

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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Atonement

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EDITORIAL

Glue and rough drafts

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

“**C**anadian Mennonite is the glue that holds Mennonite Church Canada together,” Larry Cornies, a journalism professor and former chair of this publication’s board of directors, told our staff and regional correspondents during a two-day workshop held last month at our Waterloo, Ont., office.

While this was great affirmation for those of us who labour to put this product together every two weeks, the compliment came with a caveat. Journalism is undergoing a sea change, “a metamorphosis that has not occurred for more than one hundred years,” he said. “The last time such a change happened was when big presses got installed in big-city newspapers capable of printing hundreds of thousands of copies and having them delivered to thousands of homes in a day.”

But rather than fear or be intimidated by these changes, he urged us to embrace them, experiment with the new communication tools and venues, and be adventuresome, “even if you fail.” He asked us to be playful and whimsical in our work, as well as investigative and informational, whether it be in word, artwork or photography. “Test your reputation, your muscularity and your responsiveness to these challenges,” he said.

“Be part of a process. *Canadian Mennonite* was here before we got here and will likely be here after you are gone,” he said, paraphrasing the publisher of

the *Washington Post*, Phil Graham, who opined when selling his iconic enterprise to the billionaire CEO of Amazon: “So let us today drudge on about our inescapably impossible task of providing every week a first rough draft of history that will never really be completed about a world we can never really understand.”



Indeed, part of a process we are. Every two weeks, as our writers, correspondents and columnists tell their stories, probe a particular issue or reflect on our daily life

together, we are writing a rough draft of our history that is never really completed about a world we are grappling to understand. No one has the final word. At best, we are, as N.T. Niles has so famously said of Christians, “one beggar telling other beggars where to find bread.”

We do this as partners in the Mennonite Church Canada faith community. No other similar church publication in Canada or the U.S. has paid correspondents in every area church location across the country. In return, every area church gives us financial support to carry out an Every Home Plan that makes *Canadian Mennonite* available directly to home addresses in our member congregations.

We do this under a partnership agreement with each area church and with MC Canada that is terminating this year and will hopefully be signed for a new three-year term.

As editor and publisher, I have been

asked to visit each area church to see that our goals are in sync, that *Canadian Mennonite* is giving adequate coverage to our life across Canada, and to hear each other out on just what the narrative is as we attempt to write this “first draft of history.”

Part of this sounding came through at our workshop in Waterloo. It gave me sheer pleasure to hear our correspondents, in a story/feature ideas sharing session, wanting to dig courageously into the issues confronting their congregations, issues such as how we secure pastors in our churches, the changing patterns of Sunday morning attendance, the role of para-church organizations in our faith journey, new outreach models called “neighbouring,” and, “Are we vacationing ourselves to death?” among many others.

In the process, we hope we are living up to Cornies’s affirmation that *Canadian Mennonite* is the “glue that holds us together.”

New Saskatchewan correspondent

Donna Schulz of Rosthern is our new Saskatchewan correspondent, succeeding Karin Fehderau, who served in the position for the past 13 years. Working part-time at the Rosthern public library, Donna is a member of Eigenheim Mennonite Church, a mother of two and is married to Leo Schulz, an insurance broker. An alumna of Rosthern Junior College and Swift Current Bible Institute, she holds a bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Lethbridge, Alta.



Donna Schulz

ABOUT THE COVER:

A statue of the Good Shepherd at the St. Callisto Catacombs, Rome. In the early centuries, Jesus was much more likely to be portrayed as the Good Shepherd than as a crucified Messiah. See Dave Rogalsky’s ‘Atonement’ feature beginning on page 4.

PHOTO: DAVE ROGALSKY, CANADIAN MENNONITE

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Hebrews 10:23-25 • Accuracy, fairness, balance • Editorial freedom •

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

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AIDEN ENNS



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Professor and author Ellen Davis is at the vanguard of theologians studying the biblical understanding of care for the land. She sees a vital connection between the agriculture of the Bible and human relationships with God.



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GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH FEATURE

Atonement

Can our salvation be reduced to a single theory or is it a many splendoured mystery that defies an easy answer?

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

EASTERN CANADA CORRESPONDENT

In the 1990s, when the Mennonite church in Ontario was deciding whether to add *Hymnal: A Worship Book* to its pews, a dear (now departed) saint approached me, saying, “I hear that they’ve taken out all the blood songs.” The person wondered if this important part of church heritage and theology was going to be left behind.

Thinking for a moment, I assured my congregant that “blood songs” were about atonement, about God making right the relationship between humanity and God through Jesus, and that such theology would not be left out of the hymnal. Comforted, the person dropped the question.

The congregation approved the addition of the *Hymnal*. If the same question came today I’d give the same answer, in spite of books like J. Denny Weaver’s *The Nonviolent Atonement* or Ted Grimsrud’s *Instead of Atonement*. (See reading list on page 9 for publishing information on the books cited in this feature.)

[T]here are ‘metaphors of atonement’ that ‘don’t systematize the way contemporary theology does. The Bible for me is unclear. Salvation is complex, rich, large, a mystery.’
(Karl Koop)

Satisfaction Atonement unsatisfactory

Weaver’s book, in its second edition, makes the argument that Satisfaction Atonement—see sidebar for definitions on page 6—cannot be defended from either a biblical perspective or from the effect it has had on women and minorities through the years.

A quick survey of the gospels, the Book of Revelation, Paul, Hebrews and the Old Testament led Weaver to suggest that “a minimalist conclusion is that the survey [of Scripture] has demonstrated that Satisfaction Atonement is neither the only reading nor the required reading of the Bible.” He then interacts with feminist, womanist and black theologians, looking at the effect that the focus on Satisfaction Atonement has had. In particular, he believes that Satisfaction Atonement’s focus on Jesus’ passive acceptance of his suffering and death have led women and blacks to be encouraged to accept their suffering and to not respond to it in any way to try to change it.

Weaver dips into the early church’s focus on Christus Victor Atonement. Popularized by Gustaf Aulén beginning in 1931, Christus Victor, originally called Ransom Atonement, paints a picture of humanity enslaved by Satan as they sinned in Genesis 3. Humanity was too weak and sinful to free itself, so God,

(Continued on page 6)



The Gero Crucifix in the Kölner Dom (Cologne Cathedral, Germany). In the Middle Ages, Jesus' suffering on the cross came to the fore, shadowing other images of Jesus as Saviour.

(Continued from page 4)

disguised as a human in Jesus, tricked Satan into killing an innocent human on the cross. But, surprise, the death of an innocent not only pays Satan's ransom demand, it forces death to work backwards, freeing all of humanity from Satan's clutches. (*Compare this with C. S. Lewis's theology in The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe.*)

Weaver proposes a new Narrative Christ Victor, in which God does not trick Satan nor demand Jesus' death. In his version, the powers of first-century Judaic religion and culture and the Roman government all conspire to kill

Jesus as he exposes their inappropriate use of violence to keep control. Jesus responds with nonviolence, pushing and exposing the powers until they kill him. But Jesus, not-guilty of anything, is resurrected by God as a sign of God's pleasure in Jesus' life, teaching and obedience to the point of death. In Weaver's theory, it is all of Jesus' life on earth, and not only his death, which is effective in making right God's relationship with humanity.

In fact, for Weaver, Jesus' death is not God's direct will or desire, but the result of sin committed by the ruling powers of the day. Since Jesus is God, and since the Father and the Son are of one

substance, and since Jesus preached and lived a completely nonviolent life, God cannot commit violence, he maintains. It is Jesus' resurrection that seals God's new relationship with humanity as God approves of Jesus' obedience unto death, as well as his teaching and preaching of God's nonviolent kingdom.

A different narrative of grace and mercy

Grimsrud has similar concerns. His idea is that retributive violence, based on the idea that sin or crime must be paid for by the suffering of the perpetrator, comes from Satisfaction Atonement's

Atonement metaphors/theories

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Christus Victor/Ransom

When humanity sinned in Genesis 3, they fell under the control of Satan. Due to personal sin, no human being was able to pay the ransom to free humanity, so God came among humanity as Jesus, sinless and able to pay the price. If Satan had known that Jesus was "God in the flesh," Satan would not have had Jesus killed, so this was hidden from Satan. When Jesus died, the ransom was paid, as evidenced by Jesus' resurrection. This metaphor had great influence in the early years of Christianity as it supported Christian rejection of Roman hegemony and promised God's eventual victory.

Substitution/Satisfaction/Penal Satisfaction

While the idea of Jesus' substitution for sacrifice was around in early Christianity, the metaphor was developed by Anselm of Canterbury in the 11th century. Basing his ideas on the need for the Norman king's honour to be satisfied if it had been besmirched, Anselm believed that human sin had besmirched God's honour and needed to be satisfied. Since no human being could do so, God—in Jesus—took the place of humanity and satisfied the debt. This idea was further developed by Reformers like Martin Luther and John Calvin. Calvin, in particular, developed the idea that it was God's law which needed satisfying, leading to Penal Satisfaction. This has been the basis of much western lawmaking ever since.

Moral Influence

Again, Moral Influence was around in early Christianity,

but it was developed by Peter Abelard in the 12th century. It holds that people are made right with God as they follow Jesus' example in lives of justice and righteousness.

Narrative Christus Victor

J. Denny Weaver's suggested replacement for the other metaphors of atonement holds that all of Jesus' life, death and resurrection defeat the powers that hold humanity in slavery through their threats of violence. Since Jesus, who teaches nonviolence, is God, God cannot be violent. Jesus' death cannot be for God or by God. Instead, it is in Jesus' resurrection that God shows that the powers are powerless and that God desires all of humanity to live in the already and still-not-fully-come kingdom of God as taught and modelled by Jesus.

John Driver's list of atonement metaphors

- Conflict-Victory-Liberation Motif
- Vicarious Suffering
- Archetypal Images: representative man, pioneer, fore-runner, firstborn
- Martyr Motif
- Sacrifice Motif
- Expiation Motif and the Wrath of God
- Redemption-Purchase Motif
- Reconciliation
- Justification
- Adoption-Family Image



Jesus is pictured on the side of this early Christian sarcophagus in the Vatican Museum turning his back on Moses and the old law, and giving the new law of love to Peter.

monopolization of the American imagination in terms of responses to criminal activity. If God demanded a payment in kind for humanity's sin, how can society, and especially Christians, do less?

But he believes the Bible has a different narrative. He sets out to show that the Bible supports a narrative of God being gracious and merciful, always offering forgiveness before humanity asks, obeys or offers sacrifice. Thus God frees the Hebrew slaves from Egypt before they arrive at Mount Sinai and receive the law. God gives the people of Israel a land before they have a full-blown religious system of sacrifice and worship.

Grimsrud believes that God does not demand a violent response to sin and that God is nonviolent. As professor of theology and peace studies at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., he believes that retributive justice does not work and that humanity needs to apply God's grace and mercy, extending

these to people before they repent or know how to live differently. In his walk through the biblical narrative, he seems to ignore places where people see God as violent: the death of Pharaoh and his army, or of the residents of Canaan as the Israelites conquer it.

'Salvation is complex, rich, large, a mystery'

Forerunners to Weaver and Grimsrud are writers like John Driver and C. Norman Kraus. In *Understanding the Atonement for the Mission of the Church*, Driver proposes 10 different biblical metaphors for the atonement. He believes that no one metaphor adequately covers what God is doing.

Karl Koop, professor of history and theology at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, says there are "metaphors of atonement" that "don't systematize the way contemporary theology does. The Bible for me is unclear.

Salvation is complex, rich, large, a mystery." In other words, God's work of making things right between us and God through Jesus cannot be summed up in any one theory.

Dan Epp-Thiessen, associate professor of Bible and Koop's colleague, says, "What God is doing is so wonderful that no one image can describe it."

Other writers and scholars, including Tom Yoder Neufeld, professor emeritus of New Testament at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., in *Killing Enmity*, and fellow Grebel professors Derek Suderman, associate professor of religious studies and theological studies, and Jeremy Bergen, assistant professor of religious studies, echo this calling of God's action on behalf of humanity through Jesus a mystery that no single human theory can contain.

In the 1980s, Kraus found his thinking about atonement in *Jesus Christ Our Lord* raised many questions. His experience in

Japan suggested that in a shame-oriented culture the idea that Jesus had died for someone doubly shamed the sinner, once for having sinned and again for having caused Jesus' death. The Moral Influence metaphor, in which Jesus' life and resurrection point to God's love and acceptance, seemed to him to be better used.

Mark Baker, associate professor of mission and theology at Fresno Pacific Biblical Seminary, found a similar response among Mennonite Brethren to his book *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts*, co-written by Joel Green, when they suggested that "if the New Testament writers use diverse images to proclaim the saving significance of the cross, then we should too."

Gareth Brandt, professor of practical theology at Columbia Bible College, concurs, quoting from an April 1994 *Mennonite Quarterly Review* article by Rachel Reesor: "The most helpful

discussions of the meaning of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus are those that open it up, highlighting the mystery and fostering wonder before the inexpressible. Many of us grew up with a simple, clear teaching on the atonement that explained just what was going on between God and the world in Jesus' death on the cross. When one begins to glimpse that what took place on the cross was not some legal transaction but a mystery of love, one can appreciate why the language, models and metaphors found in the New Testament are so varied. All attempts to describe the indescribable are inadequate, but each makes its contribution."

