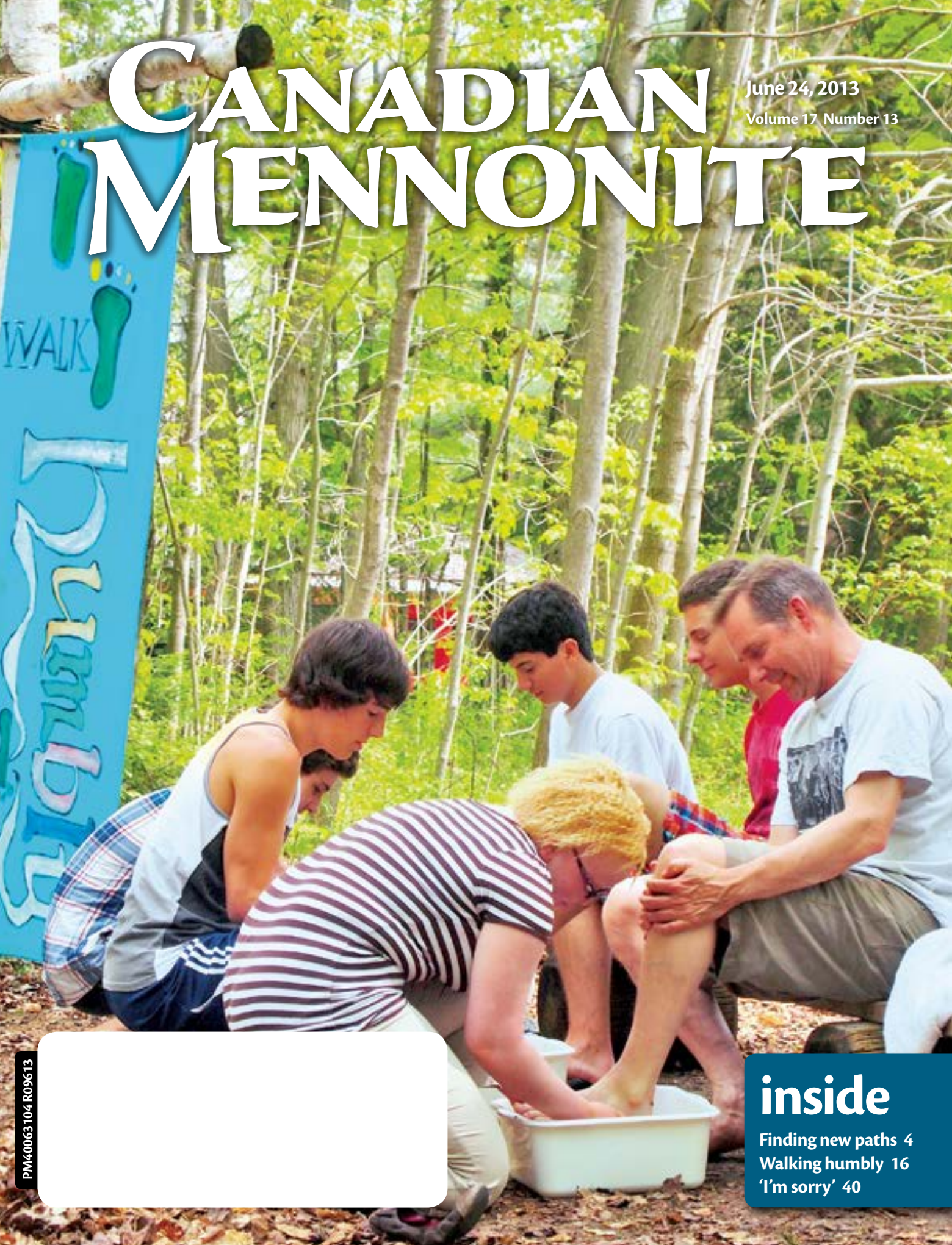


CANADIAN MENNONITE

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EDITORIAL

Finding our way

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Ken Bechtel makes an astute observation in our lead feature when he says the church in post-modernity is more about “the experiential, spirituality, community, globalism, relativism and authenticity” than the “rationalism, dogmatism, nationalism and a venerated religiosity” of the past.

“In many senses, our post-Christendom, postmodern world is becoming more and more like that of the New Testament era,” states Bechtel, an intentional interim pastor. He is one of several pastors interviewed by our Manitoba correspondent, Evelyn Rempel Petkau, for a story on churches finding their way in a new context.

Bechtel’s perceptive comment points to larger, more complex developments in the wider Canadian society, those neighbourhoods whose demographics are shifting and changing as we speak.

Our white, mostly European “Christian” society is giving way to an immigrant population of many faiths, a growing and restless indigenous people, and a declining number who aren’t interested in any church affiliation. While this is happening gradually, the impact of it all will affect how we both view ourselves as Anabaptist Christians in a new context and how we relate to our neighbours.

In their new book, *The Big Shift*, researcher/journalist Darrell Bricker and John Ibbitson, tell us “the overwhelming majority of immigrant Canadians now

come from countries that were once colonies (India, the Philippines, Caribbean nations), or were victims of imperial aggression (China). They bear none of the Europeans’ sense of responsibility for their colonial ancestors. The ancestors of

today’s immigrants played no part in dispossessing the first nations of their land; their ancestors were themselves dispossessed.”

Because of this, the authors suggest there is little sympathy for Canada’s indigenous people,

which are not only growing rapidly, but are making more demands on government and their white neighbours. “The [indigenous] population of this country, both on and off-reserve,” say the authors, “is expected to double, from one million to two million, between 2001 and 2031.”

Moreover, they posit, “a new generation of [indigenous] leaders is increasingly impatient with their elders’ litany of grievances, preferring instead to concentrate on improving conditions on reserves.”

To our credit, many Canadian Mennonites are engaged pro-actively in the many Truth and Reconciliation hearings across the country and many congregations are forming Partnership Circles and making friends with our indigenous neighbours, with a view of them as part of our faith fellowships, rather than being focused on a tired, condescending “evangelism” paradigm.

In his work as director of Mennonite Church Canada’s Indigenous Relations

(previously called Native Ministry), Steve Heinrichs emphasizes the need for respectful relationships and attempts to convey the interconnectedness of all peoples.

In MC Eastern Canada, leaders like Marianne Mellinger, coordinator of leadership formation, and Henry Paetkau, area church minister, are forming a new paradigm in pastoral training called “improv” (page 30), a model that pays attention to the spiritual dynamic evident in new immigrant churches.

All of these are good transitions that are defining the “new Canada” described in *The Big Shift* as a new generation recognizing the challenge and potential of a new demographic and seizing it, “almost overnight in geopolitical terms,” shifting the paradigms and bringing in a new order.

If we are too self-possessed during these changes, though, we will likely not make the adjustments necessary to keep our congregations vital and growing. New immigrant churches and our young people alike could soon find us irrelevant and form new models of church life and spirituality that look increasingly foreign to some of us stuck in modernity.

Externally, we may indeed be finding ourselves, as Bechtel suggests, in the environment of the New Testament church. Remember the Apostle Paul’s memorable Mars Hill speech to the “men of Athens” (Acts 17:22ff), when, using their own philosophical terms, he introduced them to the “unknown God” about whom they were curious.

“This God,” he said, “does not dwell in a temple made with hands and has made from one blood all who dwell on earth.” Strange, isn’t it, that even we who claim to know this God can lose sight of the basics in the midst of our changes.



ABOUT THE COVER:

Lovette Nyembwa of Petitediac (N.B.) Mennonite Church, foreground, learns to ‘walk humbly’ by washing the feet of Jim Loney, keynote speaker at this year’s Walk, Witness, Worship Youth Retreat at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp, Hepworth, Ont. Read ‘Walking humbly,’ a personal reflection by one of the campers, on page 16.

PHOTO: KRISTEN BERG, SILVER LAKE MENNONITE CAMP

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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 •

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GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH FEATURE

PHOTO BY ALEC MUIR

Finding new paths through the wilderness

Churches seek to find their way in a new context

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU
MANITOBA CORRESPONDENT





There is a changing reality in many Mennonite churches today. Like other denominations, Mennonite congregations have long lost the gravitational pull they had in the early and mid-1900s, when community life revolved around church activities.

Many no longer have the burgeoning Sunday school classes of children that prompted churches to look at physical expansion in the 1960s and '70s. Nominating committees everywhere face an uphill battle to fill committee positions in a world where busyness seems to be everyone's mantra.

The recently released 2011 Statistics Canada report further indicates how the context of our Mennonite churches is changing. Brenda Suderman, Faith Page columnist for the *Winnipeg Free Press*, took a close look at the 2011 National Household Survey, and noted that, with more than 80 faith groups in Manitoba to pick from, roughly one-quarter of the population cited no religious affiliation. Across the country, "about 7.8 million Canadians have no religious affiliation, representing 23.5 percent of the population, up from 16.5 percent a decade earlier," Suderman wrote in her May 18 report.

Changing contexts for churches

What does this changing context mean for Mennonite congregations? In his documentary film, *One Size Fits All?: Exploring New and Evolving Forms of Church in Canada*, church planter Joe Manafo visited churches that are adapting to their unique contexts to give viewers what he calls "a whiff of what God was/is up to on our shift as the local church in Canada." In the film he says, "For too long the church has lazily been answering questions that no one is asking, focusing on managing and maintaining her structures, instead of facing into the empire in which she now finds herself."

While a newly created task force is exploring whether Mennonite Church Canada and the area churches can continue to sustain their current programs, structures and strategies, individual

congregations are already responding to their changing contexts. There is a growing awareness that current structures can't continue serving the changing realities of their circumstances. Congregations are finding that structures and programs that served them well during the last century seem no longer sustainable—or don't work—and may even stand in the way.

One church's example

Erwin Warkentin, interim pastor at Whitewater Mennonite Church in Boissevain, Man., recognizes that his congregation has experienced significant change over its life. From its start in the 1920s, when Russian Mennonite immigrants settled in the area, to its heyday in the '60s and '70s, when declining Mennonite congregations in the surrounding area joined it, congregational membership grew to 325, Sunday school attendance surged to 175, and a 70-voice youth choir filled the loft. Since then, Whitewater has seen a steady decline in its population, Warkentin says.

The church recognized that it needed to do something to adapt to the changing circumstances. "Our constitution calls for 125 positions, but we have only between 60 and 70 people attending regularly, and that includes children," Warkentin notes, so in 2010 the church suspended its constitution and all programs except worship.

Congregants and staff look back on that as their wilderness experience. Since then, Whitewater has held monthly congregational meetings in an effort to discern an identity and a way forward.

"They don't have deacons, a church ministerial, an education committee or a youth group," Warkentin explains. "They have one Sunday school teacher for the three to 10 children, and they have a large and vibrant adult Sunday school class led by volunteers."

Volunteers are called upon to help with various functions as needed. "If there are no volunteers, it doesn't get done," says Warkentin. "As the bulletin states, the ministers are the congregation."

Many members of the congregation are heavily involved as volunteers in mental

health services, the local food bank and the recycling program. “These are important areas we can call ministries,” Warkentin says. “We just need to recognize the ‘God connection’ and support our members as they engage in these ministries.”

Structures may be more lax, but the commitment to mission and outreach remains strong. Whitewater’s traditional annual spring mission event has continued, raising more than \$8,000 for the church’s mission budget this year.

“When it comes time to identify the church programs we want to put back in the constitution, we want to do an inventory of where our ministries actually are, and from that discern what our church program is going to look like, rather than the other way around,” says Warkentin.

Focused beyond ‘the business’

Steve Drudge, lead pastor at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, Ont., sees a similar change of direction in his church. “Back in the ‘80s, we would ask how can we attract people to the church,” he says. “There was some parishioner swapping, but not a lot of church growth. Today, we are realizing it is not about attracting people to our church because church isn’t even on the radar in our culture. It is not about how to get people to our church, but how do we get the church to the people?”

More than a decade ago, Steinmann went through its own wilderness experience.

“We just couldn’t move ahead,” recalls member Gladys Bender. “We talked about wandering in the wilderness. We kept going in circles, but once we came up with a vision, we were able to move ahead.”

“What is happening in our community and do we want to be a part of it? Are we really organized in a way that is most effective? These were some of the questions we asked as we tried to fit our church programming with our vision,” says Bender, noting that the church has ended up with fewer committees and more coordinators who pull together ad hoc teams for specific short-term tasks. “It always comes back to, ‘Does it fit with our vision? Is it fitting with what God is

doing in our community?’”

“We need to be continuously revisioning because things are in a constant state of flux, and the rate of change is faster,” says Drudge, pointing out that Steinmann no longer has a church council, but a vision focus team that begins every meeting with 30 to 40 minutes of visioning time. “We still get our business done and we do it in less time than when we focused on the business,” he says.

Dismantling previous structures

Calgary First Mennonite Church saw the need for change in the mid-1990s. People were leaving, especially young people who were not happy with the structure and leadership model at the time. With the help of interim pastor Ken Bechtel, the church was able to bring about change without alienating leadership. Over a period of three years, the previous structure was dismantled and a model that allows for greater lay leadership was adopted.

“I think it is working well and people are happy with the changes,” says Ed Kauffman, who has been pastoring the church for the past three years and who

‘In many senses, our post-Christendom, postmodern world is becoming more and more like that of the New Testament era.’

