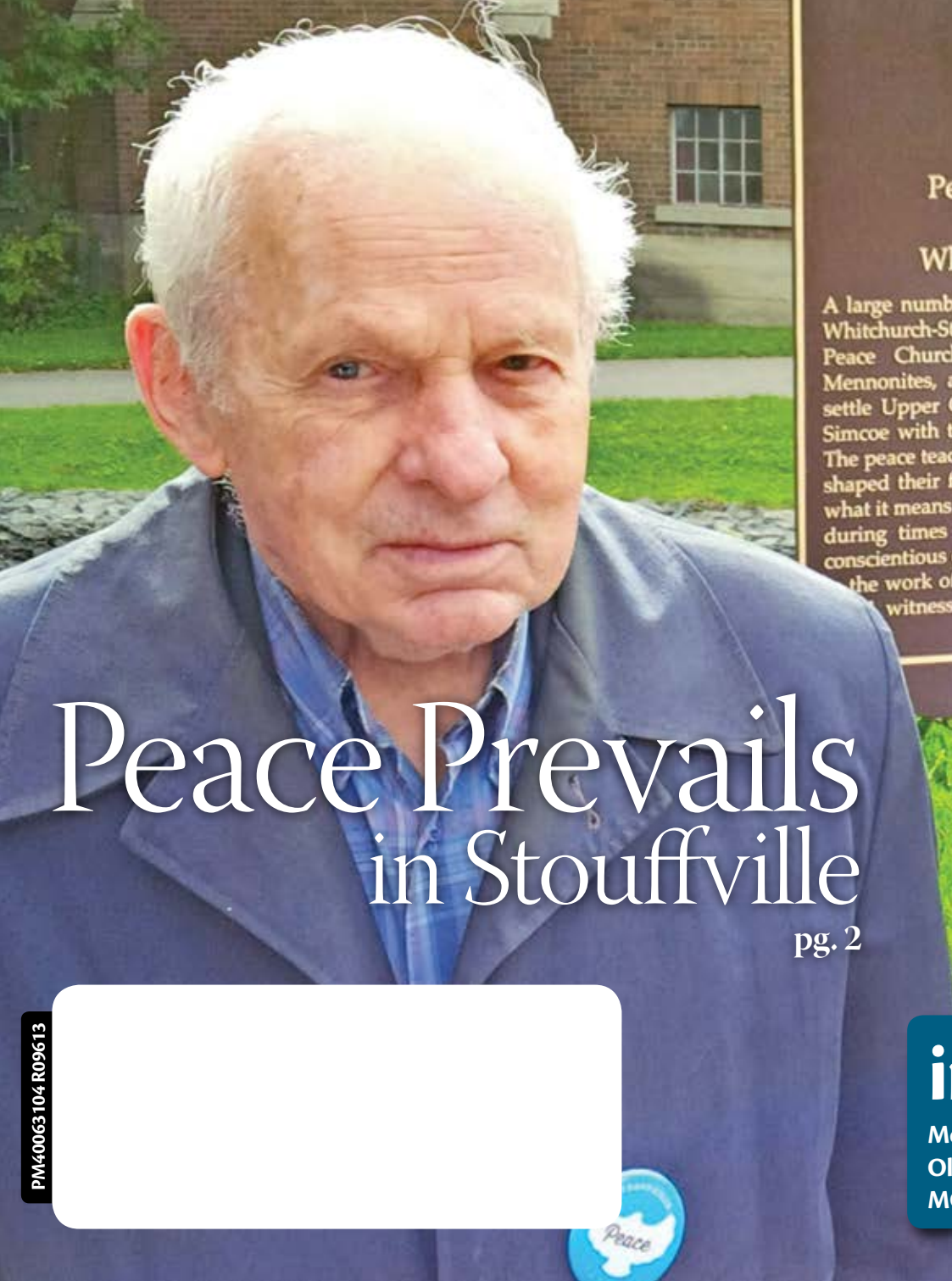


# CANADIAN MENNONITE

October 28, 2013

Volume 17 Number 21



## Peace Church Settlers of Whitchurch-Stouffville

A large number of the early settlers of present day Whitchurch-Stouffville were members of the Historic Peace Churches: Brethren in Christ (Tunkers), Mennonites, and Quakers. They were attracted to settle Upper Canada by Lt. Governor John Graves Simcoe with the offer of military exemption (1793). The peace teachings of the Christian tradition deeply shaped their faith and caused them to wrestle with what it means to be people of God's peace, especially during times of conflict and war. As pioneers of conscientious objection in Canada, their commitment to the work of peace and reconciliation continues to witness in this community and around the

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## EDITORIAL

## Peace Prevails

DICK BENNER  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

The local newspaper editor called it a soap opera. The local Member of Parliament tried to make the spokespersons for the historic peace churches lone fringe persons in a celebration of the War of 1812, speaking only for themselves and not for the members of the several Mennonite, Brethren in Christ and Friends (Quaker) churches in Stouffville, Ontario.

But in the end—a year and half later—a Peace Festival and the installation of a peace plaque made the event on September 22 much more than the theatre surrounding it. It marks a significant happening in the life of several congregations comprising Mennonite Church Canada. Against strong political forces and a divided town council, the historic peace churches persistently, but patiently and gently prevailed. These kinds of historic episodes usually don't end this way.

Much of the credit goes to Arnold Neufeldt-Fast, professor of theology at Tyndale University College and Seminary, Toronto, and a member of Community Mennonite Church in Stouffville, who steadfastly held that the town did not have military roots, but instead was settled by a war resister, Abraham Stouffer, and 55 like-minded families.

It is a remarkable story, too, of solidarity. Although Neufeldt-Fast was the leader, he was joined in his tireless efforts by his colleagues Steve Authier, pastor

of Heise Hill Brethren in Christ Church and Evelyn Schmitz-Hertzber and Philip Smith of the Friends/Quakers. Andrew Reesor-McDowell, former moderator of MC Canada and a local Mennonite, wrote a letter, dated May 9, 2012, to Governor



General David Johnston, asking him to “personally review the text of the speech that will be made on your behalf and on behalf of the horse guards (part of the War of 1812 Parade).

“We trust you will have an eye for historical accuracy and also for the appropriate tone for a community whose roots are in the historic peace churches,” he wrote, after getting approval from MC Canada to send the letter and offering “to supply you with any information on our town’s history or our church communities.”

The peaceful protest paid off. The peace plaque is a permanent fixture in the centre of town and the Peace Festival is scheduled to become an annual event—celebrating peace, not war. Even the local MP has since met with Neufeldt-Fast and his planning committee to include the peace narrative in his upcoming “Community Report.”

Neufeldt-Fast, in typical Mennonite understatement, engages in no particular triumph, but humbly said at the plaque installation, that he and his colleagues were simply “following a biblical command—*Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek (boldly) turn to him the other also* (Matt.5:39).

It is a simple truth, stated for all of us in this particular faith. This is who we are; this is what we do. This is how we do it.

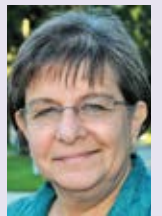
But it is not really so simple. Behind this triumph is 500 years of a steadfast belief in peace, a core Anabaptist value. We practice it in myriad ways. We do it when feeding the hungry of the world through Mennonite Central Committee, preparing school kits and blankets, building sand dams in Kenya. We do it through small financial loans to women in Pakistan to start businesses to support their families through Mennonite Economic Development Associates.

We do it through Christian Peacemaker Teams going into the centre of conflict in war-torn countries. We do it through Project Ploughshares by working with churches, governments and civil society, in Canada and abroad, to advance policies and actions to prevent war and armed violence and build peace.

This work is never done. The triumph in Stouffville is but a piece of the whole cloth.

**Hostetler named Web Editor**

Virginia A. (Ginny) Hostetler of Kitchener, Ont., has been named Web Editor for the *Canadian Mennonite*, a new part-time position.



She fills a variety of roles: writer, editor, wife, mother, daughter, and active member of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener. Ginny grew up in a Mennonite family in Brazil, where her parents were missionaries. She and her husband Michael and their two children lived for nine years in Nazareth, Israel, where they supported local Christian witness and were engaged in an interpretive centre that focused on Jesus' life, context and teachings.

**ABOUT THE COVER:**

John Reesor, a resident of Stouffville, Ont., is seen here with the peace plaque. Reesor was a conscientious objector during the Second World War. Arnold Neufeldt-Fast spearheaded efforts to officially keep the peace narrative in Stouffville's history and markings, such as the peace plaque.



Neufeldt-Fast

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*Seeking and speaking the truth in love • Open hearts and minds in discerning God's will •*

*Covenantal relationships and mutual accountability*

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## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Derksen**—Everleigh Renee (b. Sept. 21, 2013), to Andrew and Danelle Derksen, Hague Mennonite, Sask.

**Foth**—Malin Azaela (b. Aug. 30, 2013), to Andrea and Peter Foth, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Funk**—Aliyyah Nicole (b. Sept. 12, 2013), to Herb and Nicoley Funk, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Kehler**—Talia Rachelle (b. Aug. 21, 2013), to Randolph and Fanny Kehler, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

### Baptisms

**Nicole Pelletier, Wivine Sungura**—Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal, Sept. 21, 2013.

**Beth Derksen, Jen Derksen, Renee Peters, Abby Wiebe**—Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Aug. 25, 2013.

### Marriages

**Carriere/Wiebe**—Rheal Carriere and Andrea Wiebe, Springstein Mennonite, Man., June 15, 2013.

**Friesen/Penner**—Kylene W. Friesen and John T. Peter, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Sept. 8, 2013.

### Deaths

**Arnel**—Frederick Grant, 78 (b. Dec. 31, 1934; d. Sept. 10, 2013), Nairn Mennonite, Ont.

**Billedeau**—Naomi, 83 (b. Jan. 15, 1930; d. Sept. 9, 2013), Wilmot Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

**Dyck**—Mary, 99 (b. April 21, 1914; d. Sept. 27, 2013), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

**Fitzgerald**—Jean (nee Snider), 84 (b. Dec. 26, 1928; d. Sept. 15, 2013), Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**Froese**—Marilene, 65 (b. Oct. 26, 1947; d. Sept. 3, 2013), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

**Funk**—Helen, 93 (d. Aug. 30, 2013), Rosenfeld Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

**Hamm**—Bruno, 85 (b. Aug. 10, 1928; d. Sept. 27, 2013), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

**Hamm**—Andy, 77 (b. Oct. 16, 1935; d. Sept. 1, 2013), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

**Lepp**—Jacob Henry (Jack), 88 (b. Nov. 4, 1924; d. Sept. 11, 2013), Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.

**Loewen**—Peter, 80 (d. Sept. 23, 2013), Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Millar**—Blaine, 61 (b. March 5, 1952; d. April 27, 2013), Rockway Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

**Naeser-Gutzeit**—Maria, (nee Janzen) 94 (b. Feb. 23, 1919; d. Aug. 27, 2013), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

**Neufeld**—Agnes, 77 (b. May 31, 1936; d. Aug. 24, 2013), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

**Neufeld**—Katherine (nee Dyck), 92 (b. June 17, 1921; d. Sept. 23, 2013), Hamilton Mennonite, Ont.

**Pauls**—Erna, 75 (b. April 23, 1938; d. Sept. 16, 2013), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

**Peters**—Elizabeth, 60 (b. March 26, 1953; d. Aug. 26, 2013), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

**Thiessen**—Peter, 83 (b. Nov. 28, 1929; d. Sept. 5, 2013), Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Thiessen**—Walter, 84 (b. Dec. 24, 1928; d. Sept. 30, 2013), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

**Vogt**—Peter, 74 (d. Sept. 25, 2013), Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Zehr**—Ivan, 89 (b. Aug. 20, 1924; d. Sept. 3, 2013), East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

### Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones

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

## Pontius' Puddle



REMEMBRANCE DAY / PEACE SUNDAY FEATURE

# ‘Let nobody judge them’

*Nearly seven decades after 4,500 Mennonites donned the uniforms of Canada’s military during the Second World War, the church needs to come to terms with its harsh treatment of those soldiers, sailors and airmen and women.*

BY ROSS W. MUIR

MANAGING EDITOR

*Unlike the Russian Mennonites, who chose not to excommunicate its members who fought in the Revolution and who saw the entire church as being at fault, Canadian Mennonites of many stripes were quick to distance themselves from those who enlisted, whatever the reason.*

**O**f late, many peace-minded Canadians have been decrying the country’s increasing militarization, calling to mind this country’s proud peacekeeping tradition as if it was a defining feature of confederation. Unfortunately, it’s a false memory, as Canada’s peacekeeping forces weren’t formed until 1956.

Its military involvements, however, go back nearly to our country’s beginning. According to Nathan R. Dirks, whose 2010 master’s thesis, “War without, struggle within,” Canada was embroiled in its first foreign conflict—the South African (or Boer) War—when the country was only 32, noting that the “perceived glory [of its war efforts] had played a part of the nation-building process of Canada.”

And lest Mennonites think that our own founding tenet of peaceful nonresistance has been upheld faithfully and continuously since the Radical Reformation some five centuries ago, the subtitle to Dirks’ thesis—“Canadian Mennonite enlistments during the Second World War”—gives the lie to that idea.

While most Mennonites know, or know of, at least one Second World War conscientious objector (CO), many could be excused for being unaware of the fact that as many as 4,500 Canadian Mennonites enlisted in this country’s military forces between 1939 and 1945. Some served as active combatants, while others did duty in the medical or dental corps; both were considered equally discreditable by the church that has done a good job of suppressing their stories over the years.





*An Altona, Man., war memorial bears the names of local Mennonites who served and died during the Second World War.*

### **A short Mennonite history of war**

The ill-fated 1534 Münster Rebellion—an attempt by radical Anabaptists to establish a communal sectarian government in the German city—was the first, and for many centuries, the only known armed action by the peaceable sect.

The next major event was the creation of an equally ill-fated self-defence league in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution. But Conrad Grebel College student Lyle Friesen noted in a 1973 essay, that “[t]he emergence of the *Selbstschutz* was not as sudden or unexpected as commonly assumed, for the past involvements and activities of the Mennonites clearly foreshadowed the eventuality of such an occurrence.”

Before migrating to Russia, Mennonites had already “departed from their stance of absolute resistance and had participated in a type of non-combative service,” according to Friesen. “That the Prussian Mennonite attitude on pacifism was equivocable [sic] was clearly illustrated by Jacob Mannhardt,

influential pastor of the Danzig church. In a series of heated debates with exponents of the peace principles, Mannhardt argued the doctrine should be repudiated, since it hindered the social advance of the church.”

And once in Russia, Friesen noted that, “alongside the amazing economic accomplishments, religion lost its dynamic essence and receded from its prominent status, becoming only one aspect of everyday affairs.”

“Even before Russia’s legislation of universal conscription in the 1870s, the Mennonites had granted material aid to the state in instances of military emergency. During the Crimean War [1854–56], a number of farmers provided the government transportation and other duties. There is no evidence that they were censured by the church for their actions,” Friesen’s research uncovered, leading him to posit, “Not surprisingly, the remaining strength of their nonresistance convictions broke down in the face of the ravages of civil war.”

Dirks, in his thesis, explained how the self-defence league came to be: “In response to the roving bands of anarchists in Russia, in particular one led by Nestor Makhno, the Mennonites armed themselves and did battle against the attacking forces. In total, the *Selbstschutz* would last from October 1918 to March 1919, involving up to 3,000 men, inflicting hundreds of deaths upon the invading anarchists. There were Mennonites prior to this who had enlisted in the Russian army and had taken part in combat, suggesting the beginnings of a change in perspective among nonresistant settlers. . . .”

Russian Mennonite church leaders used the Bible to justify defence of their communities, possessions and families. “Drawing upon the familiar passage of Paul in Romans 13, supporters of the league argued that the state had been divinely ordained for the maintenance of law and order,” Friesen wrote. “Should the power and authority of the state be eroded, anarchy would prevail. In the absence of effective government, the *Selbstschutz*

was presented as a temporary agency devoted to the restoration of civil order. Upon the proper restitution of the state's authority, regardless of which political party was in command, the league would be disbanded." Unfortunately, the *Selbstschutz* did not get to disband peacefully; in 1919, it was crushed by the combined forces of Makhno and the White Army.

