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EDITORIAL

Forming content in 2013

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

As one year ends and another begins, the pundits package the highlights of the past and out of that attempt to project something of what lies ahead. It's as if time stands still for a brief moment while we catch our breath for reflection, a search for some meaning.

For people of faith, though, time is constant, each event in our lives a "teachable moment." Events, for us, just don't happen, but have a greater purpose, have within them messages of hope, or instruction, sometimes mystery. They have a spiritual dimension, which, when paid attention to, are more than just experiences with consequences. Even as we "peer though the glass darkly," as the Apostle Paul warned, we are also "surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses" as to give place to a "hope lying within."

Such a perception of time comes to those of us perhaps more clearly in the second half of life, as the Franciscan mystic Richard Rohr points out in his most recent book *Falling Upward*. Rohr uses the metaphor of a "container" to describe spirituality in the two halves of life. The first half is preoccupied with building that container that centre around the questions of "what makes me significant?" and "How can I support myself" and

"Who will go with me?"

The task of the second half of life, he submits, is "quite simply, to find the actual contents that the container is meant to hold and deliver." In the first half of life, success, security, and containment—"looking good" to ourselves and others—are almost the only questions.



In the second half of the journey, we are more contemplative, less judgmental, placing higher value on simplicity, a time when we reckon with our anxieties and doubts, engaging in something he calls a "bright sadness," and an increased awareness of our "shadow" selves.

In our western society, he says, a preoccupation at all levels of what Maslow has labelled a "hierarchy of needs" has made us an adolescent culture of persons who never traverse past the first journey. Most of the energy is devoted to security issues, enormously high military budgets, for instance, and the sustaining of a good economy. Similarly, religions need to make truth claims that are absolutely absolute—"and we want them for just that—because they are absolute!"

"This feels right and necessary at this early stage, despite any talk of Biblical 'faith' or trust, which can only be comprehended later. Human life is about more than building boundaries, protecting identities, creating tribes and teaching

impulse control." He quotes Jesus as saying "Why do you ask, what am I to eat? What am I to wear? Is not life not so much more than food? Is life not so much more than clothing?" (Luke 12:23). "What will it profit you if you gain the whole world and lose your very soul?" (Matt. 16:26).

As I review the narrative of Canadian Mennonites as told through the stories and commentary of the *Canadian Mennonite* over the past year, I sense a creative tension between security and order (who are we and how will we be sustained?) on the one hand (creating our container), and a very hopeful attempt to fill that container with the content of caring, making room for others in our faith world, focusing our attention, through the Being a Faithful Church process, on the importance of scripture and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our spiritual formation.

In this year ahead, I hope we will attempt to keep a good balance between these two dynamics—to not get bogged down with the statistics of survival, but to focus more on the quality of our congregational life rather than numbers and finances, to pay more attention to discernment and process, to give our sisters and brothers encouragement rather than our opinions and to make sure that persons at all stages of the journey are cared for.

"In the second half of life, we do not have strong and final opinions about everything, every event, or most people, as much as we allow things and people to delight us, sadden us, and truly influence us," concludes Rohr. "We no longer need to change or adjust to other people to be happy ourselves." ❧

ABOUT THE COVER:

Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) helps women get loans to develop small businesses, such as this woman in Ghana who sells salt at the market. See story page 17.

PHOTO: MEDA

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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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Online NOW!

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Local peacebuilder nominations wanted: **BRANDI J. THORPE**
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Ank de Vlas: A life devoted to Kenya's runners and students

HAROLD MILLER
Nairobi, Kenya

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HAROLD MILLER



Ank poses in front of a church with a Kenyan champion runner.

In recent decades, young people from the Kalenjin community in the highlands of Kenya have dominated all levels of competitive athletic running events around the world. They have been described as “the fastest people in the world.”

What factors have given these runners the leading edge over virtually everyone else? In this regard, theories abound and sometimes compete. Of all the ingredients in the theoretical mix, altitude is definitely an important one. Iten, a small village perched precariously at 8,000 feet above sea level atop the west wall of Africa’s famous Rift Valley, functions as a multi-branched training hub for at least 1,000 runners and would-be champions.

In his book, *Running With Kenyans*, Adharanand Finn, a British journalist who has lived, reported from and run in Iten, identified *ugali*, a Kalenjin staple consisting of boiled corn/maize mush, as another ingredient. Additionally, he cites the rigors of the Kalenjin people’s rural lifestyle as an endogenous stimulant to runners. From the earliest age, children run after and herd cattle, they run from their homes to school and back, easy totaling up to four or five miles a day. Finn also cites two other core elements that he considers to be critical to running success. Firstly, Iten’s runners commit themselves to full-time training and, secondly, they follow a singularly rigorous regime of running, resting, eating, sleeping, and more running.

Today Kenyan runners—champions and would-be champions—follow in the footsteps of a pace established by intrepid pioneers. Already in the early 1960s, Kalenjin runners were winning Olympic gold medals. Among them was Kipchoge (‘born-near-the grain-storage-shed’) Keino whose running prowess at world and regional levels was simply astonishing, as a quick



Ank shares tea-time with other staff members of Hekima Girls High School. She always made sure that tea-time was a shared event.

check with Wikipedia's list of prizes and recognition will attest. Later, in his mature years, he established and continues to manage a training school for would-be champion runners. He has developed the Kip Keino Foundation and is widely engaged today as a benevolent public persona within Kenya and far beyond.

Some years ago, I chanced onto the launch of a book authored by one of Kenya's much-decorated army generals, who hails from Kenya's Kalenjin community. The launch took place in one of Nairobi's glitzy new malls and during the informal chatter following the formal speeches, Kip Keino was standing nearby, nursing a soft drink. Conversation ensued, quickly zeroing in on Kenya's champion runners and then, unexpectedly, to a common acquaintance—Ank de Vlas.

"To that lady I owe much for the running career that I have enjoyed," said Keino. It turns out that she played a role in Keino's spectacular running career and in the careers of other select Kenyan runners.

Mennonite connections

Ank de Vlas was a Dutch national, born August 20, 1937 in Leeuwarden, The Netherlands. She was educated at Ryks Kweek School in Leeuwarden. In 1963 she joined Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) Teachers Abroad Program (TAP). During the 1960s and '70s, TAP flourished in East Africa, especially in Kenya where de Vlas was

seconded as a teacher to Kapsabet Girls High School, an institution sponsored by the Africa Inland Church. She taught in this secondary school for an initial three-year term. At the conclusion of that term she expressed a wish to continue for another three-year term. But before doing so, she appealed for opportunity to expand her formal training in the discipline of education.

With the support of Donald Jacobs, TAP administrator in Kenya, and through the facilitation of Robert Kreider, President of Bluffton College, she was accepted by that Mennonite-supported college in Bluffton, Ohio, to complete her bachelor's degree in education. She then returned to Kenya where she fulfilled her commitment to a second term with MCC's Teachers Abroad Program.

During her two terms of service with MCC in the 1960s, our paths crossed several times, particularly during the annual MCC retreats convened at the Brackenhurst International Baptist Centre, nestled in the spectacular highlands near Limuru. And then she faded into circles beyond the MCC community until one day in June 2001 her obituary was spotted in the *Daily Nation*, a Nairobi newspaper.

De Vlas' work in East Africa

We were stunned by the death announcement, but equally by the realization that we had been completely oblivious to her presence in East Africa

during the intervening decades. In a subsequent conversation with a long-standing Kenyan friend, Professor Kabiru Kinyanjui, we recounted what seemed to us an unusual sequence. Kinyanjui only added to the mystery of the story by responding: "I was at the funeral of Ank de Vlas. She is buried on my sister-in-law's farm!"

Later we found ourselves among British friends in the garden of Peter Paterson's lovely home in Karen, a Nairobi suburb, while celebrating the 60th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's reign. In conversation with Ray Meynink, a long time acquaintance, we were surprised to learn that he served as an authorized agent to test—on a prescribed routine basis—the Kenyan Olympic-class runners for any illicit drug use. In that capacity he had learned about the contribution of Ank de Vlas to Kenya's running genius.

He informed us, further, that for years Ank had collaborated for these purposes with a Catholic Brother by the name of Colm O'Connell of St. Patrick's High School in Iten. With that tip-off, there followed communication with Brother Colm. During the 2012 Olympic Games in London, O'Connell was cited repeatedly, both in the international and in the Kenya media, as the self-effacing, behind-the-scenes unofficial coach to numbers of Kenya's top runners, including David Rudisha, the irrepressible Olympic 800 meters world champion (2012).

In a gracious letter, O'Connell traced his first contact with Ank de Vlas to the year 1977, and wrote, "I cannot praise Ank too highly for her work as an administrator teacher, as an outstanding sports trainer and organizer. As a young coach I was honored to have worked alongside Ank. She was one of my mentors and an inspiration to me, a very dedicated and knowledgeable person. Her contribution to sports, especially [track] athletics was second to none. Together we organized the local secondary schools cross-country athletics for several years."

Among her athletic protégés, cited by O'Connell, were runners like Nancy Jebet Lagat, Olympic 1500 meters Champion in Beijing (2008), Rose Kosgei, World

Junior Cross-country Champion (1997), Hellen Mutai who took third position in the New York Marathon (2007), Prisca Jepleting who represented Kenya at the World Athletic Championships (2011) and Salina Kosgei who won the Boston Marathon (2009)—all products of Kapkenda High School where Ank had served as headmistress.

O'Connell concluded: "Ank's contribution to Kenyan education and sports should not be either under-estimated or go un-noticed. To me she played a huge role in promoting both and I am sure that she has many products of her schools who hold high positions in various

organizations in the country. She has left behind a huge legacy and I am sure many of her former students fondly remember her."

Her legacy

According to a eulogy read at her funeral, Ank de Vlas held a succession of positions at the Kapsabet Girls High School (1963-1966), at Kipsigis Girls High School (1972-1977), at Moi Girls High School (1977-1983), at Kapkenda Girls High School (1983-1998) and latterly, at Hekima Girls High School. In addition to her excellent record as a teacher and headmistress, she promoted

extracurricular activities including music. She served as a Christian Union patron, as treasurer of the Kenya Secondary Schools Sport Association, and as chair-lady of the Kenya Heads of Secondary School Association in Keiyo District. By means of seminars and workshops she served as a Ministry of Education trainer of head-teachers in accounts and in leadership skills.

Details of Ank's final assignment at *Hekima* (wisdom) Girls High School became accessible through our friend Professor Kinyanjui. He shared the name and telephone number of his sister-in-law, Mrs. Irene Kimenyi. I met her on the

New president believes value in Bible-based education

BY FRANK STIRK
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Bryan Born, the new president of Columbia Bible College sees his goal as equipping and encouraging the students to become "fully devoted followers of Jesus," and that means more than classroom instruction.

"If we look at how Jesus trained his disciples, He just spent a lot of time with them," says Born. "I think we tend to compartmentalize our Christian lives, and forget about the need to be with Jesus at all times."

A former pastor and missionary to southern Africa, Born previously served as the college's director of intercultural studies and took over as president on Dec. 22 from Ron Penner, who is retiring after 15 years with Columbia.

Born begins his tenure convinced that more needs to be done in making the case for the "relevance and value" of a Bible-based college education, especially to parents who might be uncertain of the best option for their children's future.

"They are asking, 'Do I want my child at 35 or 40 years old to be a devoted follower of Jesus Christ, or do I want them to be successful financially?'" he says. "A lot of us would like to see both. And at least a year of Bible college is, I think, a hugely important investment towards the rest of one's life. Unfortunately, not necessarily everybody thinks the same way at this particular point in time."

This fall, Columbia enrolled 416 students, down from



Born

an average enrolment of about 450.

Underscoring Born's concerns is the new Evangelical Fellowship of Canada study, "Hemorrhaging Faith" which found that only one in three Canadian young adults who went to church weekly as a child still goes to church. And of those who have stopped going, half say they have lost their faith.

"That really should be a wake-up call for not just churches, but also families," says Born.

One way that Born hopes to meet the challenge of reduced enrolment is by creating closer ties with other institutions such as the University of the Fraser Valley so that students could transfer course credits between the two institutions.

Other steps that Born wants to take include developing online education and to connect students with people in local churches who are willing to mentor them.

Prior to joining Columbia Bible College in 2004, Born and his wife, Teresa, spent 12 years serving alongside churches in Botswana and Lesotho. He says in some ways, his missionary experience is helping him prepare for his new calling as its president.

"You have to depend on God as you go into those kinds of circumstances," says Born. "You'd better be willing to learn, and learn as much as you can as fast as you can, to be willing to ask for help. I've certainly had occasion to do that already."

premises of a delightful enclave behind a prominent entrance board proclaiming, Kitengela Park. With the support of her husband, Professor Mwangi Kimenyi, a long-standing research fellow at Brookings Institution in Washington D. C., she was in the process of establishing and managing this family-oriented recreational facility, located some miles south of Nairobi. Over a soft drink, and later a meal of rice, chicken and greens, she recounted how Ank de Vlas had come into her life.

In the late 1990s, Professor and Mrs. Kimenyi had decided to establish a quality girls high school on a portion of their farm located next to the village of Ndakaini, some miles west of Kenya's industrial town of Thika in central Kenya. Ank de Vlas was one of the respondents to an advertisement seeking a headmistress for Hekima Girls High School. She ranked easily as the most qualified of the applicants and was accepted for the position.

Why did Ank seek such a position at that time in her illustrious career? According to Mrs. Kimenyi, she was eager for an opportunity to build up a girls secondary school, from scratch. Ank undertook her assigned task with aplomb. During her three-year tenure at Hekima, the student body grew from virtually zero at the beginning to nearly two hundred. Ank oversaw every aspect of the school's operations with an astonishing fastidiousness. She kept a record of the number of nails used in the woodworking shop; she maintained the school's financial accounts; she sewed up the quilts used by the girls in the dormitory; she undertook the weekly shopping in near-by towns for the school's kitchen. And she engendered a most remarkable esprit de corps among the students as well as high levels of academic achievement.

One day in June 2001, Ank de Vlas did not leave her room early in the morning as was her usual practice. Concerned staff forced the door into her room and found Ank sprawled on the floor, moaning and unconscious. She was rushed to the Nairobi Hospital and soon diagnosed with a brain tumor. After what seemed like a successful operation and even the beginnings of a promising recovery, she



Ank de Vlas (centre back) poses with her family. Her sister and brother are on the right, her sister-in-law and niece on the left and the woman with the white sweater is her good friend who attended Ank's funeral in Kenya.

experienced a sudden relapse and died on June 27, 2001.

Thousands of people attended the funeral/burial service—students, teachers and headmistress from schools where Ank had worked in years past. Moses Tunui, a champion runner, represented and spoke words of recognition and thanks on behalf of a corps of fellow champion runners. The former, now-retired, President of Kenya, Daniel Toritich Arap Moi, sent his condolences. Many parents of students and representatives from the immediate community were in attendance.

Ank de Vlas' send-off was in every

way extraordinary. She is buried on the Hekima Girls High School compound, an arrangement proposed by the school board and assented to by Ank's relatives in the Netherlands. Ank de Vlas is remembered as one who gave a lifetime of dedicated service in support of Kenyan students and Kenyan runners. She is remembered and mourned by Irene Kimenyi as a treasured personal friend. ❧

Harold Miller has spent most of his career working with Mennonite Central Committee in Africa, including Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Sudan.