(Ken Bechtel, pastor/consultant)

appreciates the flexibility the current structure affords. “We’ve tweaked it and we keep tweaking it here and there because things change, numbers change,” he says.

“We have dropped a few things, like the mission and service committee, because we couldn’t find people to serve and it wasn’t functioning very well,” Kauffman says. “But it doesn’t mean there aren’t still some of those activities going on. People are tapped on the shoulder for specific tasks as they are identified.”

As the number of youth in the church decreased while the number of children under 12 grew significantly, First Mennonite decided to shift from having a full-time youth pastor to hiring a

half-time children’s worker. A lay person from the congregation now organizes Vacation Bible School and activities for children and youth, something members wanted but did not have the time or energy to take on themselves.

“I see this shifting again as these children become youth,” says Kauffman. “The focus will change. It’s going to have to flow organically. In this sense the current structure gives us more flexibility.”

What about membership?

One of the issues that is emerging in many congregations is the question of membership. “Many people in our congregations participate without being members, although their church constitutions often require membership for certain kinds of participation,” Voth acknowledges.

“How do we think about membership, commitment, accountability, discipleship?” he wonders. “They are wrestling with what membership means and with what should be the criteria for participation in leadership roles. Some churches are rewriting their constitutions and

paring down their structures, opening up the criteria for participation of non-members.”

Henry Kliever, leadership ministries director for MC Manitoba, also sees churches grappling with this question. “One of our larger congregations is broadening out the categories of membership . . . in an attempt to deal with changing times, broadening out the sense of welcome at any stage in the faith journey.”

“Jesus didn’t care that much about membership,” says Kliever. “However, Jesus cared an awful lot about the organic interaction between his disciples, the foot-washing business, communion, and remembering that Jesus is central. Our congregations need to model not so

much the sense of wanting to be a family with boundaries to keep us all safe and close, but much more the sense of organic interaction and witness to Jesus that becomes our testimony to the world.”

The emerging church model

As churches opt for more fluid and flexible structures as they seek to be more missional, while trying to adapt to changing demographics and busy schedules, they often go through difficult and challenging wilderness times. Listening to the Holy Spirit and discerning a way into the future are often slow and difficult processes.

“The Holy Spirit is working through some of the loosening of the way we have done things,” Kliewer says. “We are to be the body of Christ. What are those elements that have crept in that are more of human making, and can come and go and shift with the context?”

Emerging churches may offer a model that is helpful. “In the emerging church, the faith community is predominantly relational,” explains Norm Voth, director of evangelism and service for MC Manitoba. “It is not the programs, or even the worship experience, that is drawing people into these churches, but relationships. The gatherings are fully participatory, often involving table fellowship, and can last two to three hours.”

“They are structuring themselves to be more involved in the local community,” he says. “People want a hands-on engagement. A lot of people are too busy for committee work because they don’t see that as being life-giving.”

“Healthy relationships remain a key component of effective Christian ministry and mission,” says Bechtel, an intentional interim pastor and consultant who has led many churches through significant changes. The age of modernity, he says, “may have promoted rationalism, dogmatism, nationalism and venerated religiosity, but postmodernity places a higher value on the experiential, spirituality, community, globalism, relativism and authenticity. In many senses, our post-Christendom, postmodern world is becoming more and more like that of the

New Testament era.”

Warkentin, who brings a legal background to his work as interim pastor, says, “As a lawyer, I have done a lot of work with church constitutions in the past, and now with Whitewater we are trying to minimize the legality and maximize the flexibility, so that it will have the capability of responding to whatever the situation will require.”

“The whole business about constitutions, Roberts’ Rules of Order, being incorporated or not, was much more important following the decision of the government in World War I to impose a ‘temporary’ measure for raising revenue—called income tax,” he says. “As that temporary measure became more permanent, charitable organizations, including churches, needed to make sure they were properly constituted. As a result, over the last century churches have become much more corporately structured. I think it is the churches that have suffered as a result. The churches are much more tied up with what our constitutions and the rules of procedure say, rather than what does the Spirit say.”

“Probably the key feature I observe in churches that are moving forward is that, either consciously or intuitively, they are

finding life-giving answers to the three core formation questions: ‘Who are we?’ ‘Who are our neighbours?’ and ‘What would God, therefore, have us do or be?’” says Bechtel. “If these become written vision or mission statements, those paper descriptions get revisited regularly, perhaps annually, inviting new hands-on initiatives.”

Earlier this year, Stuart Murray, author of *The Naked Anabaptist*, commented at the annual delegate sessions of MC Manitoba, “The Mennonite church community is quite healthy.”

Ken Warkentin, executive director of MC Manitoba, agrees. “Many of our congregations are quite healthy, but we will do well to think seriously about this in the next while, because there will come a time when our structures will be challenged to the point of breaking.”

These challenges, in turn, may lead more congregations to seek their own time in the wilderness. ❧



Evelyn Rempel Petkau is Canadian Mennonite's Manitoba correspondent.

❧ For discussion

1. How has your church changed since the 1960s and '70s? Have there been major changes in the church structures and programs? Do congregational leaders feel hopeful or anxious about the future? Are the structures and programs sustainable or does it feel as though it is time for a major shake-up?
2. Whitewater Mennonite Church in Manitoba suspended its constitution in 2010. Is that something other congregations should try? What are the signs that a church's constitution is hampering its mission? Do you agree with Erwin Warkentin that churches have suffered from too much corporate structure?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of fluid and flexible church structures, rather than formal committees with clearly mandated responsibilities? Who holds the reins of power if there is no formal structure? How can formal structure inhibit the work of the Holy Spirit? Does it matter if non-members take roles of responsibility?
4. What are the signs that it is time for a church committee or program to be dropped? Do you agree with Stuart Murray that “[t]he Mennonite church community is quite healthy”? What advice would you give to the Mennonite Church Canada task force that is looking at the future of MC Canada structures and programs?

—BY BARB DRAPER

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.

✉ Reference to age of the cosmos distracts from editorial's main point

RE: "SABBATH" EDITORIAL, May 13, page 2.

I'm not one to pick on little things, but your editorial has me doing just that for one simple reason: By including the reference that the cosmos is 13 billion years old and the soil is 4.5 billion years old, my focus was taken away from your main point.

It was redirected to the "evolutionary" thought that a scientific assumption had been stated as a fact. No one can say how old the cosmos or earth actually is. The earth could be billions, millions or even thousands of years old depending on which criteria you use to prove your theory.

As a family, we vacationed at Mt. St. Helens, Wash., about eight years after its May 1980 eruption. Life was beginning to creep out of the soil again, but Spirit Lake was still covered with a lot of logs and mud. I felt like I

(Continued on page 10)

FROM OUR LEADERS

Let's play ball

HILDA A. HILDEBRAND

When my husband asked me to join him to watch *42*, a movie about baseball legend Jackie Robinson, whom he had followed since the 1950s, I felt less than enthusiastic.

While Elmer, an avid sports fan, carefully follows various leagues and teams, knows players by name and jersey number, and loves watching televised games, my interests move easily elsewhere. I recall being in the old Yankee



Stadium with a friend, waiting for the rain to stop so the game could begin. As we squirmed uncomfortably under our plastic drapes, our husbands blissfully discussed the rich history of the place, eagerly anticipating the first pitch.

My expectations for the movie were low, but almost immediately a curve ball knocked them out of the field. Yes, the movie portrayed some amazing baseball scenes, but these were merely the backdrop for the bigger story about prejudice

and segregation in the sport at the time.

When we consider champions of human dignity, rarely does the face of a crusty baseball manager come to mind. Yet in *42* we meet Branch Rickey, a Methodist troubled by the exclusion of players from the major leagues because of skin colour. Out of this growing dis-ease grew the conviction that racist barriers needed to be torn down. Such a view was tantamount to heresy in the early '50s, but Rickey knew what he was up against.

Determined to change the status quo, Rickey sought an exceptional ball player from one of the "Negro leagues" to recruit for the "all-white" major leagues. The right man would need to be a great ball player with enough stamina to undergo extreme hardship, show extraordinary discipline in the face of abuse, face rejection from his own team players, and endure humiliation and death threats.

Jackie Robinson rose to the surface for

this daunting challenge. Together, the unlikely pair of Rickey and Robinson found common ground that transcended self-interest and a tradition of racism. Their courageous actions challenged and altered the trajectory of racial prejudice in sport and beyond.

While the movie was not overtly religious in nature, it captured a glimpse of the awesome and miraculous hand of God at work. The mission Rickey and Robinson undertook was comparable to a David and Goliath story played out in stadiums and back alleys across North America. It serves as an important reminder of God's call for us to seek justice for the oppressed in our own backyards and in the alleys of the world.

Just as each player is important for the success of a baseball team, each believer is crucial to the church body. Each is called to be actively involved in its growth.

God's purposes transcend self-interest and established practices in baseball and beyond. As we seek to be a faithful people in this season, may we respond to the Spirit's leading, find courage for the journey and clothe ourselves in jerseys of love.

Hilda A. Hildebrand is chair of the Mennonite Church Canada General Board.

(Continued from page 9)

was at the beginning of Genesis. Now a mere 33 years after its eruption, it appears that specific waterways have been determined and that there are canyons and layers in the sides of the valley just as if they had eroded over thousands of years.

I agree that, regardless of the world's age, even just from the perspective of today's vast universe and

diversity "makes me a speck in the scheme of things." And you have nailed it by then asking, "Have I created a legacy or just a memoir?" because just your editorials often inspire, encourage, uplift and enlighten me. That's leaving a legacy even if only from a fragment of who you are in life. Keep living a good story on the rest of your journey and your legacy is sure to grow with it.
MARIA SIEMENS MATTY, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

GOD, MONEY AND ME

If I had a million dollars

MIKE STRATHDEE

Many of us dream about how we might spend a large, unexpected windfall. Some imagine travelling to exotic locales, or owning a new vehicle or dream home. Some dream about making a difference.

I would use my imaginary windfall to invest in our pastoral leaders and the future health of the church by funding financial literacy programs at Bible colleges and seminaries.

Debt is a huge issue confronting our society. The average Canadian owes \$1.65 for every dollar of after-tax income earned. It would take over half a year's salary for the average Canadian to repay his/her consumer non-mortgage debt.

How much training do church leaders get at seminaries and Bible colleges so they can help people learn how to live within their means?

Basically nothing. When I asked about this at a Mennonite ministerial gathering this winter, some nodded and murmured assent. No one disagreed.

Not only do seminarians graduate ill-equipped to help members of their congregation in this area, increasing numbers are graduating with crippling debt loads that impair their own ability to be effective, and may even force them out of ministry. This situation also reduces the pool of candidates who are able to serve at smaller congregations. (A shortage

of pastors willing or able to serve small and rural churches is an increasingly major concern across Canada, according to a recent study by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.)

Some seminary graduates have student debt loads approaching or even exceeding \$100,000. Graduates head into ministry and are offered part-time positions, sometimes with few benefits. Many times their first churches are in small or rural communities where there are limited opportunities to earn additional income unless they are handy with a hammer or a computer.

It's hard enough for pastors to talk about money, let alone lead by example, without the pressure of unresolved personal challenges in that area. Fortunately, some organizations are recognizing the

Graduates head into ministry and are offered part-time positions, sometimes with few benefits.

problem and taking steps to address it.

Luther Seminary in Minnesota has a financial coaching program through its Center for Stewardship Leaders. Any student who applies for financial assistance at Luther is paired with a trained volunteer coach. Coaches are transparent about their own choices and situation, and provide a safe environment to guide students through their challenges over at least one academic year. "The job of

financial coaching is to help you get your financial life in order, clear the way to a sense of well-being about money and free you to be a stewardship leader," the coaching manual states.

After developing the coaching manual and recruiting mentors, the seminary spends only a few thousand dollars a year on the program, director Charles Lane tells me.

The United Methodist Church in Indiana takes a more holistic approach. Matching grants from the Lilly Endowment provide educational programs for clergy and lay leaders, plus grants to clergy or clergy spouses.

If I had a million dollars, I'd fund Bible colleges and seminaries to offer financial literacy programs. Tuition and materials would be free for anyone who commits to full attendance and participation. On successful completion, a graduate would get the added bonus of a grant that could be applied against student debt.

We ask a lot of our pastors. Giving them the training they need in financial matters would be a great gift for

them, their congregations and the wider church.

Mike Strathdee is a stewardship consultant at the Kitchener, Ont., office of Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC). For more information on impulsive generosity, stewardship education, and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit MennoFoundation.ca.



✉ Columnist's language scrapes bottom of the barrel

RE: "A TALE of two speakers," May 13, page 11.

Does this represent where the church wants to go in its language to one another? As a long-time church journalist and Mennonite editor, I found this article very troubling. To use such disrespectful language

about a church leader, as New Order Voice writer Aiden Enns employs, sets a bottom threshold one seldom sees. It's pretty difficult to be a church leader when privileged columnists use such language about them.

HAROLD JANTZ, WINNIPEG

FAMILY TIES

There comes a time in every parent's life

MELISSA MILLER

Watching my friend struggle with her three-year-old, I smiled sympathetically. Her daughter, like many three-year-olds, was willful, perhaps exceptionally so, full of spirit and determination, and eager to explore the world on her terms.