In his book *The Russian Mennonites and War*, Jacob H. Janzen, a church *ältester* (leader), explained how the church dealt with the aftermath of this bloody period of Mennonite history: "[W]e have not excommunicated the young men from our churches because we felt all had sinned and deserved what had become of us. Our boys meant well and were less responsible than we older fellows. Let nobody judge them."

### Canadian realities

The Russian experience of military service was transported to Canada in the 1920s, as Mennonite refugees by the thousands sought a better life in Canada. While U.S. Mennonites were pretty much unanimous in their nonresistant stance since the First World War, Canadian Mennonites found themselves with three disparate views on such service to the state:

- **THOSE WHO** had arrived a century before were willing to undertake non-combative service, but only under church or civilian oversight.
- **THOSE RUSSIAN** Mennonites who came during the 1870s—dubbed *Kanadier*—were given a certificate of exemption for all such service at that time, which they believed still was in effect.
- **THOSE WHO** had recently arrived from Russia—dubbed *Russländer*—“saw their position as a clearer representation of the true Mennonite stance,” according to Dirks, one that took “a willingness to sacrifice or to endure suffering” as seriously as nonresistance. “The medical corps allowed for suffering and the risk of death alongside Canadian soldiers, compared to which the wilderness hardships of the [alternative] forestry service were insignificant.”

As the Second World War loomed in Europe, Canadian Mennonite leaders could not come to a consensus on which stance should be adopted, resulting in mixed messages being sent to congregations and to the Canadian government about exemptions for their young men. Melvin Gingerich, in a July 1951 *Mennonite Quarterly Review* article, wondered if such dialogue with Ottawa was profitable, or even biblical, quipping, “. . . [w]e have no illustrations of Jesus and the apostles ever petitioning the government for favourable laws.”

According to T.D. Regehr in his “Lost Sons” essay published in the October 1992 issue of *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, “Canadian Mennonite leaders were . . . guilty of issuing confusing and contradictory instructions to their young men. They lacked a coherent and well-planned strategy to meet wartime exigencies. They were unable to provide avenues of national service that seemed appropriate to many of their young men . . .”

If the spiritual positions on peace had been blurred, cultural differences that had once kept Mennonites apart from “English” Canada had also grown fuzzy. During the Great Depression, many had left their family farms seeking work in the cities, where they were introduced to new ideas and ways of life, leading to a mirroring of the dominant culture as had happened in Russia a century before.

Of this situation, McGill University sociology professor C.A. Dawson wrote in 1936: “We have watched . . . the change from a theocratic community dominated by devout sectarians, to a secular community in which the church takes its place beside many new secular institutions. . . . In spite of the initial solidarity of their isolated rural settlement, Mennonites have not been able to shut out worldly influences. These latter continue to enter the sectarian citadel at

front and rear, bewildering and grieving the old, emancipating and individuating the young.”

### Conscience versus conscience

John Howard Yoder might have been thinking about just such a turn of events when he wrote in his 1971 book, *Nevertheless: The Varieties and Shortcomings of Religious Pacifism*: “The form of pacifism that speaks to the Mennonite tradition is that of the messianic community, which is defined by its reliance on an ethical system that is only made available by the Messiah, Jesus, and is only viable through a community sharing in the same confession of faith.”

But community life had begun to break down. While the churches were trying to encourage their young men of military age to seek military exemption through conscientious objection, the wider world—including Christians of other denominations—viewed matters of conscience as individual choices. While

*Peter Engebrecht enlisted, “eager to use force for the protection of the country that had provided safety and security for his family . . . because he realized that ‘Canada deserved fighting for . . .’”*

some Mennonites joined the Canadian military as a means of defying their elders, and others saw it as a way of putting food on the tables of their families after a decade of being out of work, many other Mennonite young men—and a few women—saw enlisting as a matter of personal conscience and a way to thank the country that had given them and their families a safe and prosperous way of life.

Emmanuel Wideman of St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, Ont., was interviewed by Conrad Grebel College student Andrew Scheifele for a 1992 essay. Wideman, one of at least 17 from his church who joined the forces, said he made his decision to enlist on “what my conscience told me was right to do,” feeling that he “should do something for the country. . . . I felt it was a choice of my own.”

In his book *Mennonites in Canada*,



1939-1970, T.D. Regehr wrote of Henry Pankratz of Langham, Sask., who “regarded his air force experience as ‘the highlight of my life,’ and explained his decision to enlist thusly: ‘I and my brother always felt that Canada gave our parents a new life and an opportunity to live in peace and harmony, and raise a family in the best country in the world, and therefore worth fighting for.’”

Similarly, Jake Neisteter “defended his actions as he noted the duty that he felt he had to serve the country whose benefits were enjoyed both by himself and his fellow community members,” according to Dirks, quoting the army veteran in his thesis: “Patriotism means different things to different people. But how can you just accept all the good things about living in Canada, and then when they ask for help, you say, ‘Sorry, I can’t do that.’”

Peter Engebrecht enlisted, “eager to use force for the protection of the country that had provided safety and security for his family,” according to Dirks, “because he realized that ‘Canada deserved fighting for . . .’”

John Friesen of Altona moved to Winnipeg in 1929. When the Second World War broke out, he was employed as a teacher. “When I saw some of my students go off to war . . .

I began to examine my own conscience,” he said in the National Film Board (NFB) documentary *The Pacifist Who Went to War*. This led him to first teach at a flying school in Manitoba, where he discovered “there was no sacrifice in this.” From there, the decision to join “the active forces” and serve overseas came naturally.

An unnamed veteran quoted by Dirks in his thesis sums up his decision most succinctly: “A Christian first, a Canadian second and a Mennonite third.”

### **How to respond?**

It is not because these men and women broke ranks that their church might consider offering them—and their

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MENNONITE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



*V. Wiebe of B.C.'s Fraser Valley, right, served with the Canadian forces in the Second World War, earning five medals, pictured above. According to 'The Mennonite Menace: Real or Imagined, an online report from a University of the Fraser Valley student, 66 of 99 Mennonites in Yarrow, B.C., served in the Canadian military, either in combatant roles or as part of the medical corps.*



families—a belated apology, but because of the way they were treated while they were in the service and after their return.

Unlike the Russian Mennonites, who chose not to excommunicate their members who fought in the Revolution and who saw the entire church as being at fault, Canadian Mennonites of many stripes were quick to distance themselves from those who enlisted, whatever the reason.

A 1943 resolution by the Brethren in Christ, for example, made it clear “that any member who violates these principles by accepting military service, combatant or non-combatant, automatically declares himself to be out of fellowship with the Brethren in Christ Church, and suspends his membership; . . . [and] any member who accepts military service shall only be reinstated in fellowship upon satisfactory acknowledgment of his error and declaration of his acceptance of the Bible teaching on this doctrine of nonresistance, and being in harmony with the tenets of the church.”

In other words, the church washed its hands of the matter until the “prodigal” sons and daughters returned seeking forgiveness for their sins of conscience. Such a stance led Regehr to comment in “Lost Sons”: “The church elders referring to the parable invariably seemed to see

themselves in the figure of the father, but their behaviour more often cast them in the role of the parable’s self-righteous and unforgiving older brother.”

Such a stand by many Canadian Mennonite churches left those who enlisted without pastoral care at a time when they needed it most, which, in turn, led virtually all of these Mennonites to abandon the church upon their return.

Regehr noted one such incident in “Lost Sons”: “In 1944, G. Enns of Toronto . . . reported to the [General Conference] missionary in Toronto: ‘In our church services at Camp Borden, [Ont.], which we [the Toronto Baptist War Services Committee] have been conducting for more than two years, we are meeting more and more Mennonites. . . . Many of these Mennonites are committed Christians, but they urgently need spiritual care and nurture in the midst of the dangers to which soldiers are exposed. We Baptists do not know what to do. The Mennonites have a completely different church heritage. Would it be possible to persuade the Mennonite churches to take some interest in their young people in uniform?’”

Such appeals mostly fell on deaf ears. Regehr wrote in “Lost Sons” that, “[a]fter the war, [Jacob H.] Janzen admitted that he and most of his colleagues had done





*Like the cenotaphs in Winkler and Altona, the Morden, Man., war memorial also contains Mennonite names.*

very little for the Mennonite soldiers, and urged that when the men returned to their churches and communities after the war they be received with love and understanding.”

Roy Koch, Wideman’s minister at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church during the war, admitted to pastoral shortcomings. “Personal counselling was done . . . but maybe not as much or early enough,” he is quoted as saying in Scheifele’s essay. “In retrospect, I would say that our attitudes were not sufficiently compassionate and redemptive.”

Erma Cressman of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., would probably agree, having found herself caught in the war’s crosshairs. Recalling her experience in the church’s 1989 newsletter, she said that, as the wife of a CO, she couldn’t survive on her husband’s pay of 50 cents a day. “I had to go

to work . . . so I got a job at B.F. Goodrich, where I worked [making] aviation boots,” she wrote. “This was questioned by some Mennonites. How could I work on war material when my husband was a CO? I had no other support and no Mennonite offered me an alternate job. . . . There was [also] a lot of criticism in the plant. . . . Some said we bought our way [out of serving in the military]. Others said, if we couldn’t live on 50 cents a day, then why didn’t my husband join the services like other men?”

In his research, Dirks came across what might be considered the most egregious, yet perhaps the most theologically honest, response to a Mennonite soldier who had died in battle. As the man’s body was lowered into the ground, the minister, who obviously held to the church’s strict pacifist position, “intoned in a solemn voice, ‘. . . and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.’”

After the war, Stirling Avenue was one of the few bright lights for returning soldiers. In *Risk and Endurance*, church historian Laureen Harder wrote: “For the young men of Stirling who returned, whatever their wartime experience, 1945 would mark a new beginning. Stirling welcomed them home to a congregation where the challenge of war would be replaced by the challenge of peace.”

This was not the experience of many others, including Clara Schroder, the daughter of a Mennonite soldier, who was featured in the NFB documentary. “Mom and Dad were shunned after the war. They couldn’t come to church,” she said, adding that neighbours would often cross the street as they approached.

Returning Mennonite soldiers, sailors and airmen were caught between two solitudes. On the one hand, they watched as their “English” comrades-in-arms were welcomed back into their communities as heroes, while they saw the same treatment being lavished on the COs who

returned from the work camps across Canada, some to positions of leadership in their Mennonite churches and communities.

Not only churches and communities shunned their returning soldiers, according to Regehr, who noted in “Lost Sons” that, “[s]everal of the teachers at Rosthern [Sask.] Bible School strongly endorsed official conference positions, thereby effectively closing the doors to many of the returning men,” leaving them to accept the offer of government funding for secular education that took them even further away from the life and faith they had known.

Such treatment led Regehr to lament the loss for the church of virtually all of those who served overseas: “They could have taught their people so much about the futility and horror of war, and they could have deepened Mennonite understanding of the difficult and ambiguous choices they faced.”

But in most cases the men and women who went off to war were written off, disappearing out of the history books forever. As Regehr noted in *Mennonites in Canada*: “[T]here are almost no published or recorded stories of Mennonite women who enlisted and later returned to membership and participation in Mennonite churches. In most published histories of Mennonite communities and congregations these women are either not mentioned at all, or their enlistment is mentioned and they disappear from the narrative.” The same can be said of many of the men.

### ***If not an apology, what then?***

For those who think an apology is not appropriate, or is too late to be meaningful, how about a dialogue then? Frank H. Epp, founding editor of *The Canadian Mennonite* (1953-67) and *Mennonite Reporter* (1971-73), suggested just such a thing in a 1969 sermon he preached

*‘It should also be said that many conscientious objectors have been opposed to war on personal grounds only and could readily accept others fighting for them, as though they were too Christian to do it themselves.’  
(Frank H. Epp, from a 1969 sermon at Ottawa Mennonite Church)*

## REMEMBRANCE DAY / PEACE SUNDAY FEATURE

at Ottawa Mennonite Church. Why? Because he believed that pacifists and militarists are not as far apart as either side would like to believe.

For starters, he said, “[W]e can acknowledge that both pacifists and non-pacifists claim to be pursuing the same goal, namely peace. . . . [W]e would do well to recognize that both pacifists and militarists, seen in absolute terms either in theory or practice, are very hard to find . . . [and] both pacifists and non-pacifists have in common major sins of omission.”

“Let me begin with the pacifists, whose pacifism in history has very often been a passivity which shirked involvement and responsibility,” he told the congregation. “Some conscientious objectors in World War II, for instance, were clearly escapist. . . . It should also be said that many conscientious objectors have been opposed to war on personal grounds only and could readily accept others fighting for them, as though they were too Christian to do it themselves.”

**What if there's another war?**

While it's probably safe to say that the communal pull of the Mennonite church and its many and varied confessions of faith have even less sway now than they did during the Second World War, “peace” still has a hold on young Mennonites, as the pages of this magazine's Young Voices section and Conrad Grebel University College's Peace and Conflict Studies Department both attest.

However, Nathan Dirks is not so sure how tight their grip is. In the preface to his thesis he mused, “When I look at my peers in my church, young Mennonites with draft-eligibility by the standards of the Second World War, I believe that, faced with the same dilemma, the vast majority would not only enlist, but would do so into combat units without a second thought. . . . I suspect that I am not alone in my suspicions that the Canadian Mennonite witness to the peace position is not as strong in practice as it might seem to be in theory.”

And at the end of *The Pacifist Who Went to War*, a group of young men

and women ponder what they would do if called upon to serve their country in wartime. One young woman muses, “Ultimately it is my decision and they're [her parents and church] are going to have to live with that.”

To understand the ambiguity in that answer will mean waiting until that call comes, if it ever does. ☸



*Written last year while Ross W. Muir was on sabbatical from his position as managing editor of Canadian Mennonite, with thanks to the Mennonite Archives*

*of Ontario and the Conrad Grebel University College Library staff. In the interests of full disclosure, the author is the son, nephew and grandson of military men and women who served in both World Wars.*

# Uncle Sam goes to jail

BY JOSEPH MARTIN

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

**O**f memories I have of family members, the one about my Uncle Sam's arrest on April 19, 1944, and his imprisonment, which became legendary in our community, left an indelible mark. Uncle Sam was born in the U.S. and was 18 months old when the family moved to Duchess [Alta.]. He had been baptized into the Mennonite Church and attended regularly.

The Mennonite Church in Duchess had taken a strong stand against military involvement in the early part of World War II, and getting deferrals as conscientious objectors (COs) had not been difficult for its members. My father, who was 26 at the beginning of the war, was drafted by both countries. His appearance before Canadian authorities was limited to an interrogation with an army official and his request for exemption was granted on two counts: his religious convictions

as a CO and his occupation as a farmer on his own property. A few months later, he received a letter of inquiry from the U.S. and was granted a similar exemption. Uncle Jim, two years younger than Uncle Sam, was granted CO status and served two years in alternative service in a government-sponsored logging camp.

Uncle Sam's turn to state his case came when he was 21. At first, it seemed that Sam's problems in claiming an exemption arose from a series of inadvertent events.



It was thought that the judges and officers reviewing his case wanted to make an example of Sam to others who thought military conscription could be easily avoided. Other Mennonites had enlisted under pressure, after all. Another factor leading to the judges' refusal of deferment was that Sam had recently decided to leave farming to work as a mechanic in Fred's auto shop.

On Dec. 28, 1942, Sam received a call to report for military training. He responded by applying for military exemption as a CO, following the path his other brothers had taken. In late February, he appeared before the Military Mobilization Board in Edmonton. During an interview with the judge, he stated he attended church regularly and had no prior arrest except for a speeding ticket. His request for exemption was rejected; he was offered alternative service with Canada's merchant navy, which he refused. He was given a one-year postponement, a delay in military prosecution.

In early 1944, as the period of postponement was ending, he requested another extension; the request was denied, and a notice to report for military service was issued and Sam was arrested. His first court appearance was before the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Brooks on the charge of failing to report for military training after being instructed to do so. His reply to the court was unambiguous and succinct: "Sir, I will not be a soldier. I am a conscientious objector. Three times I have been told to join the military, but my answer is unchanged. The Scriptures, as I understand them, tell me not to kill."

Sam's refusal to accept induction resulted in trials and imprisonment that lasted over the next 18 months. On April 19, 1944, he was arrested again by the RCMP for failing to report for induction into the army, handcuffed and led across the familiar streets of Brooks to the train station where RCMP officers escorted him to Calgary. He remained shackled during the train ride, and, after arrival at the RCMP barracks, he was photographed, fingerprinted and body-searched. A few days later, the RCMP transported him by train in a cohort



*Sam and Beulah Martin on their wedding day.*

of 30 prisoners to the provincial jail in Lethbridge, Alta. On arrival, his head was shaved, treatment for lice administered, prison clothes assigned and a 30-day jail term began.