Leave your atonement assumptions behind

In discussion with Suderman and Bergen, they point out that in coming to Scripture for answers we can either come with assumptions, like the nonviolence of

God, or we can come to see what it tells us about God and how God operates. They contend that, while Jesus taught nonviolence, this does not stop God from carrying out violence. An example of this is found in Abraham J. Heschel's 1962 book, *The Prophets*, where God's anger, exhibited in violence, is pictured as being the result of God's love for humanity and God's response to human injustice and unrighteousness.

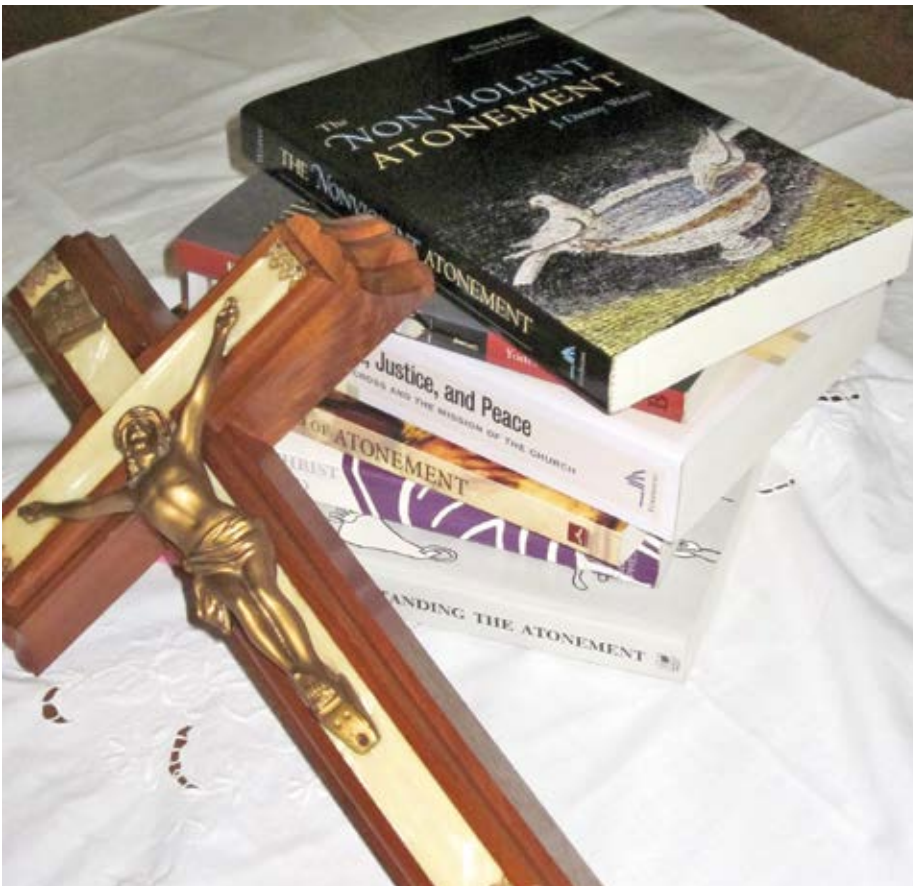
Epp-Tiessen agrees with Suderman, Bergen and Heschel. Coming to the atonement via the apocalyptic/end-times teaching of the New Testament, he sees both God and God-in-Christ at work to end injustice in the world, punishing wrongdoers and wrong-doing powers such as religion or the Roman Empire. Referring to Jesus as "the rider of the white horse" in Revelation 19:11, he says that the blood on the rider's clothing is not that of the slain lamb, but that of the nations, echoing God treading out the winepress of judgment in Isaiah 63.

In a kind of "do as I say, not as I do" example, Epp-Tiessen says, "God is portrayed as violent, but the church is to testify, to have faith and witness." In spite of this, he says he believes "God will find a way that is best for creation and God's purposes. From limited human perspective, I hope that it will be a nonviolent way."

A book of human and divine violence

The Bible seems to tell a story about human and divine violence. In the first few chapters of Genesis, both God and humanity were violent: God sent the first man and woman out of the garden, where one of their sons killed another in jealousy. In Genesis 4, Lamech exulted in having killed a young man for hitting him. Violence at this point took the form of vendettas and revenge, something that God later limited in the *lex talionis* of Exodus, from which the phrase, "an eye for an eye," comes.

In the Book of Joshua, the Israelites were only to go to war when "the commander of the Lord's army," God or an angelic commander, sends them to war. In II Samuel 24 and I Chronicles 21, David was censured by God for taking



How Christ actually provides for our salvation is the theme of many Mennonite books.

/// Reading list

- *Atonement, Justice and Peace: The Message of the Cross and the Mission of the Church* by Darrin Snyder Belousek. Eerdmans, 2012.
- *Instead of Atonement: The Bible's Salvation Story and our Hope for Wholeness* by Ted Grimsrud. Cascade Books, 2013.
- *Jesus Christ Our Lord: Christology from a Disciple's Perspective* by C. Norman Kraus. Herald Press, 1987.
- *Killing Enmity: Violence and the New Testament* by Tom Yoder Neufeld. Baker Academic, 2011.
- *The Nonviolent Atonement*, 2nd ed., by J. Denny Weaver. Eerdmans, 2011. ("Responses to J. Denny Weaver's *The Nonviolent Atonement*." *The Conrad Grebel Review*, Spring 2009.)
- *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts* by Mark Baker and Joel B. Green. IVP Academic, 2000.
- *Understanding the Atonement for the Mission of the Church* by John Driver. Herald Press, 1986.

—COMPILED BY DAVE ROGALSKY

a count of his fighting men, instead of depending on God for security. Over and over again, God raised up judges/leaders to fight against invaders, and sent David to war, all the while taking more and more control of human violence.

And then Jesus taught love of neighbour and enemy. In the apocalyptic violence of New Testament times, more and more it is God who set things right, no longer using human intermediaries. God-following humans, trusting in God's righteousness and justice, but not seeing these in human lifetimes, trusted that in some future time God would bring about righteousness and justice when the unrepentant evildoers would be punished and the righteous would be rewarded. God retains the right to violence and God-following humans hope that God would not abandon the weak and down-trodden to the wiles of the wicked.

Concluding thoughts on atonement metaphors

In one metaphor of atonement in Hebrews 10:12, God-followers saw Jesus' death as appeasing God's need for justice, a sacrifice for sin, made once for all. Interestingly, Grimsrud does not deal with Hebrews' attempt to convince Jews in danger of leaving Christianity that Jesus' sacrifice is better, and Weaver, in *The Nonviolent Atonement*, believes that a rereading of the

material can "overturn rather than support Satisfaction Atonement."

But the idea of sacrifice and satisfaction need other metaphors to be whole. Epp-Tiessen, Suderman and Bergen all point to the lack of discipleship teaching which often arises from the "once for all" being made right with God. Other metaphors—such as the Moral Influence theory, in which Jesus teaches us with his life, ministry, death and resurrection how God wants us to live, and Weaver's

Narrative Christus Victor, in which living lives of righteousness and justice put us in alignment with God's kingdom, making us right with God—strengthen the response to God's action by human recipients.

That said, it is important for us to look at the effects our theology has. Weaver and Grimsrud both point to uses of Satisfaction Atonement that have and continue to oppress people in the name of following God's example.

Other questions remain. As one of many metaphors for God making things right between God and humanity, did God require a death for justice to be done? Or did humanity think that God required such a death, and God, in love and mercy, provided such a death to convince humanity of God's love and mercy?

In theology, the questions are never finally answered. Suderman and Bergen wonder if people in the pew can live with the ambiguity of multiple theories and no final answers. ☿



Dave Rogalsky is the Eastern Canada correspondent for Canadian Mennonite and pastor of Wilmot Mennonite Church, New Hamburg, Ont.

/// For discussion

1. Dave Rogalsky says that "blood songs" are about atonement. What "blood songs" can you think of? What do these songs say about the death or blood of Christ? What questions do you have about these ideas of atonement?
2. Which metaphor of God making right the relationship between humanity and God catches your imagination, emotions or thought? Which metaphors of God making right the relationship between humanity and God do not connect with you? Which metaphor or theory do you think most of the people of your congregation would use to describe atonement?
3. Do you agree with J. Denny Weaver and Tim Grimsrud that the Satisfaction Theory of atonement is based on violence? How do you respond to Weaver and Grimsrud's attempts to paint God as nonviolent? Does it bother you to think of God as having the right to violence, but not humanity?
4. Karl Koop says, "Salvation is complex, rich, large, a mystery." Can you live with multiple images and metaphors of atonement in tension and balance?

—BY DAVE ROGALSKY AND BARB DRAPER

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

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

✉ Catholics also display the love of Christ

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

As Christians, we are often very prone to tip-toeing around difficult subjects. I appreciate the boldness and truth of this feature article. I agree with a lot, but have a few comments.

It's so easy for us Protestants to get upset with all the atrocities on "the other side" of Christendom, and it's right for us to be angry while also being angry at the sins carried out under Protestantism. At the same time, we must remember all of the good that Jesus does through Catholic believers.

After being angry after reading this article, Jesus reminded me of the love that my Catholic relatives showed me last month by their hospitality and kind gift to me in a time of need. I am certain that the love and generosity of Jesus himself, not only of men, was

FROM OUR LEADERS

A child shall lead them

LINDA BRNJAS

I've heard it said, "The trouble with Christians in the western world is not that they don't care about the poor. The trouble is that they don't know the poor."

A few years ago, when our girls were very little, we took two street teens to lunch at McDonald's. The young man wanted to get off the streets and get a job, but he couldn't get a job without an address and couldn't get an address without a job. He had left home because his dad was paranoid-schizophrenic and his dad's girlfriend was also mentally ill. He needed to get out or go crazy himself.

He talked of government policies causing the poor to become more and more invisible, and that everyone just wishes they'd go away, since no one wants to see them. He talked of meeting kind-hearted employees in the food industry who feared losing their jobs if they gave him food instead of throwing it out. He had



been a good student, especially in math.

The young woman didn't want to get off the streets. She dreamed of having a place of shelter where the homeless could live in community and help each other out. She had found community in the streets. She was celebrating one week of being drug-free. She missed her child. At the end of the meal, they politely thanked us for lunch, cleaned up our garbage and said, "God bless you, especially for listening to our stories."

Our girls never forgot that encounter. The youngest took us to task one day when we drove past a person begging on a busy street corner: "Stop!" she cried. "You have to do something! We're supposed to do something!"

The conversation that followed resulted in a solution for times when it's impractical to take someone out for lunch: Buy coffee shop gift cards and keep them always on hand!

I'll never forget this summer watching our now 13-year-old daughter

comfortably approaching street people in downtown Toronto, offering them a card and engaging them in conversation. The startled looks she got—and in one case, the wave and warm smile to her when we passed by again hours later—told me that my daughter had not only provided a meal, she had touched the hearts of folks who likely have had many parents scurry their children quickly past.

Am I concerned about my kids' safety? Of course I am! We talk about safety and listening to the Spirit's still small voice that can warn us to beware just as quickly as he can open our hearts to reach out in compassion. We need wisdom, but we also need to teach our children compassion. But then, in my experience, as I took one tiny step in that direction, it's actually been my children teaching me. They're much better at it than I am, and perhaps, just perhaps, if they get comfortable reaching out to people when they are little, it won't be a big deal when they're adults.

Linda Brnjas is regional minister of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada.

in this. I am humbled.

Jesus lives in the hearts of many Catholics, even if they and their organization believe many things that we know to be unbiblical—Mary worship, conclaves, etc.—and despite the sins of certain leaders within the Catholic Church. While “Holy contradictions” is not intended to destroy, not emphasizing this critical point may give an excuse to some to retain their hatred of

the Catholic Church as a whole. The key tenet of a true Christian is to believe in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, which many Catholics do believe.

Also, I disagree with Will Braun’s statement: “Wills questions not only the writer’s use of Melchizedek, but the whole intent of casting Jesus as a priest, since Jesus never called himself a priest, didn’t do what

(Continued on page 12)

OUTSIDE THE BOX

The wonder of scandalous grace

PHIL WAGLER

On Thanksgiving Sunday our church celebrated the joy of baptism. It was a wonderful and diverse community event as we heard transforming stories of the young and middle-aged who had travelled unique pathways to surrendering their lives to the lordship of Jesus. As I listened to their heartfelt confessions, I was reminded that it really is God’s kindness that leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4). One story, in particular, revealed this in the most unsuspecting way.

A young mother in her early 20s has been part of our fellowship for a couple years. Her story has been ravaged by abandonment, disappointment with those who should have loved her, and the challenges of living with addiction. She was alone in the world, literally, with no family to call her own.

The last of our eight new believers to share, she, frankly, appeared the most unprepared. Clad in oversized hip-hop shorts, she stood awkwardly before the gathered throng without notes and proceeded to bring down the house in tears and elevate the scandalous kindness of the Lord.

She showered her church with gratitude, declaring us the family she never

had. She had discovered that love really did exist on the earth and very articulately described what faith in Christ meant. She was the paradox of the gospel in living colour, not looking the part while being it in its most beautiful form.

And then we came to the climax. What was it that had awakened her to the Christ-like love of her neighbour who reached out to her? What was it that had restored a pulse and the faint beat of hope? The unlikely answer: premarital sex and pregnancy.

There was a cloak of holy irony, holy surprise and, I’m sure, the odd “holy

She was the paradox of the gospel in living colour, not looking the part while being it in its most beautiful form.

smoke” among the gathered throng when our sister in Christ unashamedly declared the grace in this: “God made me pregnant.” I wondered if this is what it was like for Mary to out herself in Nazareth. Was she this sure of the gift? Our sister was decidedly sure. God had used her pregnancy to shine hope in the darkness of her despair and loneliness. Her life had purpose. Perhaps there was a larger one? Perhaps she was seen after all?