This particular struggle unfolded in church, in the centre aisle, as the two made their way to a pew, or at least that seemed to be the mother's intent. Getting the daughter there was the struggle, made more difficult by the mother's pregnancy, her belly rounded by the twins she was carrying, and further exacerbated by the father's absence on that particular morning. The mother was left to negotiate the long journey down the aisle as her daughter resisted. Frustration, with a side of anger, was written into the body language of both participants.

In other circumstances, a parent would quickly scoop up the child, bringing about a unilateral conclusion to the struggle. There may be residual mop-up, but both parent and child would recognize the natural outcome of the parent's physical power.

In every parent's life, though, there comes a moment when they recognize,

much as my pregnant friend did on that Sunday morning in the centre aisle of the sanctuary, the limits of physical power.

Certain interactions between parents and children are conducted with an imbalance of power, where strong and weak, big and little, controlling and controlled meet. That same physical power provides parents with the means to protect and shelter their children, and many parents use their power wisely and carefully. Gradually but surely the physical difference between parents and children shifts to one of relative equality.



In every parent's life, though, there comes a moment when they recognize... the limits of physical power.

Back to the earlier stage of family life: What do parents do when they lose the physical upper hand? Different parents likely go different directions at such a time. Some of us might try to cling to power, upping the intensity of our force with a raised voice, physical pain or extreme punishment. Or we might be tempted to abdicate, letting go of the parental reins, freeing our children to follow their inclinations, regardless of the consequences. Many of us will use a combination of firmness and flexibility to navigate the path

of parenthood, adapting our responses as our children grow, and as the physical power balance changes.

Parenting expert Barbara Colorosa calls this "backbone" parenting. (Her books and website at kidsareworthit.com are packed with inspiring, practical lessons.) When we approach parenting with a strong and responsive backbone, we offer our children clear guidance as well as flexibility that takes into account their unique personality, the spirit within them, and the context in which our family life takes place.

It's a larger discussion than how parents care for children when they are no longer able to control them physically. More broadly, how do we use our power over those who are weak or vulnerable or less powerful? How are our physical powers used to protect and nurture, instead of to control and dominate? How are our words, one form of power, used to build up and encourage, rather than to criticize, exclude or destroy?

Through the gospels, we see that Jesus had plenty of backbone. His firmness and flexibility were evident as he taught his disciples, healed the sick and challenged oppression and sin. May we draw strength from his example to know when to stand strong as an oak, and when to bend like a willow.

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

✉ Word and Spirit both meant to 'guide us on our way'

RE: "CHRISTIAN LIVING in the 'Age of Spirit,'" May 27, page 14.

Troy Watson draws an engaging and compelling picture of life in the Holy Spirit, where "Christ is all and in all." At the same time, I am surprised by the conclusion he draws from I Corinthians 2, that "the person filled with the Holy Spirit will be taught by the Spirit, with or without the Bible."

Why set the Spirit apart from the Word? Don't we need both? Can we ever put the Bible away? I am amused to see that Watson bases his point on a scriptural passage (I Corinthians 2), even while claiming that his spiritual life would thrive if he "never read the Bible again."

I also notice that he was drawn back to faith from agnosticism by the writings of the mystics. Is it not more than likely that these mystics were themselves steeped in the Scriptures?

How do any of us learn that there is a Holy Spirit apart from the Bible? And how do we test the out-working of the Spirit in our lives unless we are immersed in the guidelines given in the Scriptures?

The features of the divine life—which are Watson's goals of love, peace, unceasing prayer—are they not introduced to us from the Scriptures?

Watson reminds us how destructively Christians have used the Bible. Is it not equally true that Christians have done grievous things in the name of the Spirit?

Given our wayward sinful nature, surely we will always need the ongoing light of both Word and Spirit to guide us on our way.

JOYCE GLADWELL. ELMIRA, ONT.

✉ Religion statistics of latest census called into question

RE: "THE GOOD of bad news" editorial, May 27, page 2.

In your editorial you looked at some trends in those affiliated with a Christian denomination. You used the census results from 1991 and 2001, and compared them to the results of the 2011 National Household Survey (NHS). Because of the large number of people who did not respond to the NHS—the overall response rate was 70 percent compared to response rates in the high 90th percentile for the census—the results are not comparable.

The problem can be illustrated by a study that Statistics Canada put on the web and then removed a few weeks ago after the release of the NHS. It took the

pattern of non-response in 2011 and applied it to the long-form census of 2006 in three cities of very different sizes: Toronto (five million), Winnipeg (680,000), and Bathurst, N.B. (31,000).

Had the NHS been run in 2006, it would have underestimated the size of the total population with aboriginal identity by 6 percent to 7 percent in Toronto and Winnipeg, and overestimated it by nearly 15 percent in Bathurst. Similarly, the total size of the Chinese community would have been overestimated by nearly 18 percent in Toronto, but underestimated by over 4 percent in Winnipeg and 75 percent in Bathurst.

In some smaller communities across Canada, in 2011 everyone responded to the NHS; but in other communities, no one responded. As a result, in many cases the NHS is an unreliable source of information about Canadian communities.

Great care must be taken in the interpretation of NHS data. Your report of 26 percent of Canadians with no religious affiliation may be inaccurate, and possibly wildly inaccurate.

DAVID BELLHOUSE, LONDON, ONT.

David Bellhouse is a statistician in the Department of Statistics and Actuarial Sciences at the University of Western Ontario, London.

✉ Is loss of penny a sign of the end times?

IN REVELATION 13:15-16, a beast makes everyone take a mark on their right hand or their forehead; without the mark, no one can buy or sell, as there will be no cash. So, when Canada ended the use of pennies, is this the beginning of no cash? I would like to know what other people think of this.

P.J. REMPEL, ROSTHERN, SASK.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Ewert—Liam Aidan (b. May 12, 2013), to Jay Ewert and Cheryl Bates, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Kehler—Jonathan Charly (b. May 7, 2013), to Reinhold and Louvani Kehler, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Leis—Simon Timothy (b. May 19, 2013), to Benjamin and Marlie Leis, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Luksic—Adriana Ruth (b. May 23, 2013), to Anna Luksic and Jon Dyck, Ottawa Mennonite, Ont.

Metzger—Benjamin Henry (b. April 28, 2013), to Todd and Melissa Metzger, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

Steckly—Matthew John Edward (b. May 13, 2013), to Ryan and Jodi Steckly, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Van Geest-deGroot—Elijah Wisdom (b. April 7, 2013) to Esther deGroot and Matthew Van Geest, Hope Mennonite, Winnipeg, in Cap Haitian, Haiti.

Weston—Serena Lynn (b. May 5, 2013), to Jonathan and Alisha Weston, North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Baptisms

Kate Enns, Sarah Dupuis, Josh Neufeld—Bergthaler Mennonite, Altona, Man., May 12, 2013.

Chanel Cressman, Jeremy Roth, Daniel Shantz, Levi Tiessen—Breslau Mennonite, Ont., May 26, 2013.

Matthew Riediger, Russel Nickel, David Neufeld, Julia Wiens, Nathan Friesen—Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., May 5, 2013.

Mitchell Glass, Elysia Vis—Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., May 12, 2013.

Megan Zavitz, Noah Janzen, Izaak Reimer, Victoria Redekopp, Anysa McShane—Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., May 19, 2013.

Courtney Burkholder, Selby Djokovic, Jordyn Field, Justyn Field—Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver.

Elmer Zacharias, Jennifer Zacharias, Ryan Koop, Natalia Dyck—Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, May 26, 2013.

Zoë Andres, Jesse Hildebrand, Maria Suderman-Gladwell—Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., May 26, 2013.

Marriages

Enns/Wiebe—Meredith Jayne Enns (Bergthaler Mennonite, Altona, Man.) and Abe Wiebe, at Morden Golf Course, Man., May 25, 2013.

Giesbrecht/Zurbuchen—Emily Giesbrecht and Gideon Zurbuchen, First United Mennonite, Vancouver, May 25, 2013.

Lichty/Marshall—David Lichty and Tabitha Marshall (First Mennonite, Winnipeg), at First Mennonite, May 18, 2013.

Deaths

Durksen—Helen (nee Redekopp), 105 (b. March 16, 1908; d. May 29, 2013), First Mennonite, Kelowna, B.C.

Dyck—Maria, 82 (b. Nov. 13, 1930; d. June 3, 2013), Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Gingrich—Leonard G., 89 (b. Feb. 25, 1924; d. May 24, 2013), St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

Martens—Mary, 82 (b. Dec. 11, 1930; d. June 3, 2013), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Nafziger—Laura (nee Erb), 98 (b. May 13, 1914; d. May 10, 2013), Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Penner—Larry, 59 (b. Jan. 17, 1954; d. May 22, 2013), Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man.

Schwartzentruber—Idella, 97 (b. Dec. 10, 1915; d. April 16, 2013), East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Shantz—Robert, 90 (b. June 16, 1922; d. May 28, 2013), Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Trimborn—Dorothy (nee Beaudry), 93 (b. Dec. 3, 1919; d. May 13, 2013), Wanner Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.

Unger-Sawatsky—Hilda (nee Enns), 82 (b. Feb. 9, 1931; d. March 31, 2013), Point Grey Inter-Mennonite, Vancouver.

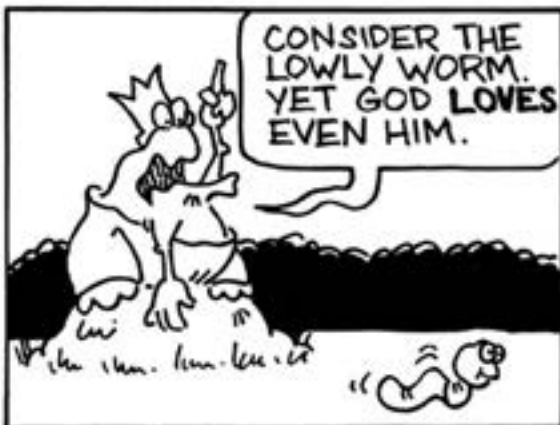
Wiebe—Abe G., 94 (b. Nov. 13, 1918; d. March 5, 2013), Bergthaler Mennonite, Altona, Man.

Wiebe—Jacob (Jake), 90 (b. Aug. 1, 1922; d. April 23, 2013), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

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.

Pontius' Puddle



LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

What is Spirit baptism?

BY TROY WATSON

To baptize originally meant “to immerse” or “place into.” Usually. (Etymology can be complicated and controversial stuff.) Some of the oldest “baptism” references we have in the Greek language outside the New Testament are found in descriptions of a ship sinking beneath the water and an ancient pickling recipe. Essentially, to be baptized in the Spirit is to be “pickled” in God’s presence.



“That’s right,” he said. “Visible and invisible! God created two worlds, or realms, and it is the invisible realm that is the most real—the kingdom of God. Jesus told us his kingdom is not of this world. It is immaterial. Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born spiritually as well as physically to enter this invisible kingdom. When we are born into the physical world,

we are given physical senses to interact with it. Likewise, when we are born into the spiritual world, we are given spiritual senses to interact with it. We can

world. It is becoming aware of what God is doing in and all around us. Meister Eckhart put it this way, “To grasp God in all things, this is the sign of your new birth.” Most mystics throughout history make similar statements. Franciscan friar Richard Rohr recently tweeted, “Either you see God in all things or you don’t see God.”

This is not an exclusively Catholic mystic opinion. Charles G. Finney, a 19th-century American evangelist and “father of modern revivalism,” preached this often. Finney was a fiery evangelist and passionate activist for the abolitionist movement and inclusion of women in church practices. He became president of Oberlin College, one of the first

It is a Spirit-filled consciousness that enables us to see the spiritual dimension of reality, to see the way Jesus saw.

When our consciousness is saturated with God’s presence, we see God in all things, all people and all circumstances. As the Psalmist writes, “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.” This is quite a provocative statement David is making here, for Sheol is the underworld of the dead, utterly dark, considered the furthest point from heaven!

The omnipresence of God is one of the most basic and universal Christian doctrines. Yet awareness of God’s presence everywhere does not seem to be a universal Christian experience. Not all Christians have eyes to see and ears to hear, and those who do inspire or threaten the rest of us.

Last year I sat down with such a man, an 86-year-old monk living in a hermitage. After talking for a few minutes, he asked me to quote the Nicene Creed. I grew up Baptist. We are not “creed folk,” so I had to think about it. Fortunately it came to me: “We believe in one God, Father almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible . . .”

He stopped me mid-sentence.

see, taste, hear, feel and smell it. This is why Jesus tells Nicodemus, ‘No one can see the kingdom of God until they have experienced rebirth!’”

I believe this old monk was Spirit-saturated, not senile. I believe it is possible to sense divine energy. Remember when the Pharisees questioned Jesus’ authority, he responded, “I only do what I see my Father doing.” Brilliant Christian leaders throughout history, such as Origen, Bonaventure, Augustine, Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley and Hans Urs von Balthasar, have all taught that Spirit-filled humans have corresponding spiritual senses to interact with the invisible spiritual realm. It is a Spirit-filled consciousness that enables us to see the spiritual dimension of reality, to see the way Jesus saw.

Being “in the Spirit” is having the mind of Christ, an entirely new mode of perceiving, thinking and interacting with the

American colleges to co-educate women and African Americans alongside white males. His passion for the gospel, social justice and joining God at work in all areas of life started when he was 29 years old.