During the spring of 1944, Sam was permitted to spend time outside in the Alberta sunshine doing farm

work. Grandpa Martin and Uncle Clarence (Ramer), by then a well-known Mennonite minister, importuned the Mobilization Board in Edmonton to secure his release. They were joined by the Conference of Historic Peace Churches

in Kitchener, Ont., in raising concerns about the proceedings. But the authorities refused any further consideration of Sam's sentence.

On May 13, 1944, with four days off his 30-day sentence for good behaviour, he was handed over to the military police and taken back to the Mewata Armory in Calgary to be inducted into the army.

Uncle Sam was subjected to physical examinations and intelligence tests, and the favourable results led to a recommendation of appointment as a junior officer. A uniform was issued, and he was ordered to appear at installation ceremonies. Again, Sam refused. So, on May 24, he was charged with disobeying a lawful command and given a second sentence of 28 days in a military prison, where he was placed into confinement with soldiers found guilty of desertion and disobedience.

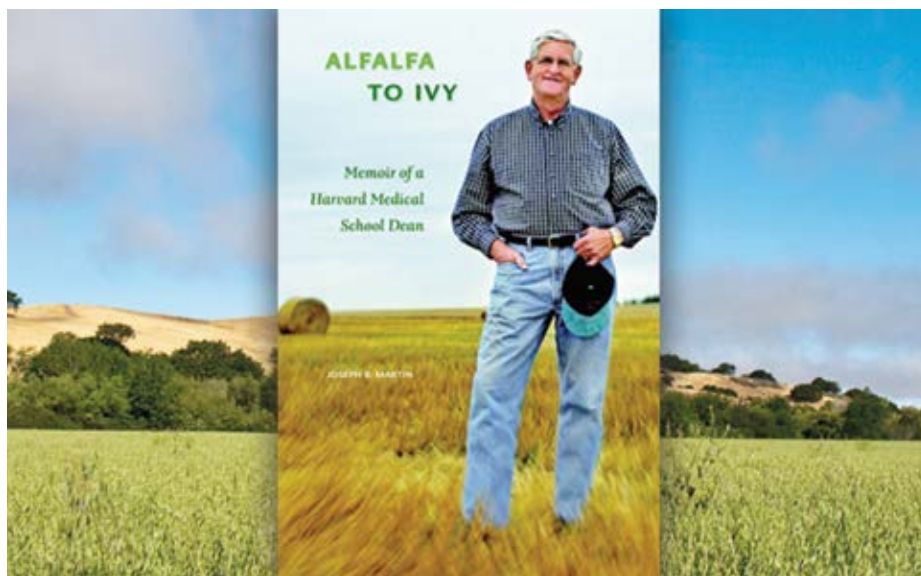
The treatment Uncle Sam received at Currie Barracks, a military outpost in Calgary, was denigrating and cruel. After persistent refusal to wear a military uniform, Uncle Sam was stripped, given only underwear and placed in a small cell. To emphasize the army's view of the seriousness of his failure to enlist, the four-week sentence included a severe curtailment in diet, with two days of bread and water followed by two days of a normal diet.

In another appearance, Uncle Sam refused to take up the mantle of military service. With his continued refusal to don a military uniform, the army issued a third sentence of 28 days, this time with 21 days of bread and water and solitary confinement, where from 10 p.m. to 6

*"Sir, I will not be a soldier. I am a conscientious objector. Three times I have been told to join the military, but my answer is unchanged. The Scriptures, as I understand them, tell me not to kill."  
(Sam Martin)*

a.m. he was given three blankets to use while sleeping on a hard shelf. He was allowed no visitors.

One day, near the end of his period of isolation, a guard appeared and threw 45 letters on the floor with the injunction,



“You have 15 minutes to read them.”

But the guard did not return right away, and he was able to read all of them. The demonstrations of love and support contained in the letters rallied Uncle Sam’s spirit. During the last week of the 21-day imposed fast of bread and water, he was finally given access to a normal diet again.

The family and church leaders were devastated. Sam sought assistance from the U.S. government since he had been born and remained a U.S. citizen. An officer granted him an informal hearing, but judged his health too precarious to be moved to the U.S. The appeals sought by family and church leaders had included the request for consideration of alternative service, as long as it was under civilian and not military management. But Sam’s appeal was denied, seemingly because other Mennonites of German-Russian origin had been willing to serve in the medical corps.

A petition objecting to Sam’s treatment was signed by 140 Duchess community members, who, although they did not share pacifist beliefs, felt his treatment uncivil and unfair. Two non-Mennonite ministers helped collect the names on the petition, which Uncle Clarence delivered to the commanding officer.

Later that summer, Uncle Sam was summoned to a hearing regarding a court-martial. Despite testimonial support from Uncle Clarence about Sam’s character and sincerity, the military

prosecutor recommended an additional sentence of 90 days at Currie Barracks. His fifth sentence was again in solitary confinement with a diet of bread and water.

A few days later, again refusing to wear a uniform, he was forced to march in the prison courtyard with other soldiers. Military activities were part of the daily routine in “rehabilitating” soldiers who had been sent to prison as a disciplinary measure. Having no other clothes, Uncle

Sam marched from the barracks into the courtyard where he was left standing in his underwear, while the others marched to the sergeant’s cadence, calling out “right-left, right-left.” Just then, a voice came over the loudspeaker. “Sam Martin, you are sentenced to eighteen months in the Lethbridge Provincial Jail, with hard labour.”

Returning to his cell, he discovered that a uniform had been delivered to him. He looked at it for a while; the temptation was strong. What was the fight about anyway? Why had he been singled out for humiliation from the thousands of Mennonites, Doukhobors, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Quakers and other COs? How much longer could he bear it?

Before he was transferred back to Lethbridge, a doctor examined Sam and concluded that the authorities needed to do something about him. His health had become precarious. He had lived on bread and water for 49 days over the previous three months. My father remembered him as a skeleton. ❧

*Excerpted from Alfalfa to Ivy: Memoir of a Harvard Medical School Dean by Joseph B. Martin. Published by The University of Alberta Press, 2011.*

### /// For discussion

1. During the Second World War, what happened when young men in your family or community were called up for military service? What are the stories of your congregation dealing with conscientious objectors? Has the Mennonite church been disrespectful to those who participated in military service?
2. Do you think a commitment to peace means not serving in the medical corps and not participating in the manufacture of war supplies? What does a military uniform symbolize? Why did Sam Martin resist the uniform so vehemently? Under what conditions can a pacifist wear a uniform?
3. How do historians portray stories of the Mennonite self-defence units in revolutionary Russia (*Selbstschutz*)? Were Mennonites hypocritical in their disapproval of those who enlisted in Canada? Do you think Mennonite churches were too harsh when those who had enlisted returned from the war? How should the church have responded?
4. If Mennonites were faced with compulsory military service today, how would the church respond? Would the response of young people be the same or different from what happened in the 1940s?

—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](mailto: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.*

## ✉ 'A little humility is in order'

RE: "HOLY CONTRADICTIONS," Sept. 16, page 4.

I was raised as a Catholic, but for years have accompanied my wife to her Mennonite church.

I hope that I am not the only reader who found Will Braun's feature to be harsh and uncharitable. Here is a partial list of his descriptions of the Catholic church: outlandish contradictions, backwardness, pomposity, theological flimsiness and human atrocities. He also repeats the word "papist," which dictionaries describe as being a disparaging term for a Roman Catholic.

I think that one should be careful in describing anyone else's theology. Writers such as Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris and the late Christopher Hitchens label anyone who believes in the Apostles' Creed—which would include Mennonites as well as Catholics—as a naïve fool or worse.

Sadly, as Braun recounts, the Catholic Church has much to answer for, for its inexcusable residential

## FROM OUR LEADERS

# The art of boundary walking

ALDRED NEUFELDT

"We are to be in the world not of the world," my father responded to a question I asked about war. As a youngster I didn't quite understand what he meant, but his conviction was clear. The words took on more significance later when I discovered they were drawn from the prayer Jesus offered for his followers just before his crucifixion (John 17:15–16).

These words, a touchstone of faith, seem to have faded from our collective memory. They come to mind as Mennonite

Church Canada's Future Directions Task Force seeks to discern what God's Spirit is calling us to in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

To be "in the world but not of it" crystallizes the challenge of Christian life. In a time when people argue that everything is relative, Jesus points to boundaries. Followers of the Jesus way are called to walk a particular path—permeable and

hard to discern at times—striking a balance between the seductions of the world around us and our commitment to being "salt and light" for a world in need.

Staying on that boundary is an art. We must walk in the world so that we can recognize the pain, injustice and failures induced by its cultures and values. Yet we also have to keep far enough away to avoid losing our identity as Christians, while staying close enough to have a transforming effect on the world.

Staying on that boundary was a challenge in Jesus' day and still is today. Most denominations are concerned about the "hemorrhaging faith" documented in a recent study sponsored by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, yet there is reason for optimism. New ways of being the church and new congregations are emerging in surprising ways and places, offering fresh approaches to

being salt and light in their surrounding communities. As we trust God's Spirit enough to step outside of our comfort zones, new and transformative ways to engage with the world emerge. We rediscover God at work in the world, and improve the art of boundary walking.

Discerning God's will for our time is much bigger than a Task Force can undertake alone. What we can aspire to, though, is to shape an approach that allows us to discern together how our denomination might best participate in God's on-going call to Kingdom building. What does it mean to be "in the world but not of it" at this time in history? How do we encourage and support each other in the art of boundary walking? What is the role of congregations? Of families? Of the broader church family?

We encourage you to discuss with one another how we can effectively be salt and light in the world, in this time and place. Share your ideas in smaller groups and larger, and then with us at [aneufeldt@ucalgary.ca](mailto:aneufeldt@ucalgary.ca) so that we can shape the art of boundary walking together.

*Aldred Neufeldt is assistant moderator of Mennonite Church Canada's General Board and chair of the Future Directions Task Force.*





schools project and the treatment of aboriginal children.

It is also true that Mennonites are among those who live and prosper on land that was taken unjustly from aboriginal people. I would think that at least a little humility is in order.

DENNIS GRUENDING, OTTAWA

## ✉ Seeking the mystery of God's grace

RE: "HOLY CONTRADICTIONS," Sept. 16, page 4.

I have read this piece by my friend Will Braun a

number of times and agree with much of his essay regarding the Catholic Church. I was struck by the similarities between his description of the Catholic Church and the relationship between God and his people in the Old Testament.

Since he assures me that he is not about throwing stones or about picking splinters out of the Catholic eye, or, for that matter, out of the Mennonite eye, I wondered what is the mystery he speaks of. After a sleepless night thinking about this mystery and wondering what point he was trying to make, I wondered if he was shining a light on the mystery of God's grace.

## FAMILY TIES

# God's in my kitchen

MELISSA MILLER

"Hey! This is our first kitchen renovation," I exclaimed to my husband of 37 years, with whom I've shared nine homes.

"It was never on my 'bucket list,'" he glumly replied.

This conversation snippet aptly represents the roles we took in our recently completed renovation. I took the part of cheerleader, enthusiast and self-designated project manager, while my husband was a reluctant partner. He was also a skilled and dedicated

labourer, I'm grateful to add. With our efforts and that of paid tradesmen, we joined the ranks of suc-

cessful kitchen renovators, or that's how it seems to me. I am delighted with how our project turned out, with its warm oak cupboards, improved traffic flow and expanded counters.

Along the way, we made many decisions regarding design and details. (The cupboards alone consumed far more hours than I imagined would be possible.) Those decisions rubbed up against our Christian ethics of simplicity and frugality. We established a few working principles: avoiding debt and unnecessary expense; modest, balanced with the rest of the house and the neighborhood; well-constructed and attractive. For the

most part, we held to those goals.

Still, it's a luxury to be able to equip one's home with such beauty and richness. (There are now three timers in my little kitchen!) Anyone who is doing a kitchen renovation, however simple and basic it may be, is relatively wealthy when compared to cooks around the world. I want to be mindful of women who bend over smoky fires to make pita, grind corn for tortillas or carry water over long distances, as I savor my food

*As I chop onions, knead dough and stir soups, the trinity soothes, settles and grounds me.*

preparation space. (For anyone similarly inclined, there are ways to stay mindful of such people. In addition to the church agencies we typically support, check out *Hungry Planet: what the world eats*, by Peter Menzel and Faith D'Aluisio, with its photos of 30 families from 24 countries, and the food they consume in a week. Or The Hunger Project at [www.thp.org](http://www.thp.org) with its vision to end world hunger.)

My corner in the world is as a middle-class North American who spends a lot of time in the kitchen. Preparing, serving and enjoying food is a spiritual practice. I meet the God of abundance in my kitchen. I remember how Jesus shared

bread and wine with his friends, and how we re-enact that meal at communion. I joyfully accept the spirit's invitation to practice hospitality. As I chop onions, knead dough and stir soups, the Trinity soothes, settles and grounds me.

It's no surprise that the Bible contains so many stories of divine encounters related to food. Our daily bread is the stuff that nourishes us. We receive food from God's bountiful hand, and we are called to pass on that bounty to others. And we feed on God's grace, that which we find in scripture and that which we find in Jesus.

There's a particular scripture that speaks to me, as a woman, as a provider of food. Luke 8 opens with a note about Jesus and his disciples going through

cities and villages, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. Luke adds that some women were among the disciples, names three of those women and notes, "[They] provided for them out of their resources." (verse 3) Someone was feeding Jesus! Making sure he had the resources he needed to do his good work. We who labour to prepare and share food are disciples in the tradition of Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Susanna.

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



I opened *Beyond Words* by Frederick Buechner, a good Presbyterian, and was struck by this statement: “A crucial eccentricity of the Christian faith is the assertion that people are saved by grace. . . . There’s no way to earn it or deserve it or bring it about any more than you can deserve the taste of raspberries and cream.”

The church—that is God’s people—is made up of fallen people who, even with the discipline and wisdom of community, get things wrong. They did in the time of the prophets, they did in the early church and we continue in the modern church. How else can we explain the inconsistency between confessions of faith and our relationship to God’s created world, between our words and our lifestyles, between the concept of Christian unity and the many divisions of the church?

Perhaps we just need to acknowledge our propensity to get things wrong, both individually and corporately, and accept the pure grace offered by Jesus and stop flagellating the church.

So thanks for the sleepless night and the mystery reminding me, and us, of God’s grace seen in the Catholic Church, in the Protestant church and yes, in the Mennonite church! God is making all things new and, as the 14th century mystic, Julian of Norwich, assures us: “All shall be well, and all shall be well and all manner of thing shall be well.” That, to me, is mystery enough!

DON DYCK, WINKLER, MAN.

### ✉ Braun presents an imaginary Catholic Church

RE: “**HOLY CONTRADICTIONS**,” Sept. 16, page 4.

As a Catholic, I had a hard time recognizing my faith as it was described by Will Braun: backwards, contradictory, pompous and, apparently, indifferent to clerical pedophilia and the safety of our children.

If the Catholic Church really were the bizarre place described in this article, it would be a mystery as to why it even had one member, never mind 1.2 billion. To me, the obvious explanation is this: the Catholic Church he describes exists only in his imagination.

I am a convert to Catholicism, and can assure you that most Catholics are not blind followers. We certainly aren’t indifferent to the problems in our church. However, the church described in this feature—where women who have abortions are “automatically” excommunicated, where the “unworthy” are excluded from the eucharist—frankly, that all sounds like the slander Catholics are used to from evangelical fundamentalists and the secular press.

Catholics, just like Mennonites I presume, are members of our church because we have encountered Christ powerfully through her: in our brothers and sisters, in our clergy, our art, our liturgies, even in our dogmas. We believe in Christ’s message of hope to the weak and suffering of the world. By grace we try to pattern our lives on his example.

My prayer would be that readers would extend a little scepticism regarding Braun’s understanding of what Catholics believe and do. For those who are curious, the Vatican publishes the full catechism of the Catholic Church online at [vatican.va/archive](http://vatican.va/archive).

There is probably still much there to scandalize non-Catholics, but at least all of it will be a truthful reflection of Catholic belief and practice.

