

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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EDITORIAL

Bringing in the 'peaceable kingdom'

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

There may be good reason why we, the Mennonites, are not joining the United Church of Canada, the Anglican bishops and 28 Presbyterian churches in British Columbia's Lower Mainland in a protest against the Northern Gateway oil-sands pipeline.

Could it be that this is too close to home for us to enter the fray, a fear that we might be too complicit with the economic/political forces that are determined to construct the pipeline despite its threat to the environment and to the survival of the first nations whose territory it would cross? Yes, we are working with indigenous people, through Mennonite Central Committee eco-justice efforts, in far flung places like Central America, but British Columbia? Not so sure.

It is far more safe to highlight, through video clips, than to bring the issue of environmental injustice too dramatically into the neighbourhoods where we live, worship, vote and relate to our middle-class neighbours, isn't it?

In our major feature "Care for creation and environmental justice," p. 4, Randolph Haluza-DeLay, from Edmonton, Alberta, calls us to account in our witness, asking us (again) to be counter-cultural by extending our belief in peace and non-violence to non-violence in our environment. In an age when security and economic development issues increasingly drive

political decisions, we as a faith community with core beliefs in the "peaceable kingdom" find ourselves in a major dilemma.

Will we cling to the conviction of the "unimpeded right to pursue wealth in Western industrial culture," as Walter Klassen posits in an essay in "Creation and the Environment," Calvin Redekop, ed "regarding the earth with its treasure as existing solely for the enrichment and

power of those who can take it?" Or will we, as good stewards of God's creation and participants in "the peaceful reign of God" described in Isaiah 11, Romans 8, and Revelation 21 and 22, "be God's own caretakers in the small places where we live, becoming channels for the water of life flowing from beneath God's throne, welling up within us and flowing out from us to water the trees of life, whose leaves are there for the healing of the nations?"

We have a choice. We can become so immobilized with complicity in our consumer culture that we lose our prophetic voice and our sensitivity to the wholesale degradation of the environment, or we can, despite our enmeshment, begin to make personal choices that break the never-ending cycle of production and consumption.

As both Haluza-DeLay and Klassen point out, our commitment to creation care should be both personal and corporate. "Unless we can begin to act as the revealed children of God at home, we will

have no resources of soul for public action guided by our biblical vision," insists Klassen. "We are not private individuals; we are part of the whole."

There is hardly a consensus on this. One of my table-mates at the recent Assembly 2012 in Vancouver expressed displeasure with Canadian Mennonite's recent edition focusing on Creation Care, dismissing any need to make this a part of our Christian commitment with "God will take care of all of this; we don't need to concern ourselves with it."

While hoping this is a minority view, we must note that there has been much energy spent on being part of the "peaceable kingdom." MCC has been helping indigenous people develop water sources, increase crop production and forming retail outlets through Ten Thousand Villages for national arts and crafts. Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) is providing micro-financing for the poor and disadvantaged. Christian Peacemaker Teams are living in dangerous places around the globe as partners with nationals in challenging oppressive regimes.

Most of our colleges now have courses and degrees in environment science, international culture and conflict transformation. Many of our businesses have worked at environmental issues, such as Palliser Furniture in Winnipeg, and the D.W. Friesen book publishing business of Altona.

MCC, according to Michael L. Yoder (Creation and the Environment), pioneered the first "blue box" collection and recycling program in Kitchener in the mid-1970s, which has now spread to many cities across Canada and the US.

While these are encouraging corporate efforts at being the "peaceable kingdom," our calling is to make this a personal mission as well.



ABOUT THE COVER:

Elmira Mennonite Church has reserved one of its parking spots (temporarily filled with gravel) for Grand River Carshare. Next door, Old Order Mennonites leave the Elmira Meetinghouse using no cars at all. Randolph Haluza-Delay challenges Mennonites to reduce our car dependence (see page 4).

PHOTO: BARB DRAPER

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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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Care for creation and environmental justice

A challenge for Anabaptists

BY RANDOLPH HALUZA-DELAY



[W]e have to go beyond individualized remedies like changing light bulbs and buying recycled products.

When Bob Lovelace, a chief of the Ardoch Algonquin of Northeastern Ontario, wrote about his people's struggle over uranium exploration on their land, he did so from a Canadian maximum security prison. To protect their traditional territories from uranium exploration, the Ardoch Algonquin had set up roadblocks. For his part in the nonviolent resistance, the grandfather and university lecturer was convicted by federal court, fined \$25,000, and sentenced to six months incarceration.

Lovelace wrote the first draft with a pencil sharpened on the metal staircase outside his cell. His manuscript was lost when given to prison authorities to be mailed. Lovelace wrote an entirely new copy, which was finally published in our book on environmental justice in Canada (see suggestions for further reading).

One lesson from Lovelace's story is that environmental issues cannot avoid being contentious and may include matters of social justice.

When it comes to future environmental sustainability, several Mennonite characteristics may be important. The Mennonite commitment to discipleship rooted in community, and Mennonite awareness of how peace and justice are integral to faith are two such characteristics. Both of these lead Mennonites to self-examination of faith and practice and a willingness to be counter-cultural witnesses. Improving environmental sustainability may demand these characteristics, but we have to go beyond individualized remedies like changing light bulbs and buying recycled products.

MCC PHOTO BY MELISSA ENGLE



Nate Howard, an MCC worker from Muncie Ind., shows visitors this mine in San Miguel, Guatemala. The mine uses vast amounts of water which eventually leaks potent chemicals into the water table.

Environmental issues not easy

Most Christian discussion about the environment suffers from several weaknesses. First, it tends to be too theological—as if people act primarily on the basis of their theologies and ethics rather than on habituated practices. Second, it tends to ignore social systems—how culture shapes us and how political, economic and other institutions create damaging social-environmental systems such as urban sprawl or expanding energy use. Third, it proposes mostly individualized solutions to complex systemic processes causing problems of ecological degradation.

Another lesson is that environmental sustainability (or unsustainability) is not just a matter of environmental science. It is a function of how we build our cities, how we use energy and resources and what we do to get those resources, what we believe about the human place in the world, and how we have organized our societies. That means also that broader social and political and economic forces are at work, which is why simple lifestyle changes are only a piece of the puzzle. It is also why addressing environmental sustainability requires involvement of social scientists like myself.

A final lesson is that the environment is a moral issue. Our ways of doing things are moral choices whether we are

aware of them or not. Who gets access to resources and who is potentially harmed by pollution show that justice concerns are part of the environmental equation, even if inequitable consequences were not intended by decision-makers. The environment is a moral issue because of what we might discern from Scripture about duty to God who is Creator.

Times have changed

Nowadays, most Christians agree that we have some responsibility to care for the environment. Thirty years ago, when I was an undergraduate biology student coming to faith, it was different. Environmentalists thought Christianity was one of the major causes of ecological degradation and Christians thought those concerned about the environment were misguided. Popular Christian author Tony Campolo titled one of his books, *How to Rescue the Earth without Worshipping Nature*.

Times have changed. Many Christians now find it astonishing that Christians would question the legitimacy of environmental stewardship. After all, wouldn't it make sense for those who acknowledge the Creator to respect the sanctity of the Creation also? The 1995 *Confession of Faith in Mennonite Perspective* asserts, "We acknowledge that God as Creator is owner of all things."

Scripture clearly shows the purpose of the Creation is to worship God. The Psalms are not the only place where trees clap their hands and rocks shout out to their creator. All creation groans in Romans 8, and the prophets declare even the land feels the pain of sin (e.g., Isaiah 24, Hosea 4). The redemptive action of Christ is for all creation, not just the human portion. How else to understand how the peace made by Christ is a gospel reconciling "all things" (Colossians 1)?

Consumption not sustainable

The global scale of ecological degradation challenges us theologically. The litany of statistics—species extinctions, water degradation, ecosystem decline, disappearing glaciers and sea ice, ocean acidification—demonstrate that seemingly puny humans now have the power to change the entirety of creation. According to some social science research, many Christians feel concern about the environment is not as important as the pressing concerns of human needs. However, poverty, famine, community development, global inequality and war are often connected to environmental conditions. As well, militarism, power imbalances and economic institutions that generate social inequality also generate ecological degradation.

Calculations of human use of energy and resources show that creation does not have enough resources or waste disposal capacity for the growth in human consumption in recent years. This is especially true for the rapid increase of greenhouse gases produced by industrial civilization in the last couple of centuries. There is little evidence to suggest that Christians have less profligate lifestyles than the average of their social class in a society. Sociologically, even committed Christian believers are affected by the culture that surrounds them and if they hold back at all, it is only a lag in lifestyle expectations.

Clearly, these are all moral issues, but natural science and social science can help us understand what ethics and theology ponder for Christian discipleship. The ecological footprint data makes me wonder whatever became of

the idea to “Live simply so others could simply live”? We do not hear much in the overdeveloped world about lowering our standard of living (which is not the same as reducing quality of life) so that necessary improvements in living standards can happen in the underdeveloped world. The frugal discipleship of Mennonites and its association with global justice was part of the witness that drew me to Christ years ago.

Anabaptist witness

The Anabaptist commitment to discipleship has allowed Mennonites a willingness to be counter-cultural in the societies in which they have lived. As “moral communities,” churches are ideally suited to discussing and helping each other with countercultural questions of lifestyle, such as “how much is enough”? Church members can share goods with each other—does every house need its own lawnmower? How big a house? How many cars? Can we share cars? Should we live closer together to facilitate such sharing? This could be one form of fulfilling the new social and economic relations in the Body of Christ: “they will know you are mine by the way that you love.” Acts 2 and 4 show the early church as cooperative economic societies; this might be a tradition to recover.

The Mennonite commitment to peace and justice is another contribution. There is a violence being done to creation. That violence spills over to human beings. This article began with a story about social inequity associated with an environmental issue. This is called “environmental justice.” Disadvantaged human groups frequently face higher

burdens of environmental contamination, poorer water quality, less protection from corporate malfeasance, and are pushed onto marginal land. Toxic waste sites, for example, are much more common in poorer communities than wealthier ones. More complicated than cleaning up such sites is to learn who created such disproportionate effects and who should be burdened to fix them. Even better, of course, is not to create problems that need remediation, especially since in many cases it is the public purse that pays for past toxic industrial activity.

Another aspect of environmental justice is to ensure equity in participation. Decision-making power is not even. Environmental hearings often require technical knowledge or access to information that is not fair. Understanding political processes and being able to speak and write in culturally-acceptable ways in order to have one’s concerns heard are other aspects of participatory justice. These components of improving just sustainability are far harder to protect, assess, or even to understand when they are impaired, but they cause tremendous disadvantage. The issues at Ardoch had to do with lack of consultation before the uranium exploration went ahead, despite court decisions and treaty procedures.

Mennonites have been active in environmental justice and sustainability. Christian Peacemaker Teams maintained a supportive presence at the Ardoch roadblocks. CPT has also been present at Grassy Narrows First Nation’s disputes over logging on their traditional territories in Northwestern Ontario. (Grassy Narrows has also recently been in the

news because mercury poisoning from three decades ago still affects community water quality and health). The ecumenical Christian group Kairos has been one of Canada’s foremost proponents of eco-justice—one of few groups consistently linking environmental sustainability to social justice. One of its major campaigns has been to demand Canadian mining companies follow the same environmental, labour and health and safety requirements overseas as they do at home. Political will does not yet exist to enact such simple fair treatment expectations into law.

There are other promising signs. The MCC Canada website has an entire section on environment as it has sought better ways to do development and justice work in Canada and abroad. Like much of the international community, MCC has become increasingly aware that much so-called “development” had ecologically damaging side effects that were counterproductive to improving human wellbeing. MCC projects include soil conservation, land reforestation, water quality and appropriate technology. Similarly, World Vision has recognized that climate change will make much of its development work far more difficult, leading that organization to become an active member of the Climate Action Network.

Congregational action

The Mennonite Creation Care Network (<http://www.mennocreationcare.org/>) has collected examples of action that Mennonite churches, schools and agencies are doing in North America. Examples include community gardens,

Suggestions for further reading

- Agyeman, P. Cole, R. Haluza-DeLay & P. O’Riley, eds. *Speaking for ourselves: Environmental justice in Canada*. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press, 2009.
- Jim Ball. *Global Warming and the Risen LORD: Christian Discipleship and Climate Change*. Washington, DC: Evangelical Environmental Network, 2010.
- Luke Gascho. *Creation Care: Keepers of the Earth*. Herald Press, 2008.
- Greening Sacred Spaces, <http://www.greeningsacredspaces.net/>
- Redekop, Calvin ed. *Creation & the environment: An Anabaptist perspective on a sustainable world*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.

water conservation, solar panels on rooftops, bicycle racks, collecting e-waste, and more. These actions are steps in a process. The danger would be if further steps and deeper change do not occur.

The first step for any congregation is to do the easy, high impact actions. The environmental committee at First Mennonite in Edmonton began by exchanging incandescent light bulbs for energy-efficient CFC bulbs. Although there were comments initially, no one notices if the lighting seems different now. The energy audit First Mennonite conducted showed that efficiency upgrades on the decade-old building would have minimal benefits. Older church buildings could probably do more. But because upfront costs for retrofits are often large, perhaps congregations with newer churches could donate into a revolving common pool which could support congregations with older buildings to reduce their impact.

The difficulty is that the significant high-impact actions really have to do with congregant lifestyles (including my family's) but that is a very difficult discussion to have. And, as discussed above, much of personal lifestyle is affected by social systems outside personal control. Addressing these social systems may also be outside the perceived role of the church, as faith leaders across Canada are discovering. Mennonite Church Canada moderator Willard Metzgar has said he received some negative responses after two stories appeared in the *Canadian Mennonite* last winter about his participation with other church leaders on climate change initiatives. He expressed concerns about whether Mennonites were ready to take action on the scale needed for effective care of creation, especially if it required challenging the inaction of governments.

Sustainability a challenge

Roman Catholic Bishop Luc Bouchard—whose diocese includes the Alberta oil sands—got extensive negative responses for his 2009 pastoral letter on the oil sands. Drawing on scientific and theological expertise, he had concluded, “it is when the damaging effects are all added

together that the moral legitimacy of oil sands production is challenged.” Many people questioned whether the church had the right to speak out on such matters, said Bishop Bouchard. The oil sands were not a matter of morality, numerous letters, emails and opinion pieces had said.

The oil sands are morally problematic, not the least for the way they enable continuation of an energy-extravagant lifestyle. They are also socially and environmentally problematic for a society dependent on fossil fuels that evidence shows is contributing to global environmental changes in the biosphere, and unjustly harming the lives and livelihoods of people who did not contribute to the problem. Fossil fuel use has certainly been effective at raising standards of living. But if sea levels rise and storms increase as predicted, the planet may see increases in climate refugees, droughts, and other complications. National defence departments around the world predict conflicts over natural resources will also increase.

Meanwhile, new sources of hydrocarbon-based energy are pursued, such as the questionable practice of hydraulic fracturing of bedrock to release natural gas. Besides the carbon emissions and global warming, the energy output of these new sources is rapidly declining compared to the energy required for

production. In the analysis of theologian-historian Jacques Ellul, “the technology of energy is closely linked to the spirit of domination, conquest and human lust” and can be an idolatrous form of security. Ellul also articulated technological domination as the substitution of human will for Godly restraint when human knowledge points to potential consequences and the actions are done anyway.

Given what we know currently about environmental declines around the globe, sustainability is a challenge. It challenges our current understanding of the good life. It challenges our understanding of God who is Creator and Sustainer. It challenges us to imagine different ways of living that are good news for the entirety of creation. On the other hand, the challenge can further discipleship and faith if Mennonites embrace it as an opportunity to develop creation care and just sustainability as elements of the shalom kingdom of God. ❧

Randolph Haluza-DeLay is a sociology professor at The King's University College in Edmonton Alberta. As an active researcher he has published Speaking for Ourselves: Environmental Justice in Canada (UBC Press, 2009) and is currently editing a book on how the World's Religions are Responding to Climate Change to be published in 2013.