He was apprenticing to become a lawyer when he experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He quit practising law and became a minister. Like so many before him, Finney experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a shift of consciousness, where he began to see God everywhere. He later wrote, “A state of mind that sees God in everything is evidence of growth in grace.”

Spiritual transformation is first and foremost about how we see. Jesus says that when our eye is full of light, everything else about us will be healthy. ☘

Troy Watson (troy@questcc.ca) is pastor of Quest in St. Catharines, Ont.

VIEWPOINT

More on inclusion and church identity

Editor's note: Canadian Mennonite conducted a follow-up conversation with Scott Brubaker-Zehr, pastor of Rockway Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., regarding his recent letter 'Inclusion, church identity issues closely linked,' May 27, page 10.

Editor: *I understand that your recent letter has caused some friends to wonder if this was a veiled attempt to criticize the inclusion of particular groups of people in the church. That clearly was not your intention, but how do you answer them?*

Brubaker-Zehr: I can understand their concern, and in retrospect I realize I chose the wrong format in which to make my point. My intention was to make a general philosophical point and not to comment on particular articles. The impetus to write was sparked by a line in the "Quilt to make space for dialogue on sexuality" article (April 15, page 20), but I wasn't wanting to make sexuality the issue. According to editorial policy, letters that refer to magazine content are given higher priority, so I consented to allow the letter to be linked to these articles. I hadn't even read the article on disability ("Enabling the disabled," Feb. 18, page 17).

Editor: *Can you expand on what you meant by inclusion being good "depending on our understanding of identity?"*

Brubaker-Zehr: I often hear the phrase, "We need to be more inclusive." Much less often do I hear, "We need to strengthen our Christian, Anabaptist identity."

As a pastor, I feel a calling and responsibility to attend to church identity. What is unique about the church in our society? What makes a church different than other social support or service groups?

Inclusion is good when identity is clear. When identity is fuzzy, inclusion tends to make it fuzzier. Philosophically speaking, when one is inclusive of elements that are

in conflict with core identity, that is not good for identity, or it means a change in identity.

In soccer, for example, we are inclusive of all players who abide by the rules of the game. Those who do not agree to touch the ball with their feet are not allowed to play.

My friend commented that this is not a good image for the church. I agree. The "rules" of Christian, Anabaptist identity are much more fluid. Our "game" is not as rigid. Perhaps many of us are reacting

Philosophically speaking, when one is inclusive of elements that are in conflict with core identity, that is not good for identity, or it means a change in identity.

to the way the "rules" or "boundaries" of church have been defined too rigidly in the past, most often by white heterosexual men.

Errors of the past, however, should not dissuade us from the important task of naming and nurturing our core, however difficult that may be.

Editor: *Can you give an example of "talking past each other" when engaging in church discussions where "presuppositions about Christian communal identity are assumed without being made explicit?"*

Brubaker-Zehr: We all have our own understandings of church identity. This is due in part to our non-hierarchical, congregational polity. When we say, "We should be more inclusive," without being explicit on our particular notion of identity, it is hard to know how to interpret the statement.

For example, I agree that we should be inclusive of those in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer community. However, I'm assuming—based on my understanding of church identity—that the basis for inclusion into membership in the Mennonite church is a personal faith commitment in Jesus Christ, which is demonstrated through adult baptism, or adult confession if baptized as an infant, and includes, among other things, an ethic of full sexual intimacy within a covenanted monogamous relationship.

I realize that this understanding is in

tension with our current *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*. Others may have different understandings of church identity and therefore the same statement can mean something quite different.

Editor: *Do you have any final thoughts on what might have led to a misunderstanding of your letter?*

Brubaker-Zehr: We live in an incredibly diverse and pluralistic culture. We've become much more sensitized to the sins of colonialism and dominance by majority groups. This is a good thing—a movement of God's Spirit—but it makes it very difficult to know how to make positive assertions about Christian faith and identity. Leaders who try to do this are often suspected of being closet fundamentalists who yearn for the good old days. It's a significant pastoral leadership challenge! ☸

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

COVER STORY: PERSONAL REFLECTION

Walking humbly

BY MIKA DRIEDGER

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

Our youth group from Petitcodiac Mennonite Church in New Brunswick had the opportunity to travel to Silver Lake Mennonite Camp, Hepworth, Ont., on the May long weekend for the 2013 Walk, Witness, Worship (WWW) Youth Retreat.

As you might imagine, we faced the idea of seven teenagers and one adult in an eight-seat minivan for 3,600 kilometres with some trepidation, and there was some question as to the sanity of our trip. But the time we spent at Silver Lake made all of those cramp-inducing hours entirely worthwhile.

Despite the fact that we looked horrible and probably smelled worse when we arrived exhausted in the evening of May 17, we were welcomed immediately with open arms. We spent a relaxing first evening getting to know the other youth who had come to the retreat and sang songs around the campfire. Our youth group experienced the added novelty of meeting other Mennonites, who are few and far between in New Brunswick.

The retreat was centred around the passage from Micah 6:8—*“He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord requires of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”*—and each of the days was given a specific theme. Saturday focused on loving tenderly, Sunday focused on acting justly and Monday sent us off with the message to walk humbly.

The weekend was a perfect balance of thought-provoking activities, discussions and regular camp activities. We enjoyed activities such as the “Love Tenderly Olympics,” presentations about Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) and aboriginal justice, and evening worship, as well as canoeing, swimming, ping pong and

campfire songs.

The indisputable highlights of the weekend were the presentations led by James Loney, a CPT member. On Saturday he shared of his moving experience of being held hostage in Iraq, where he chose to love tenderly, and to act with compassion and peace. He described his hostages to us, emphasizing both their negative and positive qualities. His talk that night, delivered from a plastic lawn chair to a circle of teenagers, was one of the most meaningful and genuine speeches I have ever heard and it left the room speechless.

On Sunday, following the theme of justice, he led us in a “blanket exercise” designed to put into perspective the mistreatment of first nation people in Canada. We stood on blankets that were spread out on the floor representing the land. Slowly, people who represented the European settlers folded our space into smaller and smaller areas. We were then asked to step off the blanket, representing the people who died due to disease and mistreatment. It was a disturbing and creative visual demonstration of the injustices in our country.

Although our group had to leave before the “walk humbly” session on Monday morning, I can say with certainty that we left the retreat with a new and more humble sense of the world and ourselves. The weekend helped each of us to grow in different and unique ways, and not only brought us closer to other youth groups, but to each other as well.

I believe I speak for the entire Petitcodiac Mennonite youth group when I say that we would have driven twice as far to experience a few more days at the retreat. (The driver paled a little at this final statement.) ❧

PHOTO BY KRISTEN BERG



‘Act justly,’ from Micah 6:8, was one of the three theme days at this year’s Walk, Witness, Worship Youth Retreat, held at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp on the May long weekend.

The WWW Youth Retreat is an initiative of Silver Lake Mennonite Camp in partnership with Conrad Grebel University College, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Mennonite Central Committee and the Mennonite Savings and Credit Union.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE



A concrete building was constructed by Behelwa Brethren in Christ (BIC) Church, Babiya, Nepal, with financial assistance from the Mennonite World Conference Global Church Sharing Fund.

Nepalese believers dedicate concrete church

Newly constructed building made possible with assistance from MWC Global Church Sharing Fund

Mennonite World Conference

Believers from the Behelwa Brethren in Christ (BIC) Church, Babiya, Nepal, were eagerly waiting for the day to worship the Lord in a newly constructed concrete church building. Hundreds, including leaders from neighbouring churches and the BIC executive board, gathered late last year for a dedication service.

Cynthia Peacock of India, chair of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Deacons Commission, which provided funds to help build the church, was the chief guest. After a reading from Psalm 100:1-5 and a dedication prayer, she unveiled the stone plate fixed on a wall outside the church and then opened the door for everyone to enter into the building.

The Babiya church is one of the village congregations among the Santal community close to the city of Biratnagar in eastern Nepal. The church was started in a house of Mongal Soren two decades ago during the monarchy, when preaching the gospel and conversion were illegal. Mongal

Soren was a well-known witch doctor in the area before he became a believer in Jesus Christ.

After a few months, 15 people from his village accepted Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, and were baptized. In spite of persecution and restriction from the government, the number of believers continued to increase. Now there are over a hundred participants, including children, in the church worship service. After two years of theological training, Mongal's nephew, Ramesh Soren, became pastor of the church.

Initially, the congregation met in the open in the yard of the pastor's house. Later, a mud house was built, but it collapsed in a strong storm. Congregants repaired the church and again it collapsed, so they decided to purchase the land and construct a concrete church building.

They collected some of the money and also received some funds from the BIC Church Nepal Conference. Even then it was not enough. When they received funds

Personal reflection

Outfitter addresses Saskatchewan pastors

Calling his presentation "Moss, rock and water . . . the Trinity," wilderness outfitter Ric Driediger of La Ronge, Sask., spoke about his outdoor experiences and how he relates them to life and to his relationship with God, at this spring's biannual pastors gathering at Rosthern Mennonite Church on April 18. After the presentation, the floor was opened for questions and then the afternoon became interesting. This is when we pastors really shine, when we can ask questions and listen to the responses. All the comments were positive regarding this time and it was well enjoyed. In our work as pastors we are often giving, supporting, advising, praying, preaching and generally expending our energy and our time on others who are within our local churches. The pastors gathering is a time to share our stories, to seek some encouragement and to relax a bit and "let our hair down," as it were. At these gatherings we are allowed to turn off a bit and just be. Someone else will feed us and we will share with others from our lives, knowing that they understand where we are coming from. For me personally, these are times I look forward to, and receive energy from, and hopefully others feel the same.

—BY BRUCE JANTZEN

Bruce Jantzen is pastor of Laird Mennonite Church, Sask.

from the MWC Global Church Sharing Fund, they were excited to begin the work. They purchased the land beside the village and started the construction work.

Unfortunately, before the work was completed, Mongal and two other elderly people of the church passed away. However, under the leadership of Ramesh and other local church committee members, the construction work was successfully completed, giving the congregants good reason to praise God. ☸

The 'most exciting time to be a Christian'

British Anabaptist shares his passion for peace

BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Jesus' story from Luke 10, giving instructions to disciples on how to go forth in the world, took on new meaning for those who came to hear British Anabaptist Noel Moules speak at an Evening of Equipping on June 10 at Emmanuel Mennonite Church. The event was sponsored by Mennonite Church B.C.

A self-described "shalom activist," Moules is a founding member of the Anabaptist Network of Organisations in the United Kingdom. He is the creator and director of the Workshope Program for Applied Spirituality and author of

Fingerprints of Fire, Footprints of Peace, a book on Christianity and destiny.

Moules said that of the two thousand years of church history, this era of post-Christendom is for him the "most exciting time to be a Christian."

In Luke 10:1-12, Jesus' instructions include not taking a purse or sandals, asking a blessing of peace on a town and healing the sick.

"This passage is rooted in Palestinian events, but presented for global mission," he said. "The way it is told is making a clear point to bring to our modern secularist

society."

Moules is passionate about peace being the heart of the gospel. "I believe the Christian gospel is summed up in a single word: peace [shalom]," he said. "It is personified in Jesus Christ. Shalom from a Jesus perspective is nothing less than the secret of the universe."

Earlier in the day, Moules spoke to a group of MC B.C. church leaders on differences between North American and U.K. Anabaptists, and what they can learn from each other. He is currently on a tour of Canada and the United States. ☘

☘ Briefly noted

Changes made to annual Inspirational Day

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.—Bright and warm sunshine greeted more than 130 women of Mennonite Church B.C. on May 4 as they arrived at Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church for the 74th-annual Inspirational Day. This year, a number of changes were made to the program in an effort to encourage more interest among the younger generation of women in the area church. For starters, the whole event took place around tables in the gym. Door prizes and child care were also offered for the first time this year, with six children registered. One thing that was not part of the day, after many requests over the last number of years, was the memorial time for women who had passed away during the past year. Guest speaker Carole Smith Wheaton came with a suitcase full of heavy baggage to share: names and labels that people may have called women, and words that women use to describe themselves that either lift up or leave a scar. She then proceeded to explain from Psalm 139 how blessed women are to be fully and completely "beloved" by their Father in heaven. This year's offering was divided as follows: half to Camp Squeah, and a quarter each to Youth Unlimited, a drop-in centre for at-risk youth, and Mennonite Women Canada International Ministries.

—BY WALTRUDE GORTZEN



MC B.C. Inspirational Day participants use signs to declare they are 'beloved' by God.

☘ Briefly noted

Eastern Canada women enriched in the snow

TAVISTOCK, ONT.—Surprise! April 20 was a snow day! Even that didn't daunt 300-plus women from attending their Spring Enrichment Day at Tavistock Mennonite Church. Terri J. Plank Brenneman, author of the Bible study guide, "Wonderfully Made: Women, Faith and Self-Care," was the featured speaker. Her message began with a reminder that each woman is uniquely qualified to touch specific lives. She challenged participants to list the Lord's attributes as seen in various parts of the Bible, and then record six words that best describe God to them on one side of a bookmark. "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. Love your God with heart, soul and strength!" was the mantra for the morning. The afternoon session's mantra changed to, "Hear, O Women of Mennonite Church of Eastern Canada! Love the Lord your God with all your heart, your soul, your strength. Learn to love your neighbours and yourself. Trust in God's plan for you and your uniqueness!" With these powerful words, she encouraged the women to write down six attributes, talents or abilities that they possess on the reverse side of the bookmark begun in the morning. Those are gifts that come from God, she said.