So on Baptism Sunday, our church

learned that God can use sin to eradicate it. I’m not sure if that’s a statement or a question. Whatever it is, it is a scandal. And, isn’t that just like God? Isn’t that the meaning of grace? Does God despise sin? Yes, relentlessly. So relentlessly, in fact, that he will even outwit sin to bring about its end. Is that not, ultimately, the truth of the cross and resurrection. Sin believes it wins, only to discover it has been knocked out.

God will go to great lengths to woo his beloved.

Here are a few thoughts for you to consider:

- **HAVE YOU** written off people God hasn’t?
- **HAVE YOU** rushed to conclusions God has not rushed to?
- **HAVE YOU** underestimated the nature

and power of grace?

- **HAVE YOU** lost the wonder at the relentless wooing of God for his beloved?

Baptism should always be such a eucharist—a thanksgiving—for the multiple kindnesses that have led us to repentance. We are a scandalous community. Isn’t it beautiful?

Phil Wagler (phil_wagler@yahoo.ca) resides with his family in Surrey, B.C., where grace keeps on being amazing.



(Continued from page 11)

priests do and often clashed not only with priests but the whole system of religious overlords.”

This is false. One of Jesus’ primary roles is as priest. No more priests are necessary because he made one sacrifice for all, forever.

ANDREW PINNELL
(ONLINE SUBMISSION)

Correction

It was at the 2008 national assembly in Manitoba that a resolution was put forward to promote more active peacebuilding in Mennonite Church Canada congregations. Incorrect information appeared in the Oct. 14 feature, “Rethinking peace,” on page 4. MC Canada regrets the error.

NEW ORDER VOICE

Eight points for a great sermon

AIDEN ENNS

Before I list my recipe for a great sermon, I offer some context. I’m self-conscious about my social standing. I just bought a second house, a rental property in a gentrifying neighbourhood close to the university.

This puts me in the categories of “landlord” and “property owner.” Which is awkward, because I tend to speak out against the evils of capitalism. Which, I guess, puts me in the category of “hypocrite.”

I feel trapped. On the one hand, I want to move down the socio-economic scale, to live more simply so that all may simply live. On the other hand, I also want the security that my wealth affords. I know that my people—rich, white, property-owning Christians—need to do something concrete to alleviate suffering in the world, but I don’t know what it is.

I don’t have the courage for anything radical.

It is a sacrilege to say I’m in bondage. When Christian Peacemaker Teams reports on the plight of displaced or harassed Palestinians, and Amnesty International gives updates on detainees on a hunger strike in Guantanamo Bay, it’s inappropriate to say those of us ensnared in the spoils of a material culture are in bondage.

Yet I still feel numb and unable to act on my conscience. Another example of

my confliction: I think cars are a defining symbol of our destructive age, and yet I want—I need!—to get a better one than we have, since we need it to renovate our second property. Woe to the rich!

Numb North American Christians need a word of liberation, a sermon that inspires us to become vessels of greater peace and justice.

At *Geez* magazine, where I work as an editor, we invited reader submissions for another collection of our “Thirty sermons you’d never hear in church.” I came up with a list of eight ingredients for a radical sermon. In this case, “radical” means that the congregation is connected with, and listens to, those who struggle, and offers a word of resistance. Here are the eight points with brief commentary:



For traditional preachers—those who think they bring a word from God to the people—this list is impossible.

1. A SERMON is a word that speaks to our bondage. I think the inactivity of the middle class maintains a system of exploitation. So my numbness, as mentioned above, serves the interests of those in power.

2. IT STEMS from the yearning of a people who struggle. We want to be on the side of justice, compassion and generosity, but don’t know what more we can do.

3. IT BRINGS hope by acknowledging despair. The sermon can name our situation and thereby assure us we are not alone.

4. IT IS inspiration for action and consolation for those who fail. We are asked to take steps, given the freedom to go astray, and return.

5. IT PROVIDES avenues of liberation for those who seek the way of love. As we open our hearts, we gain courage to do difficult things.

6. IT EMBRACES meaningful suffering that subverts illegitimate power. Our kindness exposes that which is harsh among us.

7. IT DEPICTS a quest for salvation not bound by religion. A specific word of love, such as the word spoken by Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount, has universal appeal for those on the margins and their allies.

8. IT ILLUMINATES a path of peace that finds kinship with all that lives. The vision is grand. It includes all creation.

For traditional preachers—those who think they bring a word from God to the people—this list is impossible. But “radical” preachers can move on this agenda. They can be problem-posers, facilita-

tors for dialogue with oppressed groups, reporters of power imbalances, and reminders of the grace available to those who feel their bondage is inappropriate.

Aiden Enns is editor of Geez magazine. He is a member of Hope Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, and can be reached at aiden@geezmagazine.org.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

10 things I really like about my church

BY RYAN DUECK

1. We eat together a lot

No surprise here. We are Mennonites. One of the tragedies of summer ending around here is that our summer worship schedule, which involved an earlier service followed by an hour of goodies and conversation, has come to an end. We had fresh fruit and cheese, yummy pastries and cakes, and good coffee.

I think that there is something healthy and theologically significant about communities that deliberately make space for eating together and sharing their lives with one another.

2. We try to be good neighbours

We don't do this as a means to get people to come to church, but simply because we believe Jesus has called us to love and honour those who come across our paths. We have a large motor sports dealer that just went up beside the church, so we had a beef-on-a-bun lunch for them one Thursday this summer. We didn't do it because we wanted to preach at them or even because we wanted them to come to church. We did it because they are our neighbours and we wanted to say, "Welcome to the neighbourhood. We're glad you're here!"

3. We love God with our minds

Probably between a third and half of the adults who regularly attend our worship services come early for one of our two adult Sunday school forums. People feel free to ask questions in these forums, and to push, prod, doubt and disagree. I think these are experienced by many to be life-giving spaces.



4. We love kids

We are not overrun with children at our church, but we love the ones that we have. We have people volunteering to organize "parent's night out," so the kids are fed supper and engaged for a few hours while harried parents can have a quiet meal together or catch up on some shopping. We have wonderful people committed to

teaching kids not only what to think about God, but how to think about and love God. And we have kids contributing their musical talents in our services and reading Scripture.

5. We value simplicity and creativity

There is nothing terribly flashy about how we do things at our church, and many of the "forms" we use are quite familiar. We read Scripture out loud, even the cringe-worthy parts. We pray. We listen to sermons. We sing a lot of older hymns. We study the Bible on Wednesday nights. We use PowerPoint and other technologies sparingly. We have a big old brown pulpit. We don't have a lot of programming, but within these traditional "forms" there is always space and grace for trying new things.

6. We embrace diversity and multi-voiced worship

We are blessed by the presence of a wide range of theological perspectives and socioeconomic/cultural backgrounds. All are welcome and encouraged to participate. A number of folks from our local L'Arche community have chosen to worship with us each week;

one L'Arche member gave the offering prayer a few months ago and it was wonderful.

7. We love and care for creation

We go camping together. We have a hiking group that tramps up and down the hills and mountains of Alberta weekly. We have picnics in the river valley. We go on canoe trips. We also have a settled theological conviction that we are called to be responsible stewards of God's good earth, a conviction that is reflected in our life and worship.

8. We are not anxious

There is so much hand-wringing out there about the state of the church in postmodernity that it can be exhausting and depressing even to read about it all. But we don't spend much time agonizing about the future, or about how to "get people to come to our church." My sense is that there is a quiet conviction that this is God's church, not ours, and that God has simply called us to welcome the newcomer and the stranger, to love each other well, and to preach the gospel in word and deed. The future has never been ours to control anyway.

9. Peace, justice, and generosity matter to us

Things like global awareness, political action, and work on behalf of the poor and the marginalized are important parts of how we understand and live out the good news of Christ. We are blessed to have people among us who continually prod us to be more politically active, who do not allow us to become myopic in our worship and service.

10. We love Jesus

In a world where religion in general, and Christianity in particular, tend to get a bad rap, sometimes fully deserved, we try to always remind ourselves and others that Jesus is what God looks like, and Jesus is lovely indeed. I like that. ☺

Ryan Dueck is pastor of Lethbridge Mennonite Church, Alta.

VIEWPOINT

The benefit of good law justly enforced

BY LOWELL EWERT

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

Many years ago while representing Mennonite Central Committee in Sidon, Lebanon, during their civil war, I was involved in a dispute over a payment with a former employee. I paid the employee what I thought he was entitled to



under Lebanese law, we shook hands and I thought the matter was closed. Two weeks later, I received a letter from his lawyer arguing that I had misunderstood the law, had underpaid his client, and the lawyer asked me to make it right.

I was intrigued to receive a letter from a lawyer arguing about the interpretation of law in the midst of an armed conflict and decided to negotiate directly with him to resolve this dispute. I drove to the lawyer's office, as there were no working phones, walked up the stairs to his second-floor location, down a long hallway that was punctuated by a large hole in the outside wall caused by a mortar shell fired during earlier fighting, saw the numerous bullet pock marks on the interior corridor wall, and walked into the lawyer's office unannounced. I told him who I was and why I was there. The first words he spoke stunned me. "Thank you for not bringing your gun," he said, obviously not having a clue what Mennonites were all about.

Even though I was licensed to practise law in Kansas and California at the time, I realized for the first time that I had not previously understood the central premise of law. Law is a substitute for violence. With good law justly made and justly enforced, there is no need for anyone

person who possesses the biggest gun usually wins, and for those without any power, life can be, as philosopher Thomas Hobbes said, "nasty, brutish and short."

But good law justly enforced has a greater impact on society than in just preventing violence and allowing conflicts to be settled peacefully. The ripple effect of good law is felt throughout society in ways that we often do not

acknowledge.

Amartya Sen, who won the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1998, has argued that there has never been a famine in a country where basic civil and political rights are respected. When citizens can hold their leaders accountable, and are given the ability to participate in political decisions that impact them, policies that make famine less likely can be pursued.

Others have argued that the spread of HIV/AIDS can be slowed by respect for the human rights of women, who, if given equal rights with men, can better protect their own health and resist sexual relations not of their own choosing.

And it is far easier to work to protect the environment if there is a free and independent press that can inform the public about environmental risks, and when informed people who are motivated to do so, have the right to petition, protest and work for change without risking their lives.

I also argue, although I can't prove it, that natural disasters, like earthquakes, floods and droughts, cause more harm, and usually longer-lasting harm, where civil and political rights are weakly enforced. A society in which rights are respected is better able to learn from disasters, publicly air mistakes that were made that led to the disaster causing more harm, and hold those in power accountable for their corruption, negligence or ignorance.

Societies that learn from their mistakes have a better chance to adapt, so as not to repeat them. Think of all the public inquiries that are held in Canada following a major harmful incident, and how many of the recommendations that flow from such inquiries are adopted and become the new standard of care. Our lives are better because our society can learn and change.

This is not to suggest that human rights or law always get it right, or that they

[G]ood law justly enforced has a greater impact on society than in just preventing violence and allowing conflicts to be settled peacefully.

represent "the" answer to the world's problems. Rather, that respect for human rights and good law are important for preventing violence, and for establishing systems within our society that allow us to eat, learn how to respond to disease, protect our environment, and learn from our collective mistakes. It is this unique combination of attributes that, despite its shortcomings, allows human rights and law to function as a tool for doing justice and advancing mercy. ❧

Lowell Ewert is director of peace and conflict studies at Conrad Grebel University College.

COUNTERPOINT

Without benefit of good law justly enforced

BY MARY LOU KLASSEN

SPECIAL TO *CANADIAN MENNONITE*

Lowell Ewert tells a thought-provoking story from his experience in Lebanon about how the law works to resolve conflicts peacefully. Similar stories also occur here in Nigeria, whose current constitution was instituted in 1999 after years of military rule and grounds its current democracy.



and justly enforced” is another matter. Even if there was no corruption, those with educational and economic means have a better chance of legally resolving their disputes without violence. This is also true in Canada.

For our status to be legitimate in Nigeria, we

have hired the services of a lawyer who ably and lawfully navigates the system on our behalf. On the other hand, Nigerian newspapers have recently reported the expulsion of hundreds of illegal immigrants, people without proper papers and without any opportunity for appeal.

The vast majority of Nigerians who are without means generally try to keep their heads down and their noses clean. If they have issues, they seek local mechanisms or authorities to settle them, as in the remote village of our friend. Ironically, they may go to the local police to try to resolve problems, surely a tenuous choice considering policing’s reputation.

We learned about this alternative system from an intern who befriended police officers and often sat with them in the evenings when they were approached to settle various concerns. As well-intentioned as these officers may be, they are people who are minimally trained in the law and who on other days follow orders that may enforce the “rights” of a patron, rather than the law.

Civil and political rights may indeed ground a better and improving society. However, grassroots folks here are more concerned about economic and social rights like food, shelter, healthcare and education for their children, rather than

in uncertain and intangible political rights:

- **A FREE** and independent press? What is that when journalists are poorly paid and the evening news is full of benign workshop reports? When there is criticism, it is buried in newspapers that equal the cost of a lunch.
- **FREEDOM OF** religion? What is that when you must pass a security guard to go to church or mosque?
- **FAIR ELECTIONS?** What are they when you can sell your vote for a few *naira* (Nigerian currency) or some sugar and salt?