/// For discussion

1. Who were the special teachers in your life? What were the qualities that made them special? Did they help you see and understand more about yourself, or more about the world around you? Do the best teachers work on a one-to-one mentoring role?
2. How do we learn perseverance? Are dedication and endurance something we can be taught later in life, or something we learn very early? How can we encourage each other to cultivate these values? Are there situations where perseverance is a negative quality?
3. How important is education to the well-being of the church? What does the decline of Bible schools and the rise of church-connected universities say about the health of our churches?
4. What is the role of church schools at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary level? Can we have healthy churches without them? How big a role does affordability play in whether or not families send their children to church schools?

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.

✉ Mennonites and climate

RE: THE LETTER by Steve Heinrichs on climate change, (Oct. 29, 2012, page 8).

As a practicing Mennonite and an environment scientist, my response is two-fold: gratitude for recognition of a real problem to which Mennonites are contributing, and a comment on apocalyptic predictions.

Heinrichs draws attention to a real problem. Most Mennonite responses to environmental concerns centre around improving recycling and energy saving. Addressing the problem at its source is rare, and Heinrichs identifies this as a concern.

Heinrichs provides some statistics on CO₂, the main greenhouse gas released by human activities. Here are some additional statistics from the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and other scientific sources. CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere has increased from 316 parts per million (ppm) in 1959 to about 380 ppm now. Out of 133 years of measured climate data, the coolest year was 1909 (0.52 degrees below average), and the warmest year was 2010 (0.75 degrees above average).

Palaeoscientist Donald Prothero also provides some interesting statistics. During ancient times the concentration of CO₂ was more than 10 times what it is now, up to 5000 ppm. The earth was warm enough for tropical vegetation to grow in Arctic areas during this "dinosaur greenhouse." Later, CO₂ levels dropped to about 1000 ppm, but the earth remained warm. Yet later, CO₂ concentration dropped to near the current level, and mean northern land temperatures plummeted up to 15 degrees. About 6000 years ago, the

North American average temperature was 2-5 degrees higher than it is today, and major ecosystems moved 300 km northward, a shift similar to worst case scenarios of global warming.

What do these statistics mean? Clearly, the earth's climate has varied greatly over time, and CO₂ is only one influence on climate. Life existed just fine with CO₂ levels in excess of 1000 ppm, but it was different than it is now. We should not conclude from this that we don't need to do anything. Just because life itself may survive, life as we know it may not be possible due to higher sea levels, ecosystem shifts, and many unforeseen problems.

So, is anyone doing anything? Many people are increasingly aware of the need to curb energy consumption. Even industries, including the much maligned Dupont corporation, have reduced greenhouse gas emissions. The most important technological challenge of the 21st century will be developing energy sources that do not emit greenhouse gases. Addressing energy use is more important than merely restricting production of fossil fuels.

An environmental parallel is the fact that spotted cats did not begin their current population recovery until the market for their furs was reduced by consumers.

HENRY EPP, CALGARY

✉ CRA is one of the 'powers'

IT IS DISHEARTENING anytime you get a letter from Canada Revenue, as you know you are being scrutinized. I could not believe it when my son and his wife received a letter saying their charitable donations could not be used as tax credits unless they could prove the funds had been in their possession in the first place.

I can understand Revenue Canada asking for receipts from the charity to which they donated, but I could not believe they would have to go back five years and locate records showing where the funds came from. Luckily, most of their donations were done via debit and not cash, so after a lot of running around they were able to provide the requested information.

Abbotsford has been named the city with the highest financial charitable giving in all of Canada. I suspected that those of us living in Abbotsford who have charitable donations carried forward from previous years would probably be contacted, so I was not surprised when not only my siblings, but also my niece and nephew, my parents, as well as myself, have been requested to send in charitable receipts. Thankfully, I was not asked to provide proof of where my donations came from as I sometimes give cash and don't keep all credit card statements from years ago.

I suspect this has something to do with fighting “principalities and powers,” so don’t be disheartened. If we are true to ourselves and our Maker we should have nothing to fear.

NAME WITHHELD, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

✉ Is God vengeful?

I APPRECIATED THE thoughtful Oct. 29 piece reviewing the *Hellbound?* documentary. I was always stumped by the “Mine is a vengeful God!” attitude. I stand by the early teachings of Grandma Toews in the raspberry rows on Barkman Ave. that revenge is like

drinking poison and expecting your enemy to get sick. So why would God be vengeful, especially since His jurisdiction is eternity?

On those rare occasions when I reveal my hellish misgivings, I frequently get sarcasm—“Well, that oughta be handy for you!”—to kindly redirection: “It’s in the Bible. (Duh!)” Then comes the patient explanation that the act of not believing in that place will, in fact, condemn me to that very place. Talk about your Penrose steps!

Anyway, glad to know I’m not the only confused one. Being in Grandma’s side on an issue was always the best position, so I take some strength from that.

MITCH TOEWS, CHILLIWACK, BC

FROM OUR LEADERS

Let’s NOT just have a quick prayer!

DAVE BERGEN

“**T**he fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom...” (Proverbs 9:10)

Picture this: the meeting is about to start when the leader—perhaps you—in a hurry to get to the agenda, suddenly remembers an opening prayer might be warranted and blurts out something like, “let’s just have a quick prayer.”

Sound familiar?

After rushing through a few generic platitudes about the greatness of God and the need for guidance, the meeting begins without so much as a pause to actually acknowledge and invite the living presence of the Spirit of God.

This is not prayer. It is a travesty. True prayer demands attention. It is the practice of being in the presence of God. And the God into whose presence we are invited, the One who calls us to be partners in the weighty enterprise of God’s activity in the world, is One who merits a great deal more time and attention.

Annie Dillard writes: “Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power

we so blithely invoke? Or, as I suspect, does no one believe a word of it? The churches are children playing on the floor with their chemistry sets, mixing up a batch of TNT to kill a Sunday morning. It is madness to wear ladies’ straw hats



True prayer demands attention. It is the practice of being in the presence of God.

and velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews. For the sleeping god may wake someday and take offence, or the waking god may draw us out to where we can never return.”

Dillard reminds us that drawing near to God, whether in worship or prayer, is not safe or predictable. It is not something we dare undertake lightly. When we pray, we engage God eternal.

This is the God whose name we carelessly utter in irreverent frustration when we’re stuck in traffic; the God against whom we rail when the pain of loss punches us in

the gut. And this is the God to whom we address our praise and worship and prayer.

We ask God for forgiveness, fully expecting that we are heard, completely confident we will be healed from the wounds of our sin. We invoke God’s name when we offer each other peace. We recall the mystery of God’s grace in our communion prayers. We invite God’s kingdom in the words Jesus taught us—thy kingdom come, thy will be done.

Our God is a God who changes us, who transforms the world. We should think twice about how we approach such a God. To pray to the living God requires crash helmets. For in prayer we become

fully mindful of the incredible difference and distance that exists between us and God and at the same time conscious of the mind-bending depths of love and commitment of the One who has bridged that gap and draws near to us with the fierce devotion and protective love of a parent. Prayer is a powerful expression of faith and hope.

So please, let’s NOT “just have a quick prayer.” But let us truly pray, with clear intention and rapt attention.

Dave Bergen is Mennonite Church Canada’s executive minister of Christian Formation.

✉ We choose our destiny

I WOULD LIKE to respond to Vic Thiessen's enthusiastic review about Kevin Miller's film *Hellbound* (Oct. 19, page 31). It seems to me that God does not torment us, but Satan does. The prodigal son received from his father only good things while in his presence, then chose to leave his presence. God did not throw him into the pig pen, but Satan did. We also choose who we will follow and in so doing choose our destiny.

Many recent articles in the *Canadian Mennonite* seem to originate out of Gnosticism. Some writers

promote their opinions by attaching them to past Mennonite values—like Mennonite furniture. Hopefully the next film will be a success on its own merits and will not require the Mennonite attachment.
ROSS ERB, SHAKESPEARE, ONT.

✉ Editor must seek truth and balance

I THOUGHT THE story about the “reminder” from Canada Revenue Agency would long ago have been clarified and put to rest. For whatever reason the

FAMILY TIES

New eyes

MELISSA MILLER

When my friend told me she was knitting a scarf for her husband, I foolishly exclaimed, “But you don’t knit!” Foolish, I say, because she should know if she knits or doesn’t. She corrected me, and let me know she’d actually been a knitter for decades. Similarly another long-time friend confessed she bites her nails, something I would never have imagined, given her calm and serene manner. A third friend shared that she has many piles of stuff in her house and on her desk, making it difficult to keep track of where everything is. When I told her the same was true for me, she replied, “Really, Melissa? You have piles of stuff? I’d never have thought it.”

All of these conversations got me thinking about what we don’t know about the people who are closest to us—the friends we’ve known for decades, the family members we’ve watched grow from infancy, the siblings with whom we shared our earliest years, our spouses. How can it be that these people—our close friends and family members—can still surprise us with who they are and who they aren’t? Are these qualities hidden in the mysteries of their beings, or are we just not looking/listening closely?

Such meditations fit in well with New Year’s. At least for me, I come to the new year with a hope that I will learn and grow and improve in the twelve long months stretching before me—a blank stretch of empty days and nights which will end with me being “a better person”—kinder, more tolerant, wiser, more aware. Seeing my loved ones more clearly and fully fits into such a goal.

Seeing clearly is the theme of John 9, where Jesus heals a man born blind. The miraculous gift of new sight isn’t the only set of eyes that are under discussion though. The passage begins with the disciples wondering about suffering—who or what causes it to happen? After Jesus answers their question, he then heals the

end of the passage, Jesus proclaims, “I came into the world to bring everything into the clear light of day, making all distinctions clear, so that those who have never seen will see, and those who have made a great pretense of seeing will be exposed as blind.” (v 39 *The Message*)

Reading this passage, I imagine Jesus would resonate with the conflict resolution instruction to “move from judgment to curiosity.” In the healing story in John 9, Jesus encourages his disciples to be curious about how God’s work is revealed. He gradually invites the formerly blind man to see him more clearly. He challenges the religious leaders to take the blinders from their eyes. The judgments of Jesus are aimed at revealing God’s goodness.

We too may have blinders—judgment or other kinds of blinders—that prevent us from seeing other people clearly. Maybe we could lay aside those blinders, and with curiosity, look and listen with openness and attentiveness to the people



How can it be that these people—our close friends and family members—can still surprise us with who they are and who they aren’t?

blind man, and sets off a community dispute about boundaries of who is included and who is excluded; judgment; openness and closed-ness to God’s grace through Jesus; and different kinds of blindness. Throughout the story, people, including the blind man, are invited to see others more clearly, more truthfully. Near the

around us. Such curiosity might lead us to seeing them more clearly. And we might learn something new!

Melissa Miller (familyties@mts.net) lives in Winnipeg. She is wrapped in the family ties of daughter, sister, wife, mother, friend and pastor.

editor and many readers chose to interpret it as something that threatens our constitutional right to freedom of speech and by extension, also threatens our core religious beliefs.

The editorial of Nov. 26, 2012, "Practice the peace we proclaim," should have been the one that appeared when the story first came to light. This editorial explains the course of events, cautions against using extreme language or making assumptions—and on the whole sounds sensibly conciliatory.

The editor is in a privileged, influential position. He can express his opinion, he can inform, he can persuade and publish the articles he deems right. He can, in fact, shape the readers views and beliefs over time. But with this privilege comes a responsibility to seek truth and balance. I am not surprised that these events came about because on a number of occasions I too thought the editorials went beyond what

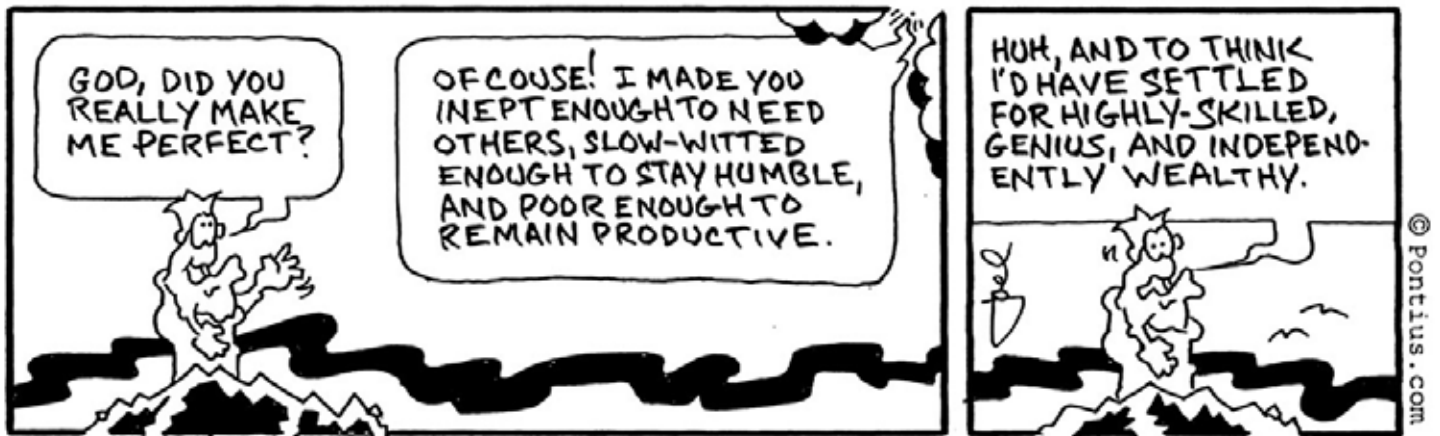
could be considered acceptable. I wonder at times if our "spokespeople" are a bit out of touch with the grassroots at home on the farm. It is possible that a fair number of Mennonites are—at least in part—in agreement with many of the policies of the current government.

Social activism has its place, but I wonder if we would not be more influential if we listened to what Menno Simons suggested many years ago: "True evangelical faith cannot lie dormant, for it clothes the naked, it feeds the hungry, it comforts the sorrowful, it shelters the destitute, it serves those that harm it, it binds up that which is wounded, it overcomes evil with good, it has become all things to all people." This too is a kind of social activism but it is a gentler, kinder form and not at all confrontational. Actions speak louder than words.

ERNIE NEUFELD, LEAMINGTON ONT.



Pontius' Puddle



Vietnam Mennonite Church leaders meet

BY LUKE MARTIN
Vietnamese Ministries
HO CHI MINH CITY

Four years after completing official registration with the government, church leaders of the Vietnam Mennonite Church met Nov. 21-22 to review their work and to project their ministries for the next four years. Around 300 persons attended this invitation-only conference for pastors, worship groups, representatives of government agencies, and international visitors.

After some inspirational worship, Pastor Nguyen Quang Trung, the church's president,

declared the conference formally open. A government representative noted that legal status was granted to forty religious groups, including 10 Protestant or Evangelical groups. Calling Vietnam Mennonite Church "a peace church," he said it has influence beyond its numbers.

Pastor Trung gave thanks to God that the government has created conditions for the church to develop these past four years. He cited the five-year pastoral training program involving 20 students, with a teaching staff of four local and six international teachers. He also noted the ordination of 29 pastors in March 2010, and the beginning of a second term of a three-year theological training program for 35 lay leaders.

Trung reported on social programs of the church: assisting poor children to go

to school, arranging for medical assistance, and emergency assistance in times of natural disasters.