—BY LINDA WIENS

Mennonite Women Canada embracing social media

STORY AND PHOTO BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada
WINNIPEG

Mennonite Women Canada leaders launched a Facebook-augmented communications strategy when they met in Winnipeg for Mennonite Church Canada's Spring Leadership Assembly earlier this year. Check out MW Canada's Facebook group at facebook.com and search for "Mennonite Women Canada."

MW Canada is already actively blogging (mennowomencanada.blogspot.ca) and produces a regular e-newsletter. Area church representatives are developing e-mail databases to grow connections with women from across the country.

"A lot of women do not know that a national women's organization of the church exists," says Liz Koop, president. "We hope to become more visible."

MW Canada will also continue communicating through traditional media, including its page in *Canadian Mennonite* six times a year. The leadership team unfurled a collection of new banners, large and small, featuring I Peter 4:10, a verse

that describes MC Canada's ministry: "As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace."

MW Canada nurtures life in Christ by sharing the gifts of its members, supporting one another and serving in ministry "across the street and around the world." The group raises funds to support MC Canada's international ministry work, operates a spiritual growth assistance fund, and helps young adults explore matters of faith through Radical Journey.

Although finding volunteers to represent each of the five area churches has been a challenge in recent years, Koop says, "I'm really happy to report that this is the first



Mennonite Women Canada leaders unveil a new banner in Winnipeg during Mennonite Church Canada's Spring Leadership Assembly. Pictured from left to right: Waltrude Gortzen, MC B.C. rep; Liz Koop, president; Myrna Sawatzky, MC Saskatchewan rep; Linda Wiens, MC Eastern Canada rep; Kate Janzen, MC Alberta rep; Elsie Wiebe, MC Manitoba rep; and Lois Mierau, secretary-treasurer.

time since 2008 we have a full complement of representatives." Elsie Wiebe, representing MC Manitoba, recently joined the team. ❧

/// Staff change

New pastor at First United Mennonite

VANCOUVER—Greg Thiessen was installed as associate pastor of First United Mennonite Church, Vancouver, on April 7. He will serve on a half-time basis in the areas of education and discipleship. Thiessen attended Trinity Western University, Langley, B.C., and Regent College, Vancouver, from which he received a master of Christian studies degree. He and his wife Aften also spent two years at the Evangelical Bible College in Malawi, Africa.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN

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GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Foodgrains Bank launches Syria crisis appeal

\$3.1 million now committed to provide food to those caught in the crisis

BY EMILY CAIN
Canadian Foodgrains Bank

“Every night I go to bed thinking about what I will feed my family in the morning,” says a Syrian woman who fled with her family to a refugee settlement in Sidon, south of Beirut, Lebanon.

Sadly, her story is all too common, as 6.8 million people are in need of immediate humanitarian assistance due to ongoing conflict in Syria.

To deal with the situation, Canadian Foodgrains Bank has launched a Syria crisis appeal to help raise money to

support people in that region who are in need. Initially, the Foodgrains Bank committed \$1.6 million to fund projects that will provide basic food items such as rice, chickpeas, pasta and oil to more than 33,000 people in the area.

And now it has committed a further \$1.5 million to help an additional 12,000 refugees by providing special supplementary food to babies between six months and a year old, as well as vouchers for families to buy food in the local market, and basic

cooking utensils that they were forced to leave behind when they fled their homes.

The projects are being led by Foodgrains Bank members Mennonite Central Committee Canada (through its partner Popular Aid for Relief and Development) and Canadian Baptist Ministries, with support from Presbyterian World Service & Development, World Renew, Primates World Relief & Development Fund, and the United Church of Canada.

Food is a top priority for many who have fled violence and fighting in Syria, according to Foodgrains Bank executive director Jim Cornelius. “Whether people are living as refugees in neighbouring countries, or are displaced from their homes within Syria’s borders, daily life has been interrupted and people do not have access to the food they need,” he says. “Many people are not able to work and normal agricultural production has been crippled in many areas.”

According to reports from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the conflict in Syria caused a dramatic drop in domestic food production. Production of many crops has dropped by half, and there is massive destruction to irrigation systems and infrastructure. At the same time, inflation is rampant and the price of many essential food items has risen by 200 percent.

Just under half of Syria’s population comes from rural areas, with 80 percent of these relying on agriculture for their livelihood.

“When there is a crisis of this magnitude, we must respond,” says Cornelius. “The Foodgrains Bank is looking for ways to scale up our effort and help even more people.”

The crisis in Syria, which began in 2011 as a peaceful protest, has worsened in the last few months. To date, more than 80,000 people have been killed and thousands more have been wounded.

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank projects are undertaken with financial support from the Canadian International Development Agency. Since January 2012, the Canadian government has provided more than \$48 million in humanitarian assistance to Syria and neighbouring countries. ❧

MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE PHOTO



Syrian refugees are pictured in an informal settlement in Lebanon known colloquially as ‘a gathering.’



James Jakob Fehr of the German Mennonite Peace Committee, left, presents Judy da Silva, a member of the Grassy Narrows First Nation in northwestern Ontario, right, with the 2013 Michael Sattler Peace Prize for her environmental advocacy work against multinational logging companies in her community.

Ontario indigenous woman awarded Sattler Peace Prize

German Mennonite Peace Committee Story and Photo
FREIBURG, GERMANY

Judy da Silva, a member of the Grassy Narrows First Nation in northwestern Ontario, was this year's recipient of the Michael Sattler Peace Prize from the German Mennonite Peace Committee.

"We want to award the prize to Judy da Silva in order to honour the nonviolent resistance of the Grassy Narrows First Nation against the destruction of nature and for the preservation of their indigenous culture," said James Jakob Fehr at the ceremony on May 20 at the Abbey of St. Peter in the Black Forest, near Freiburg, where Sattler lived as a priest before joining the early Anabaptist movement.

The prize, which includes the sum of 2,000 Euros, acknowledges groups or individuals who work for peace, nonviolent Christian witness, reconciliation or dialogue between religions. The German members of the Peace Committee first learned about these struggles during a delegation to Grassy Narrows that they co-organized with Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT).

The mother of five children, da Silva has organized countless youth and women's

gatherings, protests and speaking tours, and participated in blockades to advocate

for justice and a healthy environment. Grassy Narrows has become a beacon of hope and an example of effective community resistance in the face of some of the world's largest multinational logging companies, including Abitibi and Weyerhaeuser Corporation.

"I am delighted that Judy da Silva and Grassy Narrows have been recognized for their courageous and committed leadership," said Peter Haresnape of CPT Canada. "Judy teaches, inspires and challenges wherever she goes."

"Judy was an excellent candidate for this award, as she devotes her free time and her life to living her values as a protector of our natural environment, said Lucille McKenzie, a member of Grassy Narrows band council. "All Judy's hard work has been instrumental in protecting the natural environment of Grassy Narrows and our people."

Da Silva thanked her community, without whose help the accomplishments in Grassy Narrows would not have been possible, adding that she and her family were overwhelmed by their reception in Germany.

While in the country, da Silva was booked to promote Grassy Narrows' grassroots boycott of Weyerhaeuser Corporation. ❧

❧ Briefly noted

Kelly wins 'right to fish'

Patricia Kelly, who also goes by her aboriginal name, Kwitsel Tatel, has finally won a nine-year battle with law enforcement to legally fish in British Columbia's Fraser River as part of her treaty rights, receiving an absolute discharge from the British Columbia Provincial Court in Chilliwack, according to the *Globe and Mail*. Kelly tearfully told her story to a workshop at Mennonite Church Canada's national assembly last summer ("She is fighting a lonely battle," July 30, 2012, page 8). In a May 29 article by the *Globe's* Mark Hume, the Sto:Lo woman was reported to have been alternately "weeping and sounding defiant, saying the marathon legal battle left her feeling 'exhausted and broken.' But she said she has struck a blow for aboriginal rights and plans to move back to B.C. from her new home in Alberta to fish the Fraser River again this summer. 'Yes. I am going fishing again,' she said. 'And I'm not going after a permit. . . . I don't need a permit from Canada. I'm unceded. I'm unconquered.'" According to Hume, Kelly "said the fish she caught in the summer of 2004 were gathered on behalf of her large family, in preparation for ceremonies that were planned for that winter."

—By Dick Benner



Kelly

MEDA uses luncheon to introduce Techno-Links

BY KARIN FEHDERAU
Saskatchewan Correspondent
SASKATOON

In a recent gathering at a Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) luncheon, long-time member Paul Tiessen introduced the organization to a new group of professionals by simply sharing his heart.

"When I was introduced to MEDA, I got excited to help people in other countries who can't get help from banks," he said.

On hand to explain the idea behind MEDA's Techno-Links initiative, Katie Turner talked about MEDA's goal to help

farmers in Peru and Nicaragua improve their farming practices so that they have better yields and produce, and, in the end, can sell to more-profitable markets.

"Farmers don't know planting techniques to optimize yields," she said, explaining that often farmers simply learned how to farm from their parents, whose methods were often unrefined. As well, "business in developing countries think small farmers can't afford tools," she noted.

In order to close the gap and help small farmers, a solution was needed. Techno-Links helps to build understanding between small-scale farmers and the agri-business companies that supply their

needs, Turner said, noting, "Agriculture technology services are often aimed at large and medium-sized farmers."

In order to help these companies better respond to the needs of small-scale farmers, MEDA ran a business competition. Twenty companies were chosen and MEDA worked with their business plans to help the poor. According to Turner, the business plans chosen had to demonstrate equality for women and men, as well as a concern for environmental issues.

One company buys fruit from local farmers and dries it to sell in the U.S. With MEDA's help, it trained farmers to grow organic fruit using simple pest traps, instead of chemicals, to help control bugs.

And Techno-Links does more than just save the family farm, according to Turner. "In the countries we work in, a big part of the labour force is in agriculture," she said, expressing her belief that this project will help improve more than just the lives of food producers. ☘

PHOTO COURTESY OF MEDA



Jose Aguirre Mercado shows one of his homemade pest traps. An opening is made at the top of the bottle, and pineapple juice or sugar water is put into the bottle, which is then hung around the orchard. Bugs and pests are attracted to the sugar scent in the bottle, where they gorge themselves on the juice and are unable to escape.



MENNONITE DISASTER SERVICE PHOTO

Almost exactly two years after tornados devastated parts of the south, Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) celebrated a final home dedication in Walker County, Ala. On April 27, 2011, Alabama residents experienced one of the worst tornado outbreaks ever; more than 60 tornados were reported that day across the state and 243 people lost their lives. More than 13,000 homes were destroyed or heavily damaged across the state. In the two years that MDS has been responding in the county, 1,589 volunteers worked 11,586 days on 292 clean-ups, 82 minor repairs, 12 major repairs and four complete new builds. The work was a cooperative effort of MDS, World Renew and the Walker County Long-Term Recovery Committee. The dedication ceremony, held at approximately the same time that the tornados hit two years earlier, marked the ending of the MDS response in Birmingham.



Jae Young Lee and Karen Spicher are pictured with their daughter Lomie. Lee is director of Connexus and the Korea Peacebuilding Institute. Spicher is a Mennonite Mission Network mission associate and lead teacher at Connexus.

School in South Korea growing after spin-off

BY WIL LAVEIST
Mennonite Church Canada

A year after getting a fresh start as an English-language school for children, Connexus is growing and gaining recognition in its new South Korean community for strong academics and promoting peace.

Connexus was established in 2004 as an English-language adult school by the Korea Anabaptist Center (KAC), a partner of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Mission Network. In 2011, the centre moved to Chuncheon City because its downtown Seoul location had become too expensive, and it saw an opportunity to have Connexus operate independently.

Connexus' reputation of having caring teachers, only four students per class, and a speaking-centred curriculum is spreading by word-of-mouth in its new home in

Deokso, a suburb of Seoul. The school has grown from 10 students and two teachers to nearly 60 students and four full-time teachers.

"The past year has not been easy, but

'It's also been a faith-affirming experience to witness God's provision of everything we need and more.'

(Karen Spicher)

through it all I've been amazed at the timeliness of the transition and at the rapid growth of our work," says Karen Spicher, a Mennonite Mission Network mission associate and lead teacher at Connexus, via e-mail. "It's also been a faith-affirming

experience to witness God's provision of everything we need and more."

The Anabaptist centre also established a successful peace education program, now known as Korea Peacebuilding Institute, that offers training sessions for school teachers, students and their parents at non-governmental organizations and schools.

Connexus and the peacebuilding institute serve people and organizations from all walks of life, while the centre continues to focus specifically on providing resources to congregations and people who are interested in Anabaptist theology and practice.

Jae Young Lee, Spicher's husband, is the director of Connexus and the institute. "Our main work these days is training people to learn what restorative justice is, and how to apply it in their communities," Lee says in an e-mail. "Restorative discipline has become an especially popular program, since it is received as a new approach to prevent school violence issues."