/// For discussion

1. What changes have you seen in people's attitudes toward caring for the environment? How do Mennonite attitudes compare to the rest of society? Are younger people more passionate about caring for creation than older generations?
2. What is the Christian's responsibility to God regarding creation? What does the Bible say about human interaction with the created world? Do you agree with Randolph Haluza-Delay's interpretation of Colossians 1 that the “redemptive action of Christ is for all creation”?
3. What situations of environmental injustice are you aware of? How involved should Mennonites be in seeking greater environmental justice? If you had the opportunity to speak publically about new oil pipelines in Canada, what would you say?
4. We have experienced some extreme weather over the past few months. How was your community affected? Do most people believe that we are seeing climate change in action? How might droughts, floods and other natural disasters encourage us to change our way of life to better care for creation?

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.

✉ **Must respect be earned, or simply expected?**

RE: "WHERE ARE the manly mentors?" June 25, page 34.

Rachel Bergen expressed disgust with males who are disrespectful towards females. Perhaps we can help each other with this kind of challenge in our promiscuous post-Christian era.

In one of my pastorates, we had a very godly, highly respected deacon in our congregation, who was also a professor and supervisor at the local teachers college. At one of the board of deacons meetings, he expressed a deep concern about the Sunday school superintendent who regularly wore a micro-miniskirt and a top with a plunging neckline on Sunday mornings; he was worried about the kind of message she was sending to all ages in our congregation.

How many times have wise, mature people told us that respect must be earned, that it cannot be demanded or legislated? Yet some years ago, one of our female pastors at a Mennonite Church Eastern Canada cluster meeting said, "A women has every right to dress as she pleases, and males have a responsibility not to have lustful thoughts."

At present, we are faced with a widespread challenge in our church gatherings. With more and more women sitting on the platform as pastors and worship leaders, people in the pew are having difficulty knowing where to focus their eyes. Looking at the floor or ceiling can be a pain in the neck!

So how do we respond to Bergen's disgust regarding respect?

REYNOLD KIPFER, KITCHENER, ONT.

/// Corrections

Iris Leung was incorrectly identified in the July 30 issue, page 4.

Susie Guenther Loewen's essay was incorrectly titled "Unwelcoming the Stranger: Marriage from a Canadian Mennonite Perspective" in Many Young Adult Delegates attend Assembly (July 30). It should have been: "On Welcoming the Stranger: Same-Sex Marriage from a Canadian Mennonite Perspective."

Canadian Mennonite regrets the errors.

✉ **Get SMARRT on church safety policies**

RE: "TAKE CARE" feature, April 30, page 4.

Many thanks for the timely article on church safety policies. Garry Janzen hit it right on when he stated, "Increased awareness of incidents of abuse in recent media coverage and encouragement for victims to speak out are pushing churches to consider that there may be both victims and abusers in their pews and among their leadership."

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario has had a Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Response/Resource Team (SMARRT) in place since 1995, to assist churches when allegations arise. The team moves quickly and impartially to diffuse the situation, easing conflict and saving the reputation of the leaders involved.

SMARRT is introducing to Canada a program providing a great age-appropriate resource that supplies this training for church protection policies. This "Circle of Grace" program firmly links the protection of children with God's will, and provides children and their parents a common vocabulary for discussing concerns.

HELMA SCHMIDT, KITCHENER, ONT.

Helma Schmidt is the administrative manager of SMARRT (www.mcco.ca/restorative/smarrt).

✉ **Dress more modestly**

WE CERTAINLY NEED fathers and grandfathers who model and teach respect for women and men ("Where are the Manly Mentors?" June 25, p. 34). Showing respect is a sign of strength and character.

As a mother and grandmother, I believe women also have an influence and responsibility in encouraging and commanding respect. Over my lifetime, in secular society, women have fought for, and achieved, a much greater degree of equality and respect in the academic and business world. On another level, however, I believe

women in our Western societies are often jeopardizing this respect by how they dress and conduct themselves.

In many Eastern societies, women are forced to wear clothing that completely covers their bodies. While this approach is domineering and unacceptable, our Western women have gone too far in wearing clothing that is too body-revealing in both formal and informal situations. Where do women and girls wish to identify themselves as followers of Jesus?

As I “dust off my Bible,” I am finding that in the scriptures, women are valued for unique gifts of homemaking, nurturing, inspiring and supporting, as well as contributions in the business and professional world, and that these gifts are far more important than any physical beauty we may have.

By dressing ourselves appropriately and modestly, we can encourage the men in our lives and around us to honour and respect womanhood. What do you think?

NAME WITHHELD ON REQUEST

✉ ‘No longer persecuted’

I MIGHT AGREE that Mennonite traditions of the separation of church and state are still relevant (Letters “Serving Jesus Christ or Stephen Harper” by Walter Quiring, May 28, p 8; “MCC must now compete for CIDA grant money” by R. Penner, July 9 p 8). How this is accomplished, however, warrants re-examination and experimentation. We are no longer being persecuted for our religious liberty.

There is consensus from most Mennonites, for example, that we have a responsibility to vote during federal elections. Our churches are filled with New Democrat, Liberal, Green and even Conservative voters. This is how it should be; there are good and bad policies within all major political parties.

I cannot accept, however, that we should stand idly by while refugee claimants are being denied basic health care, environmental protection policies are

FROM OUR LEADERS

Two everyday heroes of the faith

BY ABE BUHLER AND ERIC OLFBERT

What’s at the heart of the matter? What is basic and essential to our questions of faith and life? Such questions were asked of Jesus in attempts to trap him. They are also important questions in helping us find our way to a more life-giving centre in a context where our Christian faith is often perceived as more exclusive than embracing—more restrictive than freeing. We are called from restrictive and oppressive boundary defining and patrolling by focusing on Jesus, the centre of our faith.

Jesus quoted the scriptures in speaking to the heart of the matter. “Love God with all you’ve got and love your neighbor as yourself.” He included stories to illustrate the meaning of neighbour.

We at Mennonite Church Saskatchewan have been challenged and shaped by our own stories of loving God and neighbour. It is with much delight and

deep appreciation that we remember Dale Shiele and Helmut Isaac, as they retire from careers of highlighting the meaning of loving God and neighbour. They have taught us who our neighbours are and how to love them. On Aug. 12, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan commemorated their many years of service.

Dale Schiele has served as Coordinator of MC Sask’s Person-to-Person (P2P) for over 31 years, helping MC Sask members and others get involved in over 50,000 person hours of visits with inmates in Prince Albert prisons. As well, Dale has helped put together Circles of Support and Accountability (COSAs) to provide friendship and community for 10 high-risk sex offenders in the past 15 years.

Helmut Isaac has also been in this ministry for about 30 years, first as a volunteer visitor in the Prince Albert program for 19 years and then as Coordinator of the P2P

program in Saskatoon for 11 years, helping another 6000+ person hours of visiting to happen, as well as another 7 COSAs to be organized. Both Dale and Helmut retired from their positions in 2012.

Their lives are made of beautiful stories of embracing prisoners and ex-offenders with dignity and loving them towards wholeness. Dale and Helmut have crossed fears and the prejudices we all learn to touch these lepers of our society. And even more importantly, they have helped many of us to those same experiences of loving our neighbours. Their, and our, testimony about their ex-offender friends is that “there, but for the grace of God and my Christian community, go I!”

We Mennonites aren’t always sure how to honour such testaments of our faith, testimonies that speak so strongly and challenge the stuff that’s at the heart of our gospel. We don’t do services of pronouncing our leaders into sainthood. Given the humble and unassuming nature of our dear men in question, we’re a little ambivalent about doing anything to draw attention to the wonderful incarnational theology they have displayed. So our modest and down-to-earth plan has been to invite our church community, the prison community—the whole world—and enjoy some good stories among friends, along with some good music and farmer’s sausage on a bun. ☘



Buhler



Olfert

rapidly being dismantled without due process, and our political elite are slow to openly evaluate non-partisan voices calling for a more participatory democracy.

I believe individually and as church organizations, there can be separation of church and state even as we become pro-active and dialogue with the individuals and institutions that govern and control our society.

MYRON D. STEINMAN, KITCHENER, ONTARIO

✉ Reactions to abuse eerily identical

THANK YOU SO much to Amy Dueckman for writing “Killing her softly” (July 9) and to *Canadian Mennonite*

for publishing it. I grew up in a home where domestic violence was both physical and verbal/emotional. I vowed I would never let what happened to my mother happen to me. However, when I experienced the relationship cycles of verbal/emotional abuse as described so well in this article, my reactions were identical to those described in the article. It’s kind of eerie really. My husband is outgoing and well-liked. I didn’t recognize what was happening. I was afraid. My self-esteem was extremely low. I told myself if only I did more he wouldn’t be angry. I did not make good decisions. My greatest regret is the twisted model of marriage I provided for my children. I hope that, through efforts such

OUTSIDE THE BOX

The limitless power of limits

BY PHIL WAGLER

The church in the North American context is facing limits she must accept, for God has placed them in her path for the sake of his glory and the integrity of faithful witness to the Kingdom of the risen Jesus.

This is nothing new.

Jeremiah is the most tragically limited of prophets. He is caged by the ferocious unpopularity of the message he must bear and the incessant itching of his opponents to hear what he has to say. He’s like a road-side accident—nobody wants one to happen, but everyone enjoys the voyeurism when it does.

The word of the Lord through Jeremiah is this: Israel is to live within the unwanted limits set by Heaven.

The exiles in bullying Babylon are to accept their plight and seek the welfare of the place to which they have been sent (Jeremiah 29), while the poverty-stricken remnant left in dilapidated Jerusalem are to stay put and like it (Jeremiah 42). There is to be no running to Egypt for help. There is to be no last valiant stand against the barbarian horde. There is to be no feverish joy in the entitled crowing of false prophets. Israel is to accept the limits brought about by its own dullness and by the jealous love of God for his creation, purposes and glory.

This is frustrating for those who believe their own headlines. This was no easier for Israel to hear than it is for the church in the current reality. Today a new Babylon of proud secular humanism rules and sets the cultural agenda, ethics, and worldview. Confounded by the downturn in western Christianity’s fortunes, some Christians are teetering on the brink of capitulation with a Babylon that appears to be doing well for itself, while others desperately squint through rose-coloured glasses in hopes of a return to “old-time religion.” Neither is a faith-filled response to the



Today a new Babylon of proud secular humanism rules and sets the cultural agenda, ethics, and worldview.

season we now find ourselves in. We are at the place where we must embrace the limitless power of limits.

The contemporary task of the church is to live in covenant with the God of Abraham and Sarah who seeks to bless the nations and has raised Jesus Christ from the dead. There is a time to accept that our current limits—like the feeling that our voice is increasingly muted and misunderstood the more we speak—may be placed upon us by Heaven. To be clear,

I’m not advocating ostrich-like, head-in-the-sand Christianity that retreats to the hills like Jonah to await a self-justifying Armageddon-like freak show. Rather, I’m pleading for a courageous church that is convinced that come what may, rule who may, there is a Kingdom not of this world, a Good News-Jesus-centred Kingdom, that shines brightly as a city on a hill.

When the kingdoms and wisdom of the world seem to have won the day, when God’s ways seem most limited, that is when the limitless Spirit hovers. If we rail fanatically against the limits, we may find ourselves fighting against God as the insightful Pharisee Gamaliel pointed out to his comrades (Acts 5). Let us simply be the people of that unbreakable covenant between God and humanity fulfilled in Christ, bound both by the limits of the day and the call to proclaim and live the Gospel as the new covenant community

with our gaze fixed on Jesus, who in the words of St. Vincent de Paul, “teaches us to be content to refrain from undertakings which might be within our power, and to fulfill only what charity demands and his will requires.”

Phil Wagler serves within the limits set for him in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. He is the author of Kingdom Culture and a contributor on Mennonite Media’s Shaping Families.

as these, awareness will be raised and support can be provided to families suffering from abusive relationships.

NAME WITHHELD ON REQUEST

✉ Women can be abusers too

WHILE I HAVE very little personal experience with romantic relationships and the politics within them, I find it hard to generalize abusers as a men and victims as women (“Killing her softly,” July 9, p 4).

It is dangerous to assume that men are the only ones in a relationship that can be domestic abusers, because in some cases, women can display almost all of the same traits as the ones listed in the article. I can imagine from a psychological standpoint, these women try to exert their authority in a relationship because of past abuse, or because they want to break out of the social norms of male dominance and female inferiority. The same phases of abuse can apply to a woman abuser as well as a man.

These same steps towards mental and emotional abuse stand for any kind of relationship, not just romantic, intimate ones. For a few years, in my university residence, I had a roommate who developed these traits towards me over time. I got to know her in my first year and we bonded fairly quickly. We had our differences and our arguments, but they never lasted long. In second year, we decided to stay together, and that’s when I began to notice things I had ignored or not known the previous year.

Looking back on it now, it was exactly the same phases as described in the article, with a sort of “honeymoon phase” where we would have fun with our mutual friends. Then the “tension phase” would happen, with her barely or not speaking to me for weeks on end. At the end of that time, we would often find ourselves in some sort of major argument that affected our other friends as well.

I’m not proud of my behavior towards her at some times, and regretted some of my actions and words that escalated arguments, but in most cases, I found myself questioning where I went wrong, or what I could do to fix it, and was relieved when we parted ways. Ending that relationship was the best way to go for both of us, but every now and again, I think of her, and pray that she’s doing all right.

It just goes to show that people can get hurt by emotional abuse in any kind of relationship, whether romantic or not.

NAME WITHHELD ON REQUEST

✉ Mental health ‘stigmatization’ not helpful

CHRIS SUMMERVILLE’S REFLECTIONS on mental illness (June 25, 2012) perpetuate a misunderstanding

that has become common in recent years. There is a world of difference in the extremes of mental illness, and to label society’s reaction as a monolithic stigmatization or avoidance not only does a tremendous disservice to people who meet and deal with sufferers every day, but also flies in the face of advocates who claim “most people do not even recognize sufferers of mental illness when they meet them.”

Summerville’s frankness seems superficial: on one hand, his experiences with Vincent Li, whose traumatic illness resulted in the death of an innocent person, remain incompletely processed with the glib phrase, “Schizophrenia is treatable and recovery is possible,” and thus belies the depth of healing and monitoring that are necessary to ensure that such illnesses are truly in remission, and not merely papered over with a thin veneer of civil behaviour enforced by a regimented routine found in health care institutions, but not found in the messiness of real life.

On the other hand, “Persons with mental illness are the lepers of today,” incompletely distinguishes those who suffer low-grade illnesses such as depression that are unremittingly crippling yet harm no-one but themselves, from those that are violently harmful to many people—family, friends, coworkers and strangers.

The truth is that individuals in society embrace mental illness in a variety of ways. To ignore the manifold ways that individuals treat those with mental illness around them does a profound disservice not only to society, but to sufferers as well. Each needs to participate in the health of those around them at the level they are able. Those who can care for depressives should do so, and most people are not only capable of so doing, but the literature indicates they indeed do so.

To castigate ordinary people without the skills or tools gained through decades of dealing with manipulative behaviour found with untreated or relapsing schizophrenics, narcissists and borderline-personality-disorder sufferers as uncaring, is to encourage them to become the next victims. Pastors in particular must beware of the depth of their engagement with such individuals.

When those who are ill recognize their illness—without the need to separate themselves from society, to blame society for their illness, or to make society responsible for curing their illness—and tell their stories, people are empowered to help them.

This is truly the message of Jesus and the man possessed in Mark 5. The man with the unclean spirit admitted the possibility of recovery in his acknowledgment of Jesus as a great healer, yet was desperately confronted at the thought of having to live without the possession of his illness (Mk 5:10). This man was cared for, but it took the power of Jesus in his healing to do what the people could not.

ANDRE PEKOVICH, VANCOUVER B.C.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Carter—Annabelle Clara Rose (b. June 1, 2012), to Jessica and Mike Carter, Listowel Mennonite, Ont.

Cornies—Addison (b. June 27, 2012), to Dan and Karrie Cornies, Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Derksen—Luke Elijah (b. May 12, 2012), to Dan and Tracy Derksen, Bergthaler Mennonite, Plum Coulee, Man.

Enns—Amalie Liese (b. April 26, 2012), to Brian and Verena Enns, Rockway Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Foster—Tessa Belle (b. July 12, 2012), to Mike and Shelby (Tiessen) Foster, Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Franz-Warkentin—Jakob Pilgrim, (b. May 31, 2012), to Elisabeth and Phil Franz-Warkentin, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Frey—Ruth Adorah (b. July 3, 2012), to Nick and Jocelyn (Bradfield) Frey, Hawkesville Mennonite, Ont.