MARTIN WILLMS (ONLINE SUBMISSION)

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## LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

# Attunement

## — part 2

BY TROY WATSON

I was twenty-two years old when I first realized the price of my happiness was too high. I had met some Christians in a small Russian village who, although struggling to obtain life's most basic necessities, were happier and more content than I was. They taught me that true joy, peace, and fulfillment are the result



of properly valuing what we already have, especially our relationships with others and God. They helped me realize I didn't need all the things and circumstances I thought I needed in order to enjoy life.

Jesus taught us that the highest quality of life (abundant life) is being in a state of communion with God. It's not found in financial stability, accomplishments, reputations, good health or a trouble-free existence. As I mentioned in my last article, the quality of our lives is based on what we're tuned into more than what happens to us.

So how do we tune into the divine frequency? How do we deepen our communion with God?

There's an old story of a young man who visited a wise old holy man. The young man said, "I want to see God. Show me how I may experience God." The holy man ignored him till he finally went away. The next day the young man returned and repeated his request. Again the holy man ignored him until he eventually left. The following day the tenacious youngster came back. "Please sir, I really want to know God. Show me how I may experience God."

The holy man stood up, led the young man to the lakeshore and waded out into the water. Once they were both in the

lake, the old man asked the lad to get on his knees. The young man complied and the old man grabbed his head with both hands, pushed it under the water and held it there. The young man struggled, thrashing about more wildly as time passed.

When he was finally released, he stood up gasping for air. The holy man

waited a few seconds and calmly said, "I apologize for any anxiety I have caused you but tell me, why did you struggle so while I held your head below the water?"

"Why did I struggle?" he shouted. "I was unable to breathe! I thought I was going to die."

The wise old man smiled and said, "The day you desire God as desperately as you desired air, you will find God."

The popular life coach Tony Robbins says until we turn our "wants" and "shoulds" into "musts," nothing in our lives will change. For most Christians, communion with God is something we want, or believe we should have. But until communion with God is something we *must* have, we'll keep investing our time, our focus and our energy elsewhere, on our higher priorities, on our "musts."

Unfortunately, many of our "musts" are ego-based and not in line with our real needs or best interests. Sometimes struggle and suffering are the only teachers capable of awakening us to what our souls really need. Why else would Jesus say those who are poor, hungry, grieving, and persecuted are blessed? I think Jesus is saying, at least in part, that struggle and suffering are beneficial in that they can help us get in tune with our deepest needs, especially our need for a loving,

gracious, healing God. As C.S. Lewis famously put it, "Pain is the megaphone of God."

Jesus also said wealth, entertainment, gratification and popularity are misfortunes. Why? Because they distract us from our desperate need for God. They numb us to our true desires.

One of my super healthy friends told me he used to eat a lot of chocolate bars and chips. Now, after three years of eating only healthy food, he says he no longer experiences cravings for junk food. His body is tuned into its true desires. His body now craves whole foods with lots of nutrients.

When we tune into our soul's true desires—we begin to crave communion with God.

To intellectually understand we need God is not enough though. To believe we need God more than anything will not transform us. We must feel the desire. We must experience the need, like the young man experienced his desperate need for air while his head was underwater.

Attuning ourselves to Divine Spirit starts with desire, with making communion with God one of our "musts" in life.

*Troy Watson is pastor of Quest. (troy@questcc.ca)*

### /// Corrections

#### Mis-attribution

The three summary points (education, interaction, and imagination—"Peace triumphs in festival," Oct. 14, 2013) from the peace panel were themes identified by the moderator, Jane Pauline Philpott, a member of Community Mennonite Church Stouffville, not Arnold Neufeldt-Fast.

#### Wrong date of origin

In a Briefly Noted article "MCI enrolment up," Sept. 30, 2013, it was stated that Mennonite Collegiate Institute has been "integrating community and faith since 1989." It should have read: since 1889. MCI regrets the reporting.



## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

## Program for youth confirms seminary students' call to ministry

BY MARY E. KLASSEN

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary  
ELKHART, IND.

As two Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary students led a program that encourages high school youth to consider ministry, their own call to ministry grew stronger.

Sara Erb and Eric Vandrick worked with !Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth when the participants were on campus for their group experience, July 9–24. !Explore gives high school youth opportunities to study their own theological questions, test gifts for ministry and consider their role in the church.

Erb had been a participant in !Explore, so her return to the program as a leader gave her a new opportunity to consider her own questions. At 16, the question she worked with related to women in ministry. “This time with !Explore I was seeking affirmation for what I am experiencing in my call now. This was a testing ground to see if working with youth is something that I find life-giving.”

Seriously examining questions of faith is something Vandrick believes everyone should do. He hoped that being an event pastor would “encourage my own vision for what it might be like to do educational ministry in the church.”

Event pastors host the youth and are available for questions and conversations. They join in prayer times, help the youth lead prayers, join in service projects in the community and support the youth in planning worship services.

“I was surprised how meaningful it was for me,” Erb said, although she admitted that managing self-care during the two intense weeks was challenging. “I anticipated it to be a really wonderful experience, but not nearly to the extent that it was.”

Erb confessed she has been ambivalent about thinking of herself with the title of pastor. However, through her work with the youth, “I found myself claiming that title a lot more and not realizing when that

decision happened. At the end I realized I owned that and I was comfortable with it. That was surprising.”

The two seminary students earned credit for their work with !Explore, and part of that responsibility included their own theological reflection the experience. Erb said, “I focused on redefining church as a theological playground, not making light of theological work but that we are free to ask questions and enjoy what we are doing.”

Both Erb and Vandrick are now more open to considering pastoral ministry with youth than they were before leading !Explore. Earlier misgivings grew from the view that youth ministry can focus more on doing activities than on faith formation, and that youth ministry often is assumed to be only a stepping stone to other forms of ministry.

Vandrick said, “After !Explore I see junior high and high school as a group in the church that I am particularly called or gifted to work with.” He will complete a Master of Arts: Theological Studies degree this winter and is beginning to look at different forms of ministry with youth.

Erb said, “This experience reaffirmed that youth ministry is not just a stepping stone. This is something I really do want to engage in. Through the program my strengths were very clearly in worship and worship leading.” As Erb completes a Master of Divinity this year and begins looking beyond seminary study, she is interested in positions that combine her gifts of working with youth and leading congregational worship. She is from Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, Ont. ☞

PHOTO BY SAEJIN LEE



Youth from the !Explore program at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary worked with Pedal Power, a ministry of the Voluntary Service unit in Elkhart, Ind., connected to Prairie Street Mennonite Church. From left: Isaiah Friesen, Sara Erb (event pastor), Nick Simons (from Prairie Street), Ryan Miller, Madeline Gerig, Lynea Brubacher Kaethler.

### Online

Best-selling author Malcolm Gladwell grew up in southwestern Ontario in a small Mennonite community. See a web-exclusive interview with Gladwell about his latest book and the faith that nurtured it, at [www.canadianmennonite.org/articles/interview-malcolm-gladwell-his-return-faith](http://www.canadianmennonite.org/articles/interview-malcolm-gladwell-his-return-faith)





*A couple who had their five children taken into custody work on a puzzle to help them cope with the overwhelming silence in their home.*

## Old Order community waits for children to return

STORY AND PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU  
Manitoba Correspondent

The empty swings sway idly in the breeze. A sandbox is overgrown with weeds. Toys are clustered in the corners of homes, undisturbed. The sounds of children playing are only a distant memory for parents and grandparents in a small Mennonite church community in rural Manitoba that eschews modern technology. Their population was cut by nearly half when all the children were taken into custody between February and June of this year. The children's beds upstairs, neatly made with pieced quilts, have remained empty for months. There is a deep sadness that overwhelms the parents as they enter their boys' bedroom and recall the day in June when they were taken from them.

Almost every home has a story of incomprehensible sadness and pain. One grandfather's eyes welled with tears as he spoke about his 9 grandchildren, "They [Child and Family Services (CFS)] came in with their vehicles and when they loaded up the girls the boys came and wanted Grandma to tell them the Joseph story before they came back to pick them up. Joseph also had to go to a strange country."

Very few parents and grandparents were

able to say goodbye to their children. One couple observed from their home that children were being taken from the school one February morning but didn't learn from CFS until after dark that it was their five children who were taken. The school never reopened after that day because the children were too traumatized to return.

Fifteen more children were removed from their homes in February. Later in June the remaining 19 children were taken away. Life has gone on but there is a pall of emptiness, despair, and frustration that hangs over the community as it struggles to understand and to comply with every demand in an effort to have their children returned.

Thirteen adults in the community face charges of child abuse. A court publication ban prevents identification of the children and no allegations have been proven in court. Before calling in authorities almost a year ago, the leadership had tried to manage the behaviour problems of some children without success. "At the time I was expecting that a little more firm discipline would correct the behavior. I regret now the way some of these things were dealt

with," said one community leader. "We got too desperate in dealing with the problem. Today I regret and have apologized to some of these children. We were following the teachings. It was a new experience to meet up with these behaviours. If we would have only asked for help sooner to deal with these behaviours."

Four community leaders recently met with media in the empty one-room schoolhouse to answer questions. In late July, Child and Family Services presented a letter to the leadership outlining 18 conditions that need to be understood and followed by the community before any children can be returned. The letter outlined how parents can and cannot discipline their children. That letter was circulated and agreed to by all the families.

The community has taken an active role in the hopes of bringing restoration to their community. After the first group of children was apprehended "we have been trying to correct our discipline methods. We have invited in MCC and they have provided parenting courses which we are taking," said the minister. They sought the assistance of Peter Rempel, former executive director of Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba. They became part of a restoration group that includes Eden Health Care Services professionals. They have participated in two parenting workshops and are planning on having more.

"The community is working at various ways of being a safe community for its children," said Rempel. In addition to accepting the conditions imposed on them by CFS, the community has drawn up their own proposal for making their community safe for their children. They are committing themselves to ongoing parenting courses, drawing in professionals to have individual conversations with each parent couple about specific concerns. They have outlined the contacts and resources they will use in an ongoing way to assist their church leadership, the schoolteacher, youth and young adults on forming relationships within families and between genders. They will obtain counselling resources for the children as they adjust to moving back home and for those who face criminal charges.

At a court ruling on October 4, "We

were told if we commit to three points that the agency (CFS) outlined we will have our children returned. Now (Oct.10) we received a letter with 14 more conditions to meet. We feel very betrayed," said a community spokesperson. "We have not signed it because there is a point that states we cannot take our children to church as long as there is a member of the community who has criminal charges."

"We would be willing to do almost anything that doesn't violate our beliefs or our lifestyle commitments but we were really looking forward to taking them back to church because our children are the future church. There is no church without the next generation. We will lose our identity if we cannot worship together."

The community feels it is being squeezed tighter and tighter, being asked to give up what is at the core of their beliefs in order to have their children returned. "The part that confused me the most was we thought we were conforming to the demands of CFS after the first group of children were taken but later on all these children were taken. If we knew we had to conform more we would have conformed more."


Several families had their children removed in June. None of these parents had any charges laid against them at the time although two parents have since been charged, but the charges are not related to their own children. The families were not given any reason at the time but were sent a letter later on stating "the situation was still under investigation and the agency has reason to believe that we might place our children in the care of another adult who may abuse them," said a parent.

"I believe that the concern regarding the discipline issue in our community could have been dealt with without taking the children. Restoration lies at the very core of our beliefs. Whoever did wrong, whatever the error, we believe in restoration and restoration always brings healing," said a leader. He expressed appreciation for the assistance of Peter Rempel, Lois Edmund and other Mennonite professionals who have helped to form a restoration team. "That is our goal and ties in very much with how we believe. The part that is always hard on us is when restoration is always hindered. If the wrong is recognized and commitment

is made to what is right and movement towards that, that is restoration."

On that week of October 11, hopes of having their children returned were shaken again. How can they choose between their children and their faith, they questioned. Their faith sustains them, said the

community leaders. They take one day at a time and live with the promise that they will not be asked to carry more than what God will help them to carry. ❧

 See photo story at [canadianmennonite.org](http://canadianmennonite.org)

## Montreal Fellowship retreat includes baptism

BY KIT DENCH  
Montreal, Que.

As usual in September, the members of the Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal (MFM) left the big city for the lakes and hills. Forty-five adults and 11 children participated in the annual retreat held Sept. 20-22 at Camp Peniel, a Mennonite Brethren camp. Led by interim pastors, Lydia and Gary Harder, the theme "Believing, belonging and baptizing...border or brilliant?" invited the group to explore early Mennonite history, including both the admirable and less-than-admirable aspects of the movement. Younger children participated in their own program.

Although Saturday was very rainy, the weather let up briefly for the highlight of the weekend—a service of baptism and membership transfer. Wivine Sungura and Nicole Pelletier were baptized in the river running through the Camp Peniel property by interim pastor John Docherty. In addition, Bimal Thambyah affirmed his long participation in the fellowship by officially transferring his membership. On Sunday morning, the communion service included the commissioning of long-standing MFMers Emily Nigh and Tyler Braun, who are leaving Montreal for a three-year MCC term in Laos.

Other highpoints were the fantastic meals, the variety show, the endless board and card games, swimming in the lake (a hardy few only), and walks in the countryside. The skies cleared on Sunday, so all enjoyed the lovely setting and the beautiful foliage before heading back to Montreal, strengthened by fellowship with each other and with God's creation. ❧

PHOTO BY LYDIA HARDER.



*Wivine Sungura (left) and Nicole Pelletier were baptized at Camp Peniel as new members of Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal in September.*



# Doing worship differently

*John Bell at Conrad Grebel University College*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

WATERLOO, ONT.

“**A**nd also with you” was the full-voiced response to John Bell’s “The Lord be with you,” showing the ecumenical nature of the gathering at Conrad Grebel University College’s “Doing Worship Differently.” Bell, a hymn writer and worship renewal speaker from the Iona Community in Scotland led a full house in the CGUC chapel to think with hope and creativity about worship in their local congregations on Oct. 4. The Iona community is a collection of people, rather than a location, focussed on ecumenism, peace, justice and renewal in the church.

Seemingly at random Bell taught a number of worship choruses in English, Greek and Hebrew as he taught about continua in worship:

- The worshipping congregation on a continuum between being audience and community
- The worship space on a continuum between constraining and fulfilling
- Leadership on a continuum between sacerdotal (one ‘sacred’ leader) and shared
- Form of worship on a continuum between uniform and diverse
- Scriptural knowledge of worshippers on a continuum between potent and lacking
- Dominant mode of communication

on a continuum between cerebral and experiential

- The tenor of liturgical spirituality on a continuum between individualistic and corporate.

Except for scriptural knowledge, Bell encouraged congregations to not be stuck anywhere on the continua.

He spent considerable time helping the group to think about ways of approaching scripture other than the sermon, noting that Jesus in telling his parables of the lost sheep (Luke 15) had learned about shepherding not from books but by talking and listening to shepherds. Bell told the story of learning from women about young girls who nearly died from shame on having their first period without having been prepared, something that as a man he could not fathom. This was in the context of studying the story of Jarius’ daughter in Luke 8. He then led the group in a reading of that story, interspersing the choruses he had earlier taught, a Kyrie (Lord have mercy) and an Alleluia (Praise to God), turning a simple reading into a powerful emotional, imaginative, shared, and diverse experience.

Toward the end of his presentation he looked at how worship spaces can either

bind or free a congregation to worship. Small congregations in large buildings can have a hard time being a community or hearing each other when they sing, something that dampens worship. Using cords to limit the seating and moving the group together is a simple way of changing the space. Bell called on congregations to think inside their buildings but to not allow the buildings to rule them.

Bell was on a North American tour which included, in the Waterloo area, a Friday night hymn sing and seminars at the Glen Morris United Church on Sunday morning and evening. ❧

## ❧ Briefly noted

### Project Ploughshares to return to Grebel in 2014

WATERLOO, ONT.—After more than a decade of being located at the Centre for International Governance Innovation in Uptown Waterloo, Project Ploughshares will be returning to the place of its birth next spring. Ploughshares’ office was located at Grebel from its founding in 1976 until 2002. The return home became possible because of the generosity of a \$1 million gift from the Mennonite Savings and Credit Union (MSCU) to Grebel, to establish the MSCU Centre for Peace Advancement (CPA) on the fourth floor of Grebel’s current building project. Project Ploughshares will become an anchor partner in the MSCU CPA, which will also provide a new home for Grebel graduate students, peace organization start-ups, artists, musicians and visiting scholars. Participants in the MSCU CPA will be part of a collaborative network of individuals and organizations that provide mentoring and initiate ideas to foster creative peacemaking. As an operating agency of the 25-member Canadian Council of Churches, Project Ploughshares has established a worldwide reputation for providing evidenced-based research and practical policy recommendations to advance peace and disarmament.