Tim Froese, MC Canada Witness executive minister and an original Korea Anabaptist Center staffer, expresses amazement at the progress since the centre officially opened in 2001. "When Koreans invited the Mennonite church in North America to become partners in exploring what an Anabaptist-flavoured Christian faith would mean for the church and society, we had no idea what would emerge," he says. "As Anabaptist values continue to take root and are lived out by Korean leaders, more new faith communities are emerging."

An emphasis on Anabaptist values and relationships is central to Connexus.

"Parents see [Connexus] as a place where students not only improve their English, but also build meaningful rela-

tionships," Spicher says. "The Korean staff . . . practise restorative justice and restorative discipline with the students, enabling the students to develop the skills they need to be an active part of their own conflict resolution." ❧

GOD AT WORK IN US

OBITUARIES

Three remembered for strong relationships

Ron Peters, d. April 6, 2013

Jacob A Wiebe, d. April 25, 2013

Cheryl Fisch, d. May 6, 2013

Mennonite Church Canada

Three former staff members of Mennonite Pioneer Missions and Native Ministry, the predecessor organizations of Mennonite Church Canada Indigenous Relations, passed away in April and May of this year. Ronald Peters, Jacob A. Wiebe and Cheryl Fisch all based their lives and ministries on strong relationships, say former co-workers Neill and Edith von Gunten. Their relationships extended to people across the various communities in which they lived and worked, as well as to the broader church.

Ron Peters

In the 1960s, Ron Peters and his wife Doris accepted an assignment in the Lake Winnipeg community of Bloodvein First Nation, where they moved with their young daughter, Terri. After their tenure in Bloodvein, the growing family settled in Aberdeen, Sask., and remained in that area until retiring near St. Anne, Man. Peters' life of ministry included pastoral work, social work, serving in various elected offices, and—his great love—farming.

His title always mattered less to him than his relationships, say the von Guntens, former co-directors of Native Ministry. "He strove to live with integrity and compassion, and he earned people's respect and affection for it."

In his obituary, Peters' children wrote: "Dad had a desire for justice that ranged from ensuring the scoreboard was correct



Peters

at high school volleyball games to railing against the inadequacies of Canada's criminal justice system. His early career experiences in northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan fueled a lifelong passion for justice for aboriginal people. While Dad often lamented his own failings in working for justice, he never stopped urging himself and others to pursue it."

Peters passed away at the age of 71 years after a short, intense journey with pancreatic cancer. He is survived by his wife Doris; their children, Terri Peters (Darren Oleksyn), Pam Peters-Pries (Albert) and their children Benjamin and Matthew, and Jody Peters (Tara Faris) and son Noah Chelsom; and by four sisters and their spouses and families.

Jacob A. Wiebe

Jake Wiebe and his wife Helen were involved with Mennonite Pioneer Mission and Native Ministry in several ways over many years, from teaching in Loon Straits, Man., to serving as pastor and supportive wife at Elim Mennonite Fellowship in Selkirk, Man. During the years in Selkirk they did extensive chaplaincy work in community personal care homes and hospitals. Wiebe also served as itinerant pastor in Pine Dock and Loon Straits for several years from his base in Selkirk.

Over the years, Wiebe also found other forms of employment, from painting and packing groceries, to carpentry, log cabin



Wiebe

construction, farming and baking. Living in a variety of locations taught his family to call many different places home. After retirement, and with his wife's teaching, Wiebe sewed and donated 1,950 blankets to Mennonite Central Committee.

Wiebe passed away at the age of 90. He is survived by his lifelong sweetheart and best friend, Helen, whom he married in 1948; their children, Brent (Romie), Margaret (Garnet), Naomi (John), Salome (Eric), Viola (Dave), and Orlando (Barb); grandchildren, Raymond (Rosa), and Amanda (Dave); and two sisters, two brothers and their families.

Cheryl Steifel Fisch

Cheryl Steifel was originally from Bucyrus, Ohio, where she graduated from Ohio State University and met her husband, Roland Fisch. With their young daughter, Charlott, the couple lived and worked on the Hollow Water First Nation in the 1970s under the auspices of Native Ministries. They built many relationships in the community and area in those years.

The rest of her adult years were spent in the Florida Keys, where she found great joy working as a teacher. Steifel Fisch helped create a recreation program that allowed students to actively engage with arts and science during summer months.

The couple moved to northern Florida in recent months to be close to their children and grandchildren. Steifel Fisch passed away after struggling for several years with health issues.

She is survived by her husband Roland; daughter Charlott (Pete Cadiz) and their children, Keegan and Mallory; son JR (Robyn) and their children, Connor and Lily; as well as a sister and brother. ❧



Steifel Fisch



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

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ARTBEAT

Songs

across borders

Snapshots

(Photo below) Tim Corlis, back to camera, directs the Vancouver Peace Choir, plus aboriginal drummer Randy Wood and bassist James Meger, at a May 26 concert at the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre. The concert incorporated traditional Cree music with western choral music, as well as the work of Hussein Janmohammed, a Muslim composer and musician. (Photo right) Cellist Cris Derksen, originally from the La Crete, Alta., area, who has both Mennonite and Cree heritage, joined the choir on various numbers, and also sang and performed some of her own music that combines classical, aboriginal and electronic influences. The choir, with its roots in Anabaptism, plays a significant role in crossing the divide between the two solitudes of the immigrants and Canada's indigenous peoples, which will become increasingly important as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission arrives in B.C. this fall. (See review and more photos online at canadianmennonite.org.)

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LORNE BRANDT





PHOTO BY MAX WIEDMER / PHOTO MONTAGE BY ERIC OBERLI



'Portrait' of peacemakers

Peace Makers screened during Night of Faith Festival

BY MICHAEL SOMMER
Mennonite World Conference
BASEL, SWITZERLAND

More than a thousand people saw the movie *Peace Makers* at the Theodorskirch during the first Night of Faith Festival that took place in Basel on May 17.

During seven screenings over seven hours, the 25-minute movie, created and produced by Max Wiedmer and his team, attracted many visitors to the church's contemplative atmosphere while awing them with technical wizardry.

Peace Makers was shot with a camera that was turned 90 degrees and was shown on a screen that measured close to 11 metres high in a vertical "portrait" format on a wall in the heart of the Gothic church.

The movie tells the story of a young boy in search of peace and security. Three main actors play in this silent film that alternates with the reading of biblical texts about creation, Noah, Moses, Jesus the peacemaker and Jesus the Saviour. The readings are accompanied by current photographs.

Musical snippets from children's choirs, as well as from a men's choir from the Mennonite Church of Geisberg and from the multi-artistic show from the Lightclubberz (a group of Mennonite youth), resonate with the chosen themes that are highlighted by sequences of light-painting. Most of the pictures were shot in the region of Basel and surrounding area.

The movie project started in August

2012 and mobilized more than 30 people, mostly from Mennonite churches in Switzerland, in collaboration with members of other churches. *Peace Makers* brought a touch of peace theology to the Night of Faith.

This first Festival of the Night of Faith, planned by the Association for the Promotion of Culture in Basel and supported by Protestant, Catholic and Evangelical churches, blew a wind of faith on the city, with the goal of linking the arts to the church. More than 70 events were spread out across almost 40 locations, including public plazas, churches, theatres and cafés, were offered at no cost to the public. There was something for every taste, from concerts, mime, dance and poetry, to drama, literature, sound and light, and miniature art.

Several thousand spectators walked or took the tramway from one place to another, and the atmosphere was friendly. Included among the 300 artists were singer Nina Hagen, mime Carlos Martinez and Jars of Clay, an American pop-rock group.

An upcoming project is to eventually create a 90- to 120-minute film. For further information, visit friedeinhochformat.ch or nachtdesglaubens.ch. ☿

Michael Sommer is editor of Christ Seul, a French Mennonite publication.

Max Wiedmer's Peace Maker film, created in 'portrait' format, rather than as a conventional 'landscape,' was shown seven times over seven hours on May 17 in Basel's Theodorskirch as part of the city's first Night of Faith Festival.



END OF SCHOOL YEAR NEWS

Seminary graduates challenged to speak the language of love

STORY AND PHOTO BY MARY E. KLASSEN

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary
GOSHEN, IND.

Scripture was read in Greek and English, but graduates were challenged to speak in the language of love at the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary commencement service, held on May 25 at Goshen's College Mennonite Church.

Lydia Neufeld Harder, Th.D., used I Corinthians 13 as the foundation for her address, asking how graduates can share the message entrusted to them without becoming a noisy gong or clanging cymbal. She used a metaphor from theologian Walter Brueggemann to recommend that graduates learn to be bilingual, speaking different languages in different conversations.

Graduates have immersed themselves in the language of their faith community, knowing its power to shape them into disciples of Christ, said Harder, a pastor and former director of the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre.

Now, as they move into different communities—in a new profession or new school, or continuing in ministry with a new status as a graduate—she asked, “What language do you borrow for the conversation beyond your spiritual home? How can you share what you have learned in the context of the many competing voices in our society today? What language will you use in the many conversations you will have as you move into communities foreign to your way of thinking?”

She answered the question from her own experience: “What I have gradually learned is that the language of love transcends differences . . . because it urges us to listen.”

Harder challenged graduates to listen deeply and respectfully in the communities in which they will serve. “The language of love creates mutual learning and true exchange of wisdom and insight,” she

emphasized.

Harder earned her doctorate from Emmanuel College at the Toronto School of Theology. She has taught at several institutions, including Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., the Toronto School of Theology, and schools in Paraguay and Egypt. She participated in the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) International Peace Committee and was involved in theological dialogues between the Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute and the Toronto



Deborah-Ruth Ferber



Doug Unrau

Mennonite Theological Centre.

Two students honoured at the service are from Canada:

- **DEBORAH-RUTH FERBER** of Windsor, Ont., received a certificate in theological studies. She is beginning an assignment with L'Arche Daybreak, Richmond Hill, Ont.

- **DOUG UNRAU** of Calgary received a master of divinity degree. He will become pastor of Lowe Farm Mennonite Church in Manitoba.

Twelve of the 19 graduates earned master of divinity degrees. Six have or are seeking pastoral ministry placements. Five have or are seeking ministry with church agencies and organizations. Two are pursuing clinical pastoral education through the next year, and three are involved in ministry for people with health or disability issues. ☿



Commencement speaker Lydia Neufeld Harder challenged graduates of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary to speak with the language of love as they move into ministry where people do not share their commitments.

COMPOSITE ARTWORK BY FRIESEN TOKAR AND RYAN ROTH BARTEL



A composite drawing of the new Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre/Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) bookstore planned for CMU's new Learning Commons building.

MC Canada, CMU to extend Anabaptist resources

By DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada / Canadian Mennonite University
WINNIPEG

Mennonite Church Canada and Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) are bringing together the national church's popular Resource Centre and the university's bookstore into one integrated ministry.

The yet-to-be-named facility will house a variety of materials available for borrowing, purchasing or downloading. As part of CMU's larger Learning Commons project, its function will be enhanced by a café and a public gathering space to facilitate conversation.

The demand for Anabaptist resources is growing locally, nationally and internationally. Loans from the Resource Centre have doubled since 2004, and CMU bookstore sales have increased by a third since 2006. Through this new joint effort, cross-training will enable staff of the integrated resource/book centre to assist walk-in and online customers, enhancing customer service and increasing service to the university as well to as the Mennonite and wider church community.

The new facility will occupy less than 10 percent of the new 2,300-square-metre Learning Commons building. CMU's new library, study spaces and a large foyer available for a variety of public events and community functions will also be housed in the

same building.

MC Canada and CMU are joining together to invite congregational

participation through one- to three-year budget commitments to help fund the \$720,000 required for the Resource Centre/bookstore portion of the larger Learning Commons project.

Information about the new facility has been sent to each MC Canada congregation and a contest is being held to name the new centre. For more information, visit cmu.ca/connect. ☘

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ECO-ADVENTURE TOURS

- AMAZON RAINFOREST & GALAPAGOS ISLANDS (Jan 16-26/2014)
- SPECTACULAR SCANDINAVIA & ITS FJORDS (June 13-26/2014)
- POLAR BEAR EXPRESS (Oct 16-25/2014)
- AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND (Jan 30-Feb 19/2015)

EDUCATIONAL TOURS

- BRITISH ISLES (ENGLAND, SCOTLAND & WALES) with DAVID & JOYCE ESHLEMAN (Sept 13-25/2013)
- CHINA & YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE (Nov 1-15/2013)
- EUROPEAN CHRISTMAS MARKETS (Dec 9-15/2013)
- JAMAICA: ITS PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY & FRUITS (Jan 18-27/2014)
- JAPAN & KOREA (Sept 15-25/2014)
- CHURCHES & SAFARIS in ETHIOPIA & TANZANIA (Oct 10-21/2014)
- VIETNAM & SINGAPORE (Nov 10-24/2014)
- CUBA with JACK & IRENE SUDERMAN (Jan 9-18/2015)
- CHURCHES & SAFARIS in KENYA & TANZANIA (Feb 6-18/2015)

CUSTOM TOURS

- HAITI CUSTOM TOUR (Feb 27-March 9/2014)
- HESSTON COLLEGE STUDENT CHOIR TOUR to EUROPE (May 13-June 3/2014)

HOLY LAND TOURS

- HOLY LAND: HARVEST the OLIVES & EXPERIENCE the BIBLE (Oct 12-21/2013)
- ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR RICH BUCHER (Nov 5-14/2013)
- HOLY LAND TOUR with PASTOR PHIL WAGLER (Feb 12-20/2014)
- ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR DAVID BOSHART (April 24-May 3/2014)
- HOLY LAND TOUR with PASTOR DARREL TOEWS (Feb 19-28/2014)
- FROM NAZARETH to ROME with PASTOR JIM BROWN (Nov 3-15/2014)

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'Improv': the new training model

Lebold Endowment banquet aids Conrad Grebel University College

BY DICK BENNER

Editor/Publisher

BADEN, ONT.