Gabriele—twins Kadie Lynn and Kennedy Lorraine (b. July 3, 2012), to Karrie and Kyle Gabriele, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Giesbrecht—twins Drew Benjamin and Lane C.J. (b. July 19, 2012), to Jodi and Warren Giesbrecht, Bergthaler Mennonite, Plum Coulee, Man.

Hansplant—Jacqueline Danae Hildegard (b. May 29, 2012), to Christine and Eric Hansplant, First Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Heinrichs—Jamison Kellar (b. July 1, 2012), to Jamie and Crystal (McKellar) Heinrichs, Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Helmuth—Evelyn Mae (b. May 15, 2012), to Emily and Shawn Helmuth, Listowel Mennonite, Ont.

Hiebert—Abigail Grace (b. July 6, 2012), to Carla and Dave Hiebert, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Higgs—Evelyn Mary (b. July 10, 2012), to Jesse and Sharon Higgs, Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont.

Janzen—Eve Kathryn (b. July 8, 2012), to Ben and Stephanie Janzen, Waterloo North Mennonite, Ont.

Johnstone—Ethyn Earnest (b. June 11, 2012), to Tanya and Damon Johnstone, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

Klassen—Alyssa Grace (b. June 14, 2012), to Wayne and Lori Klassen, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Leis—Daveney Ann (b. May 26, 2012), to Joel and Valerie Leis, Listowel Mennonite, Ont.

Leis—Lexi Eva Joy (b. June 13, 2012), to Scott and Nikki Leis, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Miller—Harper Ella (b. June 9, 2012), to Courtney Tusch and Jon Miller, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

Reimer—Jascha Arlo (b. July 7, 2012), to Shoshanna and Thomas Reimer, Rockway Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Remillard—Alexandre Marc Andre (b. May 30, 2012), to Dan and Karla Remillard, Bergthaler Mennonite, Plum Coulee, Man.

Rempel—Ryland Henry Wiebe (b. July 12, 2012), to Andrea Wiebe and Derrick Rempel, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont./ Waterloo North Mennonite, Ont.

Sawatzky—Megan Elizabeth (b. July 3, 2012), to George and Vicky (Peters) Sawatzky, Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Siemens—Olivia Marie (b. June 24, 2012), to Bob and Jessica Siemens, Bergthaler Mennonite, Plum Coulee, Man.

Thiessen—Ella Renae (b. May 25, 2012), to Chad and Rachel Thiessen, Bergthaler Mennonite, Plum Coulee, Man.

Baptisms

Jaden Penner, Ryan Penner, Tilman Chlupac, Justina Heinrichs—Bergthaler Mennonite, Plum Coulee, Man., June 10, 2012.

Riley Dyck, Kim Ginter, Jared Rempel, Kirsten Friesen, Jordan Fehr, Eric Giesbrecht—Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man., May 27, 2012.

Carly Braun, Gregg Walker, Elena Wiens—Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, June 24, 2012.

Rachel Brown, Tylor Jansen Van Doorn, Staci Weber, Travis Weber—Community Mennonite, Drayton, Ont., May 27, 2012.

Claudia Warkentin, Kaitlyn Wiens, Kris Geist, Tim Driedger—Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man., June 24, 2012.

Marika Friesen, Sarah Driedger—First Mennonite, Edmonton, June 3, 2012.

Scott Janzen—First Mennonite, Edmonton, June 24, 2012.

Jarrett Friesen, Emily Wiens, Haley Wiens—Glenlea Mennonite, Man., June 3, 2012.

Heather Cressman, Jamie Kirkland—Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont. June 24, 2012.

Mark Dyck, Stephanie Pauls, Ryan Reimer—North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, June 3, 2012.

Kerstin Balzer-Peters—Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., June 3, 2012.

Nathan Olfert—Ottawa Mennonite, Ont., June 10, 2012.

Nathan Martin, Noah Ehgoetz—Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont., July 15, 2012.

Travis Schroeder, Charles Cole, Kathy Cole—Tofield Mennonite, Alta., July 8, 2012.

Joshua Boyd, Cameron Dueck, Ellyse Janzen—Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., May 27, 2012.

Kaylin Epp, Lisa Klassen, Daniel Penner, Vanessa Snyder-Penner—Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., April 29, 2012.

Marriages

Armes/Nash—David Armes and Julie Nash at Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont., July 7, 2012.

Berg-Dick/Hilliard—Paul Berg-Dick and Jane Hilliard, Ottawa Mennonite, at White Lake, Ont., July 14, 2012.

Bergen/Friesen—Matthew Bergen and Janet Friesen, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, June 16, 2012.

Brenneman/Hiusser—Justin Brenneman (Poole Mennonite, Ont.) and Pam Hiusser, in Atwood, Ont., July 7, 2012.

Driedger/Wiebe—David (Bucky) Driedger and Alisa Wiebe, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, July 14, 2012.

Dueck/Falk—Angela Dueck and Shaun Falk, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., in Morden, Man., July 7, 2012

Ens/Stephens—Laura Ens (Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont.) and Paul Stephens in St. Jacobs, Ont., July 6, 2012.

Fast/Martens—Nicholas Fast and Breanne Martens, at Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., July 6, 2012.

Fehr/Wall—Dayna Fehr and Tremayne Wall of Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man., at Emmanuel Mennonite, Winkler, Man., June 16, 2012.

Franz/Reynolds—Amanda Franz and Kieran Reynolds, Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man., July 7, 2012.

Hildebrand/Rempel—Bethany Hildebrand and Ethan Rempel at Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., May 5, 2012.

Janzen/Kerr—Suzanne Janzen and Matthew Kerr, at Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., June 22, 2012.

Kasdorf/Klassen—Julia Kasdorf and Ryan Klassen, at Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, July 13, 2012.

Klimchuk/Toews—Tara Klimchuk and Nathan Toews, at Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, July 6, 2012.

Lapointe/Neufeldt—Alexandra Lapointe and Evan Neufeldt at Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., June 26, 2012.

Lesko/Neudorf—Evan Lesko and Latraca Neudorf, Hague Mennonite, Sask., July 28, 2012.

Mycroft/Thaler—Erin Mycroft (Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont.) and John Thaler at Zion United Church, New Hamburg, Ont., July 14, 2012.

Paproski/Wyse—Cindy Paproski and Daryl Wyse at Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., June 16, 2012.

Pizarro/Schmidt—Felipe Pizarro and Jaymie Schmidt, at Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Alta., July 7, 2012.

Deaths

Dick—Peter, 86 (b. March 1, 1926; d. April 23, 2012), Glenlea Mennonite, Man.

Driedger—George H., 87 (b. Dec. 11, 1924; d. April 24, 2012), Evangelical Mennonite, Taber, Alta.

Good—Susie, 91 (b. May 2, 1921; d. July 12, 2012), Wilmot Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Friesen—Liese (Betty), (nee Froese), 70 (b. July 30, 1941; d. March 3, 2012), Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man.

Froese—Raymond John, 53 (b. Nov. 13, 1958; d. July 2, 2012), Trinity Mennonite, Mather, Man.

Hildebrand—Susan, 100 (b. June 16, 1912; d. July 16, 2012), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Janzen—Katharina (nee Paetkau), 97 (b. Dec. 6, 1914; d. June 28, 2012), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Klassen—Abram (Abe), 77 (b. Oct. 27, 1934; d. April 25, 2012), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Loewen—Jacob, 84 (b. Dec. 10, 1927; d. July 7, 2012), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Martens—Richard, 45 (b. April 23, 1967; d. April 26, 2012), Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man.

Mulrooney—Munden, 67 (b. Sept. 27, 1944; d. July 8, 2012), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont.

Neufeld—Matthew, 11 (b. Dec. 22, 2001; d. June 16, 2012), Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Oberer—Myrtle (see Scheidel), 87 (b. Aug. 14, 1924; d. July 9, 2012), Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Penner—Donna Mildred (nee Wilkinson), 72 (b. Sept. 9, 1939; d. July 20, 2012), Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Riekman—Robert Artur, 96 (b. May 16, 1916; d. July 10, 2012), Hague Mennonite, Sask.

Sawatzky—Judith, 72 (b. Nov. 12, 1939; d. June 29, 2012), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Sawatzky—Peter G., 88 (b. April 10, 1924; d. July 4, 2012), Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., former pastor of W-K Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Schulz—Robert, 85 (b. April 9, 1927; d. July 6, 2012), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Thiessen—Helen (nee Epp), 91 (b. March 11, 1921; d. July 18, 2012), Zoar Mennonite, Langham, Sask.

Thiessen—Maria, 88 (b. Nov. 28, 1923; d. April 29, 2012), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Wagler—Luella, 90 (b. April 8, 1922; d. July 3, 2012), Crosshill Mennonite, Ont.

Pontius' Puddle



OBITUARIES

Former mission worker shot in Afghanistan

MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA

Al Geiser of Kidron, Ohio, was shot and killed in Afghanistan where he was returning from work on a hydroelectric project on July 23. A close Afghan friend and business partner, Al Shukur, and another Afghan co-worker were also killed. Geiser, 65, and his wife, the former Gladys Dyck of Saskatoon, were mission workers in Afghanistan jointly supported by Mennonite Mission Network and Mennonite Church Canada from 2000-2009. In their assignments, Al built small water turbines to bring electricity



to rural villages and Gladys taught elementary students in an international school. In 2008 Geiser was kidnapped and held by militants for 56 days. After his release, he and his wife returned to Ohio for a while, but continued to work independently in Afghanistan as Geiser continued his work with micro-hydro projects. He and his partner were credited with bringing electricity to more than 100 rural villages. Geiser was buried in a Christian cemetery in Afghanistan following a Christian service. A memorial service was held Aug. 5 in Kidron, Ohio. ✎

Former church moderator dies

Jacob (Jake) Fransen, 1930 - 2012
Vineland, Ont.

Memorial services for Jacob (Jake) Fransen, a former moderator of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, were held earlier this year at his home church, Vineland United Mennonite. At 81, he died January 18, 2012. He was moderator of the predecessor to Mennonite Church Canada from 1981-86 and led assemblies in Vancouver, St. Catharines, Winnipeg, Three Hills (Alberta), Regina and Waterloo.

Born on March 1, 1930 in Vineland to Nicholas and Tina Fransen, recent Mennonite immigrants from South Russia, he spent his early years on a farm where his father was employed as a farm labourer. The Fransens were part of a settlement which developed the Vineland United Mennonite Church and Jake was the first child dedicated within its ministry.

"Depression times were difficult for all," says the surviving family, "but with



hard work, the family was able to move to their own farm on Lake Ontario at Jordan Harbour. Children worked alongside their parents to make a go of the six-acre fruit farm. During the war years Jake and his siblings were sometimes granted special permits to stay home from school to work on the farm with school time made up on Saturdays.

"Jake's school experiences at Jordan Station, Ontario Bible School (Fort Erie), Mennonite Collegiate Institute (Gretna) and Canadian Mennonite Bible College (Winnipeg) were very influential in his development and preparation for later pursuits. Jake also met many lifelong friends in these settings. Later, Jake graduated from Hamilton Teacher's College, McMaster University, and OISE (University of Toronto). In his young adulthood, Jake's leadership gifts were affirmed as a speaker and coordinator for the Messengers for Christ radio program

and as young people's leader at the church."

Larry Kehler, now of Steinbach, Manitoba, remembers him as "such a good mentor, encourager and model for me and other staff and committee members. He superbly led the six CMC assemblies during his years as moderator, having had excellent preparation from his three-year term as vice-chair (1978-80). There was no doubt that he was deeply committed to the Anabaptist church locally, nationally and internationally."

Jacob also served on numerous other church boards from the 1960s to the late 1990s, including chair of the *Canadian Mennonite*, several leadership capacities on the Conrad Grebel University College, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, United Conference of Ontario and on the General Board of the General Conference Mennonite Church.

He is survived by his wife, Adelaide, son Harold and Ingrid Peters-Fransen, son Gordon and Carolyne Epp-Fransen, daughter Joan Fransen, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. ✎

Mary Jeanne (Krack) Regier
October 2, 1923 – March 11, 2012

Mary passed away at 11:00 a.m. on Sunday March 11, 2012, when she usually found herself in church. Mary was laid to rest in the Laird Cemetery surrounded by the tall whispering pines.

Her favourite Bible passage was Galatians 5:22 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness and faithfulness."

Mary remains in the hearts and is remembered by husband Don, children Don (Linda) Regier, Brenda (Art) Tremblay, Ruth Regier, Mark (Kelly) Regier, and Shirley (Howard) Enns; brothers Marcel (Mary) Krack, Herman (Irene) Krack; brother-in-law Ernie Rock; sister Helen (Chuck) Ruchotzke; as well as 12 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.



VIEWPOINT

Bricks and mortar

MCC and Menno schools to spend nearly \$50 million on new buildings

BY WILL BRAUN
Senior Writer

The new \$12-million complex Mennonite Central Committee Ontario (MCCO) is building in Kitchener will fit the more-with-less ethos, says Rick Cober Bauman, MCCO's executive director. "But," he adds, "it is still clearly sending a message that we are a serious player in relief, development and peace; and we're not hiding."

MCCO will occupy roughly a third of the building. An amalgamated and expanded version of the two thrift stores in the area will occupy another third. And the remainder will be used by Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, Mennonite Foundation, MennoMedia, MennoHomes and possibly Mennonite World Conference (MWC).

The building is designed to be highly efficient in its use of energy and water. Further efficiencies will result from shared lobby space, washrooms and meeting space. It will sit on the site of the current MCCO office, which is currently being demolished.

The project is part of a national Mennonite building blitz. MCC BC is preparing for a \$16-million project, Conrad Grebel College has started an \$8.7-million expansion and Canadian Mennonite University just announced an \$11-million project.

Back in Kitchener, sitting in the basement of an under-utilized church building where MWC now rents space, Len Rempel says the organization would like to be part of the community in the new complex, but they have to consider the costs from the perspective of MWC members in poorer countries.

"We have to be sensitive to our constituency in a global context," he says. MWC has not made a final decision.

Cober Bauman admits that in the context of global need, the \$12-million capital project—dubbed "Raising Hope"—"doesn't compare with lots of places in the world where MCC works." This "grates" on him, he says. But he believes it will enable MCCO to "grow" its capacity to address poverty and injustice.

The anticipated growth is expected to come primarily through a projected increase in thrift sales, more room for material aid responses, and a stronger public "witness" because everyone who walks in the front door—most notably thrift shoppers—will be exposed to the work of various Mennonite agencies via displays in the atrium lobby and their presence in the building.

As for thrift sales, the two stores in the area forwarded \$354,000 to MCCO in 2011. That number is expected to double, based on other thrift store expansions. The new store will maintain the current level of earnings to MCCO and use the anticipated revenue increase to pay off its share of the mortgage—roughly \$4 million. Cober Bauman expects this to happen within 10 years.

But even if more space can provide the predicted benefits, does the space need to be a high-end new facility? Does that fit an organization that works with impoverished people and has a reputation for frugality?

Ron Mathies—former director of MCC Binational and chair of the "Raising Hope" capital campaign—is not worried about the project negatively affecting MCC's reputation. He believes a vibrant and visible cluster of Mennonite agencies will "expand the witness" of MCC. "It's not going to come across as a high-end building," he says. But at a cost of about \$235 per square foot, the building is in



An artist's drawing of the proposed MCC Ontario building.

the premium range for new office space in the area, even though part of it will just be warehouse.

"I think it's safe to suggest that this was not the most affordable solution available," says Marcus Shantz, who manages Mercedes Corp., a small commercial landlord in the Kitchener-Waterloo area.

"A lower-cost option would have been to simply give up on the idea of bringing everyone under one roof," he says, suggesting that individual agencies could have probably found more affordable space to buy or rent. But Shantz adds that he is not close to the project. "Maybe there are other factors that justify the expense," he says.

Cober Bauman says MCCO did consider a range of options. In defending the scale and nature of the project, he says, "we would penalize ourselves for the next several decades if we don't do something fairly ambitious and fairly bold now," he says. "I don't think it is out of step with who MCC is," he adds.

No naming rights will be sold.