—Conrad Grebel University College/  
Project Ploughshares



*John Bell (right) greets Oderay Peters from the Jane Finch Faith Community in Toronto as her husband Hans (pastor at Jane Finch) looks on after Bell’s presentation at Conrad Grebel University College’s “Doing worship differently” seminar on Oct. 4.*

God at work in the Church

# Snapshots

PHOTO BY ELO WIDEMAN



*Erwin Wiens (centre), was installed as intentional interim pastor at Hawkesville Mennonite Church on Oct. 6, 2013. Ray Bauman (left) representing the congregation, and Henry Paetkau, Conference Minister for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, participated in the service. It also included communion and a transfer of membership by Erwin and his wife, Marian Wiens.*

PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD



*Sept. 21 was a momentous day for Edmonton Vietnamese Mennonite Church, as it celebrated the dedication of its building to God. Here, children dance to a song called 'Sing for Joy,' which tells the story of Jesus inviting people to follow the way, the truth, and the life during the celebration. In 2012, the congregation purchased the Edmonton Worship Centre building from Mennonite Church Alberta and began extensive, much-needed renovations. Many guests from across Canada and the U.S., representing several denominations in addition to Mennonite, were in attendance. Dan Graber, MC Alberta's conference minister, led the dedication ceremony, saying, "Legally, the [congregation] owns the land and building, but today we give it back to God. I invite all who worship here in the past, in the present and in the future, to never believe they have ownership of the building. It belongs to God." Thomas Pham is the pastor of Vietnamese ministry, and Kuen Yee is the pastor of English ministry.*



## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

# Standing together with First Nations

*Idle No More recognizes 1763 Royal Proclamation*

BY DEBORAH FROESE AND DAN DYCK

Mennonite Church Canada

WINNIPEG

When Moses Falco heard the words, “We never gave up our sovereignty,” at an Oct. 7 rally held in Winnipeg to mark the 250th anniversary of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, they struck a chord. “I realized that I, by the way I continue to live, am not just suppressing a people, I am suppressing nations in my own country. I’m not okay with that.”

With a variety of guest speakers, songs and drumming, the rally drew attention to the centuries-old document signed by King George III that entrenched native sovereignty and laid down rules for land negotiation between First Nations and the

government that have long been ignored by politicians of all stripes.

The rally took place on the Manitoba Legislative grounds. Niigaanwewidam Sinclair, an Associate Professor of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba, served as master of ceremonies. A diverse group of people attended, including political leaders such as Derek Nepinak, the Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, former MP Judy Wasylycia-Leis, City Councillor Ross Eadie, and Dougald Lament, official contestant for the Manitoba Liberal leadership race.

In a conversation after the rally, Sinclair

noted Mennonite support at other First Nations events. He expressed his gratitude to the Mennonite community for standing together with First Nations people in their efforts to reclaim their rightful status on the land.

Tim Froese, Mennonite Church Canada Executive Minister, Witness, recited a summary of what he heard from other speakers. “We need to undo the myth that Canada is a free and fair country. People need to learn the history that never made it into our textbooks. The Royal Proclamation means something and it needs to be translated into a plan of action.”

Reflecting on the rally, Falco, a part-time communications student at Canadian Mennonite University, says that he was inspired to learn more and that something needs to be done to heal the relationship between settler society and host peoples. He was one of 250 to 300 people at the rally, and works part time as a videographer and graphic designer for Mennonite Church Canada. ❧

MC CANADA PHOTO BY DAN DYCK.



On Oct. 7, 2013, Idle No More held a rally at the Manitoba Legislative grounds in Winnipeg to mark the 250th anniversary of the Proclamation of 1763. About 10 percent of those in attendance to show solidarity with indigenous brothers and sisters were Mennonite.

MC CANADA PHOTO BY KATHY MOOREHEAD THIESSEN



The Keewatin Otchitchak (Northern Crane) Traditional Women Singers formed a drum circle at the Oct. 7 Idle No More rally in Winnipeg. Kathy Moorehead Thiessen, member of Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg and an off-duty reservist for the Iraqi Kurdistan Christian Peacemakers Team (CPT), found the babies next to the drums a compelling image of indigenous peace and justice issues in Canada. “The baby sleeps quietly right beside the singing and drumming. The baby is the future—one of the ones whom Idle No more is working for,” she said.



## /// Briefly noted

### Church, mosque, temple host interfaith summer camp

“When we get to know others of different faiths and become friends, it will be much harder to do harm to them or turn our backs on them.” Such a sentiment lay behind the first Interfaith Peace Camp that took place in August in London, Ont. Twenty-seven children aged 6 to 12 from the three Abrahamic faiths—Christianity, Islam and Judaism—gathered daily for times of intergenerational play, learning and activities. Based on an interfaith peace camp begun at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va., the London camp brought together campers, junior counsellors and leaders under the direction of Pastor Charleen Jongejan-Harder of Valleyview Mennonite Church, Rabbi Debra Dressler of Temple Israel and Sarah Darsha of the Islamic Centre of Southwest Ontario. Activities included site visits to a mosque, a temple and a church, where children learned about similarities and differences in their faiths, developed an understanding of the basic tenets of each faith, and had an opportunity to share a meal provided in each location. Participants were surprised by the many clocks in the prayer room of the mosque, by the simplicity of the Mennonite church sanctuary and by the care taken to lovingly cover and bedeck the Torah in its protective ark. Children learned to write “peace,” “salaam” and “shalom” in Arabic and Hebrew.

—BY ELENOR TAVES



*Participants at the first Interfaith Peace Camp in London, Ont., this summer form a peace symbol.*

## /// Briefly noted

### Colombian peace advocate threatened

Ricardo Esquivia Ballestas, a peace advocate in Colombia, has received threats and intimidation from Colombian authorities. Last month, credible



**Ricardo Esquivia**

(who remain unnamed for fear of reprisal) confirmed the threats against Esquivia and other leaders, one of whom has already been detained. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada and MCC U.S. sent a joint letter to Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos Calderon asking him to condemn all threats against Esquivia as well as protect him and other community leaders. MCC also sent letters to the Canadian and U.S. governments calling on them to advocate to the Colombian government. Esquivia served as director of The Christian Centre for Justice, Peace and Nonviolent Action (Justapaz). He is the national coordinator of the Commission for Restoration, Life and Peace, of the Evangelical Council of Churches of Colombia. “Ricardo is a very close friend of mine,” wrote Robert J. Suderman, retired General Secretary of Mennonite Church Canada in an email. “We worked very closely for the years that my wife and I lived in Colombia, and long after.” Esquivia began his advocacy work in Colombia decades ago with small-scale farmers, said Bonnie Klassen, MCC’s area director for South America and Mexico. “Their successful efforts to gain legal access to land ran counter to the economic interests of some powerful political and economic leaders in the region.”

—DEBORAH FROESE FOR  
MC CANADA WITH REPORTS  
FROM MENNONITE CENTRAL  
COMMITTEE

# MCC Canada celebrates 50 years

By EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent  
WINNIPEG, MAN.

It may come as a surprise to some that Mennonite Central Committee Canada is only 50 years old. It seems MCC Canada has a history much longer than 50 years, whether that is because MCC will be celebrating its 100th anniversary in just seven years, or because the kind of work MCC Canada is doing was being done long before by a myriad of Canadian Mennonite organizations, or perhaps because many Canadian Mennonites older than 50 were impacted by the work of MCC much earlier.

Esther Epp-Tiessen, who has completed a history of MCC Canada commissioned by the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, said the history goes back to at least 1920 if not earlier. Although MCC Canada was formed in 1963, “Canadians have been involved in MCC much longer than 50 years. Canadians have been involved since the 1920s and particularly since the 1940s through the Akron (Pennsylvania) office.” Canadians developed their own inter-Mennonite organizations that worked with issues of relief, immigration, and peace. Most of these organizations had a close relationship with MCC and in the late 1950s and early 1960s there was movement to bring these organizations together. “One of the organizations that died when MCC was born was the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization,” said Epp-Tiessen. “It was formed in 1922 and brought 20,000 Mennonite refugees to Canada in the 1920s and several thousands more after World War II. It merged with another group and changed its name and then became part of MCC Canada.”

Vatican II and the Viet Nam War contributed to a decade of ferment both in the church and in society in the 1960s. It also seemed a time ripe for the birth of MCC Canada. “I think the vision of a number

of people was that the time had come for Canadian Mennonites to bring together this cluster of Mennonite organizations. There was a lot of duplication and it wasn’t as efficient and comprehensive as it could have been,” said Epp-Tiessen. Since the 1940s there had been an MCC office in Kitchener, Ont., but its direction came from Akron.

“In some ways it was a changing of the guard. A younger group of leaders had emerged and were pushing this agenda. The push came primarily from western Canada since Ontario Mennonites were quite happy with the arrangement they had.” Most of the other provinces opened offices in 1964 and Alberta in 1965.

Questions of identity and organization needed to be worked through in those early years and in recent years the Wineskin process wrestled with some of those same questions. “What we have now is two national entities that jointly engage in MCC international work . . . Three years ago MCC Canada did not have the mandate to look beyond its programs in Canada,

but now with restructuring and realignment we are working collaboratively at an international program,” said Don Peters, executive director.

Looking ahead, Peters identifies the necessity of nurturing constituency ties and relationships. “MCC takes its relationships with the churches very seriously. They need to be nurtured and maintained and we have a commitment to do that.”

In addition to the supporting churches are “numerous volunteers who help with the thrift shops, relief sales, beef canning and that kind of work. I am also gratified by the support base of our biggest domestic program, Ten Thousand Villages, that involves many who are not connected to our churches.”

“It seems to me that changes in our world are accelerating and we cannot anticipate what will happen in five years, but within the MCC network, we are working with a strategic plan. The broad priorities we have are disaster relief, sustainable community development, and justice and peace building.”

On Sept. 20 at Canadian Mennonite University, MCC Canada celebrated its 50th anniversary with birthday cake and reflections on the past 50 years. On Dec. 13 and 14 the Mennonite Historical Society will host a conference in Winnipeg on MCC Canada’s 50 years and will launch Epp-Tiessen’s book, *Mennonite Central Committee in Canada – A History*. ❧

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY ESTHER EPP-TIESSEN



*The first executive committee of MCC Canada were (from left): J.J. Thiessen, Ted Friesen, Newton Gingrich, David P. Neufeld, Cornie J. Rempel, E. J. Swalm, and Harvey Plett.*





*The Whitewater sewing circle includes (from left): Betty Albrecht, Susan Engbrecht, Lena Dyck-Hildebrand, Helen Bergman, Tinie Sawatzky, Rita Engbrecht, Agnes Epp, Lena Franz, Tina Neufeld, Joan West, Elsie Dyck, Lorraine Brannan, Jessie Tiessen, Cathy Heide, and Hedy Dyck.*

## Whitewater sewing circle celebrates 75 years

BY RITA ENGBRECHT

Boissevain, Man.

Whitewater Sewing Circle celebrated 75 years of fellowship and service on Sept. 15, 2013. The ladies of the Whitewater Mennonite Church, Boissevain, Man., gather on the first Thursday of each month to tie and quilt blankets for Mennonite Central Committee. Every month also has a special project, such as praying for a missionary and communicating via e-mail. They also support local projects including the festival, food pantry, Crisis Pregnancy in Brandon and Union Gospel Mission in Winnipeg. They make blankets for fire victims, for missions and for MCC sales.

In the early years of the Whitewater Church, two groups of ladies met regularly for an afternoon of Bible Study and fellowship. Mrs. Herman Lohrenz was the first leader. These woman also collected clothing for the needy and in 1942 helped establish a scholarship for destitute girls so they could attend the Mennonite Collegiate Institute in Gretna. In 1960 Prayer Sisters were established. They supported missionaries, sending material aid and gathering money for retired missionaries.

The sewing circle also served in other

ways, presenting programs at Westview and Deloraine Lodges, serving meals to bereaved families, collecting Campbell's Soup labels for the Hopi Mission School in Arizona, and becoming involved with social issues such as unsavoury TV programming and pornography. They also have enjoyed socializing with outings to places such as teahouses, to the MCC warehouse in Plum Coulee or miniature golfing.

The Sept 15 worship service celebrated with past and present members. As well as special music and teaching children how to fill MCC School kits (with bags sewn by the ladies) the service included a presentation by Hedy Dyck regarding the highlights of the past 75 years.

The theme for the celebration was "Carrying God's Light, a 75-year Journey of Service, 1938-2013." The Bible has many references to light that encourage, command, and instruct God's people to walk in the light and be the light.

A hot roast beef dinner and program followed the service. The basement was decorated with many quilts and three posters. The first poster listed the names of all members past and present, a second listed

### /// Briefly noted

#### MennoHomes names new executive director

KITCHENER, ONT.— Dan Driedger will be MennoHomes' new executive director effective Oct. 1. Driedger is currently the resource development direc-



Dan Driedger

tor at Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario, a position he has held for five years. Prior to serving with MCC Ontario, he held a variety of management positions with a Waterloo, Ont., manufacturer of automation systems. MennoHomes, a charitable organization based in Kitchener, provides affordable rental housing in Waterloo Region for low-income individuals and families. It grew out of an MCC Ontario working group on affordable housing. MennoHomes has created more than 100 units of affordable rental housing to meet the needs of seniors, refugees and large rural families through projects in Kitchener, Wellesley and Elmira. "I'm excited about working with MennoHomes," Driedger says. "Their hands-on approach to addressing the need for affordable housing and vision for increased response to that need is inspiring." Driedger and his wife Darlene live near Drayton, Ont., and are members of Community Mennonite Fellowship in Drayton.

—MennoHomes

those who served on the executive, and the third showed projects and pictures of quilts.

The future is unknown for the Whitewater Sewing Circle. Membership has dropped from a high of 43 to 19 but they continue to meet the needs they can and enjoy fellowship time together. They feel that they have been blessed and remember the words of 2 Corinthians 3:18-20: "And we all, with unveiled faces, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into His likeness from one degree of glory to another for this comes from the Lord who is Spirit."///



## ARTBEAT

# Faith Mennonite Church band produces CD

*Locally produced CDs have strengths and weaknesses*

DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

Creating a CD is both simple and complex. The proliferation of digital recording equipment and the ease and non-expensive nature of producing CDs has led many local musicians and congregations to produce their own music recordings. But music and its recording is complex. While many write songs, the process of creating the text and music is more difficult than it might seem and most professional musicians' songs go through a process of editing with publishers/producers so that the final version is stronger than the original.

Then there is the process of recording/producing where the technician(s) in the sound booth and the producer (sometimes the same person) make suggestions for instruments, voice mixes, tempo and so on. Mastering the final version is a solitary process with the producer working over all the takes of the song and using bits and pieces, splicing together the final version. While equipment has proliferated and pressing of CDs is relatively inexpensive, not everyone with equipment can edit and produce, nor do all amateur musicians get the help they need to get the most out of their songs and performances.

At *Canadian Mennonite*, many CDs created and beloved by local musicians and congregations come for review. All of them have a mixture of great music, great songs, good performance and relatively good production. Faith Sound, the "house band" at Faith Mennonite Church in Leamington, Ontario recently submitted "Watch the World." Faith Sound is Barry Bergen (a local correspondent for CM), David Koop and Dennis Wiens, backed up on the CD by other local musicians.

Many of the songs refer to stories close to the hearts and memories of folk at Faith MC—the Reesor settlement in northern

Ontario, conscientious objectors from World War II and a response to Canadian Mennonite University's Peace-It-Together youth conference. There are many strengths both musically, textually and performance-wise to this CD, but being self-recorded, produced and mastered it could have benefited from outside ears and production to strengthen the good content. The first track has a great 40-second intro that seems to have little to do with the rest of the song. Perhaps the song needed reworking, or the intro needed its own song, or the song should have begun when the vibes begin. The small solos by the various musicians strengthen and make the song more interesting.

Wiens sings well but the song should have been scored in a lower key to keep him from straining as he sings. He's hitting



*Watch the World CD cover*

the notes but it gives the feeling of the tuning being slightly off. His vowels are very solid. He handles a few difficult words (like singing a sustained "world") well and generally his enunciation is good.