The Art of Improv” doesn’t sound much like something coming from the pulpit. Or inside the pastor’s study. Or even in the pew.

But it got focused attention at the fund-raising banquet for the Ralph and Eileen Lebold Endowment on June 4, when the dinner music was jazz saxophone and piano by Willem Moolenbeek and Charlene Nafziger, and the theme was going “glocal,” a term combining “global” and “local.”

“Improv,” usually associated with theatre to “compose, recite, play or sing extemporaneously,” was front and centre as a paradigm shift in pastoral training by the likes of three Grebel presidents, the college’s supervisor of theological studies, a pastor from Toronto who does “improv” with an immigrant pastor, and a recent theological studies student. And it played well in the huge, open multi-purpose addition to Steinmann Mennonite Church in Baden.

“Improv is the next frontier,” said Ralph Lebold, a past president of the college, after whom the endowment fund is named, “since many of our new congregations are coming out of other ethnicities and Sunday morning preaching is now done in 13 different languages. Supervised experience in ministry is important,” he said, reiterating

the original goals of this effort to guide pastoral formation, “but it tends to focus on the cerebral rather than what comes from the ‘gut’—from the inside.”

Henry Paetkau, Grebel’s immediate past president and now area minister for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, said it is time to “sing a new song,” as he cited the “grand vision and enthusiasm for evangelism” of Pastor Jehu Lian of the Chin congregation in Kitchener: “Jehu is so excited about his discovery of Anabaptism, he thinks everybody in the world should be Mennonite!”

“It’s a different world in this 21st century,” Paetkau said, noting a big demographic shift in Mennonite culture that calls the church to pay attention to the large, broad and passionate vision of immigrant Mennonite pastors. “While we have developed fine tools for ministry—ministerial competencies in six categories, our Confession of Faith, a minister’s manual for ceremonies and rituals—we can’t build the church only on these.”

Young adults are likewise calling for a new vision, he said, citing their yearning for something “fresh” when 65 of them attended a “Red Letter Day” sponsored by the area church that featured visionary speakers like Tony Campolo and Shane

Claiborne. “More than half of them signed up for an ongoing conversation,” he said.

In her praise of Lebold for his original vision, Susan Schultz Huxman, Grebel’s current president, reported that the endowment fund now stands at \$789,700, some \$200,000 short of its \$1 million goal, enabling Grebel to spend \$24,000 per year towards the salary of Marianne Mellinger, the co-ordinator of leadership formation for MC Eastern Canada and supervisor of

/// Staff change

Vuorinen to replace Leonard Enns on Grebel music faculty

WATERLOO, ONT.— Well known in the Kitchener-Waterloo music community and beyond, Mark Vuorinen has been named to the choral music faculty at Conrad Grebel



Vuorinen

University College. Vuorinen is currently the artistic director and conductor of the Grand Philharmonic Choir, music director of the Toronto Chamber Choir and the Toronto Choral Artists, and a George Black Fellow in Sacred Music at the Church of the Redeemer in Toronto. He will continue his role with the Grand Philharmonic Choir when he assumes his faculty role at Grebel. “Besides superb experience and expertise, Mark brings energy, poise, collegiality and eagerness to engage our many music students at Waterloo, the K-W community and the wider Mennonite church,” says Grebel president Susan Schultz Huxman. “I am thrilled to be joining the faculty at Conrad Grebel and look forward to contributing to the very fine choral traditions that are such an important part of the college’s life,” says Vuorinen of his appointment. “One of the wonderful things about Grebel is the intersection of religious studies, peace studies and music.” Vuorinen will replace Leonard Enns, who is retiring in June after 36 years on the Grebel faculty.

—Conrad Grebel University College

CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE PHOTO BY FRED MARTIN



Ralph and Eileen Lebold, right, share a light moment with Christina Edmiston and Herb Schultz.

END OF SCHOOL YEAR NEWS

Grebel's master of theological studies program, and towards scholarships. There have been more than 300 donors to the endowment, she said.

Mellinger, who said the pastoral training models need to change to fit a post-Christendom era, observed, "We can no longer assume pastors are formed in a Mennonite, or even Christian, context. And we can't assume they will uproot their families for two or three years attending seminary. Not all of them need the same training. Some of them will lead established churches, others emerging congregations."

In a video interview with Noé Gonzalia, Mellinger asked why his work with several congregations in Quebec "doesn't fit the conventional mould" when thinking about

pastoral leadership. To which Gonzalia responded with the word "diaspora," meaning most of his members come from different countries, like Colombia, many of them newcomers to the faith who are discovering the Bible for the first time. "And they won't stay at one place for long, but as immigrants they will follow jobs elsewhere or bring in new family members, so that we have to establish a model of ministry for a 'transitional church.'" he noted.

Tim Reimer, pastor of Toronto's Danforth Mennonite Church, who is into "improv" by teaming up with Ethiopian pastor Ashenafi Fulase, said he meets with his immigrant counterpart on a regular basis, sharing sermon themes and counselling tips. Reimer sometimes worships in Fulase's congregation, where the style is much different but serves a deep spirituality engendered by Fulase.

"It's been a great learning experience," said Reimer, who learned that ministry is a part of everyday living, and urged a greater "attentiveness to the Spirit" evident in immigrant congregations like Fulase's. He said "timing is important" in improv

ministry, just as it is in theatre. "Now seems the time to pick up some new and unfamiliar spiritual dynamics from immigrant churches, triggering 'revolutions in our pastoral training.'"

In her story as a 2011 graduate of Grebel's master of theological studies program, [Christina Edmiston](#) said she came as a "blank slate" to the school, with no religious background or familiarity with Mennonite cultural experiences, and so she felt very intimidated taking classes with many of her colleagues.

"In due time, though, I caught the 'Grebel spirit,'" which she defined as giving her "a sound theological foundation, but in a spirit of openness to pioneering and playfulness that extends to an enormous extended family of Christ."

In his closing remarks, David Martin, MC Eastern Canada executive minister, finished the story of Pastor Jehu, who he said is an exemplary global ambassador for the Mennonite faith by helping to establish churches in Buffalo, Calgary, Edmonton, New Delhi, India, Burma and Sweden.

Improv at its best! ❧

UpComing

AMBS expands Anabaptist Short Courses offerings

ELKHART, IND.—Anabaptist Short Courses, a new series of non-credit online courses offered by Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), generated so much interest this spring that some potential students must wait until they are again offered in the future. To accommodate them, a series of six courses is being planned, with two set for fall. Gayle Gerber Koontz, professor of theology and ethics, will teach John Howard Yoder's Theological Legacy in September and October. Perry Yoder, professor emeritus of Old Testament, will teach Biblical Foundations of Peace and Justice in October and November. In spring 2014, Jamie Pitts, assistant professor of Anabaptist studies, will teach La Historia y Teología de Anabautismo, the Spanish-language history and theology course. Two new courses are also planned for next spring: Mennonite Polity, to be taught by David Boshart and Janeen Bertsche Johnson; and Congregational Conflict, to be taught by David Miller. For more information, visit ambs.edu and following the "Lifelong Learning" link.

—AMBS



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CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE PHOTO BY JENNIFER KONKLE



The Government of Canada has provided funding of \$150,000 through the Canada Cultural Spaces Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage, to help with the expansion project of the Mennonite Archives of Ontario at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont. This new investment will support the acquisition of specialized equipment to preserve and exhibit archival materials that reflect the Mennonite experience in Ontario. Pictured from left to right at the June 7 funding announcement are: Grebel president Susan Schultz Huxman, Kitchener-Waterloo MP Peter Braid, Grebel archivist/librarian Laureen Harder-Gissing and Grebel director of development Fred W. Martin. At a cost of \$8.7 million, the renovated facility will feature fully modernized archival storage, collection management and public access spaces.

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END OF SCHOOL YEAR NEWS

Briefly noted

TWU honours foundational leadership of departing president

LANGLEY, B.C.—On April 4, Trinity Western University (TWU) gathered for its final chapel to honour the tenure of president Jonathan S. Raymond, Ph.D., and his seven years of service to the university he so profoundly shaped. Students called him J-Ray, a nickname Raymond is proud of because it indicates a particular “cred” and familial



Raymond


connection to campus life. Also in April, faculty and staff gathered to honour his devotion to the mission of TWU, his outreach to the community and world at large, and his emphasis on infusing Christ-like values and reflection into the lives of students. During his tenure as president, Raymond put forth a strategic direction that sought to further strengthen

TWU’s educational vitality and emphasize the development of leaders of character and competence who would aspire to meet the world’s deepest needs through the pursuit of Christ’s truth, reconciliation, compassion and hope. As president emeritus and senior fellow of TWU, Raymond will continue to write on topics of Christian life and leadership, and spiritual formation. He will also take on speaking engagements in North America and internationally under the banner of TWU.

—Trinity Western University

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VIEWPOINT

Dispelling the myths of 'microwave ministry'

The uncomfortable realities of short-term missions

BY BETHANY DAMAN

SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES



Bethany Daman

In North American society, where most people have been blessed with an abundance of resources, many see short-term missions as a way to use what we have to help others. But is this actually what we are doing?

The success of these trips is often measured after a group completes a service project or executes a well-attended Vacation Bible School (VBS) program. The biggest accomplishment usually comes during an altar call where numerous people come forward and make a spiritual commitment to Christ. After completing these tasks, most groups return home with a warm feeling, thinking they have made a lasting impact in the country they visited.

But what is the outcome for those on the receiving end? Too often, these VBS programs spend significant amounts of time and money preparing craft projects, hand-outs and skits, setting unrealistic expectations that the locals may not be able to match.

Once the team leaves, there may be no long-term positive change for several reasons.

Relationships

To build a strong ministry one needs to invest in relationships. In most cases, once a group begins to break through the initial barriers of language and culture, and starts building relationships, it is

time for the young missionaries to return home. There is simply not enough time to build true, loving relationships.

Culture

Imagine a group from Asia visiting your hometown. After a two-week stay, they return home, telling everyone of the cultural problems and poor ways of life in your community. Would they have an adequate picture of Canada?

However, when North American groups return home from mission trips, they confidently stand in front of their congregations and share their new cultural experiences. In an era of growing technology, perhaps the global church could find other methods to share ideas and resources across nations.

Finances and economics

In his book *Toxic Charity*, Robert D. Lupton writes, "U.S. missions teams who rushed to Honduras to help rebuild homes destroyed by Hurricane Mitch spent on average \$30,000 per home—homes locals could have built for \$3,000 each." If churches had sent fewer workers with the same amount of money, they could have hired local builders in need of jobs to do the work. Imagine the potential jobs funded, programs offered and people fed if a local pastor was given the same amount of money it costs to send a mission group.

What do we do?

Most people who go on short-term mission trips go with the best of intentions. However, I believe there are alternative options that may have greater results. In fact, if one wishes to truly do the work Jesus calls Christians to, it probably requires a much larger sacrifice than fundraising a few thousand dollars and

that will address the questions of missions as a whole. However, before teams embark on a short-term trip, I think they should truly examine the costs, benefits and intentions:

- **IS THIS** trip for me, or will it benefit the people I am going to serve?
- **WOULD THIS** money be best spent

Christians often get sucked into the idea that 'missions' is something that can only be done in foreign countries.

taking a couple weeks off school or work. Whether working abroad or partnering with an organization close to home, successful ministry requires a long-term commitment, rather than the "micro-wave ministry" of short-term trips.

Speaking from experience, Christians often get sucked into the idea that "missions" is something that can only be done in foreign countries. I used to feel that if I was not serving Jesus in a foreign country, like others from my church and community were, I was not doing enough. But this is not a positive way of thinking. We must recognize there are needs for ministry all around us. Although the quick-fix trip often sounds more appealing, how much more of an impact would we be able to make if we built lasting relationships closer to home?

There is no black-and-white answer

somewhere else?

- **WHAT WILL** the long-term effects be?
- **IS THERE** a ministry similar to this closer to home?
- **AND FINALLY**, am I prepared to sacrifice and invest in potential long-term relationships?

Short-term mission trips may be the easy answer, but long-term ministry is what truly builds community. It is most often through long-term relationships that others can really begin to understand who Christ is and what a relationship with him is all about. ✎

Bethany Daman is a media and communications student at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg. She attends Niverville (Man.) Community Fellowship.

Confessions of a gay Mennonite

Young Winkler man tries to avoid 'drive-by shamings' in his hometown

BY LAURA TAIT

In addition to being smart, funny, politically conservative and an entrepreneur, Jude (a pseudonym) is also same-sex-oriented, a secret he has kept from his parents and most of his community.

Now living in Winnipeg, this 25-year-old Mennonite from Winkler, Man., has a shy and humble nature, evident in his composure as he sits in a coffee shop for an interview.

Family has always been important for Jude, who works with his parents in the family business. However, there is a tension he holds with his family that he believes can never be reconciled.