Both Cober Bauman and Mathies insist the project will not cut into donations to MCC programming, though the fact remains that this once-in-50-years ask—as Mathies frames it—is for bricks and mortar, not MCC programs.

While both men support the more-with-less ethic that has typically characterized Mennonites, Cober Bauman adds that another part of the Mennonite ethos is that "we can raise money for capital projects." While some people might argue that the two characteristics are at odds, with all the millions Mennonites are spending on new buildings, it's hard to argue with Cober Bauman's assessment. ☸

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Portage Mennonite Church closes

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent

For over 35 years “the little church that could” nurtured faith, built community, and sent many of its members out into the wider world to work in with MCC, Canadian Foodgrains Bank or Mennonite Church Canada programs. It was a place for those Christians who moved into the city of Portage la Prairie to grow in their faith and find fellowship with others who shared these Anabaptist convictions. On July 1, 2012, Portage Mennonite Church held its final service. “Growing the church to the point where ongoing programs could be conducted” was the one hurdle the church couldn’t surmount, said Gerald Loepky, a long-time member.

PMC was called the “little church that could” because its small size never stood in the way of doing big things, said Astrid Peters, who together with her husband, Tony, was one of the founding members. Just two weeks before the closing service, the entire Sunday school, Michael and Derek Thiessen, decided to raise money to buy goats for Kenya through an MCC project. They baked cakes and raised over \$800, enough to buy 18 goats. “It’s kinda sad the church is closing. I liked that church,” said Derek (7). Michael (10) agreed, “Our church was pretty fun. Lots of nice people. It will be hard to find a church that has a snack downstairs every Sunday and lunch once a month.”

PMC was a church that loved to sing. They put on concerts at the William Glesby Centre for performing arts, had an active puppet ministry, started and assisted in managing the Portage MCC Thrift Shop and the local Habitat for Humanity chapter. The church sponsored three couples from Thailand and Laos. Regular book studies and Bible studies during the week were very significant for many.

Worship was always followed by a time of fellowship over coffee. “The closeness, the family atmosphere and frequent socializing made it feel like family to us,” said Grace

Loepky who has attended since 1981.

PMC’s membership peaked at about 40, said Peters. The church had a unique practice of renewing membership every year. A membership book spans the years from 1980, when the practice began, to 2011 with columns for adherents or participants including children and columns for baptized members to sign their names. Every year on Commitment Sunday, usually in May, “we wrote our names down committing ourselves to PMC, to our Heavenly Father, and to work together,” explained Peters.

In 1977 three couples found themselves longing for a church where they could give expression to their Anabaptist faith. They sent a letter to others they knew who might share their desire for an Anabaptist faith community. “Out of that mailing we were amazed at how many people showed up,” said Tony Peters. “We were bold back then. We inquired whether we could rent a Presbyterian church that was not being used. When that church was sold we moved to a Seventh Day Adventist Church that worshipped on Saturdays and so they allowed

us to worship there on Sundays.” Eventually they bought the old Alliance Church and have remained there ever since.

Henry Neufeld, a founding member who now lives in B.C., recalls the church grew rapidly in its early years. “There was a strong sense of commitment and a lot of involvement from a lot of people. There was lots of serious discussion and there was lots of laughter.”

Leadership was shared in the early years. “We never had trouble filling the pulpit,” said Tony.

“One of the things that helped us a lot was the Charleswood connection,” explained Astrid. For several years Charleswood Mennonite Church sent speakers on a regular basis. That was followed by a series of part-time pastors who commuted from Winnipeg. Most recently, Karen Schellenberg was their first pastor to live in Portage. She served the congregation on a part-time basis for eight years until 2010.

The congregation is down to a handful of people, mostly seniors. “A lot of us are starting to feel like our shift is over, but when there are only five people on council and everyone’s term is up for renewal and you realize if they don’t renew there won’t be a council, the decision becomes clear,” said Tony.

“It is very hard,” said Grace Loepky, “but we are trying to be realistic.” They are planning a closing service on September 16. ❧

PHOTO BY JEFF THIESSEN



Derek (7) and Michael (10) Thiessen, comprising the entire Sunday School, began a goat project in June, just weeks before the last worship service of Portage Mennonite Church. They are not sure where they will go to church now that it is closing.

CHURCH ANNIVERSARY

Sharing what they have gained

Wanner Mennonite Church celebrates 175 years, and more

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
CAMBRIDGE, ONT.

The way Ken Bechtel, Wanner Mennonite Church historian, puts it, the “175” in this year’s celebration refers only to the construction of the first dedicated church building. The congregation had been meeting since around 1800, as several Bechtel families settled in the area, having left the United States, where they did not trust the revolutionaries’ commitment to allow for conscientious objection to war. These were among the earliest European pioneers in Waterloo Region in southwestern Ontario.

The church formed in 1837 when a small white brick church at the southwest corner of Beaverdale and Maple Grove roads, on land donated and deeded to the church by Henry Wanner Jr. for a church and cemetery. That building served the congregation for just over a century, when it was replaced by the present brown brick building in 1938. An educational wing was added in 1969.

Those who spoke of congregational joys and needs during the June 24 anniversary service indicated over and over that the church has a history of welcoming visitors and people who are new to the community.



Pastoral intern Christina Edmiston engages ministry team leader Mike Thiessen in conversation at the potluck following Wanner Mennonite’s 175th-anniversary celebration service on June 24 in Cambridge, Ont.

Testimonies spoke to invitations, warm welcomes and continuing support of new neighbours in the community.

For more than a century, children from the surrounding community have been welcomed to Sunday school, and since 1933 a week or two of Vacation Bible School has been held for all children in the community.

The anniversary service was bittersweet, however, as Don Penner, pastor for almost 11 years, is moving on to Shantz Mennonite Church, Baden, Ont. At the same time, pastoral intern Christina Edmiston also completed her term and will take up duties at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, this fall. Mike Thiessen, Wanner leadership team chair, and team member Marg Strom both spoke highly of Penner’s work over the years, helping the congregants to learn to communicate more openly with each other, and to share that openness and mutuality with others in the community.

Lester Bechtel of the spiritual care team noted that, as in many other congregations, many of Wanner’s young adults go off to university elsewhere and do not return, giving the feeling to some of a “dwindling church.” He hopes for a turn-around.

“A dance between connecting with love and respect, on one hand, and welcoming new people who may not have Mennonite roots,” is the desire of Helen McDonald, a member of the spiritual care team. She noted that the image of a dance, perhaps foreign for many Mennonites, was the way Penner and Edmiston had put it in recent sermon series.

The celebratory service featured the leadership of Ken Bechtel, who grew up at Wanner and has pastored all over Canada. Former pastors Herb Shultz and Eric Rempel also took part. The day culminated with an old fashioned potluck picnic, games and activities in the church picnic shelter. ❧

CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY PHOTO



After a long and deeply rewarding career at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), and having served also as the president of one of CMU’s founding colleges, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Gerald Gerbrandt retired on June 30, leaving his office at 500 Shaftesbury Boulevard, Winnipeg, for the last time in his role as president. Upon his departure after nine years, he said, “My hopes for CMU rest in the wonderful people who work here and, even more, in the belief that an institution that brings faith and meaning questions to bear on the careful systematic thinking about our world meets a tremendous need. And my hope rests in the conviction that God is at work at CMU.”

Alberta women reminded to balance their lives

BY CAROLYN WILSON

When women from four Alberta churches gathered for a retreat at the Sunnyside Christian Retreat Center on Sylvan Lake on May 26-27, Lee Klaassen began her sessions by showing a Jericho Rose. This unusual flower curls up tight and stiff when it is dry, but unfolds into supple beauty when watered. It was a suitable and memorable symbol for this week-end retreat about balancing our lives with enough self-care.

A native of Vauxhall, Alta., Klaassen was formerly a Montessori teacher of children and currently shows caregivers how to use Montessori methods to enrich the lives of Alzheimer patients. She reminded us that Jesus instructed the expert in the law to “Love your neighbour as yourself.” Having asked us all to write down a list of the six most important persons, places or things in our lives, she then inquired if any of us had included ourselves in that list. We had not.

Through personal testimony, poems, symbols and readings, Lee reminded us gently but firmly it is not a sin, but rather

a commandment to take care of ourselves. To celebrate this knowledge we were invited to create collages to keep and add to as the spirit moved us. Lee also led a couple of meditative silent walks along the beautiful lakeshore.

Sunday morning found us in the chapel for some wonderful harmonized singing, scripture and prayers. Using Colossians 3:15-17, Lee reminded us to be grateful in all things and gave us each a journal in which to begin gratitude annotations.

Participants wholeheartedly expressed appreciation to the Executive of Alberta Women in Mission for the planning and work that went into this event. The venue, maintained by the Pentecostal Assemblies and a new site for this retreat, received a thumbs-up for being within easy driving reach, clean, comfortable and offering excellent meals. There was disappointment that so few women (only 19 in total) attended. Discussion also ensued about the role played by the changing demands on the time and energies of church women. ❧

PHOTOS BY ELEANORE WOOLLARD



Lee Klaassen led a meditative walk

/// Briefly noted

2013 Youth Assembly Coordinator Announced

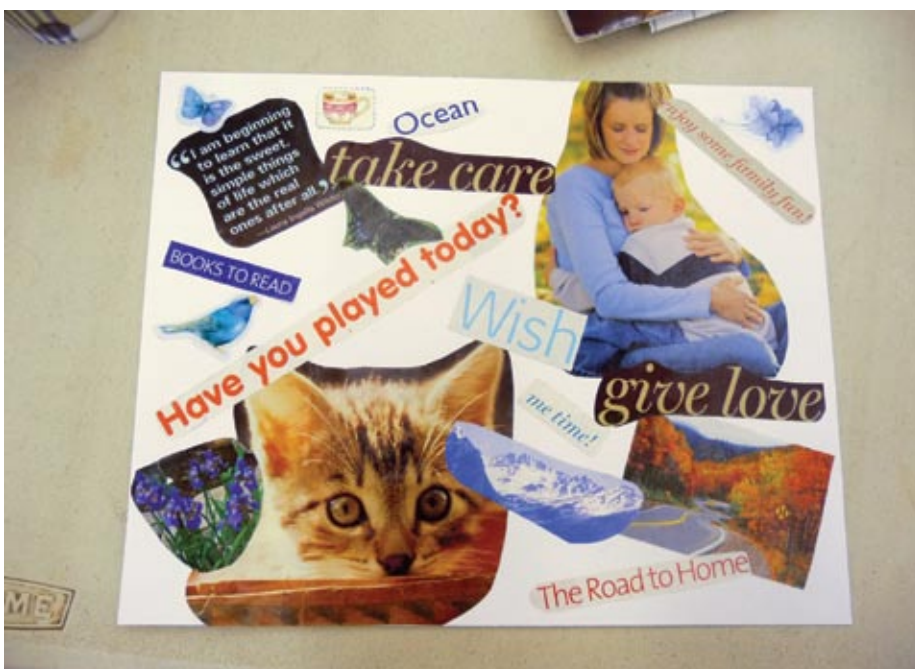
WINNIPEG—Dorothy Fontaine has been appointed to oversee the planning of the 2013 Mennonite Church Canada youth assembly in Manitoba. As Event Coordinator, she will work with other



Fontaine

Mennonite Church Manitoba (MCM) volunteers and Mennonite Church Canada faith formation staff to lead the gathering, which will take place July 29 to Aug. 2, 2013 at Camp Assiniboia, an MCM camp located on the Assiniboine River just outside of Winnipeg. “Come to where the prairie and the forest meet” proclaims a save-the-date postcard which will be sent to all previous youth assembly participants, youth pastors, and congregations. Fontaine brings several years of experience as Program Assistant with MCM’s Camps with Meaning program. She is a member at Bethel Mennonite Church where she has also served as church council chair.

—Mennonite Church Canada



A collage reflects the need for self-care

CAMP ANNIVERSARY

The little camp that could

Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp at 50

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
NEW HAMBURG, ONT.

As a member of the committee that created Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp 50 years ago, Herb Schultz remembers packing into cars on a wintery 1962 afternoon to go and look at Laverne and Nelda Lichti's second farm near New Hamburg. Walking in over hard frozen drifts, they saw an old foundation, an outbuilding and

a swampy area, and heard about the ever-flowing spring. The Lichtis severed nine hectares and the camp was born.

The original vision for Hidden Acres—to provide a summer location for urban children to hear about the good news of Jesus—sprang up from the Amish Mennonite congregations of Perth, Oxford and Waterloo counties.

Sandy Poole, current board president whose parents were among the founders, says that initially the committee in charge did everything, from constructing the original buildings and raising funds, to running the camp in summer and doing repairs.

This changed in the late 1970s with the hiring of resident staff who picked up many of the jobs the committee had done.

Twenty-six years ago, Campbell and Chris Nisbett, fresh from a dozen years of serving with Mennonite Central Committee, were invited to serve a two-year term as full-time directors. They have signed a dozen more such contracts since then. With Campbell doing the directing,

Chris has been the heart of the music and worship ministry at the camp.

In the intervening years, the ministry has expanded to year-round, with many congregations, youth groups and others coming for retreats. Recently, space has been added for individual retreats by church leaders.

From the beginning, the camp has been about bringing wholeness and healing. Camps for adults with disabilities, families with disabled children, a grandparent/grandchild camp during spring break, and the single-mom camp accomplished this. Chris notes that Justin Bieber and his mother signed the craft room wall during a camp session together.

The 50th anniversary celebration—held over the Canada Day family camping weekend—included the release of a book, *50 years of Sowing in Faith, Growing in Service*, by Chris Nisbett and Tina Wheaton, and the unveiling of a plaque celebrating the anniversary.

Campbell noted that, while this year has been focussed on looking back, next year will involve a board visioning and review process, as the camp carries the continuing challenge of a debt load as it has through the years.

Without a huge site, horseback riding stables or a lake, Hidden Acres continues to fulfil its vision to bring kids out into the country for a chance to hear about God and have fun in the peace and quiet of God's creation—all without the interference of any electronic communication devices! ❧

/// Staff change

Brnjas named as new MC Eastern Canada regional minister

KITCHENER, ONT.—

Linda Brnjas, pastor of Bethel Mennonite Church, Elora, Ont., has been named the new Mennonite Church Eastern Canada western regional minister, a position she will assume this fall. Brnjas is



Brnjas

passionate about empowering leaders to discover and carry out the mission for which God has uniquely gifted them, in ways that give life, freedom and joy. "I believe we need a broad scope of leaders—pastoral and lay—to produce the types of leadership teams that will help our churches creatively engage what God is doing in the world," she says. Regional ministers support and equip pastors and lay leaders to lead healthy, vibrant congregations that are intentionally engaging their members and communities with the peace of Jesus Christ. Brnjas, who lives in Waterloo, recently completed her master of theological studies degree and certificate of conflict management and congregational leadership at Conrad Grebel University College.

—MC Eastern Canada



Clockwise from front left: Chris Nisbett, Brenda Leis, Chris and Amanda Pott, Gary Leis and Campbell Nisbett, past and present directors of Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, pose at the dedication plaque unveiled at the camp's 50th-anniversary celebration on the Canada Day long weekend.



A highlight of the Squeah anniversary celebration was the “Squeah’s 50th Opus” performance combining words and sounds from fifty years at camp. Here, Peter Hildebrand, Melissa Brubacher and Rob Tiessen chop wood rhythmically, with Dia Jeka Ayson and Gabriella Yusuf in the background on rhythm instruments.

Squeah anniversary brings golden memories

Camp has been ‘place of refuge’ for 50 years

STORY AND PHOTOS BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
HOPE, B.C.

Cabin life, overnight hikes, swimming and campfire singing were among the memories shared when some 500 people came to Camp Squeah July 21 to celebrate the camp’s 50th anniversary.

Former and current staff, former campers and friends of Squeah gathered for an afternoon and evening of praising God for the significant ministry of Camp Squeah beginning in 1962, when B.C. Mennonite youth purchased a former logging camp as their official church camp. It was named “Squeah,” a Salish Indian word meaning “place of refuge.”

The afternoon began with a celebration service that included singing camp songs from each of the past five decades, a litany with the theme of going to the mountain, a “Squeah’s 50th Opus” creative visual and sound presentation prepared by Heidi Epp, and a meditation by Tim Froese, associate pastor of Sherbrooke Mennonite Church in Vancouver.