Like most such CDs, *Watch the World* will be treasured by many at Faith MC and in the Leamington community. They can be rightly proud of what they have produced and they have preserved stories to influence themselves and their families. The goal of selling the CDs as an MCC fundraiser only makes the project better. The CD is available from faithsoundp3@gmail.com. ☘

## /// Briefly noted

### New edition of *God's Story, Our Story* released

Ten years after *God's Story, Our Story: Exploring Christian Faith and Life* was first written by Michele Hershberger and published by Faith and Life Press, an updated version has been released. The book serves as an introduction to Christian faith from an Anabaptist perspective, especially for those considering baptism or church membership. It focuses on the Bible's story of God working throughout history, with Jesus as the centre of the story, and readers are invited to enter that story. In addition to nine chapters exploring key aspects of the Christian story through the Bible, the new edition includes key discussion questions pulled out into the margins of the text; spiritual disciplines for each chapter; a topical at-a-glance outline for each chapter; historical art that illustrates various stories; a summary of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*; and a timeline of Anabaptist history. Dave Bergen, Mennonite Church Canada's executive minister for Christian formation, says, "*God's Story, Our Story* has all the right ingredients to stir up a vigorous encounter on matters of faith. . . . It is conversational and invitational. It freely asks the hard questions, yet refuses to offer easy platitudes." —MennoMedia



## FOCUS ON BOOKS &amp; RESOURCES

## BOOK REVIEW

# Steiner pushed open doors for other women

*Flowing with the River: Soundings from my Life and Ministry.* Sue Clemmer Steiner. Self-published (flowingwiththeriver.com), 2013, 174 pages.

BY MARIANNE MELLINGER

Sue Clemmer Steiner's recent publication crosses genres within autobiography. It is personal memoir and spiritual recollection. It is reflections on a life in pastoral ministry. It is a historical snapshot of a 1950s eastern Pennsylvania traditional Mennonite community and a Mennonite girl facing the social upheaval of the 1960s. Steiner offers poetry and evocative images. The title, *Flowing with the River: Soundings from my Life in Ministry*, is apt, as flowing indicates ongoing movement and soundings measure depth.

Ordained to ministry in 1987, Steiner was part of the early wave of women in ministry who pushed open doors for other women to enter. Words from Steiner's essay titles such as "Churning," "Plunged," "Testing," suggest the struggles and uncertainty, the pain and disappointment that she, and others of this group of women, experienced.

As I read, I found myself returning to the question, "What does it take to grow a minister?" Like most women of that era, Steiner did not set out to be a pastor. Even as she embarks for seminary study she replies, "Certainly not!" when her mother inquires whether she intends to become a minister. Pastoral ministry happens to her later. Yet, in telling her story Steiner reflects on core but unique-to-her aspects of life which shaped her for the minister she became.

The first is a solid foundation. Steiner's early years seem ideal. She was loved, nurtured, and formed in an environment where for the most part family and church were one. Uncles, aunts, and cousins were

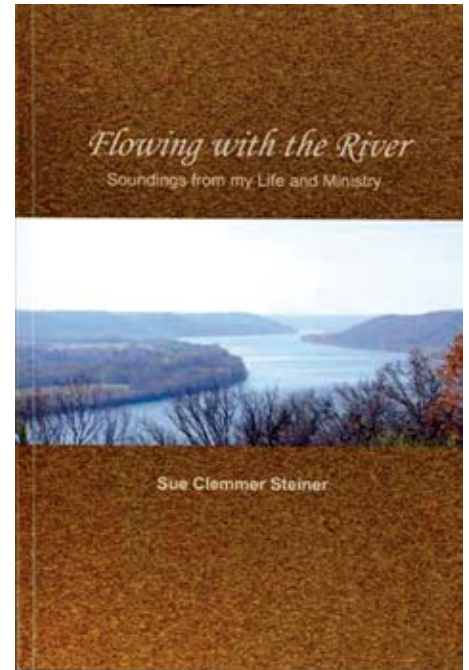
ministers, missionaries, and Sunday school teachers. She loved learning, and her questions, even about seemingly stringent Mennonite practices, were taken seriously.

The second is mentors. Steiner is fortunate to have attracted mentors throughout her life—important role models who noticed her, accepted her and encouraged her. These mentors seem to have provided her with confidence and assurance on her journey.

The third is learning to lead. Steiner writes, "During my stint as *Record* [Goshen College student newspaper] editor during the tumultuous 1967-68 school year, I claimed a voice I still own. I also began to imagine myself as a leader." And later, "The *Record* year also afforded me the chance to try my wings as a staff leader, team builder and encourager. Forging a team spirit, making space for others to shine, but also knowing when my own voice needs to be clearly heard—this has always been my best leadership stance."

The fourth is discovering a theological voice. At seminary Steiner submitted herself "to a text so fascinating and complex it defied all attempts to squeeze it into a linear outline. I understood that it wanted to define me, rather than me defining it." It was at seminary that "I began to see myself as a person able to think theologically."

The fifth is becoming a pastor. Steiner reflects not so much on a "call to ministry" as a recognition that she is a pastor. To paraphrase from the Gospel of Luke, "and her eyes were opened" (Luke 24:31). This recognition comes to her while immersed in a crucible of suffering and pain following



the tragic deaths of four teenagers. As she listens, preaches, cares, and is present to families, youth and friends, even entire congregations, she recognizes that "somehow, afterwards, I knew in a way I hadn't before that I am a pastor."

Becoming a minister is a different matter than staying in ministry. As Steiner lives into the demands, the expectations, the doubts and the joys of congregational ministry she recognizes that sustained ministry requires spiritual depth. She calls it "Staying connected to the Vine." She writes, "I knew I needed to attend more consciously to my own life of prayer and let God shape my ministry out of it." Thus begins her journey into contemplative spirituality, and new forms of ministry in spiritual direction and coaching.

Steiner's experiences are unique to her. Yet her reflections offer a framework for all who minister or who work with beginning pastors to ask not only, "What does it take to grow a minister," but also "What core aspects of my life have shaped me into the minister I am becoming?" ❧

*Marianne Mellinger is Coordinator of Leadership Formation: Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and Graduate Theological Studies Applied Studies Supervisor: Conrad Grebel University College*

## BOOK REVIEW

# Strengths, weaknesses in final 'global history' text

*Seeking Places of Peace—A Global Mennonite History: North America.* Royden Loewen and Steven M. Nolt. Good Books and Pandora Press, 2012, 400 pages.

REVIEWED BY BARB DRAPER  
BOOKS & RESOURCES EDITOR

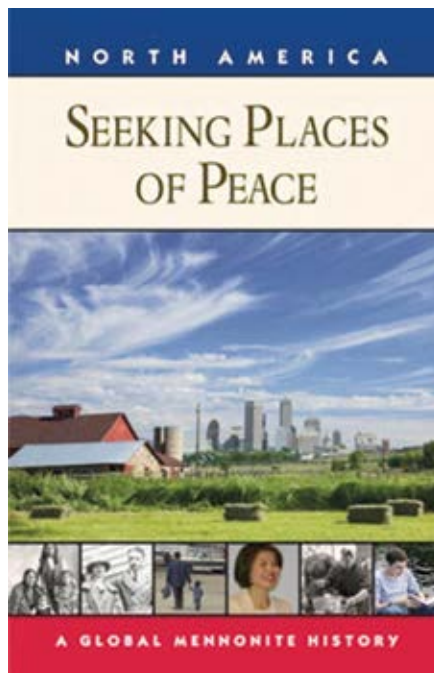
Royden Loewen and Steven Nolt have undertaken a difficult challenge in writing a history of Mennonites in North America. The scope of the project is broad, not only in terms of time and geography, but also in terms of the wide spectrum of theological diversity among Mennonite communities across Canada and the United States. This is the fifth and final volume in the Global Mennonite History Project, begun in 1997 to bring together the story of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches on five continents.

On the whole, Loewen and Nolt do not try to explain the many different sub-groups of Mennonites, finding ways in which these groups are similar to each other, rather than describing the mind-numbing details about the prolific splintering among Mennonite groups. The exception is Chapter 3, which identifies the various sub-groups of southern Manitoba, but no explanation is offered as to why other groups are not so identified.

The book primarily concentrates on the changes that came in the 20th century. In the early 1900s, Mennonites were farmers living in close-knit communities, but by the end of the century many Mennonites had moved to towns and cities, they no longer spoke German and could not outwardly be distinguished from the rest of society. While traditionalist Mennonites dressed plainly and maintained an older way of life, many other Mennonites became educated professionals concerned about peace and justice around the world. By the end of the 20th century, Mennonites were supporting an array of institutions, including

schools and universities, mission agencies and publishing operations.

In the last 100 years, Mennonites in North America have been very active and most of these projects are mentioned in *Seeking Places of Peace*. But the book is weak in its orderly logic. There was enormous theological and cultural change among Mennonite groups in the 20th century, and it is confusing when the topics within a chapter jump from one location and time period to another without a strong thread to hold everything together. I found the chapter themes somewhat broad and loose, and kept thinking "yes, but . . ." when statements didn't categorically apply to all Mennonite groups.



As a Swiss Mennonite from Ontario, I disagree with some of the authors' generalizations about North American Mennonites. They imply that the Canada/U.S. border was a major barrier separating Mennonites in the two countries, but do not mention the very strong ties between the large Swiss Mennonite contingent in Ontario and the (Old) Mennonite Church in the U.S. Nor do they draw distinctions between the history and culture of the (Old) Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church.

*Seeking Places of Peace* provides a good historical overview of the Mennonites of North America, including informative charts in the appendices. Among other strengths of the book are a variety of well-chosen photographs and two concise stories from the personal lives of representative Mennonites that introduce each of the 12 chapters. It is also a great achievement to see the completion of the five volumes of the Global Mennonite History. ❧

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## FOCUS ON

# 2013 Fall list of Books & Resources

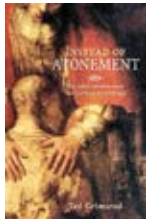
## Theology, spirituality

***Flowing with the River: Soundings from my Life and Journey.*** Sue Clemmer Steiner. Self-published, 2013, 174 pages.

Using images connected to rivers, the author uses vignettes of her life to reflect on how she grew into her role as an early Mennonite female pastor in Ontario. This is a spiritual autobiography that explores how God has worked in her life and how the Mennonite church has changed since the 1950s. Available at [scsteiner@sympatico.ca](mailto:scsteiner@sympatico.ca).

***Instead of Atonement: The Bible's Salvation Story and Our Hope for Wholeness.*** Ted Grimsrud. Cascade Books, 2013, 270 pages.

With this book, Ted Grimsrud, Professor of Theology and Peace Studies at Eastern Mennonite University, joins the theological discussion about the meaning of atonement. He argues that the biblical idea of salvation does not focus on Jesus' death as the basis for reconciliation with God and that the salvation story is based on the logic of mercy rather than the logic of retribution.



***Muslim, Christian, Jew: The Oneness of God and the Unity of Our Faith...A Personal Journey in the Three Abrahamic Religions.*** Arthur G. Gish. Cascade Books, 2012, 210 pages.

Writing from a personal perspective, Gish reviews the history and relationship of the Muslim, Christian and Jewish faiths. Using lots of anecdotes, he compares similarities and differences and argues that Christians should respect and dialogue rather than demonize Muslims and Jews.

## History

***According to the Grace Given to Her: The Ministry of Emma Sommers Richards.*** James E. Horsch, John D. Rempel, Eldon d. Nafziger, eds. AMBS Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2013, 150 pages.

This collection of 10 essays documents the life of Emma Sommers Richards, the first woman ordained to ministry in a Mennonite Church in North America in 1973. Among the contributors are her family members. Some of the essays also explore the process that brought the Illinois Mennonite Conference to take this step.



***Bridging Mind and Spirit: Conrad Grebel University College, 1963-2013.*** Marlene Epp. Conrad Grebel University College, 2013, 96 pages.

This 50-year history of Conrad Grebel has lots photos, many of them in colour. The many sidebars include interesting anecdotes, snapshots of presidents, popular Grebel recipes, and other items of interest. Lauren Harder-Gissing and Jennifer Konkle made important contributions in collecting interesting photos with a pleasing layout.

***Daughters in the City: Mennonite Maids in Vancouver, 1931-61.*** Ruth Derksen Siemens. Fernwood Press, 2013, 104 pages.

Through first-person stories, photographs and text, this book presents the history of the Bethel Home and the later Mary Martha Home. It explains why Mennonites were in

demand as domestic workers and the social changes that led to the closure of both homes in the early 1960s. Available at [www.daughtersinthecity.com](http://www.daughtersinthecity.com).

***Mennonites in Ukraine Amid Civil War and Anarchy (1917-1920).*** John B. Toews, ed. Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, Fresno, Calif. 2013, 200 pages.

This is a collection of documents, many not previously translated, that reflect the turbulent years that Mennonites experienced in Russia following the revolution. Copies are available at [archives@mhsbc.com](mailto:archives@mhsbc.com).

***No Strings Attached: A History of Warren Street/Pleasant Oaks Mennonite Church.*** Rachel Nafziger Hartzler. Resource Publications (Wipf and Stock), 2013, 322 pages.

In northern Indiana in the 1920s, bonnets with strings became a symbol of faithfulness in a traditionalist/progressive church struggle. Using lots of anecdotes, Hartzler describes the circumstances that led to the division of this congregation, their separate histories, and how they re-united in 2009.

***The Military Service Exemption of the Mennonites of Provincial Prussia.*** Wilhelm Mannhardt, translated by Anthony Epp. Mennonite Library and Archives, North Newton, Kansas, 2013, 395 pages.

First published in the German language in 1863 when Prussian militarism was growing in popularity, this book was designed to explain why the Mennonites of the Vistula Delta (now northern Poland) were historically unwilling to serve in the military. This edition includes an essay by Mannhardt in which he argues that exemption from military service is no longer relevant.



## Other books

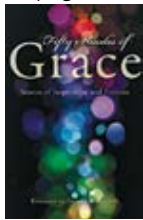
***Born of Courage.*** Walfried Jansen. Friesen Press, 2013, 165 pages.

This story, set in a remote part of Paraguay, is classed as Action and Adventure fiction. After their father is kidnapped, Martin and

Tomas set out to find him, depending on their own skills to deal with the danger and adventure they encounter. The author now lives in Manitoba, but lived in Paraguay for the first eight years of his life. The book is available in paperback or ebook format at [FriesenPress.com](http://FriesenPress.com).

**Fifty Shades of Grace: Stories of Inspiration and Promise.** Melodie Davis, compiler. Herald Press, 2013, 237 pages.

The 50 vignettes about grace and hope in this collection are designed to provide a contrast to *Fifty Shades of Grey*, the salacious bestseller. The contributors are from Canada and the U.S. and provide a wide variety of everyday situations where individuals felt the grace of God in their lives.



**Holy Mackerel! A Quiz Book of Christian Themes.** George W. Friesen. Self-published, Friesen Press, 2013, 213 pages.

This book contains many hundreds of trivia questions on a wide variety of subjects, some of them biblical. The questions are multiple choice with three possible answers.

**Mennonite Girls Can Cook: Celebrations.** Lovella Schellenberg et al. Herald Press, 2013, 320 pages.

Like the original *Mennonite Girls Can Cook*, this collection of recipes is accompanied with lots of colour photographs, not only of what the food should look like as it is being prepared, but also beautiful table settings and family groupings. The cooks have also added a variety of faith reflections about food and the importance of family celebrations. Many recipes are identified as gluten free.

**Mothering Mennonite.** Rachel Epp Buller and Kerry Fast, eds. Demeter Press, Bradford, Ont., 2013, 312 pages.

This collection of 16 essays deals with a variety of facets of Mennonite motherhood. Canadians are well represented among the contributors who are primarily female academics. Included in the collection



are autobiographical essays as well as some more formal studies of a wide variety of women's roles mostly in North America, but also Latin America. Also included are topics of singleness and infertility.

**Rewriting the Break Event: Mennonites and Migration in Canadian Literature.**

Robert Zacharias. University of Manitoba Press, 2013, 227 pages.

Zacharias examines several novels that retell the story of the Mennonite migration from Russia in the 1920s, the "break event" that is central to much of what is known as "Mennonite literature." He asks big questions about Mennonite identity and its connection to the Russian Mennonite story.