There are 8,000 persons affiliated with the Vietnam Mennonite Church, of whom more than 6,000 are baptized. The church of 90 congregations became the 99th member of Mennonite World Conference at the Paraguay gathering July 2009. Most of the congregations meet in homes as only five have been able to buy property to build meeting places.

Nguyen Quang Trung was re-elected president of the church for the next quadrennium, and Huynh Minh Dang was chosen general secretary.

There is a second Mennonite group in Vietnam with a similar number of church members that is not yet registered nationally. ❧

LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Scripture in the postmodern shift – Part 6

TROY WATSON



Are there legitimate concerns and potential pitfalls with Neo-orthodox and postmodern positions? Definitely, as there are with all approaches to Scripture in my opinion. But the concern many Christians name as most problematic with theological

perspectives like Neo-orthodoxy is they appear to diminish Scripture's divine authority. It raises some serious questions, not the least being, "On what authority do we base our truth claims if the words of our Bible are not God's very words?"

The oldest document of the early church, Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, declares, "*our gospel came to you not only with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep*

The radical reformers believed... a Spirit-filled illiterate peasant was a better interpreter of Scripture than an educated theologian without the Holy Spirit.

conviction" (1 Thess. 1:5).

I would argue, as I have been since the beginning of this series, that for the early church, words alone were not the primary authority. For Christians, God's Spirit is our ultimate authority. Therefore the important question for me is this: "How do we receive and understand the communication of God's Spirit and what is the Bible's role in this?"

My understanding on this matter is based in part on a version of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral in conjunction with the Anabaptist community hermeneutic. The Wesleyan Quadrilateral is an approach to theological reflection based on John Wesley's teachings listing four primary pillars for understanding Christian truth: Scripture, Reason, Tradition, and

Experience. I believe it is only as we hold these four avenues of communication in amalgamation that we can best sense and discern God's truth. More importantly, we must also be yielded to the Holy Spirit and the community hermeneutic of the Anabaptist tradition.

The Anabaptist community hermeneutic developed from their rejection of "Sola Scriptura" in preference of "Scripture and Spirit together." The radical reformers believed the best interpreters of Scripture were those filled with the Holy Spirit. This meant a Spirit-filled illiterate peasant was a better interpreter of Scripture than an educated theologian without the Holy Spirit. This was an extremely radical idea in the 16th century and was soon revised as some began saying and doing very questionable things, claiming to be led by God's Spirit. The challenge was how to discern authentic divine revelation.

The solution, in part, was what we now call the community hermeneutic, a process of involving the community in interpretation over and above the individual, providing a safeguard on Scriptural interpretation and on discernment of what is genuine divine revelation.

I realize this cursory overview of so many complex ideas is utterly insufficient but it will have to suffice for now. To summarize, I believe a meaningful approach to Scripture in the postmodern turn starts with recognizing all spiritual truth comes from God's Spirit and Christians access, discern and interpret spiritual truth through 1) engaging Scripture in coalition with Reason, Tradition and Experience, 2) in openness and "yieldedness" to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and 3) in the context of the community hermeneutic. ☞
To be continued...

Troy Watson is Pastor of Quest Community. This is part 6 of an ongoing series. troy@questcc.ca

There are numerous schemas that map out differing views of Scripture.

One of the most straightforward suggests everyone believes the Bible is either:

- fully divine, or
- fully human, or
- human in some parts, divine in others, or
- fully human *and* fully divine.

I believe this kind of categorical thinking is inadequate for our postmodern context. Neo-orthodoxy, for example, doesn't fit neatly into this comparative framework as it postulates Scripture *becomes* God's Word as we engage the Biblical text and as God's Spirit speaks to us through it. Neo-orthodoxy asserts God reveals God-self in events rather than words thus the Word of God is not a revelation in itself, but an instrument of divine disclosure that is personal but not propositional. According to this school of thought the Word of God is principally the manifestation of God in Christ and the Bible witnesses to this Word of God but the Bible itself is not the Word of God—it is the word about the Word. Clear as mud?

I have personally found Neo-orthodoxy helpful, yet some argue it is too subjective. Yet, ultimately all approaches to the Bible are subjective in that they are faith-based positions. Of course, most views of Scripture are reasonable if one shares the presuppositions they build upon (presuppositions are what one presumes beforehand and takes for granted as true). However, most of our presuppositions are assumptions that can't be verified. None of us can prove or disprove our viewpoint on Scripture for we all build our outlook of the Bible on the ground of faith and the soil of subjectivity.

The Bible is theological

A response to 'Is theology biblical?' by Will Braun (Dec. 17, page 14)

BY RAMON REMPEL

In our denomination we give less and less attention to the practice of theology. One wonders why. Perhaps it is because we falsely believe theology to be a strictly “academic” activity separate from church life (when in fact churches have been sorting out what it means to follow God from the beginning). Almost certainly the reason falls out of a false dichotomy between head and heart.

One could claim that we still take theology seriously, as it is primary in the training of our leaders and young people, but I can say from personal experience that teaching theology to young people gets harder by the year. Most want to feel religion, not think about it.

[T]heology is nothing more than the active discernment, made in critical dialogue with others, of God and God's will for his creation.

What is theology anyway? I will spare you the trite move of giving a dictionary definition. As one who has read the Bible and gone to church for most of my life, it seems to me that theology is nothing more than the active discernment, made in critical dialogue with others, of God and God's will for his creation. Yes there are those who focus on this their whole lives in an academic setting, but the preacher on any Sunday is engaged in this—as indeed every Christian should be. It is not the only part of worship but it is an inseparable part of worship.

When I was a teenager, I had little time for thinking about the church. I did what I wanted and I thought I had it all figured out. I told my mom this and she said (in English) that I needed theological schooling, namely CMBC. I loved just doing what felt right to me but I came to realize that my mom was right. There is more to life than doing what you feel and that hearing God involves thinking. It is not that the

head is more important than the heart, rather I needed to see how the Bible holds head and heart together.

Many Christians are moving away from the unity of head and heart, reflecting the history of Western thought over recent centuries. I hear theology in my church every Sunday but less than I used to and I can't recall the last time a preacher referred to a theologian in a sermon.

Some may claim that there are different ways of experiencing God of which using the mind is but one. Once more the ugly spectre of the false dichotomy between head and heart is revealed. If, for instance, your experience in Bible college was more about being right than being loving, that is

just as much a failure of the mind as anything else (and it was certainly not what I experienced at Bible college). Some music in church I find moving (much I do not) but I have never found that thinking about the words of a song makes it less moving. Much of the Bible is beautifully written and poetic, but I have never found that thinking about what scripture means lessens one's ability to appreciate its ubiquitous beauty.

Theology is tied closely to the Bible. We are people of the book and one thing the Bible calls us to do repeatedly is to think (debate, discern, dialogue) the faith. We can see examples of this from Moses (Num. 11) through Paul (1 Cor 14).

Thinking about the faith can be challenging. Most worthwhile things are hard. Worship that seeks to eliminate the role of the mind is but worship empty of relevance. This is not to say that all worship must be “academic,” but rather that the choices we make in how we worship are based in an ongoing active community

discernment on God's will for his people.

The worry I have is that a faith without reason is one step from a faith made irrelevant. And this is what I have seen over many years of teaching youth. They want meaning, they long for challenge, they seek ways to use their minds (despite what they sometimes say), and if they don't find meaning, challenge and a place to use their minds in the church, they will turn elsewhere.

Less reliance on theology does nothing to increase the accessibility of the Bible and faith to those with less intelligence or access to education. Whatever our challenges we are called to bring our strengths and our weaknesses to the church; no matter who we are, we all have gifts for the building up of the church. What less reliance on theology has done is drive the youth out of the church into ways of thought where the role of the mind is respected and greatly diminished their biblical literacy.

I have nothing but respect and admiration for those who dedicate their lives to theology. These men and women are performing a crucial task for the church doing full-time what every Christian should do at least part-time. I suggest we all pay careful attention to how our church leaders are trained, how our children are shaped and how we worship on Sunday. All of this needs to be carefully discerned in our churches with the full engagement of our minds since God is present when we prophecy to each other and when we weigh each other's prophecy.

Those who think that there is a dichotomy between head and heart need to re-discover the significance of thinking to the church. Despite what they think(!) they are only driving people away with their Colbertesque desire to “feel” religion from the gut. Do music, beauty and wonder have a place in worship? Of course. But so also does the mind. Let's have more study in church. Let's hold the head and the heart together. Let's witness to the truth of scripture that when we gather to discern, God can speak through anyone in the church. ☸

Ramon Rempel is a member at Charleswood Mennonite Church, and a teacher at Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute in Winnipeg.

VIEWPOINT

Asking the right questions

SEAN EAST

I married Mennonite, and I pastor and belong to a Mennonite church, but I'm not really a Mennonite. I didn't grow up Mennonite. My last name isn't Swiss, or German, or Russian. You don't know my parents, my grandparents, my cousins, my aunts, or my uncles. I am not so sure about the connection between baptism and membership.

My grandfather proudly served in the Air Force during World War II, and one of my favourite possessions is the cribbage board he made out of a broken plane propeller.

I wear a poppy on November 11. I vote Conservative (the party, not my approach to voting).

I like the Winnipeg Jets new logo.

I prefer to sing choruses with guitars and drums, harmony welcomed but optional.

I became Mennonite by circumstance; the young men in university who led me to Christ were Mennonite. So when church attendance became an important life consideration, I went where they were, having no clue what being a Mennonite entailed or what Mennonites believed.

Yet I write this, not in recognition of my "un-Mennoniteness," but because despite my differences I love the Mennonite church. It's where I found hope. It's where I found healing. It's where I found purpose. It's where I found community. It's where Jesus Christ found me, and I think it's where He can find others still too.

Because I love this church, I felt like I had to comment on an email from Mennonite Church Canada with the attention grabbing title line, "Membership dwindling? Perhaps this video can help."

I get a lot of emails, but this particular title caught my eye, so I wandered away from Psalm 27 long enough to open and read it. It rehearsed familiar concerns that I hear at many MCEC events about dwindling church attendance. Young

people are leaving home for university and not resettling into their home community. This trend does not surprise me—I grew up in Sarnia, and then settled in Waterloo Region where I attended university—so it's worth noting that this threatening trend for some churches presents opportunities for others.

The hope, according to this email, was that the video vignettes they contained could be placed on church websites so that "you can help change the popular perception that one needs to be born into a Mennonite congregation to be part of one," and so that "When someone new to your town or neighbourhood searches for nearby churches, these videos will provide an alternate story."

Let me say that I admire MC Canada

What if the question we should be asking isn't how we can help people to find and come to us, but how we as communities of faith can go and find them?

for admitting that, "Like congregational leaders, it can be difficult to know how to respond," but responding nonetheless. Trying something is better than crossing our fingers and hoping things will magically change. But when I read the email and considered the implications, I had to ask myself if we are asking ourselves the wrong question.

This method of "attracting" more people into our churches operates on the assumption that there are still people looking for churches that aren't part of one, and that they will find us, and they will come to us. It assumes that an unbeliever will visit the church website. But will they? And should they?

This kind of appeal works best for someone who knows Christ, but is unhappy with the local body they currently attend. It works best for a believer

who has moved into the community and needs to find somewhere to connect with a local family of faith. But in either of those cases, our attendance may well increase, but we'll have grown our congregation while the Kingdom of God remained the same size. We've changed seating plan for the banquet without adding any guests.

But what if few are really looking? What if most people who currently want to be part of a church already are? What if the question we should be asking isn't how we can help people to find and come to us, but how we as communities of faith can go and find them? Didn't the Great Commission imply that we should be going out in order to participate in the disciple making activity of the Trinity? Didn't Jesus tell the disciples after meeting the Samaritan woman at the well to "look out," because the fields were ripe for harvest?

Author Reggie McNeal in his book *The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church* observes that answering the wrong questions, even answering them well, doesn't get us any further ahead. I

think this insight is worth some contemplation. Maybe instead of looking for new answers, the new answers should be phrased in the form of new questions. Being missional is about more than having a missions program. It's about participating in the mission that God is already on—to reconcile all things to Himself. To do this, we might have to stop inviting people to become Mennonite and start asking Mennonites to become missionaries in their own communities. Instead of asking them to become one of us, maybe we need to become one of them for a while. The celebration over finding just one who was lost will be well worth the effort of the find. ❧

Sean East is pastor of West Hills Mennonite Fellowship, New Hamburg, Ont.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Colosimo—Dante Jacob (b. June 18, 2012), to Jason and Tara Colosimo, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Day—Emmerson George Bruce (b. July 30, 2012), to Ellie and J. R. Day, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Dick—Hannah Irene (b. June 6, 2012), to Jonathan and Sandra Dick, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Dyck—Jacob Ethan (b. Sept. 8, 2012), to Robert and Veronika Dyck, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Elgersma Ott—Reuben (b. Dec. 17, 2012), to Sandra Elgersma and David Ott, Ottawa Mennonite, Ont.

Horne—Griffin James (b. May 3, 2012), to Amanda Scherer-Horne and Spencer Horne, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Jadischke—Brett Andrew (b. June 20, 2012), to Bonnie and Mike Jadischke, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Neufeld—Addysen Reise (b. June 3, 2012), to Melissa and Tom Neufeld, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Peters—Jane Sawatsky (b. Nov. 19, 2012), to Cory and Lindsay Sawatsky Peters, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Regehr-Wiens—Sophia Presley (b. June 29, 2012), to David and Jaclyn Regehr-Wiens, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Ropp—Mason Lavern (b. Sept. 28, 2012), to Jess and Rod Ropp, Poole Mennonite, Ont.

Snyder—Beau (b. Nov. 5, 2012), to John Paul and Meghan Snyder, Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Baptisms

Tabitha Bear, Christopher Redekop—North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Dec. 2, 2012.

Jamey Barnewall, Michael Cornies, Jesse Driedger, Karlee Driedger, Elyse Epp, Tessa Klassen, Kaitlyn Koop—North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., May 20, 2012.

Marriages

Friesen/Wiebe—Betty Friesen and Henry Wiebe, First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., Dec. 17, 2012.

Kucher/Pankratz—Kim Kucher and Stephen Pankratz (Niagara United Mennonite, Ont.) in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., Nov. 8, 2012.

Rupp/Seitter—Lily Rupp (Ottawa Mennonite, Ont.) and Mark Seitter, in Archbold, Ohio, Dec. 1, 2012.

Deaths

Bartel—Harvey Elford, 92 (b. Feb. 14, 1920; d. Dec. 3, 2012), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Bell—Connie, 45 (b. April 24, 1967; d. Sept. 12, 2012), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Cornelson—Anne, 88 (d. Dec. 7, 2012), Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Defer—Peter, 83 (b. Oct. 27, 1929; d. Nov. 18, 2012), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Enns—Jake, 80 (b. Sept. 2, 1932; d. Nov. 30, 2012), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Enns—Nick, 84 (b. July 25, 1928; d. Nov. 25, 2012), Bergthaler Mennonite, Altona, Man.

Ens—Jacob, 91 (b. Feb. 5, 1921; d. Nov. 25, 2012), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Epp—Marg (nee Lampshire), 66 (b. June 26, 1946; d. Nov. 28, 2012), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

Falk—Justine (nee Reimer), 91 (b. April 16, 1921; d. Nov. 21, 2012), Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man.