Froese compared the people of Israel gathering three times a year and then having to go back home, to the experience of spending a summer at camp and then having to go back home. He recalled spending six summers at camp, serving in various positions, and how much he looked forward to it every year.

“My bones would start to ache for it,” he said, “and when summer ended, I didn’t want to come back to the normal, to the ordinary.”

Basing his message on Psalm 121, Froese asked, “When life doesn’t go the way we planned and prepared, where does our help come from?” he asked. “We answer the question, ‘My help comes from Yahweh.’” Following the worship celebration, those present had the opportunity to make craft projects, view old photos, hike up the mountain, write on memory boards, swim, tour the camp facilities, or purchase a loaf of fresh-baked bread, a Squeah fundraiser



Marlene Bergen helps herself to watermelon and rollkuchen at the Camp Squeah celebration. This traditional Low German Mennonite favourite used to be served weekly during summer camp.

tradition.

Kitchen staff served a traditional outdoor barbecue supper, followed by games on the green and a watermelon and rollkuchen snack. The activities concluded with evening campfire service and singing.

“Our fiftieth anniversary celebration was a tremendous success,” Squeah executive director Rob Tiessen told *Canadian Mennonite*. “I value the privilege it is to be serving in the position of executive director at this time in camp’s history.”

Tiessen acknowledged that the Squeah journey has not always been easy, but has been worthwhile through the sustaining grace of God. “On this day, the celebration of 50 years in ministry, we acknowledge that whatever has been accomplished of lasting value over these years has been thanks to God, and as we celebrate we give praise, honour and glory to our Creator.”

Two commemorative books were prepared for the occasion, a cookbook with favourite recipes and reflections from past camp cooks, and a book of poetry and photos capturing many different ways that different people have experienced Squeah. Both of these books are available for purchase by visiting www.squeah.com. ☿

PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD



Madeline Macdonald and Elsa Philips enjoy a ride aboard “Miss Hollywood” at the 5th annual Mennonite Heritage retreat at Ernie and Linda Wiens’ acreage just East of Edmonton on Aug. 4. Everyone is welcome, said Ernie, “[We] make sure it’s about Mennonites, not for Mennonites.” The event featured music and stories, horse-drawn wagon rides, farm animals on display, a pig roast complete with cracklings and spareribs, and freshly made rollkuchen with watermelon. Fresh garden vegetables, from a nearby Hutterite colony were available for sale. Wiens views the celebration as a unifying time for all types of Mennonites, a place where theological differences and proselytizing take a backseat to community. The event celebrates Mennonite heritage, provides opportunity for fellowship, and highlights the agrarian roots of many of Alberta’s Mennonites. The Wiens are members of Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church in Edmonton.

/// Staff change

Mennonite Foundation of Canada hires director of stewardship services

Milly Siderius has been hired as director of stewardship services by the Mennonite Foundation of Canada. In this new role, Siderius will lead the team of eight stewardship consultants in offices across Canada. Prior to joining the foundation she was director of stewardship services at the Canadian Council of Christian Charities, where she wrote and presented extensively on biblical stewardship and charitable gift planning. She has also served on the pastoral leadership team in her home congregation, Hanover Evangelical Missionary Church. In addition, she has 20 years of experience in the banking industry, where she was involved with financial and estate planning and branch management. She has completed the professional financial planner and certified fundraising executive certifications. Siderius has also served on the foundation’s board of directors. Siderius begins her new role on July 9 and will be headquartered in Kitchener, Ont.

—Mennonite Foundation of Canada



Siderius

/// Briefly noted

Video contest for students and their charities

GOSHEN, Ind.—Everence, a financial services organization connected with Mennonite Church USA, is sponsoring a video contest for young people ages 15 to 25 based on the theme, “Money talks: The world is listening.” The idea behind the contest is to encourage young people to share their thoughts, concerns and ideas about the role of money in society. “The world is full of mixed messages about money and how we use it,” said Larry Miller, president of Everence. “We want to hear what young people have to say.” The first-place winner will receive \$1,000, plus Everence will make a \$1,000 grant to the charity of the winner’s choice. The second place winner will receive \$500 and \$500 will go to the chosen charity, and \$250 to third place with an additional \$250 to a charity. Rules and details are available at Everence.com/moneytalks. Submissions will be accepted from Oct. 1 to Nov. 15. A panel will select up to five finalists, and the winners will be chosen by popular vote at www.everence.com/moneytalks. Winners will be announced in early January 2013.

—Everence

Peace Sunday is Sept. 23

Mennonite World Conference invites congregations in the global Anabaptist communion to observe Peace Sunday on September 23, 2012, the Sunday nearest to the United Nations International Day of Peace. Worship resources this year were prepared by Jenny Neme of Colombia, a member of the MWC Peace Commission and of Iglesia Menonita de Colombia (Mennonite Church of Colombia). She is also director of Justapaz. The worship resources include scripture reflections, the experience of Colombian Mennonites, a litany for peace and suggested actions. The resources are available in English, Spanish and French at mwc-cmm.org.

—Mennonite World Conference

Getting to know the neighbours

Grace Mennonite Church invites neighbours to barbecue

STORY AND PHOTOS BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent

BRANDON, MAN.

Members of Grace Mennonite Church flipped burgers and sausages over smoking barbecues, handed out nametags and served iced drinks to their neighbours on July 17.

This is the third summer that GMC has hosted a full barbecue with local entertainment at the community centre a block from their church building. "It is our gift to the community," said Della Lee, one of the organizers whose three teenage daughters were helping set up canopies to offer some shade.

None of GMC's membership live in the neighbourhood, but in recent years they have tried to find ways to connect with the community and to have a greater presence in the community, said Ken Quiring, pastor.

Discerning ways to do this hasn't always been clear or easy. Over the years, GMC has tried various ways of offering hospitality. "We began in 2006 by inviting our neighbourhood for ice cream, lemonade and children's entertainment at our community centre and then we hosted a similar event on our church lawn in 2007 and 2008," explained Lee. "In 2009 we decided to go back to the community centre and expand the menu to include hamburgers, hot dogs, apples, potato chips as well as ice cream and lemonade."

Seniors from a nearby senior's residence came by foot or in wheelchairs. "Some of the ladies from Odd Fellows Corner have become faithful attendees at our worship services after meeting us at our ice cream socials and one of our long time members decided to move into Odd Fellows a few years ago. We now get invited to birthday parties there," said Lee.

Many young families took advantage of the barbecue as well. Four hundred pamphlets were distributed door-to-door in the days before the barbecue. First Nations people, new emigrants from Colombia, from Mauritius, and many others wandered over and joined the line-up for a free supper. Jaclyn Kejick and Billie Brandon, dressed in full regalia for their prayer shawl and hoop dances that followed the barbecue, added to the colourful diversity.

When Lee participated in the first community event that GMC hosted, she was surprised how many First Nations people comprised their neighbourhood. "Eighty percent of those who came were First Nations," she said. Today the influx of new immigrants is again changing the neighbourhood. However, GMC's membership does not reflect those changes.

Ever since Maple Leaf opened a meat processing plant in Brandon, the city's population has burgeoned and the face of



Neighbourhood people, reflecting the diversity of the community, line up for a barbecue supper hosted by Grace Mennonite Church on July 17.

the city reflects a much wider cultural diversity. GMC's neighbourhood has been impacted by the changes. "This neighbourhood has a higher proportion of unemployed and underemployed people," said Quiring. "A housing issue has been created by the population explosion that came with Maple Leaf's growth."

GMC's community barbecues began "with a visioning process and group discussion about how we could get to know our neighbours and help our neighbours get to know each other," explained Lee. "Before our first barbecue planning meeting we read together from Luke 14:12-14. 'When you invite people for lunch or dinner, don't invite only your friends, family, other relatives or rich neighbours. Otherwise they will return the favour. Instead when you give a banquet invite the poor, the handicapped, the lame and the blind. Then you will be blessed because they don't have any way to pay you back.'"

Breaking down barriers within the church and within the community is slowly happening. This summer Robin, a First Nations woman whose children and grandchildren attend Sunday school at Grace Mennonite, gave a week of her summer to working in the kitchen at Camp Assiniboia. Lenza, from Mauritius, has found a welcoming place at Grace Mennonite where she comes to worship with her children. ❧



Robin's family (from left to right: Desiree, Aleaha with Lynda, Johnnie, Robin, Haleigh, and Clifford in front) enjoyed Grace Mennonite Church's barbecue. The children come regularly to Sunday school and Robin just returned from a week of volunteering in the kitchen at Camp Assiniboia.

Peace-building model takes root in Colombia

MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE

Arauca, Colombia

A grassroots peace-building model, initially developed by Ricardo Esquivia, a Mennonite leader in Colombia, is being utilized in a growing number of places. The model, called Citizen Commissions for Reconciliation (CCR), now links 220 organizations on the Caribbean coast of Colombia.

An international forum held in May in

Arauca, Colombia, was based on the CCR model. The event was convened by a variety of Protestant, Catholic and other civil society organizations, including the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP), an independent, nonpartisan conflict management centre created by the U.S. Congress. According to Virginia Bouvier of the USIP, the event, which had been cancelled twice in the last two years because of security risks, drew some 200 people. Organizers created a *mesa de escucha* (listening table) where participants could register concerns not addressed elsewhere in the program. Participants shared testimonies of how the war has affected their communities. Speakers shared reconciliation experiences from other conflict zones such as Rwanda,

Ireland and South Africa.

At the end of the forum, participants announced the official launching of CCRs in a number of regions, and a 10-year plan for advancing peace and reconciliation in Arauca. The plan includes strategies to link various parts of civil society and to establish a working group to dialogue with armed groups, public security forces and private companies.

“If we can bring peace in Arauca, it can be done anywhere,” said Mennonite pastor Peter Stucky. “Our pain must motivate us to seek a definitive end to this war.”

Esquivia was director of Justapaz, a ministry of Iglesia Menonita de Colombia (Mennonite Church of Colombia) from 1990 to 2003. He also served as director of the Human Rights and Peace Commission of the Evangelical Council of Colombia from 1990 to 2010. In 2005, he founded the Asociacion Sembrando Semillas De Paz (Sowing Seeds of Peace Association), known as Sembrandopaz (Sowing Peace). Esquivia developed the CCR model with funding from USIP. ❧

/// Briefly noted

MennoMedia to change Canadian pricing

WATERLOO, ONT.—As of July 1, prices for Herald Press books and MennoMedia products in Canada will be on par with prices in the U.S. “In light of the persistently high Canadian dollar, we’ve decided to again introduce a single pricing structure for all our products,” said Russ Eanes, executive director of MennoMedia, a bi-national agency serving Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA. If there should be a sharp drop in the Loonie, MennoMedia will return to a dual pricing structure. In 2008 (then called) Mennonite Publishing Network introduced par pricing, but when the Canadian dollar took a sharp downward turn in the aftermath of the 2008-09 financial crisis, it cost the agency nearly \$70,000 in lost revenue. Kathy Shantz, manager of customer service and marketing in the Waterloo, Ont., office suggested that churches planning to purchase one of the hymnal supplements *Sing the Journey* or *Sing the Story* might find this a good time to do so in case a return to higher Canadian prices becomes necessary.

—MennoMedia

We're hiring a family!

Mennonite Savings and Credit Union (MSCU) is currently seeking a family who would like to walk the journey of faith and finances with us, up close and personal. By inviting us into your lives in 2013, we can share in your interactions with each other and with MSCU. It will be a learning experience that will enrich our members' view of faith, finances, and their credit union.

Conversations and interactions will be shared through a variety of media. As with everything we do, MSCU's approach will be respectful and reflect our core values: integrity, compassion, and responsible stewardship.

It's important for the family to have: a membership at MSCU; multiple generations; a wide variety of life experiences; and a willingness to have fun and share in this journey with MSCU.

We recognize this will be a significant commitment so the family will be financially compensated for their time.

For more information or to discuss this opportunity, call or email me under no obligation.

Frank Chisholm, Marketing Manager
Phone: 519.772.5233 | Email: fchisholm@mscu.com



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GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

MCC PHOTO BY NADA ZABANEH



Basil Kaboushi, left, and Wajdi Haddad, volunteers with Caritas Jordan, an MCC partner, help to distribute MCC relief kits and comforters to Syrian refugees at the Latin Patriarchate School in Mafraq, Jordan, in June.

MCC material aid reaches Syrian refugees in Jordan

By ED NYCE

Mennonite Central Committee
AKRON, PA.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) continues to address needs of refugees fleeing from increasing violence in Syria. Caritas Jordan, an MCC partner, is distributing comforters, relief kits, school kits and hygiene kits in five governorates, similar to provinces or states. In the Mafraq governorate, milk powder and diapers also are distributed.

Those fleeing became refugees because of ongoing fighting between Syrian government and opposition forces. From March 2011 through July 25, the United Nations (U.N.) registered 36,323 Syrian refugees in Jordan. However, the Jordanian government and the U.N. estimate that the actual number of Syrians who have come to Jordan is closer to 140,000, according to Daryl Byler, an MCC representative in the

region. Many families fear reprisal when they return to Syria and have chosen not to register with official refugee agencies. Others have their own means of survival and do not need the services provided to registered refugees.

Byler said that the rate of Syrians crossing the border is expected to increase as violence has escalated. He noted that Jordan's government has plans for 27 refugee camps for Syrian refugees who are scattering across the country. The flow of refugees also continues into Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, an additional 1 million Syrians are displaced from their homes within their country.

MCC's support of Syrian refugees in

/// Briefly noted

Church-sponsored refugees still without 'essential healthcare': Wiebe

Opposition politicians in Ottawa are calling the latest news on refugee health care a "flip flop" by the government of Stephen Harper. The government insists that its approach has not changed. Whatever the interpretation, Ed Wiebe, national refugee program coordinator at Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada, says the situation for church-sponsored refugees and refugees who enter Canada on their own remains the same: they are now without essential healthcare benefits formerly provided under the Interim Federal Health program. (See "Suspicious hospitality," July 9, page 24.) Wiebe expects that Mennonite congregations that sponsor refugees will be willing to cover the shortfall, which can amount to about \$500 for each refugee, but wonders what will happen to refugees who struggle to get to Canada and seek asylum, and then wait, sometimes for years, for their claim to be processed. In June, students from Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, launched the "59 cents Campaign for Refugee Health Care," urging every Canadian to send the government the 59 cents needed to restore IHF benefits. An Anglican archdiocese in Manitoba and a Winnipeg group that sponsors refugees are planning a lawsuit against the government, claiming Ottawa is breaching its responsibility to provide health care for refugees. Wiebe says these efforts, in particular a successful legal challenge, could eventually pave the way for including more refugees in the IHF program.

—Mennonite Central Committee

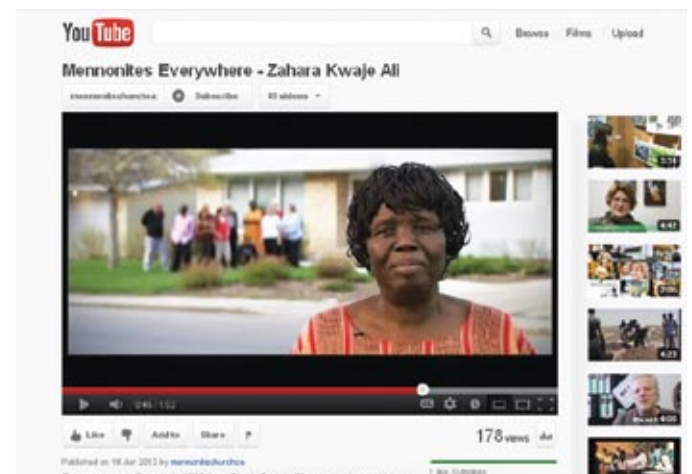
Jordan is part of an appeal MCC launched in early March for \$500,000 and for relief kit donations. As violence increased in Syria, MCC partners called on MCC to support displaced people within Syria, work pre-emptively at conflict resolution in Lebanon and help refugees in Jordan. ///

God at work in the World Snapshots

MCC B.C. PHOTO



Work has begun to rebuild the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) thrift shop in Yarrow, B.C. after it was damaged by fire on May 2. The fire is now believed to have been the work of an arsonist. At first it was thought that the shop would have to relocate, however the damage was not as extensive as was first thought and the shop will be rebuilt at 42232 Yarrow Central Road. Doug Willms, MCC B.C. provincial thrift shop coordinator says they hope to re-open by the end of the summer. "I've been told by the construction crew that many people have stopped by the shop asking when MCC is going to be open again and how much they miss the shop," said Willms. "We look forward to moving back in and presenting a fresh, revitalized shop to the Yarrow community."



