

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

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## EDITORIAL

# Who are the millennials?

DICK BENNER  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

**T**hey are confident, self-expressive, liberal, upbeat and open to change. They are more ethnically and racially diverse than older adults, less religious—while claiming to be spiritual—less likely to have served in the military and are on track to become the most educated generation in North American history.

Thus concludes Pew Research about the new generation called millennials, the 18- to 29-year-olds recently becoming top-of-mind in the media, with political strategists and, yes, in our own projections as to what the future Mennonite church will look like in another 10 to 20 years. And while the Pew researchers are American-based and have studied their young people, many of their conclusions apply to Canadian young people as well.

This generation, says Pew, is unique in its characteristics as compared to the previous generations labelled Gen X, boomers and, finally, the elderly, called the “silent generation.”

Some of what makes them unique is that they are marrying later; are upbeat about their economic future, despite the fact that 59 percent of them do not have full-time jobs and are likely living at home; are heavily into social networking; and communicate almost entirely through smart phones.

“Millennials are more likely than their elders to treat cell phones as a necessary and important appendage,” says Pew. “Many even bring their cell phones to bed—57 percent.” They mostly text, rather than talk; the median number of text messages sent and received in a 24-hour period was 10.



But the most sobering statistic regarding the future of the church is that 59 percent of them with a Christian background are not attending church—See “Where are the young worshippers?” on page 34—and some eight million will leave the church before age 30, according to Rachel Held Evans, who recently addressed students at Eastern Mennonite University on the subject: “Millennials and the future of Christianity.”

Why is this generation leaving the church? she asked.

Herself a millennial, she said, “We are tired of the culture wars. We want to be known for what we are for, not what we are against. We are tired of especially evangelicals tying themselves to one political party. We want to be part of a ‘kingdom’ that transcends political and national boundaries, and whose allegiance is to God’s kingdom, above all.

“We don’t want to choose between science and our faith. We want the church to be a safe place to doubt, to wrestle

with questions about our sexuality, about science, about biblical interpretation. We want the church to be a place where we can find the truth. We want the church to be a place where our gay and lesbian friends feel welcome and not treated as second-class citizens.

“We want our faith to be more than a set of beliefs or rules to obey, but rather a lifestyle to live. We want our church to look less like a social club or accommodating an ideology, but to be more like Jesus.

“We don’t want a cooler band, or a coffee shop in the lobby, or a pastor who wears skinny jeans,” she continued. “No, no, we are not looking for changes in style, but in substance—not a hipper church, a more stylish church; we are looking for Jesus. The assumption of our elders too often is that if they make a few style changes, we will come, or stay.

“Look, we are the generation that has been advertised to all of our lives. Consequently, we have developed very finely-tuned B.S. meters. We know that everyone is trying to entertain us; we can smell this a mile away! The last thing we want the church to do is to sell us another product.”

Moving then to some solution, she asked how millennials can partner with their elders to “find Jesus” in all of these shifting values. “We tend to make this far more complicated than it is. We find Jesus in the Word, in communion, in baptism, where ‘two or three are gathered.’ We see Jesus in the ‘least of these’—the poor, the sick, the marginalized, the left-out.”

She urged the students to “get out of God’s way,” so he can fulfill Isaiah’s call to “make ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight” (Isaiah 40:3).

So, Mennonite Church Canada’s Future Directions Task Force, here are some clues.

## ABOUT THE COVER:

This issue’s feature on page 4—‘I was in prison’—unveils the unlikely pairing of a farmer and a newly released sex offender, and the choice they make of friendship over fear.