Lowell reminds us that it is “respect for human rights and good law” that grounds a just society. The operative word is respect. It is not that people do not respect authority or law. Nigerians are by culture some of the most respectful people I have encountered. The challenge as I see it is that the state apparatus, which should guard the rule of law, does not respect its people. There are many good individual leaders, but the system is corrupted. The very mechanisms that should support law as a tool for nonviolent conflict resolution and social development have turned its apparatus into structures of violence and injustice.

Nevertheless, people are resilient, hopeful and courageous. Every day, we meet many who struggle for justice and peace in tangible ways, like teaching income-generation skills to women, drilling bore holes in parched communities, treating people with HIV/AIDS, or maintaining a complicated network of peace volunteers who are ever watchful for indicators of possible violence in conflicted communities.

There are also many who strive for better governance. These folks are weaving a fabric of justice and mercy with and without the benefit of “good law justly enforced.” ❧

Mary Lou Klassen works as a peace studies lecturer in Nigeria with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). The views expressed do not necessarily represent those of MCC.

WOMEN WALKING TOGETHER IN FAITH

Praising God through dance

BY KATE JANZEN

You've probably heard the joke: What is a Mennonite dilemma? Free dance lessons!

I was born in Saskatchewan in 1949 and the only dancing I ever encountered was square-dancing on the TV show, *Don Messer's Jubilee*. My parents played circle games in their youth, but after the American-based tent

revivals travelled across the Prairies, they believed that there was a very real possibility of being struck by lightning if any kind of dancing happened at youth events.

Meanwhile, I remember hearing quotes from the Bible with references to dancing and worship in the same verse. Verses like Psalm 149:3, which encourages worshippers to "praise God's name with dancing, making melody with tambourine and harp," seemed like an oxymoron to me.

Times changed and our three children learned how to dance. They enjoyed this social activity, especially at weddings. So when Quinlan Sharkey, our first granddaughter, celebrated her fifth birthday, I gave her a year of ballet lessons at the local community centre. To my surprise, for the next decade she dedi-

cated her free time to ballet.

Now, she's at the dance studio five nights a week and helps younger dance students learn their routines, but she still puts other things ahead of dance. She and her family live on a pure-bred sheep farm with us and she loves to help groom and show the sheep at inter-provincial shows. When she applied to an arts school in Calgary recently, she listed all the ballet competitions and awards she'd collected, noting, "I love to dance, but I'm a farm girl first."

Faith-wise, Quinlan appreciates that a favourite ballet teacher of hers is a Christian, who, on occasion, prays with her students. Also, it's important to her that our congregation at Foothills Mennonite in Calgary is supportive of her dancing passion.

Clearly, I'm delighted in my granddaughter's accomplishments and pray that if dance is indeed "the hidden



Mennonite
Women
Canada

language of the soul," as Martha Graham says, Quinlan's soul will be blessed and that she will be a blessing to others as she praises God through dancing. ☺

Kate Janzen is president of Alberta Women in Mission and a member of the executive of Mennonite Women Canada. She attends Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary, where she leads an intergenerational women's group.

Interview with a young Mennonite dancer

Kate Janzen: Do you think dancing could be part of worshipping God?

Quinlan Sharkey: Of course, because I feel connected to God. When I dance, it feels like a prayer, and I can communicate feelings that are too deep for words. God made me in his image and he says my body is his temple, so dance is praise to the Creator.

JK: Has your congregation included your talent during worship?

QS: Yes. I was asked to dance in a talent show and was invited to perform an interpretive dance on Christmas Eve to a solo piece, "I Will Trust in You," that my mom sang. My Grammy thought I danced like an angel!

KJ: Does dancing help you understand your emotions?

QS: All music has emotions and dance helps me express my feelings. When I feel angry, dance helps me change the anger into more positive feelings. Dancing is a great stress reliever for me.

KJ: Has dancing contributed to your character building?

QS: I think so because it's hard work. I practise about three hours every day. When I first started competing on stage, alone or in a group, I would be disappointed if I got a low score. Now, I take the comments more seriously than the score and apply them to improve my routine.

KJ: What keeps you dancing?

QS: I enjoy the atmosphere of the studio. It is a friendly and a comfortable place to come to after school. ☺

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KATE JANZEN



Author Kate Janzen, right, and her dancing granddaughter, Quinlan Sharkey.



Dancer Quinlan Sharkey

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Alexander—Mathias Jakob Unger (b. Aug. 26, 2013), to Dora Alexander and Lori Unger, Toronto United Mennonite, Ont.

Bruins—Annika Juliet (b. Oct. 16, 2013), to Nicole and Gregory Bruins, First Mennonite, Calgary.

Foster—Easton William (b. Sept. 28, 2013), to Carolyn and Tyler Foster (First Mennonite, Edmonton), in Calgary.

Guenther-Loewen—Simon David (b. June 17, 2013), to Kris and Susanne Guenther-Loewen, Toronto United Mennonite, Ont.

Kobold—Jackson Fraser (b. May 24, 2013), to Aaron and Maggie Kobold, Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont.

Lepp—Sebastian Kayden Schmidt (b. May 17, 2013), to Brad and Jana Lepp, Toronto United Mennonite, Ont.

Martin—Theo Benjamin (b. Sept. 9, 2013), to Simon Martin and Rachel Burkholder, Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont.

Rodriguez-Roveri—Benicio (b. Jan. 28, 2013), to Nino and Geisa, Toronto United Mennonite, Ont.

Sandberg—Charles Oscar (b. Sept. 29, 2013), to Janelle (East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.) and Oscar Sandberg in Stockholm, Sweden.

Savard—Livienne Alexis (b. Aug. 17, 2013), to Allison and Sean Savard, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont.

Somkhong-Neang—Sauphainny (b. Aug. 18, 2013), to Vanny Neang and Sau Somkhong, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Tsirimokos—Nikolaos (Niko) Alexandros (b. March 24, 2013), to Laura Giesbrecht and Alex Tsirimokos, Toronto United Mennonite, Ont.

Yantzi—Emmet John David (b. Sept. 29, 2013), to Jessica and Tyler Yantzi, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Baptisms

Sylvia Bauman, Jennifer Nemeti, Joel Steinmann—Elmira Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 11, 2013.

Autumn Heise, Sherri Klassen—Toronto United Mennonite, May 26, 2013.

Marriages

Adams/Jones—David Adams and Yacoba Jones (Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.), near Mayerthorpe, Alta., Oct. 5, 2013.

Benham/Luiting—Erin Benham and Derek Luiting, Community Mennonite, Drayton, Ont., July 20, 2013.

Brandt/Hanna—Jon Brandt and Stephanie Hanna, Toronto United Mennonite, in Lancaster, Pa., May 19, 2013.

Braun/Dyck—Wil Braun and Mary Dyck (both of Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.), in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., Oct. 19, 2013.

Davis/Litke—Jordan Davis and Kaitlin Litke, at Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., Sept. 14, 2013.

Eby/Thompson—Jeanette Eby and Matthew Thompson, The Commons, Hamilton, Ont., in Hamilton, Oct. 13, 2013.

Eckel/Roberts—Caleb Eckel and Becky Roberts, at Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., Oct. 19, 2013.

Goertz/Loewen—Matthew Goertz and Sheila Loewen, Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., June 15, 2013.

McCollum/Vos—Jeff McCollum and Kimberley Vos, First Mennonite, Edmonton, Aug. 23, 2013.

Unruh/Wiebe—Nathan Unruh and Taren Wiebe, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., Oct. 5, 2013.

Wiens/Willms—Stephanie Wiens and Jesse Willms, (Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.), at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Sept. 7, 2013.

Deaths

Bender—Robert Clair, 68 (b. Nov. 6, 1944; d. Aug. 23, 2013), Cassel Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Bergmiller—Helma, 88 (b. April 16, 1926; d. Sept. 29, 2013), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Ont.

Friesen—Auguste (nee Voth), 84 (Dec. 5, 1927; d. Sept. 19, 2013), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Froese—Jacob H., 86 (b. Oct. 9, 1926; d. Sept. 29, 2013), North Leamington Mennonite, Ont.

Gilligan—Carole (nee Upper), 50 (b. March 3, 1963; d. Sept. 20, 2013), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Hildebrand—Herta (nee Janzen), 75 (b. Sept. 25, 1938; d. Oct. 6, 2013), Hamilton Mennonite, Ont.

Klassen—Isaac (Zeke), 85 (b. June 26, 1928; d. Aug. 11, 2013), First Mennonite, Edmonton.

Klassen—Olive, 86 (d. Oct. 9, 2013), First Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Martin—Earl S., 85 (b. March 28, 1928; Sept. 19, 2013), Elmira Mennonite, Ont.

Martin—Laurence A. (Larry), 63 (b. Aug. 5, 1949; d. May 20, 2013), Elmira Mennonite, Ont.

Neufeld—Elizabeth (nee Bergen), 88 (b. Dec. 6, 1924; d. Oct. 8, 2013), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Penner—Paul, 82 (b. March 3, 1931; d. Sept. 24, 2013), Toronto United Mennonite, Ont.

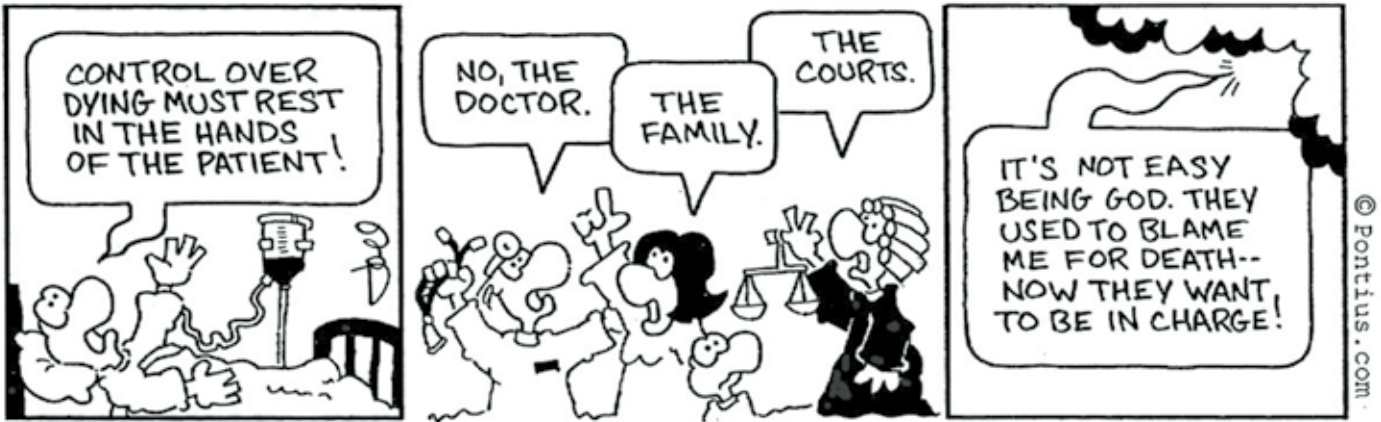
Peters—Annie, 97 (b. Oct. 9, 1915; d. Oct. 5, 2013), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Ramer—Norma, 89 (b. Oct. 5, 1924; d. Oct. 16, 2013), Wilmot Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Schmidt—Wilhelm (Bill), 84 (b. Oct. 31, 1928; d. Oct. 3, 2013), Kelowna First Mennonite, B.C.

Wiens—Elsa (nee Wiebe), 104 (b. Nov. 2, 1908; d. Oct. 11, 2013), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Pontius' Puddle



Schools directory

Elementary/Secondary

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GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Church seeks to help Yoder sex abuse survivors

By DAN DYCK

Mennonite Church Canada
WINNIPEG

Mennonite Church Canada is discerning how best to respond to Canadian survivors of sexual abuse by theologian John Howard Yoder.

Survivors of Yoder's sexual abuse in the United States, which came to light in the 1970s and '80s, have renewed their call for Mennonite Church U.S.A. leaders and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) to "revisit unfinished business with his legacy," writes Sara Wenger Shenk, current AMBS president, in an online post at Sojo.net. Shenk and Erwin Stutzman, executive director of MC U.S.A., initiated a discernment process in the American national church in September. AMBS is jointly owned by MC Canada and MC U.S.A.

Yoder, a professor and past president of

the school, is renowned for his groundbreaking 1972 book, *The Politics of Jesus*. He was released from AMBS in 1984, when it was known as Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries. Allegations of sexual abuse against women dating back to the 1970s led to "prolonged and failed attempts to work with Yoder," writes Shenk.

A task force from his local congregation concluded that Yoder had "violated sexual boundaries." In 1992, Yoder submitted to a disciplinary process led by an accountability and support group, resulting in an intense four-year process. Yoder died suddenly on Dec. 30, 1997, just one week after being welcomed back into his home congregation.

"Although a measure of healing followed the conclusion of the disciplinary

process, so did profound disappointment," that there had been no public validation of abuse survivors' testimonies, Shenk wrote.