Mennonite Church Canada plans to launch its first major web site upgrade since 2002 in the next few months. The first component to go live will allow donors to choose projects by theme, by country, or by worker. Photos and concise descriptions of giving projects will help individuals and congregations choose ministries to support, though donors will be encouraged to also give to the "where most needed" category. The new system will comply with accepted online financial security protocols and Canada Revenue Agency requirements.

Zahara Kwaje Ali, a member at Peace Mennonite Church, Regina, Sask., is featured in the latest Youtube video produced by Mennonite Church Canada. Ali arrived in Canada in 1993 with her husband and seven children as refugees from Sudan. The video can be seen at www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/2.

Young couple to lead church plant in Germany

By DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada
WINNIPEG, ONT.

Jennifer Otto and Gregory Rabus, from Ontario and Connecticut respectively, have accepted an invitation to lead an urban church plant in southern Germany in partnership with the *Verband deutscher Mennonitengemeinden* (VdM) and the *Deutsches Mennonitisches Missionskomitee* (DMMK).

While Otto and Rabus complete advanced studies in Tübingen, Germany, they have been developing relationships with partner congregations, and are engaged in language learning as they plan for their future ministry. They expect to move from Tübingen to a city in Southern Germany (exact location still to be discerned), to begin their ministry full-time upon completion of their studies in the fall of 2013.

The couple met while teaching English in Japan and together have experience in a variety of denominational settings. Otto grew up as an active participant in Steinmann Mennonite Church (Baden, Ont.) and spent three years in Montreal

as a youth coordinator at St. George's Anglican Church. While there, she attended Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal, meeting in the *Maison de l'amitié* (House of Friendship) and spent one year in the *Maison's* student residence.

Rabus grew up in a Lutheran church in Connecticut and says, "My Lutheran pastor says that if he was a man with more courage he would be Mennonite." Montreal Mennonite was for him a vibrant expression of church, where he says that individual participation was very important and deliberate care for each other was expressed.

Rabus speaks English, French and German, and is learning Hebrew and Arabic while he works toward his Masters in Middle Eastern Studies. "That's my passion, he says, "working with other cultures and other languages."

Otto completed her Masters in Church History at McGill, and is now undertaking PhD studies that focus on the formation of church communities in the early Church.

PHOTO BY DEBORAH FROESE



Rabus and Otto

"My hope for this assignment is that we would be able to use the experience that we've developed in many places, most recently Montreal, to build the kind of communities that help to sustain strong relationships among members in their joys and sorrows," she says. ❧

/// Briefly noted

MCC extends food distribution in Mexico

More than a thousand families in Durango State, Mexico, are now receiving food and blankets as part of a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) response to widespread drought. Packages containing beans, rice, oil, corn, lentils, noodles and sugar will be distributed to families in the villages and hills in the Nuevo Ideal area. Families will also receive canned meat and MCC blankets. This assistance is in addition to projects already underway for residents of the Low German-speaking Durango Colony, which was established 130 kilometres northwest of the city of Durango in 1924 by Old Colony Mennonites coming from Canada. About 250 households in Durango Colony are receiving food packages and 64 families are receiving cattle feed to help maintain their herds; 47 families will be provided with seeds so they can plant a crop. Parts of Mexico face what some are calling the worst drought in 70 years. Crop yields last year were below normal and many farmers in the colony have already sold their cattle to generate income. Farmers that still have livestock must pay high prices for feed. The projects will cost \$105,000.

—Mennonite Central Committee

/// Briefly noted

New workers for UK

WINNIPEG—Cheryl and Michael Nimz have accepted an invitation to serve with the emerging Anabaptist Network of Communities (ANC), part of the Anabaptist Network in the United Kingdom. The Nimzes first inquired about serving through Mennonite Church Canada Witness at Mennonite Church Canada's Assembly 2012 in Waterloo, Ont. "After doing some of our own work and meeting Stuart Murray [who works closely with the ANC] on his trip through Canada, we felt that this would be an amazing opportunity for us," Michael Nimz says.

Michael and Cheryl will help the ANC link congregations and other communities who wish to learn from one another and from the Anabaptist tradition. They'll also seek new ways to extend the ANC's reach. Michael has pastored at Bergthal Mennonite Church in Didsbury, Alta. since 2011. Although the couple says they will miss their children—Lyndy, Josiah, Odin, Teegan, Cody, and Quinn—their friends and their wider community, they are looking forward to a new adventure in the UK.

—Mennonite Church Canada



Intern finds life in Canada easy

CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK

Lieketseng Phooko of Lesotho—also known as Keke—spent 10 months with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank as an intern through the International Visitor Exchange Program (IVEP) of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). She travelled across Canada making presentations about food and hunger issues in Lesotho. Altogether, she spoke almost 100 times to over 6,000 people. One thing that always struck her was how easy life is in Canada. “Back home, we need to walk to a communal tap to get water,” she says. “Depending on how many people are in line, it can take up to



Keke, from Lesotho, helps on a farm in Manitoba during her IVEP term.

30 minutes to fill our containers. If the tap is dry, we have to walk to a spring—that can take an hour.” Going to restaurants was particularly eye-opening for her. “There

were so many choices on the menu,” she says. “I didn’t know what to do.” In Lesotho, the diet for most of the population doesn’t vary much. “We eat cornmeal three times a day,” she says. After her return, Keke will work for Growing Nations Trust, a conservation farming organization supported by the Foodgrains Bank. “I pray that the Lord will use me for good,” she says. ❧



At the Salem Home annual meeting on June 18, Kathy McPhail of the Southern Regional Health Authority of Manitoba presented an award to Sherry Janzen (CEO) and Jake Peters (board chair) of Salem Home. This 145-bed Mennonite personal care home in Winkler, Man., was recognized for its high-quality leadership and service delivery by Accreditation Canada. Salem Home introduced relationship-centred care in 2008 with a primary focus on such things as allowing residents autonomy in decision-making (bedtime, menu choices), developing meaningful relationships, and a living environment that is inviting, friendly and comfortable. Salem Home will also be formally recognized at Accreditation Canada’s quality conference in February, 2013.

/// Briefly noted

New executive director at MCC Manitoba

WINNIPEG—Ron Janzen will take over as executive director at Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba (MCCM) effective September 4, 2012.



Janzen has a long history with MCC. He was on the board of directors of MCC Canada and Ten Thousand Villages Canada and has volunteered with Mennonite Church Manitoba and Mennonite Economic Development Associates. Janzen comes to the position from his post as a vice president at South Eastman Health in Manitoba. He has also worked as finance manager at Steinbach Credit Union and secretary treasurer at Garden Valley School Division. Janzen takes over from Peter Rempel who is retiring after seven years with MCCM.

MCC responds to food crisis in Sahel

The rainy season was too short and the drought is crippling

By EMILY WILL

Mennonite Central Committee

A food crisis is spreading across the southern edge of the Sahara, from Mauritania on the Atlantic to Sudan on the Red Sea. The United Nations says the disaster threatens 15 million lives and may grow to affect several million more.

While parts of the region have endured food crises over the past decade, the current situation is unique in its breadth, encompassing the entire Sahel, says Chad Warfel, a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) representative in Burkina Faso.

Warfel says the rains in Burkina Faso usually last from May or June to September. But in 2011 steady rain lasted for only three to four weeks, tapering off altogether within six weeks. "Already by September crops

were drying up," he says.

Many farm families began buying basic food grains—millet, sorghum, corn—even before the usual harvest months of October and November. Prices have since soared beyond the means of farm families.

The Burkina Faso government has listed almost half of its 350 townships as grain-deficient and at risk of famine. MCC is responding with more than \$230,000 in support to Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali.

In Burkina Faso, MCC is in partnership with the Development Office of Evangelical Churches. In the rural township of Pella, MCC is giving grain to the most destitute and selling it to other households at subsidized prices. Two grain banks will be strengthened.

In the long term, this will give farmers a local market for their products and help provide stable food prices for the community.

MCC is a member of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, and is drawing on its account there to fund additional projects.

In Niger, MCC is supporting the emergency food assistance program operated by the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CODP) and the Caritas Network. MCC is also supporting the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee program, which will bring food and tools to more than 4,000 households in Niger.

In Mali and Burkina Faso, MCC is also working with CODP on emergency food distribution. ☼

MCC PHOTO BY CHAD WARFEL



During a visit of the Development Office of Evangelical Churches (ODE) in Kwon, Burkina Faso, an MCC partner, ODE representative Solomon Sangla examines a drought-stricken field.

ASK SOMEONE WHO HAS TRAVELED WITH US!

2012 TOURS

SCENIC AUTUMN CRUISE: CANADA and NEW ENGLAND (October 6-16)
 MEDA TOUR to ETHIOPIA and TANZANIA (October 12-24)
 SERVICE TOUR to ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR JAMIE GERBER (October 13-22)
 ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR DOUG KLASSEN (October 17-26)
 ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR KEITH BLANK (November 7-16)
 VIETNAM and SINGAPORE (November 12-26)
 MUSIC and MARKETS: DANUBE CHRISTMAS CRUISE (December 1-9)

2013 TOURS

JAMAICA - Its PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY and FRUITS (January 11-20)
 AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND (February 1-21)
 CHURCHES and SAFARIS in KENYA and TANZANIA (February 8-20)
 PANAMA CANAL CRUISE (February 26-March 8)
 HOLY LAND TOUR with TRACY SPROAT (March 13-21)
 MEDA in MOROCCO (April 2-12)
 ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR PHIL WAGLER (April 16-25)
 MYSTERY TOUR (April 17-26)
 LANDS of the BIBLE with PASTORS SEBASTIAN and CAREY MEADOWS-HELMER (April 28-May 7)
 EXPLORE the WORLD of PAUL with TOM YODER NEUFELD (May 1-17)
 EUROPEAN HERITAGE with PAUL ZEHR (May 2-15)
 GREAT TREK TOUR with JOHN SHARP (May 7-18)

HESSTON COLLEGE TOUR to EUROPE (May 24-June 6)
 EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (June 6-19)
 ICELAND ECO TOUR (June 10-19)
 COLUMBIA BIBLE COLLEGE ANABAPTIST HERITAGE TOUR (July 2-15)
 FOLLOWING the STEPS of MOSES with PASTOR NELSON KRAYBILL (July 22-31)
 ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (July 23-August 3)
 RUSSIA and UKRAINE: The MENNONITE STORY (September 4-16)
 THE BRITISH ISLES (England, Scotland and Wales) with DAVID and JOYCE ESHLEMAN (September 13-25)
 BEHIND the VEIL - EXPERIENCING EGYPT (October 17-28)
 CHINA and a YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE (November 1-15)
 ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR RICH BUCHER (November 5-14)
 EUROPEAN CHRISTMAS MARKETS (December 9-15)

2014 TOURS

THE AMAZON RAINFOREST and GALAPAGOS ISLANDS (January 16-26)
 EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 15-27)
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GOD AT WORK IN US

Recognizing God at work

Muriel Bechtel reflects on 12 years as MC Eastern Canada conference minister

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
KITCHENER, ONT.

After 12 years as Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's conference minister, Muriel Bechtel will be moving into retirement this summer. On June 24 she also celebrated 20 years since her ordination, when she was pastor of Warden Woods Mennonite Church, Toronto.

As she looks back on her years of ministry in a variety of celebrations in her last active weeks, she notes a significant shift that has happened to her over the years. "Earlier on, I would celebrate successes with an 'I did it' attitude," she says. But as the years have gone on, influenced by her spiritual directors, retreats, prayer life and God, she has more and more seen God as the source of success, bringing together disparate elements and people to make a whole.

While she has been praised for the success of MC Eastern Canada's Transitioning into Ministry (TiM) program, she remembers Marilyn Rudy-Froese, then chair of the area church's Leadership Council, commenting, "When you and Marianne [Mellinger] bring ideas to the table, I don't know which of you was the instigator." Bechtel sees such cooperative work being arranged by God, a kind of divine synergy.

Like other women of her era, Bechtel turned her gifts of ministry to nursing in the early years, working as a public health nurse in Cambridge, Ont. This familiarity with the community led her to leadership roles in Preston Mennonite Church a few years later, as the congregation worked with the Langs Farm Village Association to assist mothers and families.

During this time, she also took victim-offender reconciliation training. A move to Toronto in 1983 opened the possibility of

studying at the Toronto School of Theology, where she finished her master of divinity degree at Emmanuel College (United Church of Canada).

While she thought she was headed into chaplaincy work, she was asked by leadership at Warden Woods Mennonite Church to consider becoming its pastor. "People had to persuade me to go," she remembers.

The move 12 years later happened in a similar manner when the MC Eastern Canada search committee encouraged her to apply for the position of minister of pastoral services, later renamed conference minister.

A key part of Bechtel's style over the years has been depending on supports. She credits her husband Dave Bechtel, but has also sought the help of spiritual directors, a variety of coaches, and the circles of conference ministers in Canada and the U.S. At a seminar on boundary care two years ago, one she was attending as a participant, not as a leader, she remarked that no matter how many such seminars she has attended, there is always something to learn or a detail that needs attention.

Reflecting on the changes over the past 12 years, and looking ahead, Bechtel is reminded of Paul Martin, a recently deceased MC Eastern Canada pastor, who spoke of "climbing down the ladder" in the last years of his life: leaving active ministry, moving from his house into an apartment and eventually into a nursing home room, losing abilities along the way while losing visibility in the community at the same time.

Bechtel sees pastors and churches losing their formerly privileged places in communities and believes that this loss is not



Muriel Bechtel, retiring this summer after 12 years as Mennonite Church Eastern Canada conference minister, is pictured in her office, familiar to many pastors through the years.

finished. Churches and church leaders will become more marginalized yet, she believes. In this time, pastors and congregations need to "go deeper" into spirituality, getting closer to the vine, referring to John 15.

She also sees struggles ahead for the church, as traditional/ethnic Mennonites interact with new Mennonites. Some of these struggles will be around the person of Jesus and his continuing importance for Christians, the meaning of Jesus for salvation, and how to continue to work and worship together in the church when different answers to these questions are presented.

Other challenges for leaders are the alien culture in which they live, the culture of busyness, many ethical questions around the beginning and end of life and sexuality, parishioners' expectations, and wondering whether missional thinking and practice could just make pastors even more busy, rather than freeing them to depend upon God.

But her sense that God is the one at work, pruning the church and the individual, and leading the people of God forward, gives her hope for the church's future.

In retirement, she and her husband plan to spend time with family, including grandchildren. Beyond that, she is open to the leading of the Holy Spirit—or "Lady Wisdom"—for guidance. She plans to follow the advice given her: "It will take you a year or two to see how your role shaped you and to find who you are without the role." ❧

ARTBEAT

BOOK REVIEW

God is not in the violence

Killing Enmity: Violence and the New Testament

By Tom R. Yoder Neufeld. Baker Academic, 2011, 152 pages

REVIEWED BY DICK BENNER

EDITOR/PUBLISHER



Is the New Testament inherently violent? What does Jesus' brutal death on the cross mean to persons holding a more passive view of non-resistance? How does one seriously read the text and make sense of Jesus' teaching of non-violence and his behaviour with the money-changers in the Temple, for instance?

These are the tough questions, Tom Yoder Neufeld, professor of religious studies (New Testament) at Conrad Grebel

University College, Waterloo, Ont., attempts to answer in his sixth book wrestling with similar theological issues regarding violence in the Bible.

University College, Waterloo, Ont., attempts to answer in his sixth book wrestling with similar theological issues regarding violence in the Bible.

If the reader is looking for clear-cut answers, this treatise does not supply them. Yoder Neufeld, ever the eminent scholar, gives a wide scope of biblical criticism on the subject, but makes no attempt to come up with unambiguous resolutions for this dilemma. Indeed, he is more taken with the surprises found in his investigation than with any conclusive evidence, putting the issue into the category of "mystery"—the discovery of contradictions.