**Rhythms of Poverty: Reconsidering our Affluent Approach to the Poor.** Murray Nickel. Self-published, 2013, 280 pages.

Nickel, a physician from Abbotsford, B.C., has experience with overseas mission work. His book critically examines what it means for affluent North Americans to "help" the poor, especially in places like Haiti and Congo. He says that aid will only have a long-term effect if we listen to the rhythms of poverty and dance to their beat.

## Resources

**Courageous Women of the Bible.** Linda Gehman Peachey. Faith & Life Resources, 2013.

This is the 12-session Bible study commissioned by Mennonite Women Canada and Mennonite Women U.S.A. Among the women featured are the midwives who stood up to Pharaoh and a wife who refused to dishonour herself. Each session includes worship and discussion ideas.

**Creating a Scene in Corinth: A Simulation.**

Reta Halteman Finger and George D. McClain. Herald Press, 2013, 260 pages.

This book provides group role play opportunities



based on I Corinthians. Important background information about life in ancient Corinth is provided so that a group can role play how the Corinthian house church might have responded various issues in Paul's letter. Each role play has a debriefing and application section.

**God's Story, Our Story: Exploring Christian Faith and Life.** Michele Hershberger. Herald Press, 2013, 183 pages.

This book outlines the basics of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* in a way that is accessible and that invites questions and comments. It could be a helpful resource for baptismal instruction. The various sidebars invite readers to think about their own lives and how they fit into the story of salvation. This is a revised edition, originally published in 2003.

**Jesus on Justice: Living Lives of Compassion and Conviction.** Don Posterski. World Vision Canada, 2013, 194 pages.

The 12 chapters of this book show how Jesus was a radical advocate for justice. The book encourages readers to think of current challenges to justice and how to respond in today's world.

**Living Ecological Justice: A Biblical Response to the Environmental Crisis.** Mishka Lysack and Marri Munn-Venn, eds. Citizens for Public Justice, 2013, 122 pages.

This worship and action guide is designed for groups advocating for creation care. It includes prayers, discussion questions and suggested activities. Willard Metzger is one of the contributors.



**Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology** focuses on Upside-down Church in the spring 2013 issue and on Peace in the fall issue. The journal is published by the Institute for Mennonite Studies (Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary) and the Institute for Theology and the Church (Canadian Mennonite University). To subscribe go to [www.MennoVision.org](http://www.MennoVision.org).

# Pornography resource primarily for church leaders

BY KARIN FEHDERAU  
Saskatchewan Correspondent

**A**re Mennonites ready to discuss the ugly facts of pornography? A new resource being published by MCC can help start the conversation.

It's not an easy read, but a necessary one, said Elsie Goertzen who works for the End Abuse program in MCC British Columbia and whose interest in this topic began when she was teaching a sexual ethics course at Columbia Bible College.

"It takes leadership to open it up in an appropriate way, but there's a lack of awareness in where pornography has gone," said Goertzen.

Stephen Siemens, who works out of MCC's Winnipeg office, agrees.

"The world has changed so much [in the area of] child pornography. The appetite starts somewhere," he said.

The information packed into the 63



*Stephen Siemens is the Restorative Justice Co-ordinator for MCC Canada.*

pages of the resource *Lies, Truth and Hope* gives a clear understanding of the issue and forces the reader to acknowledge this is a problem for Christians too. There is an honest look at pornography with suggestions on what to do, even giving credence to recovery programs that Mennonites might not be familiar with: the 12-step recovery process or support groups.

All aspects of the porn industry are included. The victimization of children is especially difficult, but there is also the issue of children being exposed to pornography at an early age. Goertzen wants parents to be aware of what's really out there so they can prepare their own children for that first encounter when it comes.

"Hopefully this book will shock parents and churches into talking about this. If you're willing, people are amazingly open about this," she said.

In compiling the book, the writers wanted to present as much information as they could.

"We were hoping to do a little science; not just dwell on the industry," explained Siemens. "The most credible resources [for the book] were mainly secular," said Goertzen.

A section on what the church can do as an institution to take a stand against the industry is detailed and helpful. For instance, hotels now automatically have their televisions set on the porn channel.

"It's the default setting," said Siemens. And patrons of the hotel can ask to have it changed.

Although it's hard to imagine a member of the congregation going to the pastor to admit a porn addiction, the idea that the pastor himself might have the problem is even harder. But compassion is necessary.

"Imagine how the pastor would feel going to his board [to] admit he had this problem," said Siemens. "There would be shame and guilt." This is another good reason to open up the subject for discussion. ❧



**Audra Miller (left)**, book designer and co-editors John Thiessen and Mark Janzen participated in a launch of the book, *The Military Service Exemption of the Mennonites in Provincial Prussia*, at Bethel College, Newton, Kan., earlier this year. The book is a translation of a 150-year-old book by Wilhelm Mannhardt that explained the peace position of Mennonites in the Vistula Delta (Poland). It was written at a time when exemption from military service was under siege in the church and in wider society. The book was translated by Timothy Epp who died in 2011. The preface opens with a story from a little over a decade ago when Hesston College was threatened with the loss of state grant money due to its historic refusal to fly the U.S. flag, pointing to the fact that tension between the Mennonite peace position and loyalty to the state is ongoing. The book is available by email at [mla@bethelks.edu](mailto:mla@bethelks.edu) in regular and e-book formats.

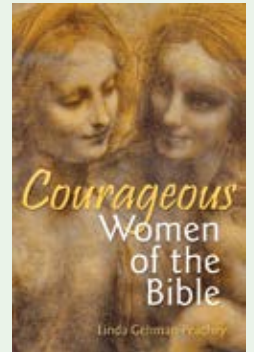


**Briefly noted**

**Unsung biblical heroes serve as models in new Bible study**


Midwives who stood up to Pharaoh. A wife who refused to dishonour herself. A woman who dared challenge the words of Jesus. These are part of a new Bible study, "Courageous Women of the Bible," published by MennoMedia and commissioned by Mennonite Women Canada and MW U.S.A. Twelve sessions and one worship session profile 20 biblical women, including Hagar who God helped to survive in the wilderness, Shiphrah and Puah who stood up to Pharaoh, Tirzah and her sisters who fought the injustice of inheritance laws, and the prophet Huldah. Each session includes a Scripture text; suggestions for a visual aid; a "deepening" text to dig into the story; a series of questions integrating the story with personal experience; and closing suggestions. Written by Linda Gehman Peachey, the volume is one in a series of Bible studies commissioned by MW Canada and MW U.S.A., including studies on justice, self-care, family care, creation care, stewardship of money, and stewardship of gifts.

—MennoMedia



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*This past spring, Clare Schellenberg walked the Camino de Santiago, a 33-day, 800 km. pilgrimage route to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northwestern Spain.*



*Clare Schellenberg (right) stands with a Hungarian woman named Mony, one of the many pilgrims who entered Clare's life during her journey along the Camino.*

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

# Walking in pilgrim footsteps

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CLARE SCHELLENBERG

SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES

**T**his past spring, I walked the Camino de Santiago, an 800-kilometre pilgrimage route to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northwestern Spain. Tradition has it that the remains of the Apostle James are buried at the site of the cathedral.

My fascination with the Camino de Santiago began in the summer of 2012 while watching a movie called *The Way*, in which a doctor embarks on the pilgrimage to retrieve the body of his son who died while hiking along the Camino.

Before watching the movie, I had never heard of the Camino, nor thought about the idea of pilgrimage. But halfway through, I blurted out, “Mom, I’m going to do this.” She smiled, knowing that I had offered many ‘brilliant’ dreams before and might not actually follow through. Inside, though, I knew that this was something that would happen.

The image of “the way,” and the ideas of “process” and “destination” intrigued me. Doing something that would push me holistically—physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally—excited me. I began reading books on the background of Christian pilgrimage, and with the help of Irma Fast Dueck, my faculty advisor at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, I created an independent study so that I could delve deeper.

Still, the questions sat in the back of my mind: Why would someone walk more than 800 kilometres, and, more

importantly, why would they choose to do so? At one level it made no sense, but another part of me knew that it did. So I resolved to walk the Camino de Santiago alone and open myself to what the pilgrimage could teach me.

I filled my backpack with 10 kilos of clothing, a sleeping bag, water bottle, every imaginable blister medication possible, my journal, and a whole lot of fears and questions about why I was going to walk across northern Spain.

### **One foot in front of the other**

On April 28, at 6 a.m., I set out from the small French village of St. Jean Pied du Port. A mere five kilometres later, early on in the Pyrenees Mountains, my first blister appeared and a sharp ache in my back began to pulse. I tried to mimic the stride of the Hungarian man in front of me, and eventually developed a rhythm with my walking poles, but I still felt like I was doing everything wrong. At that point, I knew no more than to follow the arrows and shells marked along the path, and to put one foot in front of the other.

On that first day, the fear of walking for 33 days straight—an average of 25 to 30 kilometres every day—alongside people from all over the world whom I did not know seemed daunting.

As the days passed, and my aching feet began to adjust, my appreciation for walking, particularly walking alone—began to emerge. I got up early and often walked by myself before the sun rose, but





*The sun rises on the Camino de Santiago.*

slowly I realized that walking alone was impossible. Sure, I was on my own path, but we pilgrims were always together. We were all simply walking, each with our own story and our own reason for being there, and each falling in step with others on this journey.

A deep interconnectedness with complete strangers emerged. There were no labels or judgments—often not even names. Sometimes I would know only from which country they came and the injuries they may have encountered that day. But beneath all of that, we found ourselves sharing out of our deepest selves.

This hit me early on while walking a few days with Dan, a U.S. Marine who had just finished a tour of duty in Afghanistan. As a peace and conflict transformation studies major, I was initially nervous about walking alongside someone whose worldview and experience were so different from mine. What amazed me was that I came to know far more about Dan's deep commitments, his family, his questions, his summer plans, than his life fighting in Afghanistan. We came together as two pilgrims, each walking the same path together.

Two weeks into the journey, my body adjusted to the physical realities of the

Camino and the experience became far more than simply walking. I began to realize that while my 10-kilo pack was full of my physical belongings, it was also being filled with experience, humanity and sacredness.

### ***Pouring sorrow into rocks***

As I sat, walked, cooked and ate meals with pilgrims from around the world, I listened to and took in their stories. I breathed in stories of deep grieving, of deep searching and questioning, and of deep discovery. I learned very quickly the impossibility of labelling any of the people I met. I learned that so many were searching, but none were lost.

I was graced with pilgrims who entered my life: Dan, the Marine; Mary, a Hungarian woman, who, at 72, was paralyzed from the knees down and walked nonetheless; Judith, an Australian mother whose son had recently committed suicide after the death of his twin daughters; Ben, a 17-year-old boy whose mother forced him to walk the Camino after he got his girlfriend pregnant; Veronica, a 78-year-old Irish woman with more than 40 grandchildren; Richard, a Canadian *albergue* (hotel) owner who walked the Camino last year and committed himself to hosting pilgrims from that time on in a small town in Spain; Sue, a Canadian



*On the last day of her trek, Clare Schellenberg (second from left) celebrates the completion of her journey with three fellow pilgrims.*





*Camino de Santiago pilgrims participate in a traditional pilgrim's mass at the cathedral in the town of Rabanal del Camino. The cathedral is located in a cave.*



*Clare Schellenberg stands at the highest point on the Camino de Santiago. Camino pilgrims traditionally take a rock they have brought from their home and leave it at this spot.*

writer who has walked the Camino 11 times, always in her bare feet; and the list goes on.

Each of us held and carried our own narrative, our own motive for walking. Along the way, I saw many of these pilgrims holding a stone and dropping it off along the path. I asked a friend what these pilgrims were doing, and she explained that many chose to pick up a stone and grieve with it, pouring all of their sorrow into it. When they were ready, they dropped it off. As other pilgrims would walk, they were then invited to pick up one of these stones and continue the process.

I did this as well, but soon realized it wasn't only my own sorrow that I was pouring into these rocks, it was the sorrow of my fellow pilgrims that I had begun to carry in my backpack. Their experiences, and the radical hospitality I experienced in sharing our stories, in sleeping in *albergues* and being cared for by monks and nuns in monasteries, was transforming for me. Shared stories and experiences of pain, of humanity, of hope and of grace were overwhelming.

As I walked I realized that, although I was physically stronger, it was the emotional, spiritual and relational truths of these people and their stories that filled and overflowed my backpack. So often, I think this is the case for all of us. Many of us tend to pack and carry and walk our lives so that we can control things around us, so that we can deal with our insecurities and fears, and with our own needs and aspirations.

The Camino taught me in a profound way the power of surrendering control and opening myself to what I cannot control. I could never control how far I might be able to walk that day, whether an injury would arise, who I would meet or what story I would encounter, where I would eat or stay for the night, and so much more.

Learning to be present and open to glimpses of God at work in the people I met, and the shared experiences we had, was a gift. Walking the Camino opened me again to learning to trust God and to leave room for God. In doing so, my overflowing backpack felt lighter and lighter.

### ***A unique part of an ancient journey***

"The way" is a prominent metaphor both within and outside of Scripture. Although destination is important, it is the way we get there—across the Pyrenees, into valleys, through forests and across fields, in cool rain and beating sun—that the action takes place. It is along the way that one lives through past and present wounds and hopes, thinking and crying and feeling and talking and walking in silence with them.

Jesus calls us, his followers, to practise God's way, to walk God's walk. In embarking on the Camino, I found myself stepping back into an ancient Christian practice. I was walking the way that millions of pilgrims had walked before me.

The path of the Camino opened me up to much more than dust, pain, blisters and conversation. It opened an ancient story in which I became one unique part. Through this, I developed an openness for God's presence walking with me.

Indeed, the goal of reaching a specific "holy" destination—in my case, the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela—signifies not the end of the journey, but rather the start. It's a portal into a renewed way of being, of seeing life afresh with spiritually cleansed eyes.

I learned that "the way" commanded by Christ is one to be journeyed. Indeed, "the way" is made by walking. ☼

*Clare Schellenberg, 22, attends Home Street Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.*



*Another day on the Camino de Santiago.*

# The girl who had the accident

BY BETHANY DAMAN

The accident that came to shape Lisa's life happened three months after her first birthday. She was run over by a car.

"The front and back wheel went over my head," she says. "My eyes were pushed out and my ear was almost cut off, it was just hanging by a little bit of skin. I was unconscious for 32 days and the doctors said there was no hope I would make it."

Lisa (a pseudonym) beat the odds and went on to a productive life as a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) volunteer and Sunday school teacher for 30 years. But it wasn't easy. She suffered a life of challenges that resulted from that accident when she was a baby.

Born in 1951 in southern Manitoba, Lisa grew up in a town of 4,000 people. She started school with everyone her age, but by Grade 8 classes became too difficult for her to continue. Times of dark discouragement came as she grew older and saw her life was different from those around her, particularly in the way she processes her thoughts and relates to others.

"I would see what my [younger] sister was doing, and I felt that I should be doing the same thing," she says. "It bothered me immensely."

Lisa became the poster child in her family as "the girl who had the accident."

Eventually she moved to Winnipeg and began a cafeteria job. After about five years, she attended Bible school, receiving her Sunday school and clubs teaching certificate. She returned home, found a job and got married in 1974.

Life's pain had not ended for her, however, as she became pregnant in 1977 and labour complications arose. "[My daughter] was all blue when they took her out," Lisa recalls. "Then they said, 'Something is wrong, she is not breathing.' I can still see them pumping air into her as I was on the stretcher. They said [my baby] was a girl, but they had to rush her off."

The daughter's esophagus and windpipe were not fully developed, making eating

and breathing difficult. Four months after birth, the child continued to vomit when fed, leaving tube-feeding as the only option.

After 13 months in the hospital, the family was finally able to go home. "It was an awful struggle," she says. "I had to feel on her stomach whether the feeding tube had gone down her stomach and not into her lungs. If it had gone into her lungs, this would be the end of it. She would fight it with me so terribly."

Lisa's child became malnourished, leaving her mother discouraged. "I felt I was doing such a rotten job in trying to look after her," Lisa says. "I just felt awful."

As Lisa faced the daily challenge of feeding her daughter, she found hope in Scripture. "I had her sitting in the high chair and then with every spoon, I quoted, *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*"

Finally her daughter began eating solid food, but frequent hospital visits continued. Family life at home grew difficult and the marriage between Lisa and her husband fell apart.