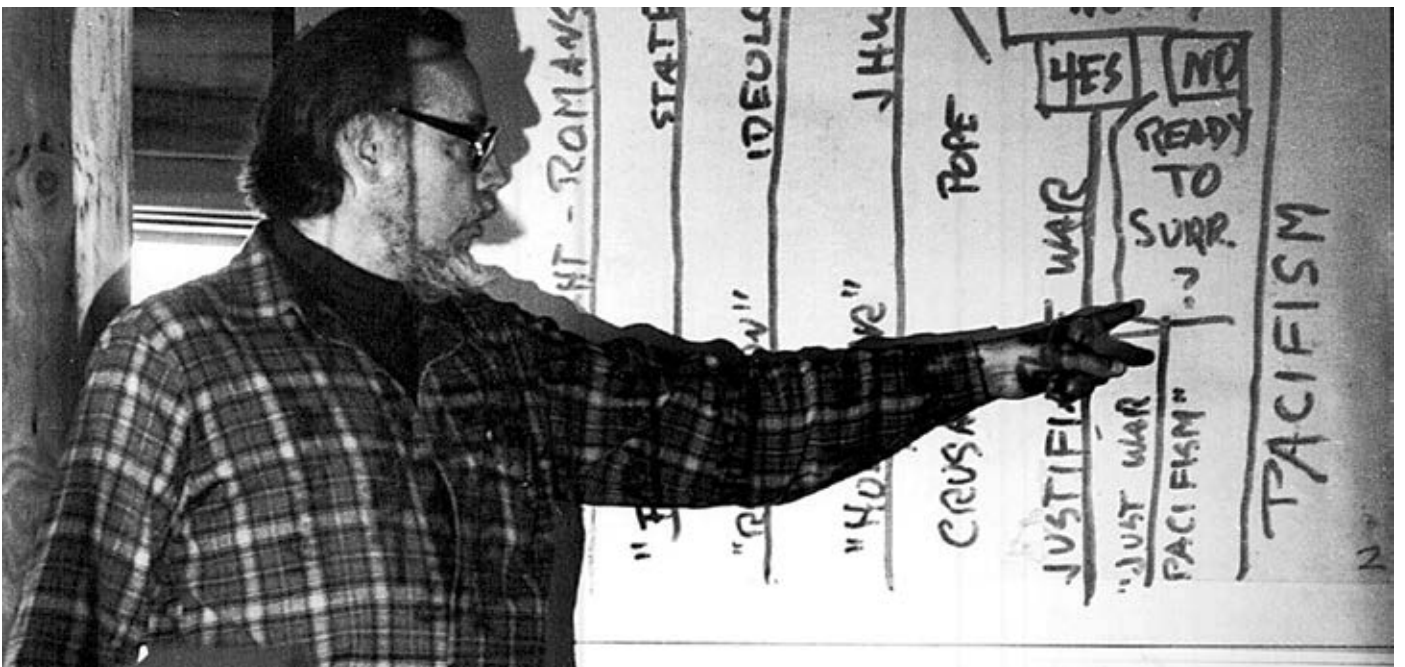
"We know there were Canadians who attended AMBS during Yoder's tenure at our binational seminary," says Karen Martens Zimmerly, MC Canada's denominational minister. "I want to invite any Canadian who encountered harassment from John Howard Yoder to consider joining in this renewed opportunity for healing."

Martens Zimmerly will also send a letter to pastors across the national church, but is aware that some survivors may no longer be connected to a Mennonite congregation. "Pastors are in a position of confidence, and may know persons to whom this invitation can be personally extended," she says.

Willard Metzger, MC Canada's executive director, says the national church is encouraged by efforts to help survivors redress their experiences. "I ask that the wider church pray for the healing of abuse survivors, pray for leaders as they hear difficult stories and walk with survivors, and to pray for the Yoder family."

Martens Zimmerly invites Canadian survivors to e-mail her at kmzimmerly@mennonitechurch.ca or call her toll-free at 1-866-888-6785, ext. 118. All responses will be held in the strictest confidence. ☯

MENNONITE REPORTER ARCHIVES PHOTO BY ALLAN SIEBERT



John Howard Yoder is pictured teaching at a 1984 peace seminar at Strawberry Creek Lodge in Alberta.

Being a Faithful Church process introduces online forum

Mennonite Church Canada
WINNIPEG

The Being a Faithful Church (BFC) Task Force is initiating opportunities for ongoing dialogue using Internet technology.

The first online forum discussion is planned for Nov. 23 at noon Eastern Standard Time, to introduce the BFC 5 material and interact with constituency regarding the BFC process as a whole. This opportunity will be offered again as the BFC process continues. Those wishing to join the online forum should send an e-mail with their name, congregation and phone number to office@mennonitechurch.ca.

An exploration of healthy sexuality—"BFC 5: Between the horizons"—is the next topic in the BFC process, and a study paper to guide the discussion is nearing completion. It will offer biblical perspectives on healthy sexuality that span the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. Written by Rudy Baergen and Robert J. Suderman, the paper will be accompanied by a study guide contributed by Willard Metzger, MC Canada executive director.

"BFC 5 is designed to generate helpful discussions around sexuality as one part of God's larger mission," Metzger says. "It continues to lay significant groundwork for discernment that is planned for 2014 through 2016 on individual topics concerning sexuality, such as premarital sex, homosexuality or other issues."

BFC 5 will invite further discussion at next year's assembly, when delegates will determine how to shape the next question of discernment regarding same-sex relationships.

"I've learned from this process so far that how questions are shaped has a tremendous impact on the quality and depth of engagement on the topic," Metzger says. "We're seeking input from the wider church to help frame the questions for the next stage. I believe that solid discernment is meant to happen in community and not in isolation."

A subsequent study paper is anticipated



as a result of discernment at Assembly 2014. That document, planned for release next fall, and related follow-up material to be circulated in 2015, "will lead to the church speaking again at Assembly 2016 on the matter of sexuality, as planned in the BFC discernment process," says Andrew Reesor-McDowell, co-chair of the BFC Task Force.

However, Metzger says, "In reality, discernment is never really over. As human beings who find themselves in a particular place in time and culture, we must be continually discerning God's will for our lives and for the church. Though the planned discernment is set to conclude in 2016, we should be prepared to find that there is not a single, final answer that ties everything up neatly. There may be congregations who wish to engage the BFC tools beyond 2016."

About half of MC Canada congregations have engaged the BFC process so far, and report that the materials produced to this point have been helpful in creating space for conversations that otherwise would not have happened.

"This is significantly higher than the 25 percent engagement realized when the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* was developed," says Reesor-McDowell.

Being a Faithful Church is a church-wide discernment process initiated in 2009 by MC Canada. The process seeks to first ground the church in sound biblical interpretation practices and then to address questions of human sexuality. The process has produced a number of study papers, all of which can be found at mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1930. ❧

/// Briefly noted

MWC appoints Asian regional representatives

BOGOTA, COLOMBIA—Mennonite World Conference (MWC) has appointed three regional representatives to nurture relations with member and associate member churches in Asia and the Pacific:

- **Timothius Adhi Dharma** is general secretary of the Persatuan Gereja-Gereja Kristen Muria Indonesia. He will be responsible for relationships with churches in Indonesia, Australia/New Zealand, Myanmar, Singapore, Philippines, Vietnam and Thailand.



Adhi Dharma

- **Cynthia Peacock** served as a social worker with Mennonite Central Committee for 38 years prior to her retirement in 2006. She chairs the MWC Deacons Commission. She will be responsible for relationships with churches in India and Nepal.



Cynthia Peacock

- **Kyong-Jung Kim** has served with the Korea Anabaptist Center for the past 11 years and is also an active member/co-leader of the Jesus Village Church. He will be responsible for relationships with churches in Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong/China.



Kyong-Jung Kim

"Having persons like this to help connect member churches in a widespread region will help to build a stronger identity and interdependency as Anabaptist Christians, said César García, MWC general secretary, in making the appointments.

—Mennonite World Conference

Rhetoric in aid of pacifism

Susan Schultz Huxman delivers Eby Lecture at Conrad Grebel University College

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

WATERLOO, ONT.

"If truth were self-evident, eloquence would not be necessary." (Cicero)

"Rhetoric is the art of using symbols," Susan Schultz Huxman, president of Conrad Grebel University College, explained to those gathered in Grebel's Great Hall on Oct. 10 for the annual Eby Lecture. It is "the study of all the processes by which people influence each other through verbal, non-verbal, visual and aural [heard] symbols, [and] the craft of producing reason-giving discourse that is grounded in social truths."

Her own interest is particularly on the rhetoric of "the underdog": the social outcasts, minorities and oppressed peoples. In her studies, she said she looked at "the power of stories and the intersection of the literary and rhetorical traditions . . . [and] the brazenness of subversive discourse and the study of 'rhetorical underdogs.'"

Huxman spoke at length of the use of rhetoric and rhetorical principles by American Mennonites during the draft of soldiers in the First World War. Questioned about their patriotism and challenged on their pacifism, Mennonites needed to quickly come up with responses to the larger society. Men were encouraged to sign up for the military, but as non-combatants, she said.

She showed a photo of a whole battalion of marching Mennonite men, each carrying a broom over his shoulder, rather than a gun. Willingness to serve, but not to kill or train to kill, they used symbols others could understand to make clear points, often in humorous ways.

In an extended story she spoke of a Mennonite pastor, Bernard Harder, who was confronted on his front porch by a mob demanding that he fly the American flag. He consented, but when the flag was produced he asked where the proper flag pole was and how to properly care for it.

The mob didn't have a proper pole, nor were they willing to care for it properly. Nor did they know all the verses to the American national anthem, so they had to listen as the pastor sang the verses beyond the first by himself.

By acquiescing where he could, being proper and reasoned with a mob—confronting them neither in a church nor in the public square—and by showing his patriotism even while holding his pacifist principles, Huxman said Harder used a rhetoric of identifying with the mob by keeping a separatist identity. %

Fitting together puzzle pieces of life

Women talk peace at fall retreat

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent

HOPE, B.C.

Life can be puzzling sometimes, and putting it all together can be a challenge. So Mennonite Church B.C. women who gathered for their annual retreat at Camp Squeah from Oct. 18 to 20 were challenged with a puzzle-themed weekend, "Peace by piece."

Speaker for the weekend was Rebecca Seiling of Waterloo, Ont., who gave a series of talks on peace in various aspects of life. In "Peace with God: Manna in the wilderness," Seiling spoke of God's daily provision, the assurance that people are fed today and will be fed tomorrow. "How do



Susan Schultz Huxman, president of Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., centre, poses with her parents Carolyn and Harold Schultz on Oct. 10, when she presented the annual Eby Lecture in Grebel's Great Hall. Her now-retired father was a former president of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.

you collect manna every day, the evidence God is with you and that God is providing?" she asked. Seiling concluded her talk by having each woman come forward and partake of bread dipped in Ontario maple syrup.

In her second session, "Peace with others: Journeying together," Seiling told of her own rewarding experiences with people from other cultures and countries. Offering hospitality means people can offer comfort, forgiveness and the gift of presence to others, she said.

"Peace with myself: The road to personal

peace,” was the topic of Seiling’s third session. “I like to think of my life as a puzzle [where] the pieces are fitting together,” she said, asking in turn, “What is the next piece of your puzzle? In what area of life is God calling to you?” She concluded by distributing a piece of a jigsaw puzzle to each woman, asking her to write a word or phrase to live by for the coming year.

The puzzle theme continued in other aspects of the weekend. Door prizes were all puzzles, and a Saturday night cooperative group game involved giving each woman a plastic bag with random puzzle pieces, then moving from table to table putting puzzles together.

A silent auction of donated items netted \$880 for a bursary fund to help women with financial difficulties attend future retreats.

Although MC B.C. no longer has an organized women’s group, the retreat has continued because so many women find it an important place to connect and be refreshed each fall. This year’s retreat drew women from their 20s to their 80s.



Women work together to finish jigsaw puzzles at the annual fall B.C. women’s retreat. A cooperative game had participants going from table to table trying to complete puzzles as quickly as possible.

Mennonite Women Canada president Liz Koop of St. Catharines, Ont., who attended the retreat as a guest, commented, “I think we’ll have to start one in Ontario!” ☼



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Mennonite Church Canada



Dessert evenings raise funds for MC B.C.

Story and photo by Amy Dueckman

B.C. CORRESPONDENT

Abbotsford, B.C.

Raising operating funds for Mennonite Church B.C. has been an ongoing concern, so this year the MC B.C. Finance Committee tried something different. In three evenings of storytelling in October, constituent church members were invited to enjoy dessert together and hear inspiring stories of the ministry of MC B.C.

The gatherings were held at Level Ground Mennonite Church in Abbotsford on Oct. 15, at Eden Mennonite in Chilliwack on Oct. 17, and at Peace Mennonite in Richmond on Oct. 23.

At the MC B.C. 2013 annual sessions, delegates were told that some of MC B.C.'s programs could not continue if more funding could not be found. The Finance Committee felt that people would be more willing to donate if they were more

aware of what all is happening in MC B.C. As noted by committee chair Al Peters, "People really don't have any idea of what the conference is all about."

Each of the three areas was responsible for finding speakers and furnishing dessert. The Abbotsford area gathering included music by the group Shirika, and short talks by several people, including Karen

Heidebrecht Thiessen, pastor of Level Ground, who told of how her congregation has been making use of Forge Canada's programs to help it be a missional, transforming presence in the community. Columbia Bible College president Bryan Born gave an update on the college, and Brittany Gifford, on staff at Peace Mennonite, told about her life path to youth ministry.

"As a Finance Committee, we are very supportive of what MC B.C. does," said Randy Redekop. "Over the next couple of years, we'd like to broaden and strengthen our giving base."

By the end of the three fundraising evenings, more than \$25,500 had been raised. Peters said he hopes the dessert fundraisers will continue next year. ☘

'People really don't have any idea of what the conference is all about.'