In his care as a scholar, however, he does not come down on the side of justification of violence; rather he portrays divine actions acted out on the human stage that show the breaking of the chain of violence. "We have seen—not always unambiguously, to be sure," he writes, that Jesus' presence "leads to a subversion of

violence, not its legitimatization, let alone valorization." On the sometimes controversial issue of the death of Jesus as atonement for God's wrath with the human sinful condition, he comes down on the side of atonement for sin, not God's wrath. He draws heavily on the writings of ancient scholars Anselm and his contemporary, Peter Abelard and attempts to explain away the "scapegoat" myth as presented by French anthropolo-

gist René Girard. He differs with his fellow Mennonite theologian J. Denny Weaver, who proposes the "narrative *Christus Victor*" theory which, while still implicating God in violence, stresses the story of Jesus' life, ministry, death (as suffering the violence of humanity) and resurrection. Yoder Neufeld believes, instead, that there was a divine role of redemption in the death of Jesus.

"Jesus' whole life, teachings, healings, announcing and enacting of the reign of God, resurrection and *parousia* [second coming] are all part of the drama of 'at-one-ment' that began at the first sin and will culminate with the final mending of the cosmos." "Justice and mercy at this moment [Jesus death and resurrection] are indistinguishable."

The author also takes on the thorny issue of subordination by framing it in the Household Code culture of Paul's time—when slave ownership was common and

the social order put males as "heads of households"—as well as the troublesome passage of the apostle's call for deference and obedience to the "authorities" in Romans 13. In the husband-wife relationship, for instance, Yoder-Neufeld asserts that "in no way is Christ put forward in a dominating way. Rather, husbands and wives are invited to view their own relationship as a dramatic enactment of the drama of liberation."

Suggesting that Romans 13:1-7 is "proverbs-like wisdom about the place of authorities under God's sovereign ordering of the cosmos," he is not really definitive about what to do with this passage in a completely different time from the Roman occupation. "A call for subordination is dangerous business in a world of violence and oppression, he writes. "It forces the issue of the difference of patient suffering and acquiescence, between hopeful if vulnerable engagement with and collusion in violence."

The answer is both yes and no, he asserts, on the issue of whether Romans 13 condones or even supports violence on the part of the state. "It depends who is reading or misreading the text. Decisive in my view, is what readers bring to the text. Are they in positions of power, or of marginalization or even oppression? Do they read it as a timeless charter for government and the Church's call to subjection or obedience? . . . Or do they read it from within the call to radical nonconformity to this age and its ruling powers?"

This is the classic style of Tom Yoder Neufeld—careful, non-judgmental, inclusive—in the end, as he himself says, "it is the ingenuity of God's love, the compassion at the heart of grace and the persistent drive towards reconciliation and restoration." No, we can safely conclude: the New Testament is not violent, nor do its writers condone it. ❧

How does one seriously read the text and make sense of Jesus' teaching of non-violence

FILM REVIEW

A dark night falls

The Dark Knight Rises

Directed by Christopher Nolan. Starring Christian Bale and Anne Hathaway

REVIEWED BY VIC THIESSEN

She has the best of lines; she has the worst of lines. I am referring to the dialogue of Catwoman in this summer's mega-blockbuster film, *The Dark Knight Rises*, based very loosely on Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* (which concerns the French Revolution).

Early in the film, Catwoman tells billionaire Bruce Wayne (Batman): "There's a storm coming, Mr. Wayne. You and your friends better batten down the hatches, because when it hits, you're all gonna wonder how you ever thought you could live so large and leave so little for the rest of us." This is the best line of the film, encapsulating not only the film but also the world we live in today. It is one example among many of how *The Dark Knight Rises* rises above most of this year's popular films in terms of intelligence and relevance, making *The Avengers* look like a Saturday morning cartoon.

The Dark Knight Rises is the third in Christopher Nolan's Batman trilogy, which began with *Batman Begins* in 2005 and continued with *The Dark Knight* in 2008. In *The Dark Knight Rises*, Wayne has been lying low for eight years, disengaged from both his company and the world as he nurses his wounds, which include the loss of his life-long love (who was murdered by The Joker in *The Dark Knight*). Wayne's energy only begins to return after he is robbed by Catwoman and she warns him about the coming storm.

In the context of the film, the storm is represented by Bane, a masked villain who was once part of the League of Shadows (introduced in *Batman Begins*) and who intends to complete the League's goal of destroying Gotham City, though not before "liberating" the city from the rich and powerful and giving it back to its ordinary citizens. In Bane, Batman has met his



match and will require not only incredible determination but lots of help from his friends to save Gotham.

While not without flaws, *The Dark Knight Rises* boasts very high production values. Hans Zimmer's relentless percussive score combines with perfect editing, great cinematography and an intelligent screenplay to produce an overwhelming, dark and intense epic that never lets you relax throughout its 164 minutes. But what stands out most is the quality of the acting. Christian Bale as Batman is at his best, Michael Caine as Alfred just keeps getting better, Anne Hathaway as Catwoman is surprisingly effective, Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Gary Oldman are outstanding as Batman's police friends and Tom Hardy does as well as one can while wearing a mask.

Flaws include a few holes in the convoluted plot and the excessive action

and violence one expects of a superhero film. But the most frustrating element in the film is the ambiguity represented by Catwoman's best and worst lines (written by Jonathan and Christopher Nolan). The line quoted above, written prior to the Occupy Movement, suggests that the rich and powerful have abused their wealth and privilege and are about to face the revolution of the poor and oppressed masses. But the revolution comes with looting, chaos and kangaroo courts, seeming to imply that, unjust or not, the rich are at least better at governing than the poor.

Catwoman's worst line comes near the end of the film, when she informs Batman: "About that whole no guns thing . . . turns out I'm not as committed to it as you are." This line is designed to elicit laughter, making it even more disturbing. After three films in which Batman impressively shames the use of guns and lethal force as effective means to achieve justice, we suddenly have someone persuasively arguing that guns may still be the most effective weapon against evil. Mr. Nolan, why this moral ambiguity of inspiring light mixed with the darkness of despairing disillusionment?

Film critic Gareth Higgins writes: "The dominant ethical assertion in *The Dark Knight Rises* is that human beings learning to live with thoughtful, non-reactive, nonlethal, selfless compassion (often at great personal cost) is not only our only hope, but the only thing that works." I am not convinced, but this points to the fact that the film's ambiguity invites discussion (about the film, about revolution and about society's obsession with violence and guns).

Telling is the scandalous response to the horrific theater shooting in Colorado at the premiere of *The Dark Knight Rises*. Media analysis following the shooting did not focus on gun control or the national addictions to celebrity and violence which no doubt contributed to the shooting. No, it focused on the specific role of the Dark Knight films (thus missing the larger point) and on whether the shooting would negatively impact box office receipts for *The Dark Knight Rises*. A dark night indeed. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Staff hired for new Sunday school curriculum

MennoMedia and Brethren Press have hired Rose Stutzman and Rebecca Seiling to direct and develop the next generation of Sunday school curriculum for children and youth. This new, yet-to-be-named curriculum will succeed Gather 'Round: Hearing and Sharing God's Good News, which is scheduled to conclude after the summer of 2014. As project director, Stutzman will oversee the new curriculum through its creative design, implementation and duration. She has served as Gather 'Round editor since 2006 and will continue in that role part-time for the next year. Seiling, of Waterloo, Ont., has served as a Gather 'Round contract writer and editor; she will become project developer, a one-year position to develop the new curriculum. Seiling is the author of the recently released Mennonite Women Bible study, "Let Justice Roll Down," as well as *Plant a Seed of Peace* and *Don't Be Afraid* from Herald Press. Prior to her work with Gather 'Round, Stutzman and her husband Mervin served with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Kenya, where she was an elementary school teacher. She also worked at Mennonite Publishing House from 1995 to 2002 as an editor and director of Faith and Life Resources.



Seiling

—Michael Spory for MennoMedia

/// Briefly noted

Waterloo residents win Word Guild awards

MISSISSAUGA, Ont.

Storyteller Jack Dueck and Elmer John Thiessen, a research professor of education at Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, were awarded for their work at The Word Guild 2012 Christian Writing Awards last month in Mississauga

- Dueck won in the Scripts and Screenplay category for his DVD *Mysteries of Grace and Judgment*, described as "a journey of story, letters from Siberia, poetry and song . . . reflecting the experiences of the Mennonite sojourn in Russia." In his acceptance speech, Dueck noted that the Mennonites in Soviet Russia lost everything except their faith, saying the letters smuggled out of the Siberian Gulag deal poignantly with the faith struggle when all indeed seemed lost, while in Canada the immigrant Mennonites focused on living the gospel of Jesus in church and society.

- Thiessen's book *The Ethics of Evangelism: A Philosophical Defense of Proselytizing and Persuasion*, published by IVP Academic, won in two book categories (Apologetics/Evangelism and Culture) and earned an award of merit in the Academic category.

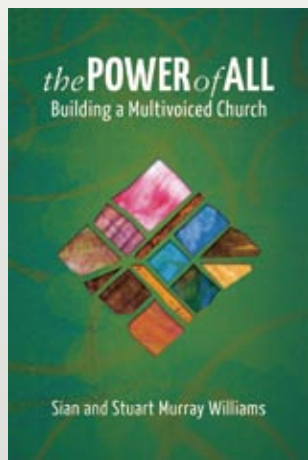
—BY ROSS W. MUIR

VBS material widely used

St. Thomas Episcopal church in Richmond, Virginia has used Mennonite-produced Vacation Bible School materials for six years and the assistant rector, June Hardy Dorsey commented, "We don't even look at anything else." The Center for the Ministry of Teaching at Virginia Theological Seminary has also been recommending the MennoMedia VBS materials. This year's VBS theme, "Take Me to the Water," focuses on Bible stories involving water. For 2013 the theme is "Breathe It In" and features stories about the life-giving breath of God.

—MennoMedia

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Herald Press

Telling stories of sexual violence

A US-based blog aims to open the discussion about sexual abuse experienced by members of the Mennonite Church

By Emily Loewen
YOUNG VOICES CO-EDITOR

In Canada 1,397 sexual assaults occur every day, according to the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women. In the United States nearly one in five women reported experiencing rape or attempted rape at some point in their lifetime says the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Mennonite Church cannot assume its members are excluded from those statistics, said Rachel Halder, and she thinks it's time we started talking about it.

In June, 24-year-old Halder launched *Our Stories Untold*, a website focused on sexual violence in the Mennonite Church. At present the blog features general articles about sexual violence, but Halder hopes it will become a space where women share their personal stories of abuse.

Because sex remains a taboo topic in many churches, victims of sexual assault, and the congregations that should support them, often keep quiet. A problem for a denomination focused on justice, said Halder. "I definitely think because of our Mennonite stance on peace and pacifism this should be a really important topic for them to start tackling," Halder said by Skype from Parnell, Iowa.

On its first day the blog received 700 unique views, far more than Halder expected, and the overall response was positive. She did, however, get some comments pointing her to existing Mennonite Church USA guidelines and suggesting that their denomination doesn't ignore the problem. But Halder wants a bigger, more open discussion.

"I'm not saying there aren't like existing

literature about it," she said, "I'm saying it's just not talked about and just because we have a statement about what would we do in this circumstance it doesn't mean it actually happens."

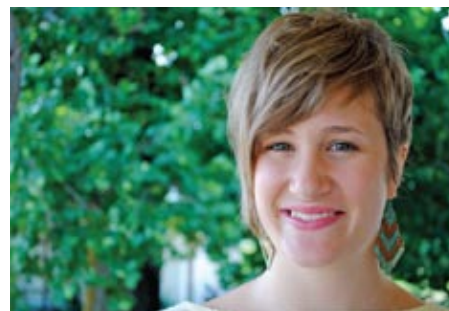
Yet convincing women to share personal stories online presents a major hurdle in using the website to promote important discussions. Though she has received a number of emails with personal stories she has just one willing to share online, and she wishes to remain anonymous.

While Halder understands the wishes of women who want to keep their stories private, she wishes more would share openly. "It's also kind of frustrating because it's like well you're still buying into this concept that silence is better than speaking it out loud," Halder said.

For Halder learning to speak about abuse is personal. She was assaulted around the age of three by someone staying at her aunt's house. While she doesn't remember all of the details, the process of working through it spurred her to start the blog. "Through the therapy to process I guess I realized, wow there's probably a lot of people out there who have these stories," she said, "and there's not really anywhere for them to be."

To help launch the website, Halder collaborated with Hannah Heinzekehr who runs *The Femonite* blog. Halder and Heinzekehr has been in conversation about an unrelated blog post when Halder mentioned her desire to start *Our Stories Untold*. They worked together to generate a week's worth of posts on the topic to draw attention to Halder's project and to

PHOTO COURTESY OF RACHEL HALDER



*Rachel Halder started **Our Stories Untold** to explore the topic of sexual violence in the Mennonite Church.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF HANNAH HEINZEKEHR



Hannah Heinzekehr, 27, dedicated a week of posts on her blog to discussing sexual violence in the church

raise awareness about sexual assault.

While Heinzekehr, who attends Peace Mennonite Fellowship in Claremont California, sees the wider Mennonite church opening up about sexual abuse and developing statements on the issue, she believes many communities lack resources to deal with the aftermath. "You know we do a lot of good reconciliation and justice work," Heinzekehr said, "but I don't think we've really thought through what that looks like in these specific kind of very contentious intimate settings."

Both Heinzekehr and Halder suggest that spending more time discussing sex education and healthy sexuality could help the church get one step closer to open conversation on sexual violence.

"At least when I was growing up I sometimes got the vibe that sex is something dirty or it was something we should always feel guilty about," said Heinzekehr, "so then when there are these breaks in trust of a very intimate nature like sexual violence I don't think it feels appropriate to talk about them if you're a victim."

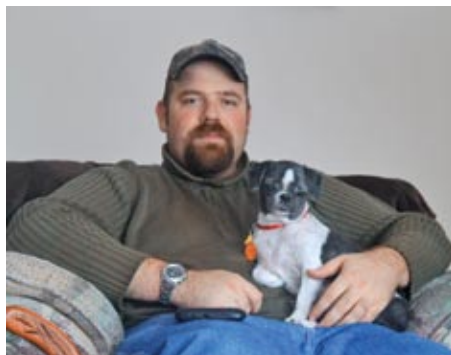
Halder also believes more training for church leaders would help bring the taboo subject into the open. "I think there should be like some kind of training for pastors or you know people in the church who are leaders," she said, "to be able to kind of understand what this is and understand victim blaming and understand how it is a sensitive topic but it should be open and talked about." ❧

Graduate students pursue faith-based education

BY RACHEL BERGEN
Young Voices Co-Editor



Melanie Kampen



Marco Funk

It's fairly common for young Canadian Mennonites to attend one of the Mennonite institutions for their undergraduate studies, but many young Mennonites are heading back to school to pursue the newer graduate programs at the Mennonite institutions.

Melanie Kampen, 23, for example, recently graduated from Canadian Mennonite University's Bachelor of Theology program and is heading to Conrad Grebel University College to pursue a Master of Theological Studies. The MTS program is a very flexible program at CGUC, Kampen says, which is why she was drawn to it. Kampen, who will major in Christian Ethics, will be able to take classes across disciplines.

"This enables me, for example, to take some classes in the new Masters of Peace and Conflict Studies program for my MTS degree. Because my interests are in Christian Ethics, specifically with questions of the church's work of peace and justice in the world, this area of the program was important to me," she said.

Kampen has been advised to become

educated at schools with a variety of different denominational backgrounds, but this isn't as important to her as becoming educated across theological disciplines, she says.

"I'm ultimately not as concerned with gaining a wide variety of denominational ethics on Christian ethics, for example, as I am with figuring out what it means to live well with those around me, who might have different perspectives, from a particularly Anabaptist understanding of God's people in God's world," she said.

Though Kampen is going for her Masters in order to prepare her for Doctoral work, her main reason for pursuing graduate studies is to engage with the world around her.

"My interest is at the margins of academic and church life, trying to bring the two into conversation so that they might build each other up and together work for peace and justice in the world," she said.

Marco Funk, 32, is not heading back to school, but completed a Master of Arts in Theological Studies program at CMU in

2006 after taking his undergraduate studies there. Funk decided to attend CMU because of the top-notch biblical scholars and theologians that he would be working under, he said. While many graduate students aren't really sure if they'll get what they expect from their studies, Funk got more than he hoped for.