Friesen—Dora Bartel (nee Wieler), 88 (b. Feb. 15, 1924; d. Dec. 11, 2012), First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Helmuth—Wyatt, 7 (b. May 30, 2005; d. Dec. 12, 2012), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Knopf—Arthur, 83 (b. March 11, 1929; d. Oct. 11, 2012), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Kroeger—Elfriede (nee Hiersack), 88 (b. Aug. 7, 1924; d. Nov. 3, 2012), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Kroeker—Peter J., 79 (b. Feb. 2, 1933; d. Dec. 10, 2012), Bergthaler Mennonite, Altona, Man.

Loewen—Peter, 97 (b. May 5, 1915; d. Nov. 28, 2012), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Redekop—Erna (nee Bergen), 91 (b. Jan. 22, 1921; d. Nov. 28, 2012), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

Riemland—Tina (nee Pauls), 75 (b. Feb. 10, 1937; d. Nov. 21, 2012), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Ruby—John F. (Jack), 76 (b. Nov. 24, 1935; d. Nov. 21, 2012), East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Sawatsky—Dick, 90 (b. Aug. 16, 1922; d. Nov. 21, 2012), First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Sawatsky—Katharine (nee Bergen), 92 (b. Nov. 20, 1920; d. Nov. 22, 2012), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Schellenberg—Eva (nee Falk), 93 (b. June 23, 1919; d. Nov. 27, 2012), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Thiessen—Harvey, 59 (b. Sept. 15, 1953; d. Nov. 10, 2012), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Tiessen—Irene (nee Neufeld), 78 (b. Oct. 19, 1934; d. Nov. 3, 2012), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Witmer—Mary (nee Shantz), 91 (b. Aug. 25, 1921; d. Nov. 27, 2012), Preston Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones

announcements within four months of the event.

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

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

BEING A FAITHFUL CHURCH PROCESS

The paths and ditches of Biblical interpretation

At the July 2012 Mennonite Church Canada Assembly, delegates approved Being a Faithful Church 4 for study. These articles are to stimulate further thought and discussion. For more information, visit www.mennonitechurch.ca and follow the “Being a Faithful Church” links.

Path #12: Grace and justice for the vulnerable

BY LAURA LOEWEN

Being a Faith Church Task Force member

Jesus is portrayed as “consistently interpreting Scripture in reference to, and with regard for the needs/realities of ‘the least’—the most needy and vulnerable (the poor, the sick, the foreigner/outsider, women, social outcasts).” God’s intention through Scripture is to bring wholeness to creation, justice to the orphans and widows, sight and healing to the blind and the lame, reconciliation and salvation to the sinners.

There are many examples given in the gospel writings where Jesus follows a law of grace and justice rather than the legalities of the law as practiced by the Pharisees. For example, healing on the Sabbath was considered as breaking the law (Ex. 20), and yet, Jesus healed a man with a withered hand (Mark 3:1-6), as well as a crippled woman (Luke 13:10f) on the Sabbath. His response when he was criticized for his actions was that observing the Sabbath was not intended to keep us from doing good.

On another occasion a woman, who was caught in adultery, was brought to Jesus as way of entrapping him (John 8). According to the law this woman should have been put to death (Lev. 20:10). In fact, the Scribes and Pharisees quoted this law to Jesus in front of the crowd, but Jesus saw the hypocrisy in this action and challenged those who had not sinned to throw the first

stone. Jesus would also have noted that only the woman was brought before him. Where was her partner? To the woman, the person with the least power in that particular setting, Jesus’ challenge was to go and sin no more. Jesus did not condone her action, but neither did he choose to



condemn her. He chose the path of grace.

As we discern our responses in difficult relational situations, a good foundational scripture text is the Great Commandment as found in Matthew 22: 37-40 which calls us to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

/// Briefly noted

Youth assembly speaker passionate about youth ministry

When Iona Snair was a young teen, she was impressed by a television show about turning around the lives of hard-to-reach youth in New York. “I wanted to be someone who could do that,” she says. Snair, who will be keynote speaker for the Fat Calf Festival (Mennonite Church Canada’s 2013 Youth Assembly), is now doing just that. Working with her husband Rob Snair, she is Associate Director of Lifeteams School of Urban Youth Outreach, a program of Greater Vancouver Youth for Christ. Snair finds particular meaning in the parables because Jesus loved to tell stories. “So many things in scripture are told in story form and stories are some of the most profound things he left us with. Tolkien, who wrote *Lord of the Rings*, said somewhere that we are story telling animals. There is something in us that stories speak to that propositional truth doesn’t reach.” Snair grew up in Manitoba and has been involved with youth work since her late teens. She and her husband Rob have two sons; 2 sons, Eli who is in grade 10 and Sasha who is in grade 7. *The Fat Calf Festival* takes place at Camp Assiniboia, a Mennonite Church Manitoba Camps with Meaning ministry, from July 29 to Aug. 2. For more information see <http://fatcalf.mennonitechurch.ca/>.



COVER STORY

Saskatoon MEDA chapter hears about Ghana

BY KARIN FEHDERAU
Saskatchewan Correspondent
SASKATOON, SASK.

Although the Saskatoon chapter of MEDA is considered to be a small group, their dreams to help others are big. Each year, this group of business people raises money for one project with an eye to giving \$20,000 toward their chosen project. This past year, they agreed to help rice farmers in Ethiopia and at their spring gathering, over three quarters of that amount was raised.

“We want to bring hope to people living in poverty and disease,” said Ray Fast, president of the Saskatoon and area MEDA chapter.

At the Nov. 16 meeting, the focus was on the newest project to help women in Ghana. Kim Pityn, the Chief Operations Officer for MEDA, described the great need and the exciting potential of the new project. Describing the growing conditions in Ghana, Pityn painted a picture of sadness and desolation.

“In the north of Ghana, it is dry savannah,” she explained. Climate change has resulted in less rain, forcing the men to travel out of the area to find work, leaving the women behind without the needed resources to care for their children. In the space of 14 years, the number of people living in poverty in the area increased by 900,000.

“Eighty-eight percent of the population is living in poverty,” said Pityn.

Most farms are small. The women are expected to work on the farm, but this leaves them little time to tend their own gardens which are mainly used to feed their families. The women also face challenges in getting any extra produce to market.

“Our goal is to reach 20,000 women farmers,” said Pityn. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Association, women produce 70-80 percent of food in developing countries. Research suggests that soybeans will be an important crop

and MEDA wants to help the women take advantage of this trend.

In a separate but related project, there is a need to encourage local banks to make loans to newer clients. To aid in that, MEDA is raising money for a risk management fund.

“This fund will be used to share the risk banks take on when they develop new loan products and extend credit to populations

they have not previously served,” explained Rachel Hess, staff person.

Pityn shared stories about the results in Afghanistan, where women in a similar situation have received loans from MEDA. While MEDA needs to be careful in a Muslim culture to get the support of the men in the community, she explained how the women’s gardens are their target. On one visit, Pityn sat with a group of women and a translator to find out how things were going.

One older woman pulled a small purse from her garment. “This is *my* money, and when I use *my* money I don’t have to ask my husband for *his* money and that makes him very happy,” she said. In Afghanistan, these loans are reducing financial stress on families struggling to find dignity after poverty. ❧

“On being Wisdom’s child”

Yoder Neufeld addresses the ecstatic in Bible Study

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONTARIO

Tom Yoder Neufeld’s presentation at the 2012 Conrad Grebel University College’s annual Pastors’ Breakfast was “On being Wisdom’s child: Retrospective and Prospective Reflections on Bible, Church, and Academy.” He described it as summing up his nearly 30 years of teaching at CGUC in



Tom Yoder Neufeld

a half hour. He called it “another ‘pre-funeral’ event,” looking to his retirement as Professor of Religious Studies and Peace and Conflict Studies at the end of 2012.

Central to Neufeld’s presentation was his understanding of Jesus’ taking on the role of Wisdom. Like Wisdom in the Old Testament and inter-testamental materials, Jesus was there at the creation, enlivens people’s understanding of God, and opens the scriptures to people. Numerous references in the New Testament point to Jesus as “the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24). Wisdom informs not only spiritual

knowledge but also earthly knowledge—science, psychology, sociology etc. Wisdom is not just dry academics but, as Neufeld put it, passionate. He challenged his listeners to joyfully ruminate about the scriptures as he has all these years.

Isaiah Boronka, a Master of Theology student, asked how to re-interest church people who are afraid of the critical questions about the Bible. Neufeld challenged the pastors, professors and students present to have “erotic pleasure in studying the Bible, to infect others with pleasure in studying the Bible” and to wrestle with the big questions along with the people. What the church needs, said Neufeld, is inspired [Spirit/Wisdom-filled] readers of the Bible, ready to act on what they learn there. Leaders need to love the word and bring that love to their people. ❧

Bethel Mennonite Church celebrates 75 Years

STORY AND PHOTOS BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG, MAN.

In 1937, a tired and aging Rev. Benjamin Ewert sat in the old Eaton's waiting room in downtown Winnipeg. As young people drifted through, he studied their faces to see if he could match any of them to the rural Mennonite people he knew in southern Manitoba.

This was not the first time Ewert had been asked by the Conference of Mennonites in Canada to canvas the city and form a church for Canadian-born Mennonites in Winnipeg. Previously he had not been successful but now at age 67 he was committed to trying again. The Eaton's waiting room, he knew, was a popular meeting place for rural Mennonites. Over time he found twenty-one young people by patiently scanning the faces of those who came to the Eaton's waiting room and invited them to come to a meeting at his

home on December 8. Every one of them came.

This beginning, growing out of his fatherly concern for the faith of Mennonite young people coming to the city, was the start of Bethel Mennonite Church. On Nov. 3 and 4, 2012, Bethel celebrated 75 years which have seen the church grow to a place that has not only nurtured faith but has been a catalyst for programs and outreach into the city and beyond.

By Jan. 16, 1938 the small group of young people with rural Manitoba roots was gathering regularly for worship. At first they called themselves Winnipeg Mission Church. A year later they moved to rented space in central Winnipeg and changed their name to Bethel Mission. In 1945 they were ready to purchase their own church building and bought a former

United Church building at Furby and Westminster, changing their name again to Bethel Mission Mennonite Church.

While at the Furby Street location, Bethel became the launching pad for Canadian Mennonite Bible College, now Canadian Mennonite University. Classes were held in the small basement. The growing student body needed more space after two years and CMBC moved to a much larger building on Wellington Crescent.

By 1955 Bethel had outgrown the Furby church building. They bought the property at their present location and erected a new church building. By 1957 the church had become independent from the Mission Board and changed their name for a final time to Bethel Mennonite Church.

With video presentation, story-telling, and guided bus tours to previous church locations and daughter churches, Bethel celebrated its rich history in which membership, programs and ministries have grown beyond anything Ewert likely could have imagined. A mural-sized quilt, the erection of a peace pole, the unveiling of a peace parchment listing Bethel's forty-seven WWII conscientious objectors, a coffeehouse featuring an abundance of local artistic talent, and choir performances gave testimony to Bethel's commitment to honouring and serving God through its peace witness, through the arts and through mission outreach, locally and overseas.

Bethel has been the launching pad of many significant initiatives besides CMBC. In 1961 when Bethel's membership reached 515, the congregation started its first daughter church, Elmwood Mennonite which later became Burrows Mennonite. In 1997 this church dissolved due to declining membership. In 1963 the second daughter church was born, Charleswood Mennonite and in 1987, Hope Mennonite Church was launched.

Carter Day Care was founded in 1974 by several Bethel members and continues today on the church premises, serving the neighbourhood and Bethel's membership. Vacation Bible School was another form of outreach into the community for many years. Some years the attendance was over 350 but by 1987 the program was dropped for lack of finding a volunteer director.



One stop on a guided bus tour was the Furby Street building where members worshipped from 1945-1955. This 105-year-old building is now used by the St. Demetrius Romanian Orthodox Church. It is also the birthplace of Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now CMU).

In 1985 Bethel sponsored a Mennonite Voluntary Service unit in Winnipeg. Under Bethel's sponsorship this unit continues to place volunteers in ministries throughout the city. Since 1979 Bethel has sponsored more than 100 refugee families.

In 1978 a small group of Chinese Christians needed a place to worship. Bethel offered them space and a year later after diligent study the group decided to join MC Canada and became the Chinese Mennonite Church. In 1983 they purchased their own building.

Gerald Ens at the Sunday morning worship service suggested that as Bethel celebrates 75 years, conversations should focus not only on comfort and edification. "Part of worshipping a crucified God means that we should become continually unsettled especially when things become easy. I pray that by carrying on we will have fellowship and conversations that will be at once unsettling and edifying." ❧



On the occasion of their 75th anniversary, Bethel members erected a Peace Pole to symbolize its commitment to peace.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GERALD NEUFELD



Gerald Neufeld has a new guitar for music ministry, thanks to the help of a number of people.

A missing guitar, an answer to prayer

Saga involves three congregations

BY AMY DUECKMAN
B.C. CORRESPONDENT
Abbotsford, B.C.

A Mennonite Church B.C. pastor who had his guitar stolen found out what a caring community can do to rally to the aid of someone in need.

Gerald Neufeld, pastor of Mennonite Japanese Christian Fellowship (MJCF) in Surrey, who also serves part-time as music coordinator at Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, had an unfortunate experience Nov. 18 when he came early to Emmanuel to prepare to lead the morning worship team. He left his 12-string guitar, which he'd had for 30 years, in its case in the sanctuary near the stage, then left the room for a few minutes. When he returned, the guitar was gone. A search of the premises turned up nothing, so the only conclusion was that it had been stolen.

"While I had been out, I heard that others had been in the church for a short time, including a stranger, who was there alone for awhile and then left," says Neufeld. "It's still a mystery what actually happened to the guitar."

A replacement guitar was quickly rounded up for the worship service, and Neufeld's need was mentioned and prayed for that morning at Emmanuel.

That afternoon at the MJCF worship service, Neufeld shared the incident with his congregants. "One guy has been participating in our prayer meetings and worship services. He has a passion for reading the Bible and is hoping to get baptized soon," Neufeld said. He later learned the man, who used to play in a band himself, was concerned enough to contact several

music stores and churches for donations or a replacement guitar for his pastor who had had his guitar stolen. "He said something like, 'Our church has only about 20 members; he is our band. Is there anything you can do to help him out?'"

The guitar's disappearance was also shared at a pastors meeting, and the pastor from a Spanish Mennonite church said he knew one of his members had a 12-string guitar he wasn't using that perhaps Neufeld could have.

Within a week Neufeld had the replacement guitar, but still needed a strap and case. The friend from the Japanese church had connected with someone at a local music store who was willing to sell him the items at cost.

Neufeld was grateful for this additional response. "I found [the music store dealer] to be very sympathetic and supportive," he reported. "He gave me amazing deals on a used case as well as everything else I needed."

Neufeld reported the guitar's loss to the police, but says he is not hopeful of getting the original guitar back. Nonetheless he is grateful for all the people who helped with a very practical answer to prayer. ❧



Laureen Harder-Gissing, archivist at Conrad Grebel University College, examines some of the items from Lorraine Roth's collection that recently found a new home at the Mennonite Archives of Ontario.

Lorraine Roth's collection finds archival home

Conrad Grebel University College
WATERLOO, ONT.