"My parents are the only people I've ever wanted to please," says Jude. "But they're also people that can never totally accept me for who I am."

(Continued on page 36)





Laura Tait

(Continued from page 35)

Jude finds himself stuck between neither relating completely to his community in Winkler, nor finding solidarity with modern “gay culture.” This dichotomy has put a strain on Jude as he tries to navigate these

wonder, do they really?” says Jude.

Another aspect framing his family’s prejudice against same-sex oriented people is stereotypical, flamboyant “gay culture,” with which Jude has no interest in being associated. Jude laments how lesbian/gay/

Jude laments how lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer Pride parades . . . have turned into flashy displays of scantily clad people dancing atop floats.

dual lives of being “out” in his personal life and “in” in his family and professional lives.

Much of the motivation for hiding his sexual orientation comes from stigma against same-sex orientation he sensed while growing up in Winkler. He has no intention of ever telling his school or church friends from Winkler about his sexual orientation because he believes he would not be received kindly.

“In Mennonite families, shaming is a big business,” says Jude. “Some places have drive-by shootings. Winkler has drive-by shamings. Saying nothing about it means less shaming than acknowledging what people might suspect.”

Jude feels it’s the prospect of being shamed that colours much of his family’s prejudice against same-sex-oriented people. The thought of their own son being one of these people would cause them anxiety, he believes. What would people at church think? For Jude, trying to tell his family something they don’t want to know isn’t worth the tears, hurt and denial.

“Your parents say they’ll love you no matter what, but the thought of them knowing something like this makes me

bisexual/transgendered/queer Pride parades, that used to be respectable political protests, have turned into flashy displays of scantily clad people dancing atop floats.

For Jude, maintaining a bit of humour is important. From dodging his mother, who asks him about any women in his life, to dealing with people associated with the kind of “gay culture” he wants to avoid, his mantra remains, “If you don’t laugh, you cry.”

While many same-sex-oriented people often feel isolated from the church and their faith, this does not describe Jude’s experience. He finds comfort in a church congregation in Winnipeg that he feels is more accepting of his orientation. He believes stigma against same-sex-oriented people is a product of a history informed by human beings, and not one of God. ❧

The Voice of the Voiceless articles were written for Canadian Mennonite University’s Journalism: Practices and Principles course during the Winter 2013 semester. Teacher Carl DeGurse is vice-chair of Canadian Mennonite’s board of directors and assistant city editor of the Winnipeg Free Press.

Blue saris and shaved heads

Hair donation and musings on femininity

BY RACHEL BERGEN

Young Voices Co-editor

Long, voluminous hair has long been regarded as an archetypal feminine trait.

Anna-Marie Janzen, 25, currently has long curly blonde hair, but she won’t

have it for much longer. On July 6, she is hosting a fundraiser and shaving her head in order to raise money and awareness for Mennonite Central Committee's Pobitra program in Bangladesh.

The program gives women and girls who were forced into the sex trade an opportunity to transition into a new life. "Pobitra" means "holiness, sanctity and the fresh cleanliness of a newborn." The eight-month program provides alternative job training, some money, teaching about

to shave her head for her role in *V for Vendetta*, she told the British Broadcasting Corporation that she thought people would have predictable opinions of her new look. "Some people will think I'm a neo-Nazi or that I have cancer or I'm a lesbian," she said.

When singer Britney Spears shaved her head, the pop princess was considered crazy.

And even further back, when Louisa May Alcott published her book *Little*

'Hair is a large part of feeling beautiful for women and I thought it would be healthy for me to be rid of it . . .'
(Natasha Woelcke)

health and hygiene, literacy, mental health, human rights and peace. After they have gone through the program, participants are each given a blue sari to symbolize rebirth.

The same is true for Janzen. Losing her hair will usher in a new part of her life, a life not dictated by archetypal symbols of femininity. For Janzen, who attends Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, the thought process about hair started with her thinking about other cultures and the women in them.

"I started thinking about the women in this world who don't get the same kind of respect as I do," she says. "And even that I don't get as much respect as a man. We're not looking at the injustice with clear eyes."

Natasha Woelcke, 23, of First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, shaved her head in 2009.

"Hair is a large part of feeling beautiful for women," she acknowledges, "and I thought it would be healthy for me to be rid of it and to search for worth in areas other than beauty, like the Lord's love for me."

She took part in a Brave the Shave event that the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation helped organize. She donated her tresses to Locks of Love and raised \$3,000 for breast cancer research.

Popular culture and long hair

Both Janzen and Woelcke feel that shaved heads aren't widely accepted.

Before actress Natalie Portman decided

Women, it contained many references that the main character, Jo, is the least feminine sister. These references are confirmed when she scandalously cuts off her hair to earn money to send her mother to visit her wounded father in the hospital.

"As she spoke, Jo took off her bonnet, and a general outcry arose, for all her abundant hair was cut short," the book reads. Her hair is even regarded as her "one beauty."

Theologies of hair cutting

For Janzen and many others who donate their hair, it's not just about what people think, it's also challenging their ideas and working for a greater cause. Her life is focused on working for peace and justice.

"Micah 6 says, 'Do justly, love mercy and be humble.' That's the purpose of life," she says. Cutting her hair off "is just a small part that I can do to encourage justice."

And for Woelcke, it was about making bald heads more acceptable and acting in solidarity to support those who need motivation fighting cancer.

"Hopefully, in a very small way, this made it more acceptable and less scary for women who do lose their hair during cancer, to see it as a less scary part of a very difficult disease," she says. ❧



Anna-Marie Janzen will auction off her hair for Mennonite Central Committee's Pobitra program in Bangladesh on July 6.



Natasha Woelcke shaved her head in 2009 for breast cancer research.

Calendar

British Columbia

Sept. 6-7: MCC Festival for World Relief, at the Abbotsford Tradex.

Sept. 18-22: Truth and Reconciliation Commission gathering, in Vancouver.

Sept. 28: Mennonite Fall Fair, in Prince George.

Oct. 7-9: MC B.C. pastor/spouse retreat.

Saskatchewan

Aug. 24: Fourth annual Spruce River Folk Festival at the Spruce River Farm, 20 kilometres north of Prince Albert, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Music, food and information about landless indigenous bands in Saskatchewan. Sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan and Grace Mennonite Church, Prince Albert.

Aug. 24-25: Mount Royal Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, 50th-anniversary celebration. For more information, visit mountroyalmennonite.org

Manitoba

Until Sept. 14: Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg, hosts the 81st-annual Open Juried Exhibition of the Manitoba Society of Artists. Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday), Noon to 5 p.m. (Saturday).

July 29-Aug. 2: MC Canada youth assembly at Camp Assiniboia, Man.

Aug. 27: Westgate Collegiate annual golf tournament at Bridges Golf Club.

Sept. 14-15: Charleswood Mennonite Church 50th-anniversary celebrations include a concert, family activities,

worship and food. For more information, call the church at 204-837-7982 or e-mail cwoodmc@mymts.net.

Oct. 18-20: Scrapbookers retreat at Camp Moose Lake. For more information, e-mail camps@mennochurch.mb.ca.

Ontario

July 25-28: The Bridgefolk (Mennonite-Catholic) conference, Reconciliation: A Way to Peace, at Conrad Grebel University College.

Keynote speakers: John Rempel of the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre and Christian McConnell of St. Michael's College at U of T. For more information, or to register, visit bridgefolk.net.

July 29-Aug. 2: Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, hosts its annual Peace Camp for students who have completed Grades 6 to 8, featuring sports, arts, guest speakers and field trips. Theme: "Local actions with global impact." From 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. To register, contact Sarah Klassen at 519-885-0220 ext. 24291 or by e-mail at peacecamp@uwaterloo.ca.

Aug. 24: 10th annual Central Ontario all-day Sacred Harp fasola shaped-note singing with midday dinner on the grounds of the Detweiler

Meetinghouse, Roseville; from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. For more information, e-mail Gillian Inksetter at gillian@inksetter.com.

Sept. 22: Fourth annual *Sing the Journey/Sing the Story* event, at the Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m., led by Mark Diller Harder. For more information, call Will Stoltz at 519-696-2805.

Sept. 27-29: 200th-anniversary celebrations at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener. More details to follow.

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



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BETHANY MENNONITE CHURCH in Virgil, Ontario is inviting applications for a **FULL TIME LEAD PASTOR**. Start time is negotiable.

We are a congregation with approximately 130 in attendance for worship and seek a pastor to lead in further transformation of our understanding of our call to be witnesses in God's kingdom. The pastor we seek will be committed to Anabaptist theology with strengths in preaching, teaching, pastoral care and community engagement.

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
Phone: 519-650-3806
Fax: 519-650-3947
E-mail: hpaetkau@mcec.ca

WATERLOO-KITCHENER UNITED MENNONITE CHURCH is embarking on a search for a **3/4-TIME ASSOCIATE PASTOR**, with responsibilities in our family programs, which comprise Christian Education, Youth, and Young Adult ministries. Starting date ideally September 1, 2013. We view ourselves as a progressive and engaged congregation with a strong desire for growth.

Our mission statement: *"Loved by God, empowered by the Holy Spirit, we follow Jesus Christ. As a welcoming Mennonite community, we worship God, nurture each other, and extend God's love and peace to all."*

Information available from MCEC – contact Henry Paetkau, Area Church Minister.



CRAIGWIEL GARDENS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Organization Background:

Long Term Care, Seniors Apartments and Seniors Day Program

Qualifications:

- Minimum of 5 years of senior management experience in the Long Term Care sector required.
- Certified Administrator certificate or similar qualifications recognized by the Ministry of Health & Long Term Care.
- In depth knowledge of current trends in Long Term Care, human resources issues and current Long Term Care Legislation.
- Financial Management and budget development skills.
- Experience in community, government and labour relations.
- Demonstrated interpersonal, leadership, management skills.

Major Responsibilities:

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director provides leadership to the management team and staff in a service orientated environment where residents and client needs are the priority.

Salary:

Compensation and benefits are competitive and dependent on qualifications and experience.

Other

- Visit us at our website: www.craigwielgardens.on.ca

Deadline date: June 28, 2013

Interested candidates should forward their resume in confidence to:

Craigwiel Gardens
221 Main St., R.R.#1
Ailsa Craig, Ontario
N0M 1A0
Email to: humanresources@craigwielgardens.on.ca

Mennonite Savings and Credit Union (MSCU) has an exciting full-time position for a **Senior Executive Assistant** to provide executive level administrative and organizational support to the CEO, as well as to the Board of Directors and various Board Committees. In this capacity you will pro-actively support the CEO on current and emerging priorities and the senior leadership team as they discover, plan, and act towards creating our best shared future.

For a full description and how to apply to this position please visit www.mscu.com.

Christians say 'I'm sorry'

'One small but important step in the right direction': Jamie Arpin-Ricci

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent

For the second year in a row, a group of Christians gathered in Winnipeg to say "I'm sorry." They joined the crowds on the sidelines of the annual Gay Pride Parade in downtown Winnipeg on June 2 to convey their message of contrition.

"The I'm Sorry campaign is an international effort by Christians to make unqualified apologies to the LGBTQ [lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered/queer] community for the ways we have caused harm, and to show our commitment to making things better in tangible ways," explained Jamie Arpin-Ricci, pastor of Little Flowers Church, a church plant of Mennonite Church Manitoba and Youth with a Mission in the West End of Winnipeg. "This is not about being affirming or non-affirming, but about saying we are sorry that we have not modelled the love of Christ as our primary witness to our LGBTQ neighbours."

The community of Little Flowers spent several years in prayer and conversation before formally participating in the campaign last year.

"We understand that this is a difficult topic with some complex dynamics, but also that the need for generous space for relationship and reconciliation was essential," he added.

Although MC Manitoba is not formally involved, several area church congregations participated, according to Arpin-Ricci.

"We were blessed by how we were received by participants in the Pride parade," he said. "Many tears flowed, hugs exchanged and forgiveness gladly extended. However, perhaps the most impacting aspect has been what has come since the event. We have received so many deeply moving and encouraging e-mails



Jamie Arpin-Ricci, pastor of Little Flowers Church, left, and Janet Conrad take part in the I'm Sorry campaign at this year's Gay Pride Parade in Winnipeg on June 2, to express regret for the way Christians have not shown love to their LGBTQ neighbours.

PHOTOS BY JOHANNA PETKAU



Sam Schalk, Jen Funk and Hannah Foulger share their messages at the Gay Pride Parade in Winnipeg on June 2.

from people thanking us for what we did. I believe this event is one small but important step in the right direction."

Jeff Myall, media and communications director for Pride Winnipeg, welcomed the I'm Sorry campaign to the Pride festivities. "The apology by the campaign regarding the many years of social oppression from segments of the religious community is respected and appreciated," he said. "Together we can strive against social inequalities and mistreatments, and work towards a society of understanding and respect for ourselves and our children."

Whether Christians believe that homosexuality is a sin or not, Arpin-Ricci said that saying sorry is an opportunity to take responsibility for the real and devastating treatment that Christians have inflicted on gay people over the centuries. "Perhaps the most important thing we want people to know is that this is an opportunity to put aside the debate and simply do what Christ calls us to: to confess and repent of our sins, to be reconciled to others. As neighbours, we are called above all else to love." ❧