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**Dick Benner,** Editor/Publisher, [editor@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:editor@canadianmennonite.org)

**Ross W. Muir,** Managing Editor, [managinged@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:managinged@canadianmennonite.org)

**Barb Draper,** Editorial Assistant, [edassist@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:edassist@canadianmennonite.org)

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**Virginia (Ginny) Hostetler,** Web Editor, [webeditor@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:webeditor@canadianmennonite.org)

**Advertising Manager:** **D. Michael Hostetler,** [advert@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:advert@canadianmennonite.org),

toll-free voice mail: 1-800-378-2524 ext. 224

**Correspondents:**

**Will Braun,** Senior Writer, [seniorwriter@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:seniorwriter@canadianmennonite.org)

**Amy Dueckman,** B.C. Correspondent, [bc@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:bc@canadianmennonite.org), 604-854-3735;

**Donita Wiebe-Neufeld,** Alberta Correspondent, [ab@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:ab@canadianmennonite.org), 780-436-3431;

**Donna Schulz,** Saskatchewan Correspondent, [sk@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:sk@canadianmennonite.org), 306-232-4733;

**Evelyn Rempel Petkau,** Manitoba Correspondent, [mb@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:mb@canadianmennonite.org), 204-745-2208;

**Dave Rogalsky,** Eastern Canada Correspondent, [ec@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:ec@canadianmennonite.org), 519-577-9987.

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## FEATURE REFLECTION

# I was in prison

*The story of a farmer, a sex offender and the choice of friendship over fear*

BY JOHN PENNER\*

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

*He hung on, partly because of his own remarkable resilience, and partly because there were people who refused to treat him as societal trash, to be feared and avoided.*

Just before Jack McKay\* was let out of prison, a local paper ran an article that portrayed him as an unhinged, unreformed sexual predator. The message was blunt: Beware, be afraid.

I wasn't afraid. But I was somewhat apprehensive as I pulled up to the prison at 8:30 a.m. to pick Jack up on the day he was released. As a retired Mennonite farmer, the thought of assisting a convicted sex offender navigate his first day of freedom in a city and society that was not exactly going to roll out the red carpet was intimidating.

I had met Jack through a Mennonite-affiliated prison visitation program. Although our personal backgrounds could hardly have been more divergent, I had really appreciated getting to know him. Our friendship reminded me of the basic commonality that runs deeper than ethnicity, age or experience with the law. We are all human. We are all loved by God.

About a year before Jack's release date, I suggested that when the big day arrived I would pick him up at the prison. I thought we could share that special moment. I knew enough of his

splintered life story to know that no one else would be making that offer. I was happy to do it. I knew it wouldn't be like in the movies—sunny elation and tears of joy on the front steps of the prison—but we would have breakfast together, run some errands and then I would take him to the bus depot. His plan was to leave town.

*I wasn't afraid. But I was somewhat apprehensive as I pulled up to the prison at 8:30 a.m. to pick Jack up on the day he was released.*

Life does not always work out as planned. I waited a half-hour in the drab prison entrance way. Eventually, Jack walked out with his few belongings. He was happy to get out, but he didn't even crack a smile. I shook his hand. Neither of us said a lot.

Due to legal developments shortly before his release, he was to have numerous conditions placed on him upon his release, including a travel restriction. This dampened the mood.

I took one of his bags and we walked out the front door into a mild winter day. All his belongings—including a traditional star blanket he had made while in prison—fit comfortably into half the trunk of my car.

I had been given no instructions by prison staff other than that we were to go directly to the probation officer, no stops. Shortly after leaving the prison, Jack said he wanted to get some smokes. I said our orders were clear, and added, as was my Christian duty, that this might be a good time to give up the habit. I hadn't yet realized how absurd it was to suggest that a guy quit smoking on his first day out of jail. To re-enter society as an indigenous ex-con sex offender comes with enough other challenges.

At the probation office we waited again. When Jack's turn came up, the officer detailed the stringent stipulations of his probation and the consequences of any failure to comply. Then he sent us off to the Salvation Army shelter to arrange lodging. That was his official welcome back to society.

First we went for our much-anticipated

breakfast out. A staff person from the prison visitation program I was part of joined us. We spoke about Jack's offence history. It was not a topic he had been willing to discuss earlier. I only found out about the nature of his record when I saw the newspaper article prior to his release. Correctional Service Canada (CSC) had subsequently provided the prison visita-

tion program with a copy of Jack's record. I didn't read most of it. I knew the basics, but didn't need the specifics.