A lifetime of persistent and meticulous research into the lives and family histories of Amish Mennonites has been donated to the Mennonite Archives of Ontario at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo. Lorraine Roth first became intrigued with genealogy as a teenager in the 1940s, and spent the ensuing decades reading and corresponding widely. She even travelled to Europe to unearth

archival documents and taught herself to read old German script. Her published genealogies were soon followed by local histories, such as *Willing Service: Stories of Ontario Mennonite Women* (1992) and *The Amish and Their Neighbours*, about Wilmot Township (1998).

"Everyone says 'where does the time go?' but how many of us actually stop to record and tell the stories of people in



Roth

our families and local communities?" says Grebel Archivist Laureen Harder-Gissing. "Lorraine's gift is her ability to pay attention, to search out those facts and stories. Through the generous donation of her collection, the public can continue to benefit from her work." In addition to genealogy files on over 100 Amish family names and research files for her history books, the collection reflects her experiences as a mission worker in Honduras, a Goshen College student, and a world traveler.

Lorraine had long expressed the desire that the Mennonite Archives of Ontario become the archival home for her research. In November, 21 boxes of files were moved from her residence in Tavistock to the archives in Waterloo. Here they will be stored until they can be properly preserved and eventually made available to the public.

"The opening of Roth's collection for research will likely coincide with the opening of the Lorraine Roth Archives Reading Room in our new facility in 2014," says Harder-Gissing.

Friends who wanted to honour Lorraine Roth's contribution began raising funds to name the new reading room in her honour at a fundraising dinner in Tavistock one year ago. They are \$10,000 away from meeting their goal of \$75,000! Donations to this fund are still being accepted. Contact Fred W. Martin at fwmartin@uwaterloo.ca or 519-885-0220 x24381 to contribute. ☘

MSCU Centre for Peace Advancement—one year later

Conrad Grebel University College
WATERLOO, ONT.

A year ago, Mennonite Savings and Credit Union (MSCU) gifted Conrad Grebel University College with \$1 million to add an entire fourth floor to the current three-storey academic expansion capital campaign (\$8.7 million) to study, practice, and pursue peace.

Interviews with 42 outside experts to help form the MSCU Centre for Peace Advancement (CPA) brought forward ideas

such as, sponsoring debates on peace issues, promoting international peace through music, displaying peace art, building peace practices in schools, studying the environment as a peace issue and hosting visiting peace advocates from the global church.

In the past year more than 50 donors have joined the cause, giving over \$400,000 toward a remaining goal of \$500,000 to build this collaborative, innovative

space for peace. A "Centre for Peace Advancement Task Force" was struck to flesh out the initial ideas and to gather more input. President Susan Schultz Huxman, Jim Pankratz (Dean) and Lowell Ewert (Director of Peace and Conflict Studies) met with dozens of people in civil society organizations, centre directors, and other business and church leaders to share the vision and get important feedback.

The 6,000 square feet of the MSCU Centre for Peace Advancement has an open, flexible floor plan including a display gallery, a "buzz" room, seminar and project rooms, an "incubator zone," think tank room, a graduate "hive" as well as several offices, reception area and washrooms. ☘

Surprise visitor comes to Holyrood Mennonite

JOANNE DE JONG

Associate Pastor, Holyrood Mennonite Church
EDMONTON, ALTA.

It was the third night in a row that I had not been able to sleep. Two weeks previously I had noticed that the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Leymah Gbowee, was coming to our city (Edmonton) to receive an honorary doctorate from the University of Alberta, and in a spontaneous act of excitement I wrote a gushy email inviting her to church. But then to the surprise of us all, she said “yes!”

One of the reasons I invited her was because our church is 40 percent Liberian and she won the prize for mobilizing the women of Liberia (both Christian and Muslim) to work together to end their 14-year civil war. (Her tactics included prayer, sit-ins and sex strikes.) Also, she graduated with a Masters in Conflict Transformation from Eastern Mennonite University. Finally, our church is partnering with two denominations in Liberia to build a hospital and expand a school. I thought these connections might encourage her to accept our invitation.

So I went to the car wash, took out all the dirty Kleenexes and on Sun. Nov, 18, drove off to pick up Ms. Leymah Gbowee

and her husband, Jay Fatormah for church. She was so beautiful and humble. When we got to church she refused to sit on the stage saying, “No, that is for the pastors—I will sit right here,” as she sat herself down in a pew.

The church works together with the Greater Edmonton Liberian Community so the church was packed. Her message was powerful and many were touched. She spoke about the importance of seeing ourselves as “blessed” and not “privileged.” When we see ourselves as blessed, she said, we are more grateful for we know it is not from ourselves. If we carry the attitude that we are blessed, we will be more generous with others. She challenged us in many ways, including getting involved in each other’s lives and not to be shy to do the unpopular thing. She strongly encouraged the Liberians to remember their people.

After the service we hosted a luncheon with delicious African and Western foods. We had an open mic for people to ask questions and it was there we learned about her special passion to help the girls in Liberia, especially with education. Health care is

/// Briefly noted

Mennonite Church USA Corinthian Plan a success

In 2007 Mennonite Church USA delegates asked denominational leaders to provide all pastors with basic health coverage. The Corinthian Plan became fully operational in 2010 and has 450 participating congregations. Keith Harder, director of the plan says it now represents 70 percent of Mennonite Church USA congregations with eligible employees. Participating congregations have contributed more than \$1 million over the past three years to the Fair Balance Fund that helps smaller congregations with the cost of providing coverage for their pastors. There have been no increases in dental, vision, life or long-term disability coverage premiums since the plan’s inception, according to Harder.

—Mennonite Church USA

in a serious crisis as she mentioned a village where 15 women died in childbirth last month. When asked why she risked her life for peace she answered that the women all had loved ones who were killed and raped and felt they no longer had lives to lose. They had no weapons, all they had were their broken bodies, so that is what they used to make peace.

Our Liberian women sang for her and she danced.

Some of us went to her honorary doctorate ceremony and sang and danced in the foyer. We heard her speak at the Winspear Theatre; we met her for breakfast. We celebrated with her and embraced her as our own and she reciprocated.

I cannot tell you how much we were truly blessed and inspired by her stories and by her strength of character. She has written a memoir, *Mighty be our Powers*, and there is also a wonderful documentary of her peace activist work called *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*.

I invite you too to learn about this amazing woman for peace. I know you will be blessed! ///

PHOTO BY THOMAS BUMBEH



On Nov. 18 Holyrood Mennonite Church was honoured by a visit from Leymah Gbowee (second from right), a winner of the Nobel Peace prize. She was accompanied by her husband, Jay Fatormah (left) and welcomed by Holyrood pastors Joanne and Werner De Jong.

Partnership Circles change lives

STORY AND PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG, MAN.

Nathan Entz was part of a group from Sterling Mennonite Church, who went to Cross Lake for a week this summer. At the meeting of Partnership Circles in Winnipeg on Oct. 27 he reflected on the powerful impact the past three summers at Cross Lake have had on him. "It has been life changing," he says. "I was beyond a nervous wreck the first time I went when I was 13, but I was blown away by their hospitality."

At the meeting, Norm Voth, director of Evangelism and Service for Mennonite Church Manitoba read from a letter that he had received from Bob Smith, mayor of Cross Lake First Nations. "As mayor I

acknowledge that we are faced with many hardships and . . . social ills and thus we feel alone and helpless at times but when your group comes you give us strength to carry on."

"The Mennonite Church has always been accepted here and is recognized as a church that cares immensely for our people and works hard to make our community better and a more family-oriented place to live and raise a family. The benefits of love and hope you bring to our community are huge and cherished," Smith wrote.

Kyle Penner, associate pastor from Grace Mennonite in Steinbach, was in Pauingassi this summer with a group from his church.

Thirty people from Grace spent a week in Pauingassi, a remarkable accomplishment given that this remote, troubled community, 300 km north of Steinbach is accessible in summer only by small plane. This was their second year of leading a family camp. "Throughout the week the numbers kept rising, even teenagers showed up," said Penner. This summer Grace, Winkler Berghaler and Springfield Heights sent four young adults to work with Child and Family Services in Pauingassi for nine weeks. "They were employed by CFS and worked with children's programs," explained Penner. "It was hard and they were challenged but they loved it."

More stories of hope and challenges were shared from the past year. With attendance at the Partnership Circles meeting down due to weather and illness, Norm Voth, executive director of Evangelism and Service for MC Manitoba and Steve Heinrichs, director of Indigenous Relations for MC Canada, asked whether it was still important to have the fall gathering of Partnership Circles. Participants said it was encouraging to hear the reports and they appreciated the learning that happens when they come together.

Norman Meade, Aboriginal Neighbours Coordinator for MCC Manitoba, pastors the congregation in Manigotagan. "I hear from our chiefs that the relationships with the Mennonite community are significant," he reported.

Relationship-building continues to be a vital part of the work with First Nations. Several of those attending the Partnership Circles meeting attended the first National Day School Class Action Conference that took place in Winnipeg earlier this year. They reported that in seeking to be faithful in our ongoing relationships with First Nations, we need to discern, as a Mennonite community, our role in supporting day school survivors.

Like residential schools, day schools were funded by government and operated by churches. Three times as many students attended day schools as residential schools and they experienced similar indignities. "To date there have been three class action law suits filed, one with as many as 10,000



Nathan Entz from Sterling Mennonite Church reported to the Partnership Circles meeting about his experiences at Cross Lake over the last three summers. Ralph Bartel (Sterling MC), Martin Penner (Sargent Ave. MC) and Steve Heinrichs, (MC Canada) listen.

signatures,” explained Heinrichs. The purpose of the Conference was to bring people together, to hear from indigenous leaders, listen to the witness of day school survivors and discuss next steps in the class action.

The Mennonite community is not exempt from this concern. In the 1940s Mennonite conscientious objectors were sent to United Church day schools in northern Manitoba and worked as teachers and principals. In the 1950s, Mennonite Pioneer Mission, the predecessor to Mennonite Church Canada’s Native Ministry, was invited by Pauingassi and

Bloodvein to open day schools in their communities. “Some of the students of these schools tell a story, not of dramatic cultural loss, but one in which teachers and community leaders worked closely together. In Pauingassi, for example, some teachers changed the school calendar to respect the rhythms of trapping and fishing, and Anishinaabe language was encouraged, despite the protest of the Department of Indian Affairs. But that is not to say our schools were wholly respectful of indigenous life-ways,” said Neill Von Gunten.

Voth said an offering was taken at the

Conference and dispersed among people they considered to be companions in this journey. “Some was left over. Joan Jack, an Anishinaabe lawyer, said she wanted to give this to us as their partners ‘walking down this road together.’ We still have that \$28.50”

Meade commented, “The \$28.50 is a powerful symbol and underscores the need to keep our Partnership Circles going.”

The next Partnership Circle meetings will be held on March 15 and 16, 2013. Ovide Mercredi, former Grand Chief, will be the speaker. ❧

❧ Briefly noted

Rewarding retreat for B.C. pastors, spouses

Hope, B.C.—Mennonite Church B.C. pastors and spouses had a time of fellowship, worship and inspiration at their retreat at Camp Squeah, Oct. 29-31. Pastor Lup Chee Ngai of Vancouver Chinese Mennonite Church shared his personal faith journey on Monday with the theme “the redemptive thread of Christ.” Participants were encouraged to share their own story “threads” in small group sharing and discussion. Tuesday morning’s speaker was Brander McDonald, MC B.C. Indigenous Relations Coordinator, on authentic power as a matter of the heart. Deborah Barkowsky, wife of First Mennonite (Kelowna) pastor Kevin Barkowsky, spoke in the evening on “God’s willingness to follow us into our darkness.” Gordon Carter of United Mennonite Church of Black Creek said, “I came away having benefited from time spent with other pastoral couples and pastor care reps as well as quiet time with my wife, just enjoying the comfort and beauty of Squeah.” The annual retreat is sponsored by the Church Health Committee so congregational leaders can connect with each other and refresh themselves for continuing ministry.

—AMY DUECKMAN (WITH FILES FROM NEWS & NOTES)

The Fat Calf Festival

Youth Assembly 2013

Mennonite Church Canada

The Fat Calf Festival is a celebration to take place at Camp Assiniboia near Winnipeg, Man. from July 29-Aug. 2, 2013. Participants will explore the “lost and found” parables of Luke 15.

“Whenever something was found in these parables, there was a celebration,” says Dorothy Fontaine, Event Coordinator. “And in the case of the Prodigal Son story, the celebration included a feast with a fattened calf.” Fontaine goes on to say that the word “prodigal” actually means excess.

“Together, youth, sponsors and speakers will explore the excesses that we—like the son in the story—sometimes turn to for fulfillment and we will look at how this impacts things like the environment and our relationships with others. We will also explore the excesses of God who—like the father in the story—demonstrated great love and grace toward his son.”

The Youth Assembly may take place at a camp, but Fontaine has a vision for transforming the campground into a tent city. “It is going to be colourful and exciting. For the opening night, we are planning to have jugglers, fire-breathers, plate spinners, musicians, storytellers...” Keynote speaker for the event is Iona Snair, Director of Lifeteams School of Urban Youth

LOGO DESIGNED BY RYAN ROTH BARTEL



Outreach, a program of Greater Vancouver Youth for Christ.

The Youth Assembly planning team is comprised of Manitoba youth pastors: Randy Hildebrand (Steinbach MC); Lois Friesen Wiebe (Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship); Kathy Giesbrecht (Mennonite Church Manitoba); Richard Bage (Altona Bergthaler MC); Janna Wiebe (Springfield Heights MC); Kyle Penner (Grace MC Steinbach); Phil Campbell Enns (Bethel Mennonite); and Dave Bergen, Mennonite Church Canada, Executive Minister, Formation. To learn more and keep up-to-date with developments, see <http://fatcalf.mennonitechurch.ca/>. ❧

MennoMedia reports on first fiscal year

Operating loss more than projected

MennoMedia

MennoMedia finished its first year of operations as a merged agency of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada with an operating loss of slightly over \$259,000. Auditors recently finished their work on the fiscal year ending June 30, 2012.

“We had projected that we would have an operating loss but this was more than we expected,” said Russ Eanes, executive director. He cited declining income from products such as curriculum and periodicals as one factor. The agency merger in 2011 had higher than expected costs.

“These are especially difficult times,” Eanes noted. “We continue to experience rapid and somewhat unexpected shifts in our primary business, which is print media. We find that we have to cover more bases, such as having our books in digital formats and more downloadable materials.”

MennoMedia is restructuring and retooling the organization to be more nimble, and adaptable to the changing media and technological environment said Eanes. The workforce is being reduced by about 16 percent over the next six months, some of which will come via attrition. In addition, the *Shaping Families* radio program has been cut due to lack of funding; it will end at the end of January.

MennoMedia’s board of directors affirmed the reductions and overall direction of MennoMedia at a meeting Nov. 2-4 in Kitchener, Ont.

Eanes hopes to take a fresh look at how MennoMedia might provide new public media for the future. He cited the recent documentary, *Weaving Life*, produced by Eastern Mennonite University students. The documentary complements the new Herald Press book, *Making Friends among the Taliban*, by Jonathan Larson, an example of the synergy that can be developed when traditional print is combined with

visual media. *Weaving Life* is currently airing on ABC-TV stations in the U.S.

Amy Gingerich, director of media, also emphasized that MennoMedia has made considerable progress toward blending print and electronic media capabilities. By the end of the year most Herald Press books will be available in ebook formats. “Some of our newest and most successful titles are also going to be available as audiobooks, such as Ted Swartz’s *Laughter*

Is Sacred Space and Making Friends among the Taliban.”