(Al Peters, MC B.C. Finance Committee chair)



Karen Heidebrecht Thiessen, left, pastor of Level Ground Mennonite Church, left, Marion Braun and Arnie Friesen survey the dessert selection at the MC B.C. fundraiser evening on Oct. 15 in Abbotsford.

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God at work in the Church Snapshots

HIDDEN ACRES MENNONITE CAMP PHOTO



Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp's fall seniors retreat days saw a record number of people registered Sept. 30 and Oct. 1, with 90 seniors participating. Resource person Sue Steiner, with guest writers Maurice Martin and Lois Brubacher, encouraged participants to tell their stories as they shared examples from their own memoirs. The day was also highlighted by hymn singing, fellowship and delicious food.

PHOTO BY LAVONNE DYCK /
TEXT BY NAOMI UNGER



Elsie Goerzen, director of Mennonite Central Committee B.C.'s End Abuse Program, spoke twice at the annual fall retreat sponsored by Saskatchewan Women in Mission. Reflecting on the retreat theme, 'I heard her voice: Courageous women of the Bible,' Goerzen showed Hagar's courage as she walked into suffering, trusting the God she named as 'the One who sees me.' In the story of the bent-over woman, Goerzen stressed the woman's courage in allowing herself to be seen by Jesus and by the whole synagogue. Because she took that risk, Goerzen said the woman, her community and the Sabbath were all liberated. Sixty-six women attended the event at the Shekinah Retreat Centre near Waldheim on Oct. 18 and 19.

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



Margaret Oakey, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada bookkeeper/administrative assistant, oversees the move from the houses where the area church had offices for almost 20 years at 4489 King St. E., Kitchener, to the new Mennonite Central Committee Ontario building at 50 Kent Ave. Staff have high hopes for new synergy in their brightly lit offices and common areas, as well as with the other Mennonite institutions with whom they share space: Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario and the MCC Thrift Store, Mennonite and Savings Credit Union, Mennonite World Conference, Mennonite Foundation, MennoMedia and MennoHomes.

PHOTO BY RANDY KLAASSEN



In response to the 2010 Lutheran World Federation apology to Mennonite World Conference, southwestern Ontario representatives of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and Mennonite Church Canada congregations met on Oct. 27 at Grace Mennonite Church in St. Catharines for a service of healing and reconciliation. The event included a fictional dramatization of a conversation between Martin Luther and Menno Simons in heaven, which was followed by the highlight of the service when Pastor Julio Romero of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Fort Erie, left, and Pastor Rudy Dirks of Niagara United Mennonite Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake exchanged the washing of each other's feet. A large choir of singers from both denominations gave voice to their common prayers as a unified Christian body.

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

A three-course meal of words

'Germinating conversations' continue across Manitoba

STORY AND PHOTO BY TAMARA PETKAU

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

WINNIPEG

The pleasure and fellowship that comes with food and eating seems increasingly flavoured with controversy and confusion.

Controversy surrounding genetically modified organisms (GMOs), pesticide usage and farming practices has left many confused as they face overwhelming choices at their local supermarket. Canada currently faces an obesity epidemic, and food and nutrition classes are facing dramatic cuts in our school system. For many, food is no longer one of life's pleasures that brings us together at the dinner table, but a worrisome and divisive burden.

With these issues in mind, a three-course roundtable discussion was held at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) on World Food Day, Oct. 16. In this fifth "germinating conversation" planned by CMU, Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba, A Rocha and Food Matters Manitoba, producers and consumers from a wide variety of backgrounds and viewpoints came together to discuss food issues and choices.

Approximately 100 audience members eavesdropped into the lively conversation of the panel guests who sat around an intimate table in the centre of CMU's Great Hall. They spoke carefully and reflectively on several topics that had been pre-crafted to help guide discussion:

- **HOW DOES** thinking of food as a gift impact the choice of food we make?
- **WHAT ISSUES** need to be included for a healthy food system?
- **WHERE DO** we look for inspiration as we think of our changing food system?



The goal of the evening, as clearly stated by facilitators Kenton Lobe and Jamie Reimer, was not to solve any problems, but rather to enjoy an evening of hospitality and radical dialogue.

"We're not attempting to solve any problems, but we are aiming to generate conflict," Reimer said. "Conflict can be good so long as it is not turned into a fight, or ignored. Conflict can be fertile ground for new insights."

The viewpoints were diverse and at times almost seemed to edge into the controversial, but the conversation was respectful and relevant, at times humorous, and always passionate and honest.

"If food is a gift, then so is the dirt, the sun, the seed," said panel member Terry Mierau, an opera singer-turned-chicken farmer from Neuberghal, Man. "The seed is a tiny little miracle. It's in peril to mess around too much with that seed."

Ron Krahn, a third-generation grain farmer from Rivers, Man., challenged the notion of food as a gift, stating that such a notion might make food easier to discard if it's just given and not something worked for. "Do we devalue it by calling it a gift?" he asked.

Panel members acknowledged that North Americans often have an unhealthy relationship with food. They presented their idealized versions of a world of healthy eating, but challenged each other with the reality of a growing global population.

"Food became unhealthy when we didn't know where it came from," Mierau said, with many nodding in agreement. "We need to know who is teaching our kids, but we also need to know who is feeding our kids."

Lobe emphasized the appropriate level of diversity that the panel presented. "We were looking for a range in representation," he said, acknowledging, though, the absence of indigenous peoples, older generations and people struggling with food insecurity. "This was an insider conversation," he acknowledged.

While pleased with the evening's conversations, he mentioned the growing need for conversations within the faith community. "We want to create a space for honest, truthful conversation, whether it's on food issues, homosexuality in church, or sustainable energy," Lobe said.

The evening was broken up into three courses, beginning with the roundtable discussion, followed by audience table discussions that generated questions for the panel. The event concluded with pumpkin pie—home-baked and store bought, organic and non-organic, with whipped cream or not—once again presenting the audience with a world of choice. ❧

VIEWPOINT

A bloody satisfying hassle

COLUMN AND PHOTO BY WILL BRAUN

SENIOR WRITER

All I knew about pig butchering before I did it myself was the Low German saying that translates as, “good weather for slaughtering pigs,” which somehow surfaces from my subconscious on brisk sunny days in the fall. I also knew that if people learn you plan to turn three pigs into sausage, a good number of them want in on the action. We could have charged admission.

That is the mystery. Why would we choose blood, guts and lardy carcasses—not to mention five months of feeding, shovelling and occasionally chasing—over Superstore? The pig experiment was emblematic of a larger life-sized experiment my wife and I have embarked on.

Fourteen months ago, we lived in an old apartment overlooking the dumpsters and dysfunction of downtown Winnipeg. Now we call an old three-hectare farmyard near Morden, Man., home. We’re rookie ruralites. And we’re not alone.

Last summer, Kalynn Spain travelled to more than 80 Manitoba farms engaged in direct marketing to consumers as part of a research project. Of those, about a quarter were run by people who made the move to farming within the last several years. Spain—a 25-year-old who attends Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg—is eager to become a rural farmer herself.

Dutch scholar Jan Douwe van der Ploeg would say Spain and I are part of a re-emerging global peasantry. He says that the values we live out imply “a rupture in the trend to modernize farming,” a reversal of the agri-food system that presides over obesity, rural decline, unconscionable corporate profits, a billion hungry humans, and pre-packaged disconnection from food and the land.

He says peasants are not failed agrarian entrepreneurs, but people living a different set of values, often because the agri-food system has failed or alienated them.

Amidst all my work, I have to remind myself regularly of the merit of this other set of values. I tell myself that butchering pigs is the opposite of a stereotypical office job. I was outside. I was active. The work was varied. Kids were running around, sometimes in horror. Wine was flowing, in Mennonite moderation, of course. The outcome was tangible and satisfying. The rhythm of the day was not



dictated by clock or boss. We all wanted to be there.

Of course, no one made any money either. Financially, Superstore would have made more sense. But the whole point is to live for something more than deals and convenience. Like being able to give a respected elder—one who would recognize good butchering weather—farmer sausage fresh out of the smokehouse I just built with help from my dad and a neighbour out of reclaimed lumber. Or watching my six-year-old run to the garden to pick a cucumber to chomp on. Or the first

irresistibly red raspberry of the year.

There is something of pure gift in it all. The simplest miracle of a new sprout pushing through warm soil or a chick growing. It is this element of gift that both humbles and creates generosity better than any sermon ever could. It is of God. It is the element that makes it easier to pray over potatoes from the garden than a storyless extra-large pizza. It is this element that makes me want to give guests tomatoes straight off the vine to take with them, although I would never send them home with store-bought produce from the fridge.

I don’t want to idealize our life. Pig excrement stinks, even if a meadowlark is singing in the background. We drive more than we used to. Our chicks didn’t grow as miraculously as hoped. My son might not have had a tantrum if I had been parenting instead of frantically building a smokehouse the day before slaughter. And he may resent me one day because we won’t be able to afford dirt bikes like the neighbours.

I also don’t want my values to solidify

into ideology. Not everyone can or should live like me. Diversity is good. God bless city slickers, vegetarians and my pesticide-using neighbours who also partake of the gift of soil and seed.

I tell my little story only in the hope that it may fan a peasant flame or two. Spain says she feels called as a person of faith to care for the land and provide healthy food. “I feel like it’s a gift,” she says. For others who feel that call, I know of an occasionally idyllic spot with plenty of extra space for cucumbers and pigs where someone could experiment for a season. ☘

'Thinking in a different way'

IVEPer from Lesotho learns new agricultural techniques on Abbotsford farm

Mennonite Central Committee B.C.
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Rorisang "Rori" Moliko works hard helping to plant more than 50 varieties of pumpkins in the greenhouse at Willow View Farms in Abbotsford. Although pumpkins are a common crop in Lesotho, where he comes from, corn is what most farmers grow. But Moliko is learning new things at Willow View and dreams what he will do when he returns home after his year here.

"I am learning so many skills," he says. "I want to do more. I am encouraged to be a farmer."

Moliko is a participant with the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) International Volunteer Exchange Program (IVEP) that offers vocational and cultural exchanges for young adults between the ages of 18 and 30. People from 30 countries around the world come to North America for a year to live and learn. Participants are billeted with local families and gain vocational skills through a volunteer work placement.

For Moliko, that placement is at Willow View Farms, a small-scale fruit and vegetable farm owned by Murray and Cheryl Siemens. Willow View Farms has been family-owned and -operated since 1960.

The Siemens have been farming since 1991 and have grown their business to include agri-tourism and direct farm sales.

Murray loves farming, but he also loves sharing his knowledge, so when the opportunity came to take on an IVEPer, he was very excited.

"I really wanted to do this," he says. "I can't go somewhere to teach farming practices because I'd have to leave my own farm, but to have IVEPer come to me is ideal. A lot of what we do here is small-scale farming, some marketing as well. All skills that are transferable to Lesotho."

Back home in Lesotho, Moliko was already involved in farming, working for an organization focused on conservation agriculture called Growing Nations. In Abbotsford, he has learned everything from planting, grafting and pruning, to driving a tractor and making juice.

He is considering introducing new crops into the market when he has his own farm. Farming back home is seen as a lesser occupation, where desk jobs and computer work seem to have more prestige. But working the land is all he wants to do, even though there will be some challenges



Rorisang Moliko grafts apple trees on a sunny day at Willow View Farms in Abbotsford. Moliko is from Lesotho and is in Canada with MCC's International Volunteer Exchange Program, learning new skills that he'll take home with him.

getting established.

"My mom says you need patience to succeed," he says. "I had to work hard to earn money to come here, but I've learned so much, it has been worth it."

The Siemens don't know if they will ever get to Lesotho, but they know that their investment in farmers here is making an impact there.

Murray knows that the biggest challenge for Moliko when he goes home will be the capital needed to purchase land. "If we just train people here, but they have no resources when they return, they'll get discouraged," he says. He hopes that the next step will be to find a way to help farmers like Moliko get a start.

In the meantime, Moliko knows that he will have to work hard to earn enough money to purchase his own farm, but he isn't afraid of hard work. And he is encouraged by the fact that he is already making a difference in his home community. "My friends look to me as a leader now," he says. "I think they will have even more respect for me [when I return] because I am thinking in a different way." ❧

MCC B.C. PHOTO



Murray and Cheryl Siemens say that their lives have been enriched by IVEPer Rorisang Moliko, who comes from Lesotho and is spending this year learning new farming techniques at the Siemens' Willow View Farms.

Connecting through canned meat

MCC canners visit Central America to meet people who receive the food they produce.

By EMILY LOEWEN

Mennonite Central Committee Canada
WINNIPEG

The four volunteers working on the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) mobile meat canner quickly develop a community while they travel across the U.S. and Canada, preparing canned meat to be sent around the world.

But Andrew Keeler, one of this year's canners, says his role in processing the meat only gave him one side of the picture. "When we're canning we can really feel the community aspect of everyone there," he says, "but at the same time we don't know how it looks when the can's being opened and what kind of support it is providing for communities."

In September, Keeler finally got to meet the people at the other end of the chain on a trip to El Salvador and Guatemala. Three of the canners visited Central America to meet those who use the meat, and even sample some recipes.

As Stanley Toews packs cans of meat this year he will remember a visit to the Finca Canaán coffee farm in San Martín, El Salvador. The women there prepared a variety of recipes they developed using canned meat, including pupusas, lasagna and stuffed peppers.

"The first time when they received meat they didn't know how to use it," Toews says. "They had to invent their own recipes and they showed them to us and we could taste them. It was good."