To confront a man about horrific crimes from his past is awkward, but in the opinion of CSC Jack had not taken responsibility for his actions and that was something that required attention. Frankly, this isn't the story of a model prisoner. Jack had once told me about a parole hearing that hadn't gone well for him: "They say I would be likely to kill someone if they released me," he scoffed.

I cringed inside, but my friendship was not dependent on him being an ideal inmate. Jack had asked for a visitor and I was there for him.

At breakfast, we also talked about various avenues of assistance that might be available to him and what would be required of him in the process. Jack handled it all well. When asked where his stress level was at on a scale of one to 10, he said two.

After breakfast we went to a thrift store, where Jack quickly acquired a new wardrobe for under \$30.

Then off to the Sally Ann. The welcome mat there was a slightly soft layer of cigarette butts outside the front door, where 15 or 20 people huddled, most of them sucking on a cigarette as though their life depended on it.

Inside, we took our place in line. We could have moved up one spot in the queue for the price of a cigarette, but Jack turned down the offer. Then I again found myself on the supposedly dangerous side of bullet-proof glass, talking

*(Continued on page 6)*

PHOTO © ISTOCK.COM/C\_FOR





*(Continued from page 5)*

through a slot, apparently surrounded by would-be assailants. That had also been the case at the probation office earlier, and would be again later at the welfare office.

But our challenges were greater than glass barriers. A person with a history of sexual offence needs to watch his back. A former prison inmate or a relative of a victim may be a potential threat. That's probably why Jack's original plan was to leave town.

Given that reality, the idea of sleeping on the floor in an open room with 30 strangers at the shelter was a non-starter for Jack. That became clear when the staff

officer about Plan C. He wasn't happy to see us. I asked if the Best Western down the street was acceptable. As long as I paid, it was.

At the hotel desk, they asked for Jack's address. After a pause, I said he had just come to town. After eight eye-opening hours, we had Jack settled in. I drove back home to the farm, a world away.

By then I felt like I needed a cigarette!

Jack stayed at the Best Western for a couple nights, after which the probation officer got him into a cheaper hotel and eventually into a bedbug-infested rooming house from which he could try to re-launch his life.

During the first year following Jack's re-

*Then off to the Sally Ann. The welcome mat there was a slightly soft layer of cigarette butts outside the front door, where 15 or 20 people huddled, most of them sucking on a cigarette as though their life depended on it.*

person showed us the room. I couldn't blame him. He needed privacy, but there was no way they would give him his own room.

The afternoon was wearing on and I was getting worried. Jack announced that his anxiety level was up to nine. As we headed back to the car, he asked with a hint of urgency if he could have a smoke. Without hesitation, I said, "By all means."

I waited in the car, recalling a study I had read that said tobacco is an effective anxiety-reducing drug, an effective anti-depressant, and, for the really desperate, it holds forth the promise of shortening one's hellish life. My view towards tobacco use among poor people softened.

I called the probation officer to see about a Plan B, since I didn't have one. He gave me the list of four hotels, none of them the kind that I would ever consider staying in even in dire circumstances.

We went to the welfare office. Again, there was a room full of people waiting for the important folk sheltered behind the thick glass, and again I was on the helpless, unprotected side. Through a narrow slit, they refused Jack assistance because he had some money in the bank.

Then we went to see the probation

lease, I visited him weekly and we talked by phone in between. The visitation program staff also did much to support him. At a gathering of program participants, Jack told the group that without the program he would have breached his probation, or worse.

I was amazed by the fortitude he showed after his release. I was proud of him, and honoured to be part of his life.

When he invited me to a sweat lodge ceremony, I was a bit unsure—huddling in a pitch dark, super-heated tent isn't quite my thing—but I was honoured by the invitation. Plus, by that point I was becoming accustomed to the unaccustomed. Sweats were part of Jack's world and I was glad to share this experience.

### ***The right thing to do***

A few months after Jack's release, I heard that Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA), a non-profit organization that works with men who have histories of sexual offence, was holding training sessions for volunteers. Each such man is surrounded by a circle of staff and volunteers who meet weekly to provide support and accountability. The goal of the program is simple: No new



victims.