Recent reviews of *Making Friends among the Taliban* indicate potential for titles to extend beyond a Mennonite market. Robert David Steele, a former Central Intelligence Agency clandestine services case officer, said of *Making Friends*, “If there were one single book I would ask every national security professional in the U.S. Government to buy and read for themselves, this is that book.”

MennoMedia is also continuing its partnership with Brethren Press to produce new children’s curriculum, beginning in 2014. Gingerich and Eanes are hopeful regarding sales for books appearing in 2013, including a follow-up to the bestselling *Mennonite Girls Can Cook*, now surpassing 31,000 in sales. ❧



Cheryl Pauls was installed as president of Canadian Mennonite University on Nov. 25, at River East Mennonite Brethren Church in Winnipeg. As part of a community blessing student, faculty, alumni, board, and constituency representatives placed scarves of support and blessing about the President’s shoulders. Pauls grew up in St. Catharines, Ont., and came to Manitoba in 1983. Along with her husband, Bryan Harder, and children, Nicholas and William, she is part of the River East Mennonite Brethren Church in Winnipeg. Pauls began teaching at CMU’s predecessor colleges in 1994, and came to the position of CMU President from that of Associate Professor of Piano and Music Theory.

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Putting faith in action through meat canning

GLADYS TERICHOW

Mennonite Central Committee Canada
WINKLER, MAN.

Elaine Dueck, 15, eagerly anticipates the annual 64-hour around-the-clock meat canning operations when Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) mobile meat canner comes to her home community. As she washes, dries and labels cans, she reflects on the unforgettable images of poverty and devastation of the Haiti earthquake.

"When I saw the pictures of all the orphans and people who needed help in Haiti I started to cry," recalls Dueck. "I just felt that God was telling me that I could do something to help others." Dueck, along with 18 other students from Valley Mennonite Academy near Winkler, were among 300 volunteers who shared their time and skills to fill, cook, clean, seal, label and pack 22,000 cans of pork chunks in late November.

"As teachers, we always look for activities where students can put their faith into action," says Trudy Wiebe, a teacher at Valley Mennonite Academy.

Winkler is one of more than 30 canning sites in Canada and the U.S. where thousands of volunteers assist MCC's canning crew with preserving about half a million cans of turkey, beef and pork for hungry people around the world, says John Martens, chair of the Winkler meat canning committee.

Ten percent of the cans preserved at the Winkler canning site stay in Manitoba where they are distributed by food banks. The remainder is distributed by MCC worldwide in places where people are experiencing war, disaster and malnutrition.

In Manitoba, the meat is donated or

purchased through financial donations and deboned and cut by the staff of Winkler Meats, a meat processing facility that donates its facilities for this meat canning operation.

Volunteers of all ages work six-hour shifts. This is the second year that Alyssa Unrau, 14, of Plum Coulee worked alongside her grandparents, David and Margaret Reimer. Her grandfather was instrumental in bringing MCC's mobile meat canner to Winkler in 2002.

Students and staff from Milltown Academy, a Hutterian Colony School near Eli, have volunteered annually for five years. "We can't solve all the needs in this world but each one of us can do a little bit," says principal Ron Kleinsasser.

This is the fourth year that Dueck worked a shift with her classmates. When she learned that a night shift needed more volunteers, she also worked a night shift. "My hands look like prunes but it is for a good cause," she says. ☸

☸ Briefly noted

Hay drive update

The Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) Region V hay drive, HayEast 2012, continues to move hay from Alberta and Saskatchewan to Ontario. This program is helping farmers to keep their livestock herds when drought has left them without enough feed for winter. The Saskatchewan Unit continues to receive donated hay and arranges for transport, while the Ontario Unit is working with partners to distribute it to farmers with the greatest need. One farmer who received a load of hay said, "What a relief, as just that morning we were down to no hay whatsoever. We would like to thank all those out West who have donated hay. We cannot express our gratitude enough." To date HayEast has delivered hay to 15 farmers in need. The U.S. hay drive has assisted over 60 farmers. Both are still accepting donated hay and funds. For information, call the MDS Region V office (204) 261-1274.

—Mennonite Disaster Service

MCC PHOTO BY TONY SIEMENS



Wesley Driedger (left) and Elaine Dueck and other volunteers wash and dry cans of meat at the MCC meat canning operation in Winkler.



Sommerfeld Church pulls out of MCC

STORY AND PHOTO BY WILL BRAUN

Senior Writer

At a Brotherhood meeting in Altona, Man. last November, the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church decided to withdraw as one of the member churches of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

The church—made up of 13 congregations, all in Manitoba—will no longer appoint representatives to the MCC Manitoba and MCC Canada boards.

Sommerfeld bishop David Wiebe of

Winkler did not respond to a request to comment but according to MCC Manitoba director Ron Janzen, who met with Wiebe and others Sommerfeld leaders following their decision, the reasons cited for leaving were MCC's co-sponsorship of a 2009 Nurturing Healthy Sexuality conference—which they viewed as too biased in favour of accepting homosexuality—and MCC's adoption of the Mennonite World Conference's "Shared Convictions." That statement says "God is known to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit . . ." Sommerfeld leaders object to the phrase "known to us" as not definitive enough.

Though MCC was not invited to attend the meeting at which the decision was made, the two sides have had a series of meetings since about 2006. A broad range of additional concerns about MCC were raised at these meetings, including MCC's critique of Israeli treatment of Palestinians, its lack of evangelistic activity, its engagement in environmental issues, its political engagement, its relationship to the United Nations, and its posture toward people of other faiths, including participation in interfaith dialogue with Muslims.

Many of these concerns are encapsulated in the criticism that MCC is "too political" and in a simple question, one that Sommerfeld officials have put bluntly to MCC leaders in the past: Do you believe Jesus is the only way?

Despite efforts on the part of MCC to keep the Sommerfeld Church in the MCC fold—including the unusual move of amending MCC Canada bylaws to include a trinitarian confession, in an effort to address concerns about the "known to us" wording—the tension proved too much.

"The great thing about MCC is the fact that it has been one of the broadest tents in the Mennonite constituency," says Ron Janzen, who took over as MCC Manitoba director in September. The fact that that tent just got smaller disappoints him. "We're saddened for sure," he says.

The Sommerfeld concerns closely mirror issues raised by Carl Teichrib, a researcher and author from Plumas, Man. In 2003, Teichrib, who is of Mennonite background, scoured MCC materials and wrote a report critical of the organization. This report, which he later extended to 103 pages, has

MCC Manitoba Constituency Churches, by Membership

- from 2010

10,300	Mennonite Church Manitoba
6,300	Mennonite Brethren
5,100	Evangelical Mennonite
3,000	Evangelical Mennonite Mission
1,900	Chortitzer
<u>1,100</u>	Reinland
27,700	
2,500	Sommerfeld (formally withdrew, 2012)
500	Old Colony (informally withdrew, ~2008)

circulated among Sommerfeld members. The report warns that MCC's involvement with the UN brings it in line with sinister, unbiblical efforts to create a global government. It is also highly critical of MCC's work in Israel-Palestine, which Teichrib sees as pro-Palestinian and unbiblical.

Teichrib made a presentation to the Sommerfeld ministerial in 2009 about MCC, though the extent of his influence over their decision is not clear.

Peter Rempel, who was the director of MCC Manitoba during most of the period of dialogue with the Sommerfeld church, says the church has "discovered a zeal for being biblical and evangelical." Given this, when it started getting reports that MCC was not as biblical or evangelical as they thought it should be, that raised serious questions for them.

Rempel also notes that certain statements that appeared in MCC materials were not easily defended, such as a prayer addressed to Mother Earth in the Earth Trek devotional materials and a statement that Jews, Muslims and Christians all worship the same God. While members of the three faiths do worship "the God of Abraham," he questions whether MCC should have spoken so categorically on behalf of all three faiths and on a matter over which only God has authority.

The Sommerfeld is not the only church asking questions. The Reinland, Chortitzer and Old Colony churches have also pushed MCC on some of the same issues in recent years. Around 2008, the Old Colony Mennonite Church informally withdrew from MCC. While they no longer appoint board members, they are still legally a member church, and their members continue to volunteer at MCC thrift stores, relief sales and meat canning events.

Sommerfeld leaders told Janzen they will leave decisions about such involvement up to individual members of their churches. Sommerfeld members make up a key part of the organizing group for the Morris Relief Sale, the longest-running MCC sale in Manitoba.

Janzen says that if the Sommerfeld leaders ever wish to reverse their decision, "their chair at the table continues to be open. We keep that hand extended to them." ❧

MCC facing funding gap for chaplaincy service

BY GLADYS TERICHOW

Mennonite Central Committee Canada
WINNIPEG

Mennonite Central Committee's chaplaincy programs in Alberta and Ontario are facing a fund gap following the Canadian government's decision to change how it supports community chaplaincy services for ex-prisoners. MCC's chaplaincy programs in these provinces are funded partially by Correctional Service Canada's (CSC) chaplaincy program and supplemented by other sources of funding.

Under a new funding model taking effect April 2013, CSC chaplaincy funds will be used exclusively for full-time positions, says Stephen Siemens, coordinator of MCC Canada's restorative justice program.

"MCC Canada is submitting a proposal for funding under this new model," says Siemens. "If this funding does not come through, that means MCC has to find \$85,000 for the work in Alberta and Ontario to continue."

Through MCC Alberta's chaplaincy program, Peter Worsley provides ex-prisoners with the spiritual and practical support they need to transition back into life in Calgary. "Community chaplaincy works," says Worsley. A survey taken in August 2012 showed that 95 percent of the 233



Worsley

men and women he had worked with between 2006 and 2008 were living crime-free lives.

While the offenders are still in prison, Worsley meets with them to talk about their plans for re-entry into the community.

"When they come to Calgary they often step off the bus with nothing. They have no money, food, clothing, housing or jobs. "If we weren't there to support them, it would be easy for them to go back to their old friends and a life of crime."

In Southern Ontario, Shauna Mayer offers similar chaplaincy support to women released from the Grand Valley Institution for Women.

"MCC, through our restorative justice program, will not abandon our faith-based presence and relationships with individuals released from prison," says Eileen Henderson, coordinator of MCC Ontario restorative justice programs. Her commitment is shared by Kim Thiessen, acting director of MCC Alberta.

"It is our hope that we can find ways to continue this program," she says. "It is about rescuing the human spirit in a very real way. We can't put a price on it." ❧

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Mennonites and indigenous day schools

BY KEN WARKENTIN

Mennonite Church Canada
WINNIPEG

“The phrase that describes what happened to us,” said Ray Mason “is cultural genocide.”

On Nov. 26, staff and members of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church Manitoba met with leaders of Spirit Wind, a volunteer indigenous advocacy organization established in 1986, to learn of the issues surrounding day scholars in the indigenous community. Day scholars are indigenous children who attended, often by force, schools that were funded and run by the Canadian government and a variety of churches.

Unlike children in the residential school system, day scholars were allowed to return home at the end of each school day, however, they endured many of the same abuses. Like their residential school sisters and brothers, they suffered the harsh policies of assimilation by Canada’s Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) which sought to

eliminate native language and culture. In the infamous words of Duncan Campbell Scott, former head of the DIA, the goal was “to kill the Indian in the child.” Day scholars also suffered tremendous spiritual, sexual, physical and emotional abuses.

Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church Manitoba have a long history of connecting with indigenous communities dating back to the 1930s. During World War II some Conscientious Objectors were placed in residential and day schools as principals, teachers and support staff. They also ran day schools in Pauingassi and Bloodvein in the 1950s and 60s. Two former (Mennonite) teachers in these schools attended the Nov. 26 meeting at Mennonite Church Canada/Mennonite Church Manitoba offices.

At the Nov. 26 meeting, Ray Mason, Spirit Wind president, Garry McLean, Spirit Wind vice-president, and Irwin Kehler, publisher of *Weetamah* newspaper, spent over two hours powerfully describing the history and impact of residential and day schools.

Spirit Wind is actively pursuing a class action lawsuit on behalf of day school survivors. Past class actions led to an out-of-court settlement in 2006 between the government, the implicated churches, the Assembly of First Nations and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. This settlement recognized the suffering of residential school survivors, offered compensation to victims, and birthed the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on Indian Residential Schools.

Yet a majority of survivors were left out of the settlement—those residential survivors whose schools did not make the settlement list, and more than a hundred and fifty thousand day school survivors. Schools situated in buildings that were not owned by the government—such as church buildings and basements—were

/// Briefly noted

Foodgrains Bank meets with government minister

Winnipeg—Julian Fantino, Minister of International Cooperation, met with representatives from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank on Nov. 16. He heard about more than 200 community growing projects across Canada which donated \$5.5 million last year, including over 19,000 tonnes of grain. The Canadian government, through Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), has been a strong supporter of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank since its creation in 1983. The evening included the presentation of a Diamond Jubilee Medal to Jim Cornelius, executive director of the Foodgrains Bank for his contribution to helping end global hunger. The medal, which honours significant contributions and achievements by Canadians, marks the celebration of the 60th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II’s accession to the Throne.

excluded.

In order to pursue justice and fair compensation on behalf of day scholars, Spirit Wind has initiated a new class action law suit. This suit, filed in 2009, has over 11,000 signatories, but requires a substantial fee of \$300,000 for certification.

“The government can ignore it,” said Mason, “until it is certified.”

Mason, McLean and Kehler thanked the audience for entering into this dialogue, and encouraged Mennonites to support their efforts for healing and reparations. “Come and join us,” said McLean. “What [the day scholars] need is help to certify this class action.

“What would happen,” Kehler asked, “if Mennonites helped?”

While Spirit Wind is in the process of seeking charitable status, congregations and church bodies that are registered charities cannot grant money to organizations that are not also registered charities. //

with notes from Steve Heinrichs

PHOTO BY DEBORAH FROESE



Ray Mason, president of Spirit Wind was one of the persons who described the impact of residential and day schools at a Nov. 26 meeting with MC Canada and MC Manitoba staff.

GOD AT WORK IN US

CMU student hopes for stability and reconciliation in Congo

BY LYNDSEY WRIGHT
Canadian Mennonite University
WINNIPEG

Shadrack Mutabazi is a Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) student who is trying to concentrate on his studies in spite of the trauma that plagues his family and his country. Mutabazi was born in the Democratic Republic of Congo but lived for ten years in exile in Rwanda and five years as a refugee in Uganda.

"I have lost many relatives—parents, uncles, brothers, cousins, colleagues, and friends—and I have narrowly escaped life-threatening incidents myself. I grew up with no peace, no hope for stability," he said.

Mutabazi is anything but a victim. In Africa, he became an ordained pastor and founded the HOPU Organization to bring hope and peace—both to those who have been persecuted and the persecutors themselves.

"Deep inside, we all have interest in finding reconciliation and forgiveness. Even the perpetrators don't live in peace," said Mutabazi. "HOPU uses music to repair and restore, building bridges between groups of people who have been fighting for their entire lives. We want to see reconciliation. And we will get there someday. But first, we focus on just getting people sitting in the same room together and finding some common ground—through music, poetry, and other cultural activities."

This father of six children has moved his family—including some of his siblings—to Winnipeg in search of peace and stability. At CMU, he is studying Peace and Conflict Transformation Studies and he also attended CMU's Canadian School of Peacebuilding this past summer.