At Asociación nuevo Amanecer de Santiago Atitlán in Guatemala, women receive canned meat for participating in classes such as nutrition, craft-making or business. They also give cans to children in after-school programs. Keeler appreciates that the meat is used alongside programs



Gerald Heimpel, Toby Penner, Andrew Keeler and Stanley Toews began working on the MCC Mobile Meat Canner on Oct. 8 in Ohio.

to help families achieve long-term success.

"It was neat to see how the projects used the meat and other resources to enhance the community," he says.

Every two years, the canners visit projects where the meat they package is used. Canners also return from the trip with stories to tell the thousands of volunteers

who help throughout the season, providing a bridge between the meat they can and those who eat it.

The mobile canner will be in Winkler, Man., from Nov. 27 to 30, and next spring in Leamington, Ont., from April 14 to 17, and in Elmira, Ont., from April 21 to 25. ☞

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CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

MCC PHOTO BY JOHN HILLEGASS

ARTBEAT

Making a splash in the glittering world

New memoir recounts farm-girl life of former president of Goshen College

MennoMedia

Born into a plain-dressing, plain-speaking Mennonite farm family in Lancaster County, Pa., Shirley Hershey Showalter was named after Shirley Temple, a movie star she was forbidden to watch. She writes that she grew up with her nose pressed to the window of the glittering world, “protected from its supposed evils by parents and preachers and kind ladies with hankies in their pockets.”

That sheltered farm girl went on to become president of Goshen (Ind.) College from 1997-2004. Showalter’s memoir, *Blush: A Mennonite Girl Meets a Glittering World*, was released by Herald Press earlier this fall.

The memoir is a richly textured and affectionate look at the Mennonite church then and now, complete with Mennonite recipes and vintage photos. It has earned endorsements from many Mennonite writers and leaders, and from others in the wider world, like best-selling author Bill Moyers, who says, “I promise, you will be transported.”

Shaped by her life on the family farm, a country school and Lititz Mennonite Church near Lancaster, the rosy-cheeked, barefoot “Shirley” never quite disappeared. Growing up in a family of Swiss-German farmers stretching back 10 generations in the U.S., and in a church with a distrust of the world, Showalter sought to understand the strange and often contradictory stories around her while she struggled to create her own story.

From an early age, Showalter nurtured dreams of life beyond her circumscribed world. “Ever since I was little, I wanted to be big,” she writes. “Not just big as in tall, but big as in important, successful,

influential. I wanted to be seen and listened to. I wanted to make a splash in the world,” she writes.

“If ambition is a bad thing, and thrice bad for a woman and a Mennonite, I could take the easy way out and blame mine on Mother,” writes Showalter. “She had her secret desire to be what Mennonites call ‘fancy’ barely hidden under her prayer covering and plain cape dress.”

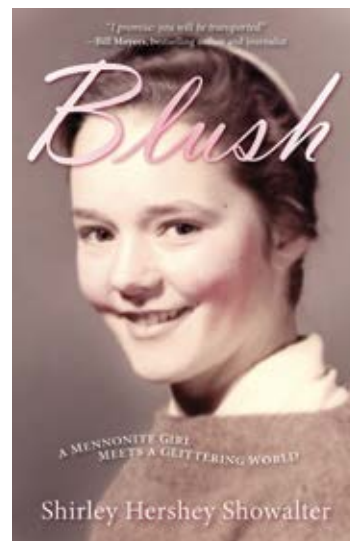
Evoking the simple joys of a farm childhood, Showalter recounts life on the 40-hectare “Home Place” that formed the centre of her world. “I didn’t distinguish

*‘If ambition is a bad thing, and thrice bad for a woman and a Mennonite, I could take the easy way out and blame mine on Mother.’
(Shirley Hershey Showalter)*

between play and work for a long time,” she writes. Much of her childhood as a “free-range girl” was idyllic, but Showalter also tells of the hard work of farming, lean times and friction in her extended family.

The values instilled in her by family and church are ones Showalter still holds dear today: generosity, kindness and empathy. In the Mennonite community, “a child in need was everyone’s problem to solve, not only the parents,” she writes. “If I saw a ‘plain person’ in a long dress or wearing a bonnet or a plain suit on the street, I would never have hesitated to ask for a ride, for information or even for money. All through my childhood I was being trained to be that same kind of beacon of kindness for others.”

Showalter writes lovingly of Mennonite



cooking and the famed “seven sweets and seven sour.” Love of food, “prepared well in large quantities, was so great among my kin that we risked one of the classic deadly sins: gluttony,” she writes. The seven sour are side dishes, such as pepper cabbage and pickled beets. The seven sweets include up to 20 kinds of pie.

“Everyone’s childhood is some mixture of sweet and sour,” Showalter writes. “My



Mennonite childhood was sweetest when surrounded by family, including the 40 families in our church who called me by name and knew where I lived, what grade I was in, and what part I sang when we opened the hymnals together.”

Although it took her years to notice some of the sour among the sweetness of her church, Showalter writes, “I now see the irony that Mennonites thought it necessary in order to follow Jesus to exclude those who dressed or talked ‘loud,’ divorced, drank or danced—unless they repented.” Showalter respects the conservative branches of Anabaptists who “continue to maintain boundaries between the plain church and the glittering world.”

Showalter is now a writer, speaker, blogger and consultant living in Harrisonburg, Va. ☺

WARNER BROS.' PHOTO



Sandra Bullock and George Clooney, as astronauts Ryan Stone and Matt Kowalski in Gravity.

FILM REVIEW

Gasping for air ... and for God

Gravity.

Directed, co-written and co-produced by Alfonso Cuarón. Starring Sandra Bullock and George Clooney. A Warner Bros. release, 2013. Rated PG.

REVIEWED BY VIC THIESSEN

“Houston, I have a bad feeling about this mission,” says Matt Kowalski as he dances circles around the space shuttle Explorer, which is in orbit around the Earth. His words come early in this fall’s blockbuster film, *Gravity*, an awe-inspiring work of cinematic art. Despite the “gravity” of Matt’s words, it’s just his way of introducing the stories he likes to tell about his life as he drifts in space, although it also serves to foreshadow the catastrophe that is about to strike.

Matt is played by George Clooney, who is perfectly cast as the calm, laid-back, know-it-all astronaut who likes to talk. Matt and scientist Ryan Stone—played by Sandra Bullock, in what must be her best performance—are making repairs in space when a Russian attempt to destroy one of its own satellites goes awry and sends satellite debris flying around the Earth at the speed of a bullet. Matt and Ryan are caught in the path of that debris

and soon find themselves stranded and running out of oxygen. Thus begins a relentless thrill ride that leaves viewers also gasping for air.

There are some obvious allusions to *2001* in *Gravity*, but the slow-moving *2001* has a very different feel than the fast-paced *Gravity*. Both films, however, represent the cutting edge of filmmaking.

While I am not a fan of 3D, there’s no question that, in *Gravity*, 3D brings you closer to the action and makes you feel like you’re with the astronauts in space. It also heightens the beauty and wonder of seeing Earth floating below you.

“You should see the sun shining on the Ganges. It’s amazing!” Matt says to Ryan at one point in the film. Experiencing the wonder of space and of our marvellous planet is one of the joys of viewing this film. I would argue that in such an environment it is very easy to find God. This is what happens to Ryan in *Gravity* and it also happened to me as I watched.

Film critic Gareth Higgins suggests that “going to the cinema can be a spiritual experience akin to worship.” I have found God in many films over the years, especially in films that heighten our sense of wonder at the world God has created. But it is rare these days to see characters in Hollywood films having a spiritual experience of their own, which is what happens to Ryan.

In a moment of despair, she reaches out to her four-year-old daughter, who died some years before in a playground accident: “Please pray for me,” she says. “I have never prayed. No one ever taught me how.” Just before that, the camera had zoomed in on a picture of Jesus which a Russian astronaut had pinned to the control panel. This is the beginning of my favourite scene in *Gravity*, which I won’t spoil for you by saying more.

Long before taking this first trip into space, Ryan’s life had lost its meaning. Now, in the stark lifeless environment of space, she must repeatedly confront death and decide whether she wants to choose life. Her crisis is depicted in various ways—some subtle, some overt—and more than once Ryan chooses death, but the film as a whole conveyed to me the message that life, and the universe that houses it, is a gift of God that deserves to be cherished and celebrated no matter what our circumstances are.

So, while at one level *Gravity* is a simply told disaster flick, at another level it is a profound reflection on life, death, God and being human. This is made possible by the quality of the filmmaking, with special effects second to none, a score that perfectly enhances the action, a tightly nuanced screenplay by Cuarón and his son Jonas, and excellent acting.

Perhaps I loved this film so much because I always wanted to be an astronaut, although few will see the appeal of that profession after viewing *Gravity*’s terrifying intensity. If that description doesn’t scare you, then you need to watch this film on the biggest screen you can find. Few Hollywood films made in this century have captured the magic and potential of filmmaking the way *Gravity* has, so perhaps it isn’t time to give up on Hollywood just yet. ▮

BOOK REVIEW

Confessions of an errant postmodernist

For a Church to Come: Experiments in Postmodern Theory and Anabaptist Thought.

Peter C. Blum. Herald Press, 2013, 175 pages.

REVIEWED BY MAXWELL KENNEL

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

For a *Church to Come*, the newest addition to the Polyglossia series published by Herald Press, is a collection of essays full of gems for those who long to see authentic conversation occur between Anabaptism and postmodernity. Prefaced by theologian John D. Caputo, the book contains seven essays of diverse themes united by the confrontation between postmodern philosophy and Anabaptist Mennonite theology.

While the essays themselves may not be accessible to readers without some philosophical and theological education, the introduction, interludes and appen-

the Law,” and a very thought-provoking appendix reflecting on John Howard Yoder. These meditations question common assumptions about absolute truth (in the introduction), offer meaningful reflections on the place of theory in theology (in the interlude), and provide very insightful thoughts on the relationship between the scholarly work and biography of John Howard Yoder.

Blum points out the ambivalent and contradictory meanings of the term “postmodern,” and shows how it suggests finality and closure. This suspicion of ultimate foundations means that, for those with postmodern convictions, nothing is

The experiments within For a Church to Come follow an attitude in which . . . occasional interventions are perhaps more authentic than long systematic tomes.

dix may find a wider audience.

Blum introduces the book with “Confessions of an errant postmodernist,” and provides an interlude entitled “Boxes,” a poem entitled “Nine-tenths of

beyond question. The experiments within *For a Church to Come* follow an attitude in which questions are more important than answers and occasional interventions are perhaps more authentic than



long systematic tomes.

In his “Boxes” interlude, Blum illustrates how humans theorize about reality, whether theologically or philosophically, by finding categories for their experiences. This is a theme that runs through the essays in the book, along with the very nonviolent and pacifist caution to avoid letting human categories become too “totalizing.”

The publication of these essays together will be especially helpful for students in the humanities with an interest in both postmodern philosophers like Derrida, Heidegger and Levinas, and Anabaptist Mennonite theology. In this way, Blum joins other Mennonite scholars, such as Chris Huebner (*A Precarious Peace: Yoderian Explorations on Theology, Knowledge and Identity*) and Jamie Pitts (*Principalities and Powers: Revising John Howard Yoder's Sociological Theology*), who are engaging in dialogue with postmodern thinkers.

One can only hope that scholarly and popular work of this calibre continues to be published on the relationship between our Mennonite identity and our postmodern climate. ☿

Maxwell Kennel is a student in the master of theological studies program at Conrad Grebel University College and associate youth pastor at Crosshill Mennonite Church near Millbank, Ont.

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FOCUS ON MUSIC

A choir that creates community

Menno Singers

A choir truly is a community-building venture. Something happens to people when they sing together. They bond, becoming part of something bigger than themselves. Menno Singers, a part of the Kitchener-Waterloo, Ont., choral community since 1955, experienced and recognized that earlier this year upon the death of one of our long-time members.

On Jan. 15, Mary Martin passed away after a journey with cancer. Mary was a friend of many, and was well loved and appreciated wherever she went. One of her significant communities was Menno Singers, where she sang in the choir for more than 40 years, and her strong, deep voice anchored the alto section. She is deeply missed and often mentioned.

Her husband Ken sang with her in the choir for those years as well, and he and son Justin continue to sing in the bass section. Singing in the choir was simply a regular part of life and community building. It was a true honour for Menno Singers to be invited to sing at Mary's funeral at Breslau Mennonite Church, her home congregation.

As a choir, we have wondered how best to honour and remember Mary. This past spring, we commissioned Mennonite composer Stephanie Martin to compose a piece dedicated to Mary. Stephanie is conductor of Pax Christi Chorale in Toronto and associate professor of music at York University, Toronto. She is also daughter of Abner Martin, the founding director of Menno Singers.

The Martin family gave input as Stephanie chose a text from a Tennyson poem, "In Memoriam." Her composition, "Ring Out, Wild Bells," will be premiered by Menno Singers at our Christmas concert, to be held at 3 p.m. on Dec. 8 at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Kitchener. Singing together will become a way of remembering, mourning and honouring.

The Christmas concert also points to the

community building that happens within a whole family of choirs. InterMennonite Children's Choir, directed by Carolyn Neumann VanderBurgh, and Menno Youth Singers, with new conductor Janna Lynn Cressman, will join Menno Singers. There is a long tradition of this "three choirs at Christmas" concert, where children, youth and adults all sing together. The concert is entitled "Navigating North," part of our 2013-14 "Explorations" season.

As artistic director Peter Nikiforuk writes, "Each concert will feature a point on the compass and explore music that embodies the idea of that direction."