I thought the training would give me a better understanding of what Jack was going through and perhaps teach me to relate to him in a more helpful way. I also thought that Jack might eventually join CoSA and I wanted to be prepared to be part of his circle if that did happen, which it did.

CoSA is a made up of people who consider it worthwhile to invest time in the lives of people who have offence histories that are, in some cases, downright shocking. They are an intriguing and enriching group to be part of.

And of course it has been enriching to be part of Jack's journey in this way, as intense as it is at times. I value the opportunity of sharing in the life of someone whose journey has been so different from

Mennonite Central Committee—have proven to be a remarkably successful means to keep people from re-offending. Obviously Jack would have been more likely to mess up if he had just been deposited on his own at the front door of the shelter. He once said that if he had had to stay there, he would have breached his probation the first night out.

At other times he phoned when he was on the verge of heading out to drown his sorrows, or worse. He hung on, partly because of his own remarkable resilience, and partly because there were people who refused to treat him as societal trash, to be feared and avoided.

Unfortunately, government funding for CoSA appears shaky. One source of federal funding will dry up at the end of September, and another was abruptly cut

I am saddened that a government with plenty of money to spend on incarceration seems to be wavering in its commitment to a program that has proven to reduce the likelihood of re-offence. CoSA is good for people with offence histories, it is good for public safety, and the price tag is very reasonable. The candid discussions and hard-nosed accountability that are worked into CoSA are legitimate and effective ways to be "tough" on crime. But the toughness is within the context of friendship, not fear.

I refuse to look with fear, prejudice or hatred towards people who have been convicted of crimes. They are loved by God. Jack and I, we share a common humanity and a common Creator, and we have come to respect each other. We have become friends. ❧

*'Does it even do any good?' That's the wrong question. I ask instead whether it is the right thing to do.*

my own.

There is no fairytale ending to this story. Jack has been unable to get a job, largely because of serious health issues. He continues to live with the anguish of being estranged from his former partner and his children. He still lives in a rooming house. He hasn't become a medical missionary, motivational speaker or anti-tobacco advocate.

But he has healthy relationships. He hasn't gone back to jail. His actions have flatly refuted the demonized billing the newspaper gave him at the time of his release. Still, he lives in a society in which open hostility and disdain toward people like him is acceptable.

A Mennonite church-going friend once asked me of my prison visitation: "Does it even do any good?"

That's the wrong question. I ask instead whether it is the right thing to do. To offer unconditional support and friendship to sexual offenders who have, in most cases, themselves been seriously disadvantaged and victimized, seems like a worthwhile endeavour.

That said, it does indeed do good. Studies show that CoSA programs across Canada—many of which have roots in

and then reinstated under unclear terms recently. (See Evelyn Rempel Petkau's "CoSA Winnipeg facing funding cuts from all sides" article on page 24.)

*\* In order to honour the privacy of "Jack McKay," names in this story have been changed, including that of the author, and dates and geographic locations have been omitted.*

### ❧ For discussion

1. What experiences have you had with prison visitation or helping someone with a painful past become settled in Canadian society? What level of acceptance would someone like Jack McKay, the pseudonymous former inmate in this story, find in your community? What social services would there be to help him? What would happen in your congregation if a former sexual offender began attending?
2. How do you understand Jesus' words in Matthew 25:31-46 about feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and visiting those in prison? The author says he doesn't ask if his work of befriending a former sexual offender does any good, he says it's the right thing to do. Do you agree?
3. Why is the idea that punishing offenders is an effective way to keep the public safe so pervasive? What might be the government's rationale for reducing funding for programs like Circles of Support and Accountability? What is the rationale behind supporting former offenders to re-integrate into society?
4. What are the qualifications for being a prison visitor or a volunteer for Circles of Support and Accountability? What are the challenges and the benefits of this type of volunteering? How much should the church encourage its members to be involved in this type of work?