"One of the most important things I've learned during my time at CMU so far has been the power of love and forgiveness," he said. "It sounds so simple, but I've

discovered that you must go inward first to find love and healing so that you can help others to do the same. This truth has been profound in my life."

His work has continued here in Winnipeg, through Shalom Christian Outreach and Heritage Outreach, and Mutabazi plans to use his degree to continue promoting peace, unity, and social justice as both a church and a community leader.

When asked about his home country, Mutabazi said, "I see great possibilities for peace and reconciliation in the Congo,"



Mutabazi

adding, "What has happened in my life—the killing, the fear—surpasses all human understanding. But we can still preach the message of peace, love, and justice. God promises us, in John 14:27, a 'peace that the world cannot give.' Peace comes from God, and God has a wonderful plan for the Congo."

Recent increased tensions in the eastern Congo have sent other members of Mutabazi's family fleeing for their lives. Some are safe for now, but have been separated from their families and fears run high. Mutabazi is looking for ways to bring more of his family into Canada. ✎

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ARTBEAT

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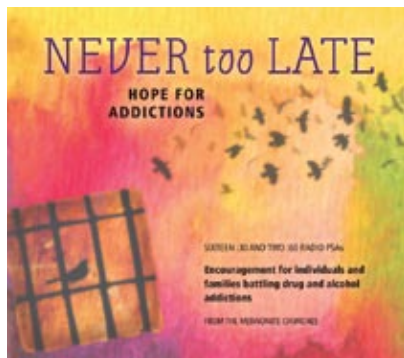
New public service announcements produced by MennoMedia are being distributed to 13,000 radio stations across the U.S. A grant from Schowalter Foundation helped with funding.

Never Too Late: Hope for Addictions is a series of radio spots that offer encouragement for individuals and families battling drug and alcohol addictions. The spots feature real people telling their stories of pain, addiction and loss. The spots end with a variety of tags including “This message from the Mennonite churches,” or with available resources from MennoMedia such as websites, and a *Close to Home* pamphlet, “Dealing with Drug Addiction.”

Most of the persons in the spots were originally interviewed for an award-

winning Mennonite-produced documentary, *Finding Hope in Recovery: Families Living with Addictions*, which aired earlier on Hallmark Channel and ABC-TV.

The spots were mailed in mid-December



so that stations could air them following the post-Christmas advertising slump. A Facebook page called “Never Too Late Hope For Addictions” will post new stations as they air spots. The spots are available online at www.thirdway.com/rad. Churches or community groups interested in seeing that the spots air on a local station can request a free CD of the spots. The *Finding Hope in Recovery: Families Living with Addictions* DVD is available from store.mennomedia.org/. ☘

☘ Briefly noted

‘Weaving Life’ documentary wins award

Weaving Life, a documentary on the life and death of peacemaker Dan Terry in Afghanistan, has received a gold Pixie Award for innovation in the use of motion graphics, effects, and animation. The Pixie Awards, are sponsored by the American Pixel Academy (encompassing those who work with “moving pixels”). *Weaving Life* was produced by visual media students at Eastern Mennonite University last spring, in cooperation with MennoMedia. Terry, a 64-year-old United Methodist, was among 10 humanitarian aid workers assassinated in Afghanistan in August, 2010. The documentary shows the way Terry set out to build bridges where “everyone else was blowing them up,” says production consultant and storyteller Jonathan Larson. Unable to go to Afghanistan to get new video footage for the documentary, the students relied on photos, motion graphics and effects, and videotaped interviews. The highest Pixie award is a platinum award for entries scoring 9 or higher on a 10 point scale; those scoring 7 to 8.9 points qualify for a gold award. Terry’s story is also the focus of a book, *Making Friends among the Taliban: A Peacemaker’s Journey in Afghanistan* (Herald Press) by Jonathan Larson.

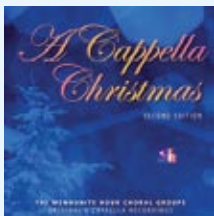
—MennoMedia and Eastern Mennonite University

☘ Briefly noted

Two new Mennonite Hour CDs released

Two new CDs from MennoMedia celebrate 60 years of Mennonite Hour a cappella music and recordings: *18 Most Loved Hymns* and *A Cappella Christmas: Second Edition*. In July of 1952, The Mennonite Hour Chorus was formed to provide music for the “Mennonite Hour” radio program launched in 1951. Though the radio program went off the air in 1978, a cappella music continues to be popular in North America. The CD, *18 Most Loved Hymns*, by various Mennonite choral groups, comes from an earlier LP (long-playing album). In 1961 a poll was taken of radio listeners regarding their favourite hymns. Over 5,000 persons responded and more than 12,000 copies of the resulting LP of the 18 top hymns were sold at the time. *A Cappella Christmas: Second Edition* includes seven new selections not included on an earlier CD of the same name.

—MennoMedia



FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Wearing the Hijab

BY SARAH CURRIE

Westgate Mennonite Collegiate

At the end of the grade 10 Christian Studies class at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, students are asked to do a project in which they reflect upon a foreign religious practice.

I decided to don the Muslim headdress, called the hijab, for a week. In class we had learned about the cultural implications of wearing a hijab, but nothing could prepare me for what I experienced over the next few days.

On day one of the experiment, I hit the first bump in the road—actually getting the hijab to stay on my head. A few tonnes of bobby pins and a few headbands later, I innocently crept towards the front door of my house, only to be pelted with my mother's ringing shrieks as she saw what I was wearing on my head. She promptly sat me down and gave me a 20-minute lecture on the oppression of women in the Middle East, and how whatever it was that I was wearing on my head was a symbol of their hopeless struggle against tyrannical males.

After listening to my explanations of how wearing the hijab in Canada is a choice that women make independently to try to

further their relationship with God, she launched into another 30-minute argument on whether or not Muslim women in Canada were just brainwashed by years of tradition and they don't know what they really want yet. I think in the end I managed to convince her that hijabs are still a relevant religious practice in today's society, and that they aren't just some invention to make the women of Islam more submissive.

I was surprised when I actually went out into my neighbourhood to gauge everyone else's reactions. No one even stared at the hijab openly, although according to my sister who walked with me, I did get a lot of backward glances. I only got one glare

from a stranger and he was about five years old and glaring at everyone. I had expected people to be more judgmental and rude than they were.

In thinking about the way that wearing my hijab made me feel over the course of the week, I think it's overall effect was that of a small burden being lifted off my shoulders. Knowing that people would look at me and just see the hijab somehow allowed me to forget about whatever I looked like on the outside and focus more about what was going on inside. I'm pretty sure that I prayed a lot more than I usually do, and I definitely felt a lot calmer as though I had things more under control. I think that wearing the hijab simplified my life, sort of like removing variables from a science experiment to get to the heart of the exercise.

Although I don't believe that having uncovered hair is immodest, I think that wearing the hijab was an awesome way to relieve stress and I think that the pros of wearing the hijab outweighed the cons. I

/// Briefly noted

Principal loses his beard

Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, Ont., held another successful food drive for the local food bank. For decades the school has been donating food items to the House of Friendship Christmas Hamper Program, a partner with the Waterloo Region Food Bank. When this year's drive ended on Dec. 17, a total of 27,144 cans of food were collected. Principal Dennis Wikerd had challenged the students to get involved, putting his beard on the line. The students took delight in shaving off the beard he had worn for 35 years.



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Corrie ten Boom (played by Olivia Brotzell) is interrogated by the Gestapo while those hiding from the Nazis huddle in the secret room (left). Bethany College, Hepburn, Sask., fall theatre presented "The Hiding Place" on Nov. 1-3 to sold-out audiences.

think that I can understand why Muslim women decide to put themselves through it. What I find the most amazing about their faith is that after deciding to wear the hijab, almost none of them take it off permanently, even after experiencing (in some cases) enormous amounts of racism. I don't know if I would be able to show that much commitment to my faith by keeping my hijab on and choosing to brave the storm, even though I could just take it off and be treated like a normal person.

The commitment that Muslims show to their religion is astounding, and as a Christian, I feel enormous respect for them—if I had to wear the hijab and long sleeves for my whole life (including hot summer days and swimming practice) I probably wouldn't be so eager to wear it as I am now. It kind of makes me feel as though my zeal in my worship of God is a bit lacking. Muslim people take the time to pray five times a day in the same circumstances as we live in. I feel like such a slacker compared to them; if they can make their religion the centre of their lives in today's society, I think that it is our duty as Christians to do so as well. Even though I'm definitely not going to wear a hijab for the rest of my life (I'm not sure if I could handle that much religious enthusiasm all at once), I think I am going to start praying at least 5 times a day like they do in Islam. If they can do it, we should be able to do it too. ☘

/// Briefly noted

Early Learning Centre

Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary and Middle Schools has opened an Early Learning Christian Centre at the Bedson Campus. The program is geared for children ages two to five and runs 12 months of the year. There is a strong Christian component to the program with the intent to provide each child with a solid spiritual and educational foundation to prepare them for success once they enter school on a full-time basis. Crestview Park Day Nursery, which has 35 years of successful experience, has been brought on board to assist with the administration and operation of the program.

WINNIPEG MENNONITE

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Anna Rehan to retire this month

Kirsten Hamm to begin the job in June

BY RACHEL BERGEN

Young Voices Co-Editor
SASKATOON, SASK.

After almost 28 years in her position as area church youth minister of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, Anna Rehan is retiring.

In her time in this role, she came to understand the unique needs of the youth, young adults, parents, youth leaders and congregations in the area church. And the people she served in her time as a youth minister valued her efforts deeply.

“My primary focus over the years has been to build relationships with the kids, parents, and congregations. These people are continually changing . . . it’s always like you’re starting over,” Rehan said.

Rehan has also worked with youth and congregations to find opportunities for youth to be involved, to have a voice and to be empowered.

“This role has been more than a job for me, it’s been a lifestyle, so much a part of my life that I’m not sure if I know how to do anything else. When I find myself outside of youth ministry or my role as such, I find myself still doing those things,” Rehan said.

Kirsten Hamm, 23, will be taking over the role. She is a 2011 graduate of Canadian Mennonite University who majored in English and minored in Music and Biblical and Theological Studies. She went on to work as a pastoral intern at Langley Mennonite Fellowship in B.C. and went on to work at Rosthern Junior College as their Residence Dean, where she has worked for about a year.

The expectations and responsibilities for

Hamm are high, but speaking with Rehan and the area church, she feels as though she can understand some of the needs of the congregations.

“From what I hear and from being in conversation with Anna, I need to spend a lot of time getting to know people on a personal level. According to people in the conference it’s really appreciated. That’s something I’d like to continue with,” Hamm said.

Hamm has had experience working with and attending churches in different area churches and is looking forward to understanding an area church that she is relatively new to.

“I’m excited and interested. I know Mennonite Church Manitoba, I know Mennonite Church B.C. almost more than I know Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, so I’m looking forward to getting to know what the church in this conference is like and what the people are like,” she said.

Rehan is grateful that she could spend a great deal of her life working in such a relational capacity.

“I’m most thankful for the support that I’ve had from the church initially, from Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, for the people on the committees that I’ve related to, the support from my family, and for the relationships and ongoing friendships with youth, young adults, and for others within the conference,” she said. She hopes that Hamm can enjoy the same kind of support and that she can continue to build relationships.



Anna Rehan



Kirsten Hamm

“I also hope she isn’t afraid of trying new things. There’s always room for dreaming new ways of doing things,” Rehan said.

Hamm, who attends Rosthern

Mennonite Church will begin this role in the summer, but there is no official start date at this point. ❧

Why does business matter to God?

BY ETHAN HEIDEBRECHT

Special to Young Voices



Ethan Heidebrecht

Why does business matter to God? As a business major at Canadian Mennonite University this is a question that has kept me up at night as I think about what I want to do with my degree once I graduate this spring. I received an answer when I attended the Mennonite Economic Development Associates conference at the beginning of November.

The team went in order to participate in a student competition against other Mennonite schools across North America. The competition was a great opportunity to put what I have learned in the classroom into practice. However, what I will remember the most from the conference were the lectures by Jeff Van Duzer, the dean of the School of Business and Economics at Seattle Pacific University. During the weekend he delivered two presentations entitled, “Ethical Risks: Why Do Good People End Up Doing Bad Things?” and “Why Business Matters to God.” It was through these lectures that I gained a better understanding of what it means to live out my faith within my vocation of business.

In the first lecture Van Duzer explained the three main reasons why people end up doing bad things in business: speed, spin, and stuff. In regards to speed, he explains that the growth of new technology has made it possible to accelerate many aspects of business. This acceleration increases the expectations of business people until they become so overwhelmed that they start cutting corners to meet deadlines.

Under those greater expectations the art of spinning the truth has infiltrated the business world more frequently. The last reason comes from the common desire to accumulate material things, which may

lead to an increase in unethical decisions. While these three reasons do not speak to why business matters to God, they do act as guidelines of what to avoid when making decisions for a business.

The second lecture helped me gain a better understanding as to what I should strive for in running a business. The common depiction of Christians incorporating their faith in matters of business is the generous business person—giving back to charities through financial donations. Van Duzer affirms donation as a key part of faithful business practices, but says that donations alone are not enough. People need to intertwine their faith into every part of their business. To go beyond simply donating, business owners need to consider the purpose and practices of their business.

Many entrepreneurs assume that the primary purpose of business is to make money by providing a service. Van Duzer turns this around and says that the purpose of business is to provide a service for people. This is accomplished by providing goods and services and creating jobs, both of which further the growth of a community. The main point Van Duzer stressed is that a business needs to work within a limit: no business practices should cause harm to any of the stakeholders. Though there was much more to what Van Duzer had to say, his ideas in these areas helped me to understand how I should approach business as Christian. ❧

Ethan Heidebrecht is a student at the Redekop School of Business at Canadian Mennonite University. He is from Crossfield, Alberta, and is a member of Bergthal Mennonite Church in Didsbury Alberta.

PHOTO BY CASEY VAN WENSEM



Only 26 per cent of Canadian's are satisfied with their representatives to parliament hill

Political advocacy in dysfunctional times

Christian organization finds creative ways to witness to government

BY CASEY VAN WENSEM

Special to Young Voices
OTTAWA, ONT.

Are you feeling unsatisfied with the state of democracy in Canada? You may not be the only one.

A recent poll released by the charitable organization Samara found that only 55 per cent of Canadians are satisfied with the way our democracy works. This

dissatisfaction appears to be a relatively new phenomenon; a survey that asked the same question in 2004 found that 75 per cent of Canadians were satisfied with the state of our democracy.

For Alison Loat, co-founder and executive director of Samara, this demonstrates

PHOTO BY JORDANA MEILLEUR



Casey Van Wensem

PHOTO COURTESY OF SAMARA CANADA



Allison Loat is co-founder and executive director of Samara Canada

a contradiction in the way our country is seen by others. “If you look at international rankings of democratic countries, Canada always comes in the top 10,” she said over the phone from her office in Toronto. But the numbers from this survey indicate that Canadian democracy might not merit such a high score, at least not according to its own citizens.

Part of the blame, this poll suggests, may lie with our Members of Parliament. When the same survey asked Canadians how happy they were with the way MPs do their jobs, only 36 per cent said that they were satisfied.