Despite everything she has faced, Lisa has impacted young lives through three decades as a Sunday school teacher and her numerous hours volunteering at the local MCC Thrift Store. Much of her days are now spent tying blankets that are used in MCC relief kits.

Lisa has proved it is possible to make it through the grimmest circumstances as she faces everything that comes her way with a renewed spirit of strength and trust, knowing she will be protected.

*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.



Bethany Daman

## Calendar

### British Columbia

**Dec. 7,8:** Advent vespers with the Abendmusik Choir at 8 p.m.: (7) Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford; (8) Knox United Church, Vancouver.

### Alberta

**Nov. 22:** Edmonton Thrift Shop volunteer appreciation evening, at Salem Mennonite Church, Tofield, at 6:30 p.m.

**Nov. 22,23,24:** CD release celebrations of *Even in the Smallest Places* by Kim Thiessen and Darryl Neustaedter-Barg to raise funds for MCC's AIDS and peace initiatives. (22) Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary, at 7 p.m.; (23) Bergthal Mennonite Church, Didsbury, at 7 p.m.; (24) Edmonton, venue TBA, at 7 p.m. For more information, visit [takeyourplace.ca](http://takeyourplace.ca).

**March 27-30, 2014:** Truth and Reconciliation national event in Edmonton. For more information, visit [trc.ca](http://trc.ca).

**March 30-April 9, 2014:** MCC Alberta Middle East Learning Tour.

### Saskatchewan

**Nov. 16:** Mennonite Disaster Service Saskatchewan fundraising dinner and information evening, at Cornerstone Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, at 6 p.m.

**Dec. 15:** RJC choir concert, at Knox United Church, Saskatoon.

**Dec. 20:** RJC Christmas concert, at RJC, 7 p.m.

**Jan. 10-11, 2014:** RJC alumni basketball, hockey and choir weekend, at RJC.

**Jan. 17, 2014:** RJC winter theatre production.

**March 2, 2014:** RJC Guys and Pies concert fundraiser.

**March 16, 2014:** RJC/CMU concert, at RJC.

### Manitoba

**Oct. 26:** CMU hosts Bachtobefest. For more information, visit [cmu.ca/programs/music.html](http://cmu.ca/programs/music.html).

**Oct. 26,27:** Camps with Meaning celebration banquets: (26) Camp Koinonia, Boissevain, 6 p.m.; (27) Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, 5 p.m. For more information, call 204-895-2267 or e-mail [camps@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:camps@mennochurch.mb.ca).

**Oct. 30:** CMU Face 2 Face | On Campus. Topic: "When cheap is costly: Sweatshops and the clothes I buy." For more information, visit [cmu.ca/face2face](http://cmu.ca/face2face).

**Nov. 1:** MCI soup and pie fundraiser and fall concert, Gretna. For more information, visit [mciblues.net](http://mciblues.net).

**Nov. 2:** New Songs for Worship workshop, in the CMU Chapel, Winnipeg, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., led by CMU prof Christine Longhurst.

For more information, or to register, call 204-487-3300 or e-mail [clonghurst@cmu.ca](mailto:clonghurst@cmu.ca).

**Nov. 15:** CMU dessert fundraising evening, in Steinbach. For more information, visit [cmu.ca/events.html](http://cmu.ca/events.html).

**Nov. 17:** Mennonite Community Orchestra concert at CMU. For more information, visit [cmu.ca/programs/music.html](http://cmu.ca/programs/music.html).

**Nov. 19:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's Evening of the Arts, at the school, at 7 p.m.

**Nov. 21:** IDS Esau Public Lecture Series, with Patricia Allen, at Menno Simons College. For more information, visit [mscollege.ca/esau](http://mscollege.ca/esau).

**Nov. 22,23:** Canadian Foodgrains Bank presents "Singin' in the Grain," a musical grow project fundraising concert: (22) Springfield Heights Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7:30 p.m.; (23) Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Winkler. With the MCI Chamber Choir and the CMU Women's Chamber Choir.

**Nov. 28:** CMU Face 2 Face | On Campus. Topic: "On being good neighbours: Urban reserves in Winnipeg." For more information, visit [cmu.ca/face2face](http://cmu.ca/face2face).

**Nov. 25:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate annual general meeting, at the school, at 7 p.m.

**Nov. 28-30:** Cottonwood Community Drama presents *Parfumerie*, a dramatic comedy by Miklos Laszlo, in MCI's Buhler Hall, Gretna, at 7:30 p.m. each evening. For more information or tickets, call MCI at 204-327-5891.

**Nov. 30:** Christmas@CMU, at 2 and 7 p.m. For more information, visit [cmu.ca/Christmas.html](http://cmu.ca/Christmas.html).

**Dec. 1:** First Mennonite Church choir presents John Rutter's *Magnificat* at the church, 7 p.m. An offering will be taken.

**Dec. 5-7:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate presents its senior-high drama.

**Dec. 9:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Christmas concert at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

**Dec. 19-20:** Christmas concerts featuring MCI choirs in Buhler Hall. For more information, visit [mciblues.net](http://mciblues.net).

**Jan. 23, 2014:** IDS Esau Public Lecture Series, with Nettie Wiebe, at Menno Simons College. For more information, visit [mscollege.ca/esau](http://mscollege.ca/esau).

**Jan. 24-25, 2014:** CMU opera workshop, in the Laudamus

Auditorium, at 7:30 pm. For more information, visit [cmu.ca/programs/music.html](http://cmu.ca/programs/music.html).

**Jan. 24, 2014:** New Songs for Worship workshop, in Winkler, led by CMU prof Christine Longhurst. For more information, or to register, call 204-487-3300 or e-mail [clonghurst@cmu.ca](mailto:clonghurst@cmu.ca).

**Jan. 30, 2014:** CMU Face 2 Face | On Campus. Topic: "The universe is expanding, just like our minds: Beyond quantum physics and what it all means." For more information, visit [cmu.ca/face2face](http://cmu.ca/face2face).

**Jan. 30-31, 2014:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate presents three one-act plays by its junior-high students, at the Franco-Manitoban Centre.

**Feb. 5, 2014:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate open house, at 7 p.m.

**Feb. 13, 2014:** CMU celebration fundraising dinner, in Winnipeg, at 7 p.m. For more information, visit [cmu.ca/events.html](http://cmu.ca/events.html).

**Feb 27, 2014:** Face 2 Face | On Campus. Topic: "The European debt crisis and other wonders hiding in the global economy." For more information, visit [cmu.ca/face2face](http://cmu.ca/face2face).

**Feb. 27, 2014:** IDS Esau Public Lecture Series, with Hannah Wittman, at Menno Simons College. For more information, visit [mscollege.ca/esau](http://mscollege.ca/esau).

**March 7, 2014:** CMU dessert fundraising evening, in Winkler, at 7 p.m. For more information, visit [cmu.ca/events.html](http://cmu.ca/events.html).

**March 20, 2014:** CMU Verna Mae Janzen Music Competition finals, at 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit [cmu.ca/programs/music.html](http://cmu.ca/programs/music.html).

**March 20, 2014:** IDS Esau Public Lecture Series, with Jules Pretty, at Menno Simons College. For more information, visit [mscollege.ca/esau](http://mscollege.ca/esau).

**March 23, 2014:** Mennonite Community Orchestra and CMU Singers, Women's Chorus and Men's Chorus perform *Missa Pax* by Timothy Corlis. With guest artist: Catherine Richard, piano.

**March 27, 2014:** Face 2 Face | On Campus. Topic: "You lost me: The church and young adults." For more information, visit [cmu.ca/face2face](http://cmu.ca/face2face).

### Ontario

**Nov. 4:** "Keep your fork: The best is yet

## Upcoming

### Documentary film debuts in southern Alberta

After two years of filming, Denise Calderwood is about to launch her new film, *I Found My Tribe*. Shot in Canada, the United States and Ireland, the film traces the western poetry career of award-winning poet, Doris Daley. *I Found My Tribe*, Calderwood's tenth film, is a 48-minute documentary. "We follow Doris's story," explains Calderwood. Southern Alberta residents have the opportunity to attend one of three film launches: Thur. Nov. 21 at Red Deer United Church (call 403-687-3931 for tickets), Fri. Nov. 22 at Sheep River Library, Turner Valley (call 403-933-3278 for tickets) and Sat. Nov. 23 at the Empress Theatre in Fort MacLeod (403-553-4404 for tickets). The film launches will begin at 7:30 p.m. and will include entertainment from roots singer Eli Barsi, poetry from Doris, an insider's look at film-making from Calderwood and a screening of the film.



to come," a dinner celebrating the 70th anniversary of Fairview Mennonite Home and the 50th anniversary of Parkwood Mennonite Home, at Bingeman Park, Kitchener, at 6:30 p.m. Keynote speaker: Michael "Pinball" Clemons. Live and silent auctions. For tickets, call 519-653-5719 x367. Proceeds for the renovation of the Fairview kitchen.

**Nov. 6, 13:** MC Eastern Canada's "Tackling tough texts: Violence and vengeance": a two-session preaching seminar with bag lunch forum at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

**Nov. 9:** MCC Ontario fall conference, "Sharing God's love and compassion," with guest Sarah Adams, MCC representative for Syria and Lebanon.

**Nov. 16:** Handicraft sale at Fairview Mennonite Home, Cambridge, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Featuring Santa's Sweet Shop, fresh baking, tea room, crafts, preserves and used books. For more information, visit [www.fairviewmh.com](http://www.fairviewmh.com) or call 519-653-5719.

**Nov. 16, 17:** The Soli Deo Gloria Singers present their fall concert, "Love Incarnate: (16) at UMEI, at 7:30 p.m.; (17) at Leamington United Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m. For more information, call 519-326-7448.

**Nov. 17:** Senior youth event hosted by Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, 3 p.m. For more information, contact Rebecca Gibbins at [rgibbin@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:rgibbin@uwaterloo.ca).

**Nov. 23:** Nithview Christmas tea and bake sale, at Nithview Community, New Hamburg, 2 to 4 p.m.

**Nov. 26:** Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp annual meeting, at the camp. Dinner at 6:15 p.m.; meeting at 7:30 p.m. RSVP for dinner to 519-625-8602.

**Nov. 28:** Conrad Grebel University College and TourMagination present the book launch of John Ruth's *Branch: A Memoir With Pictures*, in the Conrad Grebel University College Chapel, Waterloo, 7 p.m.

**Nov. 29-30:** 22nd annual Spirit of Christmas music and craft show at Nairn Mennonite Church, Ailsa Craig, featuring live music, Ten Thousand Villages, craft sale, tea room and more: (29) 6 to 9 p.m.; (30) 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call 519-232-4720.

**Nov. 30:** University of Waterloo Choirs

present "A Celebration in Song" at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, 8 p.m. Includes world premiere of a commissioned piece composed by Timothy Corlis, UW class of '98.

**Nov. 30, Dec. 1:** Pax Christi Chorale presents "A Frosty Christmas Eve," featuring Finzi's 'In Terra Pax' and Willan's 'Mystery of Bethlehem,' at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto; (30) 7:30 p.m.; (1) 3 p.m.). For tickets, call 416-491-8542 or e-mail [boxoffice@paxchristichorale.org](mailto:boxoffice@paxchristichorale.org).

**Dec. 1:** Acoustic Advent carols at the Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, 2:30 p.m. Featuring the PMS Singers and No Discernible Key. Leader: Fred Martin. For more information, call Will Stoltz at 519-696-2805.

**Dec. 8:** Menno Singers presents "Explorations: Concert No. 2—North," with the Inter-Mennonite Children's Choir and the Menno Youth Singers, at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, at 3 p.m.

**Jan. 18, 2014:** MC Eastern Canada pastors, chaplains and congregation leaders event, "The Lord's Supper and the 21st-century Mennonite church," at Rouge Valley Mennonite Church, Markham.

**Feb. 7-9, 2014:** MC Eastern Canada youth winter retreat at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp.

**Feb. 19-21, 2014:** MC Eastern Canada School for Ministers, "Will you come and follow me?" with Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

**March 6-7, 2014:** Bechtel Lectures at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. Speakers: Steve Nolt & Royden Loewen.

**March 22, 2014:** Menno Singers presents "Explorations: Concert No. 3—East," with Gerard Yun and the East-West Ensemble, at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, at 7:30 p.m.

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

## Classifieds

### Travel

Visit Europe the Mennonite Way with Mennonite Heritage Tours! Small group Hotel Tours focusing on Mennonite/ Anabaptist heritage in Holland, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Poland and Ukraine. [www.mennonite-heritagetours.eu](http://www.mennonite-heritagetours.eu)

### For Sale

## Book for Sale

Flowing with the River: Soundings from my Life and Ministry

by Sue C. Steiner

To order go to: [flowingwiththeriver.com](http://flowingwiththeriver.com)  
\$15 + shipping

## Employment Opportunities

### MUSIC MINISTRY COORDINATOR

Are you being called to:

- work closely with the planning of worship services?
- mentor new musicians in leading music in worship?
- lead music in a variety of styles?

Then, consider the position of MUSIC MINISTRY COORDINATOR at the Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Altona. We are a rural congregation of 400, located in southern Manitoba, seeking a quarter time person to assist the congregation in planning blended worship, teaching new songs and mentoring new musicians in our worship services.

Start date negotiable.

Please send resumes to [andrew\\_rempel@yahoo.ca](mailto:andrew_rempel@yahoo.ca), or call Andrew Rempel at 204-324-1741, Search Committee Chair Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Altona 117 2nd St. NW, Altona, MB R0G 0B1



Ottawa  
Mennonite  
Church

### EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY: LEAD MINISTER

Ottawa Mennonite Church is seeking a lead minister for our congregation of approximately 225 people. We are diverse in culture, education, age, marital status, and faith traditions. Mennonites by choice, we love to worship, to sing, and to serve Jesus in our community.

We are searching for a person of deep faith, schooled in the Anabaptist tradition, who is able to communicate and connect with people of all ages. Through well-planned and thoughtful worship services and a strong preaching and teaching ministry, the applicant will equip us to live as loving, faithful and joyful Christians in our various settings.

Start date: Summer/Fall 2014

For more information, please contact Henry Paetkau, MCEC Area Church Minister at [hpaetkau@mcec.ca](mailto:hpaetkau@mcec.ca)



*Sidonie Swana Falanga, left, receives a Bible from CMCO president Adolphe Komwesa at her ordination in Kinshasa. Photo by Nancy Myers*

## **Congo Mennonites Celebrate Women's Ordinations**

By Nancy Myers and Charlie Malembe

**M**ore than 1,000 Congolese Mennonites gathered on September 22 in Kinshasa, capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, to witness and celebrate the ordination of two women, along with two men.

Sidonie Swana Falanga and Fabienne Ngombe Kidinda were the first women to be ordained to ministry in the Mennonite Church of Congo, known as CMCO (Communauté Mennonite au Congo).

A third woman of the denomination, Bercy Mundedi, was ordained in Kalonda, Western Kasai Province, on October 6, along with four men.

"This is a very special day for the Mennonite Church," CMCO President Adolphe Komwesa Kalunga proclaimed in his Kinshasa address. "The door is wide open to you," he said to the women in the assembly. "The barrier is broken."

The five-hour services in Kinshasa and Kalonda included multiple choral performances, instructions to the candidates and their congregations and jubilant dancing and gift-giving. Sermons and comments from witnesses focused on the biblical and social bases for women's leadership.

"We have been practicing sexual discrimination. That is not good for the church," said Paul Kadima, a Kinshasa

pastor. "Now we have put in practice Galatians 3:28. In the church we are equal."

Robert Irundu, CMCO's national youth president, said he believed it took time for the church to approve women's ordination "because CMCO wanted to study the declaration of Paul requiring women to be silent in the assembly. But the Bible also says there is no distinction between men and women." He added, "The young people are full of joy. We want to encourage young women to study theology."

The struggle in CMCO for women's ordination has taken place over decades. Swana, 59, received a degree in theology in 1995 and has long served in a pastoral role alongside her husband, Rev. Léonard Falanga. She has been a leader in organizing women who have studied theology, teaching on the issue, and attempting to persuade church leaders and pastors that women's ordination is based on biblically sound principles.

In November, two more CMCO women, identified by church leaders as Mubi Mutemba and Mundombila, will be ordained in Kananga, Western Kasai. *—Reprinted with permission from The Mennonite* ❧