"I got exactly what I came for, with the added gift of good friendships in the community of students, and also friendships with my professors," Funk said. He is currently the pastor at Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

Kimberly Penner, 25, who also attended CMU for her Bachelor of Biblical and Theological Studies, graduated from CGUC with a Master of Theological Studies and is heading to the Toronto School of Theology in the fall for a Doctor of Theology, also hoping to be a professor of theology one day. Mennonite institutions have greatly informed her worldview, she said.

"My understanding of scripture as the word of God to be interpreted by the Holy

Spirit in its historical and cultural context, which I learned from CMU is an important lens through which I view the world and make life choices."

"For example, environmental ethics, sexual ethics, the life of the church, I view all of these things through the lens of biblical interpretation. Mennonite institutions have taught me how to study scripture and thus have influenced my world view in this way," Penner said.

Penner hopes to continue to learn more in her field of study and to teach these things to the wider church.

Penner, like Kampen and Funk, believes that Mennonite institutions are important for the unique education they offer and the community they emphasize.

"Mennonite institutions are important because they provide a unique education that includes a community in which you feel the support of other believers, and an academic opportunity to study the Bible or any other subject from a Mennonite perspective," Penner said. ☛



Kimberly Penner, second from right

MCC Manitoba teaches global awareness

STORY AND PHOTOS BY AARON EPP

Winnipeg

SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES

From Vacation Bible School to Bible camp, many children participate in a variety of different activities during the summer. This year, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Manitoba offered a program in the hopes of fostering global awareness among young people. The Summer Global Awareness Program for School Age Children ran throughout July at MCC Manitoba's headquarters on Plaza Drive in Winnipeg. Aimed at students between Grade 1 and Grade 9, the program engaged participants on the topic of fair trade.

"The goal is to give the kids an opportunity to become more globally aware," says Arthur Mann, who organized the program

as part of his work as MCC Manitoba's material aid resource centre coordinator.

"We want kids to manage to look beyond themselves and their own world. Especially this year, we want to get them to think about some of the choices they're making, so when it comes to fair trade, how their choices affect other people. We also want them to think about how their contribution of time or whatever can make a difference globally, so we're always encouraging them to volunteer."

One of the four focal points that guides MCC Manitoba's work is, "To work at being a resource to the Mennonite constituency and beyond at issues that arise from our mission," and the Summer Global



Arthur Mann, MCC Manitoba's material aid resource centre coordinator, organized the Summer Global Awareness Program for School Age Children, which aimed to educate young people about fair trade.

Awareness Program falls under that.

Mann notes that the program used to be called “Jobs for Juniors,” but when he inherited the program three or four years ago, the mandate changed from providing young people with work experience at MCC to a focus on educating them about the work that MCC does.

Mann says each session was tailored to a specific age group. Depending on the age of the participants, the sessions included a talk from a representative from Ten Thousand Villages (TTV) about what fair trade is, and a scavenger hunt in the TTV store next to MCC Manitoba.

Participants also answered questions about their own lives in terms of their access to material goods such as food, water and clothing, which prepared them to watch a video about a child in India. During the video, participants made note of all the things they have in their lives—the internet, a fridge, vehicles, and so on—that the boy in the video does not necessarily have.

“We don’t get too preachy,” Mann says. “We just let [participants] make their own

observations.”

Megan Burnett participated in one of the sessions and says learning about how MCC’s work can impact someone’s life made a difference for her.

“Watching the video of [the Indian boy’s] life and seeing how having a sponsor can make such a difference really stuck out for me,” says Burnett, who is entering Grade 8 at École River Heights.

Sammy Crozier, who attended the same session as Burnett, says the Summer Global Awareness Program reminded her of how wealthy she is living in Canada.

“Not everybody has got everything like we do,” Crozier says. “We’re one of the richest countries in the world.” She adds that one thing she learned about fair trade is that it’s important that people are paid a fair wage for the goods they produce.

Burnett says people should question where the products they purchase are coming from, and how they are being produced.

“I think that can make a really big difference,” Burnett says. “Just starting out by asking a question.” ☞



Megan Burnett and Sammy Crozier, two Grade 8 students from École River Heights, took part in MCC Manitoba’s Summer Global Awareness Program for School Age Children.

Herald Press releases first audiobooks in over 20 years

By MELODIE DAVIS

MennoMedia
HARRISONBURG, VA.

T*obias of the Amish* and *Emma: A Widow Among the Amish* are now available on CD and audio download, read by the author, Ervin R. Stutzman, Mennonite Church USA executive director. The audiobooks have been released under the Herald Press book publishing imprint of MennoMedia. The last audiobook that was published by Herald Press was Alan Kreider's *Journey Toward Holiness* in 1989.

"Audiobooks are often popular with commuters, the visually impaired, joggers, multi-taskers, and anyone who enjoys listening more than reading," noted Sheri Hartzler, project manager for the audiobooks and director of electronic media at MennoMedia.

Stutzman, of Harrisonburg, began making audio recordings on his own time. "It was really a labor of love," said Stutzman, not knowing whether anyone would produce and distribute the recordings.

"Reading my family stories aloud brought back many memories in a more powerful way than when first I wrote them."

Stutzman is also featured on the July 21 episode of the *Shaping Families* radio program (www.ShapingFamilies.com) talking about writing these fictional books based on true life. A video showing parts of his interview is available online at www.MennoMedia.org/emma.

Emma is already MennoMedia's top seller in the Kindle ebook platform, and MennoMedia is working on getting ebooks available in a format other than Kindle. "We hope to create future audiobooks with titles that show a good chance of recouping the investment," said Russ Eanes, executive director of MennoMedia.

The audiobooks for *Emma* and *Tobias* each come on eight CDs. *Tobias* runs 9 hours and 28 minutes, while *Emma* runs 10 hours and 7 minutes. The readings are complete and unabridged. //

// Briefly noted

Doors Open at Erb Street

Waterloo, Ont.—Erb Street Mennonite Church, 131 Erb Street W., Waterloo, will participate in Doors Open Waterloo Region on Sept. 15. Doors Open will celebrate its tenth year of organizing a day when the public can visit historic and innovative sites. Visitors to the 110-year-old Erb Street Church can expect: self-guided tours of the building with volunteers to answer questions; various displays; music by Mike Erb at 11 a.m. and by Joanne Bender at 3 p.m. and a presentation by Jonathan Seiling at 1:30 p.m., "War resisters and non-resistance in the War of 1812: The dawn of Canada's pacifist legacy." Erb Street Mennonite Church invites visitors to come through its front or back door and learn how its history is intertwined with the history of the region and the rest of the Mennonite community.

—Erb Street Mennonite Church

// Calendar

British Columbia

Sept. 7-8: MCC Festival for world relief at Tradex in Abbotsford. For information contact admin@mccbc.com.

Sept. 13-Oct. 25: 7-week, Embracing Aging series at Menno Place, Abbotsford. Thursdays 7-9 p.m. For more information go to mennoplace.ca.

Sept. 29: Mennonite Fall Fair at Civic Centre in Prince George. For information call 604-850-6639.

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

Oct. 27: Columbia Bible College annual fundraising dinner. Visit www.columbiabc.edu/fundraisingdinner for more details.

columbiabc.edu/fundraisingdinner for more details.

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 twimmer@aol.com.

Manitoba

Aug. 28: Westgate golf tournament at Bridges Golf Club.

Sept. 17: Bethania annual spiritual care fundraising dinner, "Everyone can make a difference," at Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 6 p.m. Guest



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speaker: Arvid Loewen, Guinness world record cyclist. Music by Mint and Anita Durksen. For tickets, call 204-667-0795.

Sept. 21: Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery fundraiser at 7:30 p.m. with art from China and previews of coming exhibits.

Sept 21-22: Brandon MCC Relief Sale

at the Keystone Centre. Fri. barbecue supper and musical program featuring Hank and Anna Neufeld; Sat. a.m. auction and children's activities.

Sept. 23: A MennoNITE of Comedy fundraiser for Altona Youth for Christ and Mennonite Collegiate Institute, at MCI's Buhler Hall, Gretna, at 7 p.m.,

featuring Leland Klassen and Matt Falk.

Sept. 28-29: CMU fall festival.

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

Nov. 2: MCI soup and pie fundraiser and fall concert, at Buhler Hall, Gretna.

Dec. 1-2: Christmas @ CMU.

Ontario

Aug. 25: *Sacred Harp* All-Day Sing at Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. For more information,

Classifieds

Announcement

*Two paths diverged
in the autumn forest;
I was sorry I couldn't
take both.*

*Imagine what a good editor
could do.*

Kerry Fast Editing
kerryfast@gmail.com
kerryfastediting.weebly.com

e-mail gillian@inksetter.com.

Sept. 7-9: Building Community retreat at Hidden Acres Camp for individuals with disabilities. For information go to www.hiddenacres.ca or 519-625-8602. Register by Aug. 31.

Sept. 8: Wanner Mennonite Church 23rd annual corn roast, at the church, at 5:30 p.m. Bring a donation for the local food bank. For more information, call 519-658-4902 or visit www.wannerchurch.org.

Sept. 9: George Albrecht reunion at

75th Anniversary Bethel Mennonite Church

Winnipeg, MB
November 3 & 4, 2012.
"Come journey through the past
and present to the future."
For details visit
www.bethelmennonite.ca

the KW Khaki Club, Wellesley, potluck at 1 p.m. Contact bongingrich@gmail.com for information.

Sept. 15: Erb Street Mennonite Church open house 10 a.m.-5 p.m. as part of Doors Open Waterloo Region. Lecture by Jonathan Seiling at 1:30 p.m. "War resisters and non-resistance in the War of 1812." Visit www.regionofwaterloo.ca/doorsopen for information.

Sept. 21-23: East Zorra Mennonite Church 175 anniversary celebration. For more information, contact office@ezmennonite.ca or 519-462-2814.

Oct. 14: Ninth annual Gospel Vespers, at Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, from 3 to 4:30 p.m. For more information, call Will Stoltz at 519-696-2805.

Sept. 27: Church Council on Justice and Corrections 40th anniversary with address by Pierre Allard and reception to follow at the Church of the Ascension, Ottawa, 7 p.m. RSVP to 613-563-1688 ext. 105 or to splayford@ccjc.ca.

Oct. 14: Hidden Acres Camp benefit

concert at Steinmann Mennonite Church, 7 p.m. featuring Daniel Licht, Brandon Leis, Charlene Nafziger and Cherchez Vivre. For tickets contact 519-625-8602 or info@hiddenacres.ca.

Oct. 28: CD release concert for 'Sing for Joy'; the third recording by Lifted Voices; at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, at 7 p.m.

Nov. 17: Fairview Mennonite Home handicraft sale with Christmas crafts, decorations and more; 9 a.m.- 2 p.m. with lunch available.

Nov. 25: Acoustic Advent Carols, at Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, 3 to 4:30 p.m. Led by the PMS Singers and No Discernible Key. For more information, call Will Stoltz at 519-696-2805 or Laurence Martin at 519-208-4591.

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.

Employment Opportunities

PASTOR

LOWE FARM BERGTHALER MENNONITE CHURCH LOWE FARM, MANITOBA

We are a congregation in southern Manitoba with an average attendance of 85 in a small rural community of about 350 people.

We are strong supporters of Mennonite Church Manitoba and Mennonite Church Canada.

We are looking for a pastor and spiritual leader who is an effective preacher who supports Anabaptist beliefs.

Interested candidates may contact the Search Committee Chair Rick Giesbrecht at 204-746-8365 or rickandliz@xplornet.com

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
Phone# 403 335-4509



LEAD PASTOR ST. CATHARINES UNITED MENNONITE CHURCH St. Catharines, Ontario

St. Catharines United Mennonite Church invites application for the full-time position of Lead Pastor to serve with our associate pastor couple.

We are a multi-generational congregation in a residential neighbourhood/urban environment with a rich history and commitment to future growth.

This position places major focus on preaching scripturally based sermons and visionary leadership, bringing people to a deeper faith, calling forth the gifts of others, relational, administrative and pastoral care skills.

We are open to a variety of applicants, but are especially interested in someone with experience in pastoral leadership. Commitment to Anabaptist theology is important, and we would welcome candidates with a relevant degree in Christian Ministry.

Interested candidates may find more information about our church at www.scumc.ca or contact the search committee at scumcpsc@gmail.com for further information and the complete detailed job description.

The posting will remain open until the position is filled.

INTENTIONAL INTERIM PASTOR

Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal (MFM) is currently seeking an Intentional Interim Pastor to provide leadership during a time of transition, healing, and integration.

Located in the heart of a vibrant, multi-ethnic neighbourhood in Montreal, MFM is a diverse urban congregation with approximately 60 regular attenders.

The term is for one to two years at 75% FTE. Flexibility in how the work is arranged and scheduled is possible, depending on the needs of a successful candidate. We encourage all interested and qualified candidates to apply.

Training and/or experience as an intentional interim pastor is desirable.

Inquiries, resumes, and letters of interest may be directed to:

Henry Paetkau
Area Church Minister
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada
4489 King St. E.
Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2
Telephone: 519-650-3806 / 800-206-9356, ext. 107
Fax: 519-650-3947 / E-mail: hpaetkau@mcec.ca

Reviews will begin in mid-August 2012 and will continue until a suitable individual is found.



**Conrad Grebel
University College**

FACULTY POSITION IN CHORAL MUSIC

Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo invites applications for a full-time regular faculty position in Choral Music in the Department of Music, to begin July 1, 2013 at either the Assistant or Associate Professor level. Review of applications will begin November 1, 2012. Conrad Grebel University College is committed to employment equity and welcomes applications from all qualified persons. Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority. For further information about the position, qualifications and application procedures, see: grebel.ca/choralmusicfaculty

FIRST UNITED MENNONITE CHURCH (FUMC) located in Vancouver, BC seeks **TWO PASTORS** (1.5 FTE) to serve in a culturally diverse urban setting. We hold to the Anabaptist theology, are members of Mennonite Church BC and MC Canada, and need pastors to lead us as we strive to continue to develop our relationships with Christ, each other, and the community.

Candidates should have the following:

- Capacity to relate to various age groups and cultures.
- Church leadership experience, with a focus on preaching and worship, pastoral care, nurturing and supporting lay leadership gifts.
- Ability to work and mentor in a team environment. Actual responsibilities will take into account the gifts each person brings to address the needs of the congregation.
- Commitment to Anabaptist theology.
- Post secondary religious education (preferably an M. Div.)
- A completed Ministerial Leadership Information Form.

Interested candidates may contact the Search Committee at laura.penner@gmail.com.

Closing date for applications: 31 August 2012.

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. In addition to completing an application, resumes should be sent to: Henry Wiens, Chair, Board Transition Committee, Email: 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.

**Upcoming Advertising Dates**

Issue Date	Ads Due
September 17	September 4
October 1	September 18

Focus on Education



The Niverville and District growing project was able to give a record donation to Canadian Foodgrains Bank this year. On July 24, 15 local farmers used their combines to bring in the crop in about 2.5 hours while several trucks were kept busy delivering the grain to local buyers. The project harvested 78.2 bushels an acre from its 264 acres of winter wheat. Sold for \$7.25 a bushel to area farmers for animal feed, the crop produced about \$150,000 for the Foodgrains Bank—their biggest donation since starting in 2000. Organizers of the project made sure that spectators were given combine rides and after the harvest, people gathered in the field to enjoy a barbecue and celebrate.



Thirty-five tractors made the trek from the village of Reinland, south of Winkler, to Gretna, Man. on July 21 raising \$50,000 for Eden Health Care Services. The day began with breakfast served to more than 200 people in Reinland which raised \$1,500 for the local community centre and for the upgrading and maintenance of the cemetery. After a circuitous route, the Tractor Trekkers arrived at the Blumenort Mennonite Church in Rosetown for lunch then made their way as far south as the Old Post Road and arrived in Gretna by mid-afternoon. After supper at the Mennonite Collegiate Institute, the day ended with evening entertainment. Armin Ens, Eden Foundation chairman and founder of the Tractor Trek said that many smiles are created as tractor stories are shared and old friendships are renewed.

—Eden Foundation