And when MPs themselves are asked for their opinion, it turns out they aren’t satisfied either. After the 2011 election, Samara conducted exit interviews with 65 outgoing MPs. What they found was that the overwhelming majority of MPs had felt more constrained by their own parties than they had by the Parliamentary system. “For [MPs],” the report said, “it is often the way political parties manage themselves, their members and their work that really drives the contemporary dysfunction facing Canadian politics.”

Loat also noted that “only somewhere between one and two percent of Canadians are members of a political party.” “We’re not really joiners,” she said. This shows a wide disconnect in how well our ideas influence our country considering that, as the Samara report says, “political parties play critical roles in the functioning of our democratic infrastructure.”

In light of this democratic dysfunction, citizens, and Christians, continue to make efforts to have their voices heard.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CITIZENS FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE



Joe Gunn is executive director of Citizens for Public Justice

One Christian organization that has found creative ways to present its witness to government is Citizens for Public Justice. They seek to influence government policy on issues such as poverty and the environment.

For Joe Gunn, CPJ’s executive director, success in political advocacy comes in a variety of ways. “Sometimes [change] comes through legislation and sometimes it doesn’t,” he said during an interview in his Ottawa office. One of these successes came during the last federal election. “We had four of the major parties running on a poverty reduction plan,” Gunn said.

CPJ has also found ways to turn failure into success. When a parliamentary committee’s report on poverty was ignored by cabinet, it looked like CPJ’s dreams of a federal poverty reduction strategy were over. Months later, CPJ tried to bring members of that same committee together again in an effort to get poverty agenda back on the federal government’s table. Initially, this looked to be another failure. “We only got one MP to come,” said Gunn. Soon, though, that one MP turned into more than 40, and the All-Party Anti-Poverty Caucus was born. Now, the APC serves as a forum for parliamentarians to work together across party lines with the goal of finding concrete solutions to end poverty.

In light of these successes, however, there is still work to do for Christians who want their voices to be heard. For Loat, civic engagement in Canada has a long way to go, and her organization seeks to do something about that. “We need to do a much better job of cultivating political citizens,” she said. For Gunn, the fact that CPJ is still around means that they haven’t achieved all of their goals yet. “If we were being really successful, I guess we’d close the shop,” he said. ☺

Casey van Wensem is a recent graduate of the University of Victoria, where he studied political science and professional writing. He recently completed the Advocacy Research Internship at the MCC Ottawa Office. When he’s not in Ottawa, he lives in Victoria with his wife Amy and their hedgehog Herbie.

Yellow Page Business Directory



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Upcoming

Augsburger to speak at B.C. sessions

David Augsburger, well-known Mennonite theologian, author and speaker, will be featured at the 2013 annual general meeting and LEAD conference of Mennonite Church B.C. on Feb. 23. Both sessions will be held at Bethel Mennonite Church, Langley. Following last year's format, the sessions are all taking place in one day. The business meeting will be in the morning, with the LEAD conference, featuring Augsburger as speaker, in the afternoon. The LEAD conference, originally designed for leaders, elders and deacons, is open to everyone, and all delegates and interested persons are encouraged to attend. Augsburger, of Claremont, Calif., joined the faculty at Fuller Theological Seminary in 1990. Retiring in 2012, he is now senior professor of pastoral care and counseling at the Fuller School of Theology. He is the author of 20 books in pastoral counseling, marriage, conflict and human relations. For more information, contact the Mennonite Church B.C. office at 604 850-6658, or www.mcbc.ca.

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**Do you know of
 someone in your
 congregation not getting
 Canadian Mennonite?**

Ask your church administrator to add
 them to the list. It is already paid for.

Calendar

British Columbia

- Feb. 2:** Multicultural leaders training at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond.
- Feb. 8,9:** MCC winter banquet at Sardis Community Church, Chilliwack (8) and Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond (9). Contact MCC B.C. at 604-850-6639 or visit bc.mcc.org/whatwedo/events.
- Feb. 8-10:** Young adult retreat at Camp Squeah.
- Feb. 15,16:** MCC winter banquet at Bakerview M.B. Church, Abbotsford (15) and South Langley M.B. Church, Langley (16). Contact MCC B.C. at 604-850-6639 or visit bc.mcc.org/whatwedo/events.
- Feb. 23:** MCBC annual meeting and LEAD conference.
- Apr. 12-14:** Youth Jr. Impact retreat at Camp Squeah.

Alberta

- Jan. 18-20:** Junior High Snow Camp at Camp Valaqua. Speaker Tim Wiebe-Neufeld. Contact church youth leader to register.
- Feb. 22-24:** Senior High Snow Camp at Camp Valaqua. Contact your church youth leaders for registration information.
- March 22-23:** Mennonite Church Alberta AGM at Menno Simons School. Guest speaker: Cheryl Pauls, CMU President.

Saskatchewan

- Jan. 18:** RJC Friday Night Live Youth Event.
- Jan. 25-27:** SMYO Sr. Youth Retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre.
- Feb. 3:** Choir Concert at Third Avenue United Church, Saskatoon, featuring RJC Chorale, CMU Male Choir, Sonrisa and Buncha Guys.
- Feb. 22-23:** MC Sask Annual delegate sessions at Rosthern Junior College.
- March 17:** RJC Guys & Pies fundraising event.

Manitoba

- Jan. 15:** Grade 6 day at Westgate Collegiate.
- Jan. 30-31:** Westgate Collegiate junior high three one-act plays at the Franco-Manitoban Centre.

- Feb. 1:** CMU Campus visit day.
- Feb. 6:** Open House at Westgate Collegiate, 7 p.m.
- Feb. 7-9:** Worship + Imagination at CMU.
- Feb. 21:** CMU Open House for perspective students.
- Feb. 28-March 1:** revised dates, MCI Musical, "Fiddler on the Roof" at Buhler Hall, Gretna.
- March 3:** CMU Choral Connections.
- March 15:** CMU Campus visit day.
- April 4:** CMU spring banquet and fundraiser.
- April 8:** Jazz@CMU.

Ontario

- Jan. 15:** Rockway Mennonite Collegiate grade 9 information night, 6:30 p.m.
- Jan. 20:** Niagara United Mennonite Church 75th anniversary.
- Feb. 8:** Conrad Grebel University College Sawatsky Lecture with Gerald Gerbrandt, "Where the Church thinks: The role of the Christian School," 7 p.m. grebel.ca/Sawatsky.
- Feb. 9:** Valentine banquet fundraiser for Mennonite and Brethren Marriage Encounter with speaker Ruth Smith Meyer. For more information call 519-669-1005 or visit marriageencounter.ec.com.
- Feb. 18:** Family Day Open House at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp. Come enjoy free indoor and outdoor activities with donations appreciated for lunch, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. RSVP at info@hiddenacres.ca or (519) 625-8602.
- March 23:** Menno Singers concert, Bach and Zelenka at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, 8 p.m. Ticket information at mennosingers.com.

Classifieds

Announcement

Canadian Word Guild
AWARDS

MYSTERIES OF GRACE
AND JUDGMENT DVD

For special awards sale see:

www.mysteriesofgrace.com

Employment Opportunities

SALES AND MARKETING DIRECTOR needed to lead **MENNOMEDIA's** sales and marketing department. Preference given to candidate with sales and/or marketing experience in trade book or curriculum publishing. Must have an entrepreneurial mindset and creative drive to stay abreast of latest sales and marketing strategies and media technologies in a rapidly changing publishing industry. MennoMedia is the primary publisher of all things Anabaptist and Mennonite in North America and is best known by the trade book imprint Herald Press. Contact RussE@mennomedia.org.

FULL-TIME LEAD PASTOR

GRACE MENNONITE CHURCH in Winkler, MB, is prayerfully seeking a full-time Lead Pastor. We are asking God for a Pastor who is passionate, strong in pulpit ministry, with special emphasis on Biblical preaching and encouraging the congregation to walk the Christian walk. We are a congregation of approximately 400 members seeking a pastor who will be inspiring, and help provide spiritual vision and leadership to our congregation and pastoral team. Preferred start date would be May 1, 2013. All applications will be held in strict confidence. Please direct resumes and/ or inquiries to gmcsearchcommittee@gmail.com

For additional information please visit our website at www.gracechurchwinkler.com



Leamington Mennonite Home & Apartments is committed to providing a continuum of Long Term Care services to our residents in a charitable, faith-centered environment. We are seeking a

DIRECTOR OF NURSING & PERSONAL CARE

Reporting to the Administrator, you are responsible for and supervise all aspects of nursing care within a multidisciplinary team home environment. As a key member of our Leadership Team, you are an effective motivator, mentor and role model, fostering a supportive work environment. The Director of Nursing & Personal Care will ensure adherence to all provincial legislation, the standards set by the College of Nurses and support the Home's Mission and mandate.

Your credentials include a current Ontario College of Nurses Certificate, (preferably with a BScN) with continued geriatric education and minimally 5 years supervisory experience in Long Term Care. Your demonstrated leadership and communication skills are enhanced by your problem solving, analysis and planning competencies. As a member of a multidisciplinary team, with a commitment to providing excellent care, you strive for continuous quality improvement in resident care. An understanding and support of Mennonite values, beliefs and traditions is an asset.

If you have both the initiative and the desire to truly make a difference in this challenging field, we invite you to forward your resume in confidence, by January 11th, 2013 to:

Linda Tiessen, Administrator
Leamington Mennonite Home
35 Pickwick Dr., Leamington, ON, N8H 4T5
Fax: (519) 326-3595
lindatiessen@mennonitehome.ca



Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba is inviting applications for a **FULL TIME LEAD PASTOR** to commence in summer 2013.

We are seeking a person with a strong Anabaptist theology as well as ability to engage the congregation through worship and preaching. This person will have strong administrative skills and able to work with & lead a multi-member pastoral team. Our desire is that the successful candidate, along with the pastoral team, can enable and nurture the gifts of the congregation in order to enhance the overall mission of the church. Pastoral experience, along with a Masters of Divinity or equivalent is preferred. We are asking for expressions of interest by Jan 31, 2013.

Please send resumes to fdueck@mymts.net or contact Ken Fast Dueck, Search Committee chair @ 204-775-0219 for further information. For additional information about Bethel Mennonite Church go to: <http://bethelmennonite.ca>.

PASTORAL OPPORTUNITY STIRLING AVENUE MENNONITE CHURCH KITCHENER, ONTARIO

Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church invites applications for a half-time **PASTOR-FAITH FORMATION**.

This Pastor will be part of a ministry team that guides this urban Anabaptist congregation toward its mission of nurturing households of faith, joyfully responding to God through worship and prayer, faith formation, caring relationships, and living justly and peacefully. The focus of the half-time Pastor-Faith Formation will be coordinating and resourcing Christian education and facilitating work with youth and young adults. It is expected that there will be some involvement in preaching and worship, and pastoral care.

Applicants should be ordained or eligible to be ordained, with graduate work in an Anabaptist setting preferred.

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
Fax: 519-650-3947 / E-mail: hpaetkau@mcec.ca
Closing date for applications: January 30, 2013

PASTOR FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

RIVER EAST MB CHURCH, WINNIPEG, is seeking a full-time pastor with primary responsibility for ministry among youth and young adults. The candidate will join a pastoral leadership team that equips us to be faithful to Jesus in a postmodern culture. REMB has just over 200 members, spanning five generations. Our community values a wide range of perspectives. Recently, our congregation discerned three callings that will guide us into the future: we are committed to honest encounter with God in worship, to spiritual formation within our congregation, and to being agents of reconciliation in our world. Applications or inquiries may be addressed to REMBSearch@gmail.com. A full job description is posted at www.remb.ca.

FORT GARRY EVANGELICAL MENNONITE CHURCH is seeking a full-time **SENIOR PASTOR** for an established, dynamic urban congregation with an average Sunday attendance of 225 people. We are an inter-generational, ethnically diverse congregation, located in Winnipeg, near the UofM, with programs for all age groups, and a strong ministry to international friends and university students. Working out of their own commitment to the Lordship of Christ, the ideal candidate is a collaborative and inspiring team leader and gifted speaker. They possess a reputable theological education at the graduate level and are committed to a theology shaped by Anabaptist tradition. Submit queries and résumés to rosemreimer@gmail.com by February 28, 2013. Projected start date is September 2013.



HOSTS at BRUBACHER HOUSE MUSEUM

Conrad Grebel University College and the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario are seeking a couple to serve as hosts for the Brubacher House Museum beginning spring 2013. Located on the north campus of the University of Waterloo, this historical home (ca. 1855) requires a host couple to live on site in a furnished apartment and provide tours during the summer months. Rent and utilities are free in exchange for performance of duties. Applicants should be responsible and able to relate to a broad range of people. Preference will be given to persons who have a familiarity with the history of Waterloo County.

*Send letter of application and resumé by **January 21, 2013** to:*
E. Paul Penner, Director of Operations,
Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, ON, N2L 3G6
epenner@uwaterloo.ca grebel.ca/positions

ST. CLAIR O'CONNOR COMMUNITY INC. (SCOC) is a Not-for-Profit, Intergeneration Housing Project with Continuum of Care, developed under the sponsorship of two Mennonite Churches. SCOC is seeking applications for a **STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT MANAGER**. This dynamic individual will provide strategic leadership in the planning and implementation of the SCOC's Long Term Strategic Plan, including budgeting, financial planning, arranging funding, and management development.

Applicants considered will have a strong, commitment to the mission and vision of SCOC; understand the importance of developing strong relationships with community and funding partners. Ideally, the candidate will have a proven track record of involvement of a successful project that has undergone physical changes or redevelopment. Has an understanding of (MOHLTC, LHIN) funding opportunities, proven interpersonal skill in leadership, relationship building, communicating, and negotiation skills.

Closing date for application is February 15, 2013.
Job Description available on request

Please send resume to:
Susan Gallant, Executive Director
St. Clair O'Connor Community Inc.
2701 St. Clair Ave. East
Toronto, Ont.
M4B 3M3
Fax: 416 751-7315
s.gallant@scoc.ca



Cindi Powell and her daughters Erica and Emily are the owners of this house in St. Catharines, Ont., built through a partnership between Habitat Niagara and the local Mennonite community.

Habitat Niagara raises another house

STORY AND PHOTO BY MARIA KLASSEN
ST. CATHARINES, ONT.

Habitat for Humanity Niagara has been building houses in the Niagara Peninsula since 1993. This year the house built on Tasker St. in St. Catharines was a partnership Habitat for Humanity and the Mennonite faith community.

Rudy Thiessen, Martin Durksen and Vic Ens formed the build committee while Ed Enns from Hamilton volunteered to supervise the build. Suppliers and trades people willingly joined the partnership. Some companies donated materials and skilled workers, while others donated money. The local Mennonite churches held fundraisers and donated money. The city donated the development fees, permit fees and the installation of services.

The house was finished ahead of schedule. Rudy Thiessen, chair of this project, mentioned the good weather and the co-operation of the trades. No time was wasted

as the trades came promptly when they were needed. About 75 to 100 volunteers and skilled workers were involved. Service clubs, community groups and churches provided lunches.

As the result of a careful selection process, Cindi Powell and her daughters Erica and Emily, are the proud owners of this house. Their responsibility is to pay an interest-free mortgage based on their income, and contribute 500 hours of volunteer service back into the community. They will also have training in money management and house maintenance responsibility.

Keith Gowans, Director of Construction at Habitat for Humanity Niagara, commented that the dedication and skills of the Mennonite community resulted in the smoothest build project in his experience. A home dedication and key ceremony was held on Nov. 14. ☘