The whole Menno Singers season is about community building and collaboration with other musicians. Our first concert, "Wandering West," on Oct. 26, featured saxophonist Willem Moolenbeek.

The March 22, 2014, concert, "Exploring East," will involve collaboration with skakuhachi flute master and conductor Gerard Yun and members of the Dark Horse Ensemble. The concert will embark into an exotic sound world of Asian music, choral improvisation and the intersection of cultures.

The final concert on May 10, 2014, "Surveying South," will explore global song from South America, Africa, Australia and Southeast Asia together with conductor Debbie Lou Ludolph and the global music

PHOTO BY CALVIN CRESSMAN



The Menno Singers in performance.

group Inshallah. The concert will feature "Missa Criolla" by Argentinean composer Ariel Ramirez.

In all these concerts, community is formed as we collaborate with others, and then expanded as we go beyond our comfort zones and into music from around the world in a true community-building venture. ☼



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PERSONAL REFLECTION

My faithful God and bleeding brain

BRANDI FRIESEN THORPE

SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES



Brandi Friesen Thorpe

I remember coming home the day my brain started bleeding.

I had worked the morning shift that Friday and was pulling into my driveway when the spots in my eyes wouldn't go away. I nonchalantly dismissed it as the brightness of the morning sun, thinking nothing of it at first.

blood on my brain.

The doctors said I may need surgery to fix the bleed, and I was sent to a Hamilton hospital for further testing. During this time, I was strangely calm and confident. My husband was at my side through every step.

God was just as close, as though he

It was spectacular that God healed me, but it is also spectacular that I have daily bread, that my sins are forgiven and that God blesses me with more than I need.

An hour later, when those spots hadn't gone away, when my fingers were numb and tingling, and when my body was shaking from the severe pain in my head, it was no longer something I could dismiss.

By the time my husband drove me to St. Mary's General Hospital emergency room in Kitchener, Ont., my body was weak and shaking. Upon hearing my symptoms, staff pushed me to the front of the ER list and I was given the next available bed.

Tubes, needles and various other medical instruments were attached to me as medical staff began their testing to confirm the suspected diagnosis: I had suffered a burst aneurysm in my brain, a sub-arachnoid brain hemorrhage. In other words, a small blister on a blood vessel in my brain had popped, leaving

was sitting next to me on my hospital bed whispering love and encouragement into my heart. I can say that I was not afraid. I had everything I needed.

I must emphasize that it is not bravado that allows me to say I was not scared. It was, and is, the knowledge that God is a faithful God. It was as simple as being reminded that God has given me specific promises for my life, and I have not yet seen those all come to fruition. God is the promise-maker, and keeper, and that is who he is. Nothing, not even a brain bleed, threatens who God is or what he promises.

After countless tests and extensive mapping of my brain, the doctors eventually came to me with results. The aneurysm, without medical interference, had healed itself. As such, I could go home to a long, slow recovery. When I

received this news, it was not something spectacular. It was an orderly delivering of a medical diagnosis that allowed me to vacate my hospital bed for the next patient, and for business at the hospital to continue as usual.

It wasn't until I began sharing this story within the community that I realized that, to many, this was a spectacular event. For me, it was God again showing me his faithfulness, something that is demonstrated daily. Yes, it is amazing that I was healed. It was as though God had reached out with his finger and touched my brain, saying, "No, it's not her time. I have given her promises."

It was spectacular that God healed me, but it is also spectacular that I have daily bread, that my sins are forgiven and that God blesses me with more than I need.

There are two common responses I receive on the occasion that someone discovers I am recovering from a brain aneurysm:

- **FIRST, THEY** point out the seriousness of the event, citing that they know someone who has died from the same thing. It's not exactly a statement of faith or encouragement, but I can understand that, for most people, death is more commonly understood than faith, especially in regards to a brain aneurysm.
- **SECOND, THEY** pose a question, asking how the aneurysm has changed

my life. This brain aneurysm was not a defining moment in my life. It was not a life-changing experience. My experience was in keeping with the God I have been serving and loving my whole life. He has shown me that he has promised faithfulness and nothing can threaten that.

Make no mistake, this is not a story of how I chose to be faithful in a life-threatening situation. I firmly believe that faith is not "my choice" in how to handle an event. My choice is relationship with God. In that relationship, God reminds me of his identity, and that is what causes the reaction of faith. That is what makes this a story in which God reminded me of who he is all the time, and I believed him. It is purely the acknowledgement of God's character that caused the reaction of faith, rather than the "choice of faith."

As I continue to recover from the long-term effects of a brain bleed, God continues to remind me of who he is. He is faithful. ☺

Brandi Friesen Thorpe's Mennonite roots were grown in Saskatchewan, flourished in Manitoba, and have explored the global church in South America and Europe. At 24, she joyfully resides for a season in Winnipeg, researching generational trauma in Mennonite communities and investing in a church plant in the city's West End.

Music at work

Music therapists help clients realize their potential

By RACHEL BERGEN

Young Voices Co-editor
WINNIPEG

The choirs, bands and performers at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) produce some of the most beautiful music around, but a few graduates are using music to help people achieve non-musical goals.

Lori Schroeder

Twenty-two-year-old Lori Schroeder is a

contract music therapist who works with different day and school programs to help people from all walks of life by promoting, maintaining and restoring their health. Schroeder graduated from CMU in 2013 with a bachelor of music degree majoring in music therapy.

"Music is my tool, but I'm not there to

(Continued on page 36)



Lori Schroeder

(Continued from page 35)

help them sing better or get the notes,” she says. “It’s not about the music. We work on communication, self-esteem, self-expression, motor skills. . . . All these things can be worked on through music.”

One of Schroeder’s jobs involves directing a choir at Norshell, a non-profit organization that supports adults with intellectual disabilities. The choir members have something to work for and take pride in, Schroeder says, but it’s not about being the best-sounding choir.

Since entering the workforce, Schroeder has worked with many clients, but one she feels she made a difference with was a tough-looking, 26-year-old assault victim. While she was working in a hospital, he was admitted with a brain injury. He was so badly beaten he had lost the use of his voice for a period of time.

After he regained his voice, Schroeder and the patient discovered they had a mutual taste for country music, so they developed a relationship involving singing and being goofy together.

“What began as techniques to help him develop his speech and breath capacity developed into a special relationship,” she says, “and music therapy did so much

more for him than help him with speech goals. Music connected us, and allowed him to be goofy and express himself and his feelings.”

Being able to help people, connect with them and use her musical talent is a gift, she says, adding, “I feel like my spiritual life and my relationship with God [have] a lot to do with why I practise music therapy. I’m doing it because God put a passion in me to help people and to help people through music. And CMU helped foster, encourage and facilitate that in me.”

According to Jennifer Lin, the director of CMU’s music therapy program, the school is glad to be able to help students enter the workforce, but also hopes they will use their faith-based education to help others. “It is our hope that the overall learning experience would continue to evolve and positively influence their life journey beyond the classroom,” Lin says.

CMU has since hired Schroeder to work for the Community School of Music and the Arts as a music therapist for both group and one-on-one clients.

Erin Koop

Twenty-six-year-old Erin Koop is another graduate of CMU’s music therapy program. She works as a contract music therapist for Expressions Music Therapy Services, Café Music School and other places.

Before starting as a music student at CMU and getting out in the field, she wasn’t very aware of its therapeutic applications. “I didn’t really know a lot about music therapy at all before I came to CMU,” she says. “My practicum and internship experiences were the most real for me.”

Since graduating, Koop has made her mark on many clients, but recently she’s been working with an elementary student doing songwriting. “Most of the time we write songs about goats that win eating contests,” she says with a laugh. “One time we had this amazing conversation about what he wanted to be and how the world is always changing.”

Koop played a melody while the boy sang, “I want to find my destiny, the place in this world.”

“It was really amazing to connect with this client on that level,” she says. ☘



Erin Koop

VIEWPOINT

The goal of dialogue

Author hopes conversation on sexuality issues will not decrease church diversity

BY TYLER VOTH

When I grew up in a conservative, non-denominational church, the issue of homosexuality was never discussed, but it was regarded as “sin.” It was not until a friend came out to me at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg that I had a direct experience with someone who is homosexual. My strong friendship with this person let me see her humanity, rather than just a sexual orientation.

One morning as I met my friend and her girlfriend, she said that coming out was a very “fearful” experience due to the “risk of rejection.” This fear was not only for herself, but for her family as well. “They’re coming out with me,” she said.

Together, they expressed the need to “talk about the Bible,” our “stories” and the need to “humanize” the subject. Both women emphasized the importance of their sexuality as only “one part of [their] being” and how “limiting” it can be to have a part of yourself “you’re not honest with.”

I have explored lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/queer (LGBTQ) issues and realize the importance of an open and honest dialogue that gives voice to the voiceless. Rejection from either side of a topic transforms dialogue into a lecture, rather than a balanced discussion.

One Mennonite church pastor explained the “long history” the church has with the LGBTQ community and how he hopes to move towards a policy of “no secrets.” He wants the church to be “affirming and accepting,” but without forcing people to “accept” any one viewpoint. “We don’t see the issue being settled simply by having a Bible study,” he

said as he pointed out the importance of “stories” within the dialogue.

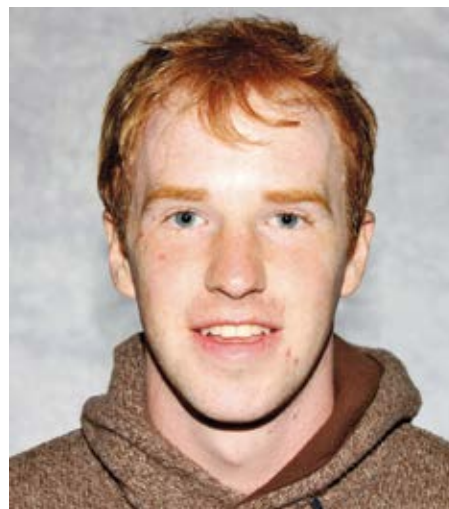
The desire for dialogue has resulted in groups like Harmony, which has a website that identifies the group as “Mennonites for LGBT Inclusion.” The group’s website states that it “desires to create open and loving spaces, affirming people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.”

Officially, Mennonite Church Canada hopes to “mutually bear the burden of remaining in loving dialogue with each other” on LGBTQ topics.

However, the trials of simply discussing an issue can be seen in the Sommerfeld Church’s resignation from Mennonite Central Committee late last year. In a *Canadian Mennonite* article, “Sommerfeld Church pulls out of MCC,” Jan. 7, page 26, the Sommerfeld church cited “MCC’s co-sponsorship of a 2009 Nurturing Healthy Sexuality conference” as one of its reasons for leaving, feeling that the discussion was “too biased in favour of accepting homosexuality.”

The goal of dialogue is not division, but an attempt at understanding and charity towards varying viewpoints. I hope the diversity of the Mennonite church will not be lost. ✎

This is the final Voice of the Voiceless article 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.



Tyler Voth



*‘We don’t see the [homosexuality] issue being settled simply by having a Bible study.’
(Mennonite pastor)*

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.

Saskatchewan

Dec. 15: RJC choir concert, at Knox United Church, Saskatoon.
Dec. 20: RJC Christmas concert, at RJC, 7 p.m.

Manitoba

Nov. 17: Mennonite Community Orchestra concert at CMU. For more information, visit 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.
Nov. 21: Eden Foundation Dessert Night at Bethel Mennonite Church with John Janzen sharing his Grand Canyon hike experience. For complimentary tickets contact Eden Health Care Services 866-895-2919 or ehcs@edenhealthcare.ca.
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. 25: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate annual general meeting, at the school, at 7 p.m.
Nov. 28: CMU Face 2 Face | On Campus. Topic: "On being good neighbours: Urban reserves in Winnipeg." For more information, visit

cmu.ca/face2face.
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.
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.


Ontario

Nov. 16: Handicraft sale at Fairview Mennonite Home, Cambridge, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. For information, visit www.fairviewmh.com or call

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Nov. 16: Mennonite and Brethren Marriage Encounter annual meeting at 1:30 p.m., Hawkesville Mennonite Church. For information contact Sherri at jsmc@kwigs.net or call 519-669-1005.

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.

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: Voices for Habitat concert, at Hamilton Mennonite Church, at 7:30 p.m., featuring Dawn and Marra, and

Diana Braithwaite and Chris Whiteley. Fundraiser for Habitat for Humanity. For more information, call 905-528-3607 or e-mail hmc@cogeco.net.

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.

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.

Classifieds

Employment Opportunities



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY:

Willowgrove is inviting applications for FRASER LAKE CAMP director.

This is a ¾ time position with more hours during the spring and summer and fewer hours in the fall and winter months.

The position is based at the Willowgrove office in Markham, Ontario for the off season and at the Fraser Lake camp site in Bancroft, Ontario during the camp season. There is opportunity for additional hours in the off-season teaching in the Willowgrove Outdoor Education Program.

We are seeking a person with strong relational and organizational skills with a passion for working with youth and children in an outdoor faith building context. Willowgrove is a Mennonite affiliated not-for-profit organization that is committed to serving a diverse community, peace-making and non-violence, and caring for the land that God has entrusted to us.

For more information or to submit your resume, please contact Miriam Reesor at Miriam@willowgrove.ca by November 30th.

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, 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

Lead Pastor: Highland MB Church (Calgary, AB), following transitional renewal, needs a Lead Pastor-Teacher who will be a discipler-equipper to build up the Church. More details: www.hmbc.ca/employment.

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

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