—BY BARB DRAPER

## VIEWPOINTS

## /// Readers write

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

## ✉ Mandela refused to renounce violence to get out of prison

RE: "LESSONS TO be learned from Nelson Mandela" letter, Feb. 3, page 11.

Nelson Mandela was an admirable figure, no doubt, but I am always a bit perplexed when he is described as being nonviolent. I wonder if he's being confused with his countryman, Desmond Tutu. Famously in 1985, then South African president P.W. Botha offered to release Mandela from prison if he renounced violence and Mandela refused.

The armed wing of the African National Congress, Umkhonto we Sizwe ("Spear of the Nation") regularly carried out bombings, torture and summary executions. Upon being elected president, Mandela became commander-in-chief of the South African military. Under his tenure, the military's capabilities were substantially increased with a controversial arms deal. In the years since the fall of apartheid, South Africa has

## FROM OUR LEADERS

## The prophet margin

TIM FROESE

In our rush to welcome Jesus, we often skip those who paved the way for him.

Consider the prophets, who tend to be marginalized by others or by themselves. The margins they occupy actually become the focus for people and their real-life stories. Prophets often represent a paradox. They call for repentance and radical change while maintaining an apparently unchanging resolve.



Prophets such as John the Baptist are noticed by the unflattering labels they sometimes use—"You brood of vipers"—or by their stark demands for actions that reflect godliness—"Produce fruit in keeping with repentance"—or by their innate ability to question foundations of the status quo and our sense of entitlement—"And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'"—(from Matthew 3:7-9).

Paul asserts that Christ gave each one of us different gifts "to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of

Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith" (Ephesians 4:12-13).

We readily identify the pastors and teachers among us, but struggle to identify and sometimes to welcome what author and missiologist Alan Hirsch calls the "generative roles" of the church: apostles, prophets and evangelists.

Maybe that's because they make us uncomfortable. In their own way, each of them reminds us of where we've come from and what we are called to do. That's important to consider as ministries of Mennonite Church Canada seek to thrive and grow in the future.

Generative roles are already impacting our overseas ministry. In the Philippines, our workers and partners speak to the injustices of corruption by elected officials. They challenge the notions of power exercised by colonialism and Christendom, and tirelessly present the idea that even deep-seated historic conflicts can be transformed to achieve peaceable relations.

In South Korea, we encourage a church where following Jesus comes at great cost. Some believers risk imprisonment for the illegal act of conscientious objection to military service, while others are labelled as heretics for self-identifying as Anabaptists.

In South Africa, we share gospel and church perspectives that deal with the residue of apartheid and the complexities of a multi-ethnic present.

In Colombia, we encourage sisters and brothers in their struggle for peace and justice against decades of civil war.

And in Canada, we foster respectful awareness of the land, history and treaties our host peoples share with us, while we work and pray for healing and hope in all peoples and in all our relations.

As a prophet, John the Baptist not only encouraged repentance, but also baptized people as a sign of their confession. Ultimately, John was aware of the larger activity of God. He knew that he was only the precursor of the one to come, one more powerful, able to thoroughly cleanse and transform a people for God.

"[John] will go on before the Lord . . . to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17).

Tim Froese is the Mennonite Church Canada Witness executive minister.



increasingly aligned itself with countries like Russia and the People's Republic of China, neither of which could hardly be called friends of peace.

This is not to say Mandela was a terrorist or a warmonger. The violence done against apartheid pales in comparison to that done in the name of apartheid, but “less violence” is far from the same thing as nonviolence.

It's easy to forget that, in addition to being a revolutionary and a bringer of reconciliation, Mandela was also a politician. There are many heroes of nonviolence out there, but few of them are politicians.

**BENJAMIN WEBER (ONLINE COMMENT)**

## FAMILY TIES

# A reluctant traveller

MELISSA MILLER

**W**hen the door opens, do you hesitate, turn aside or walk through? It probably depends on the door, right? A big door opened when I was invited to join a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) program review team in South Africa. In the end, I walked through, but certainly with some hesitation.

I am not an eager traveller to foreign lands. I like my bed and pillow. I function much better with a regular schedule, drinking water on demand and manageable stress—which is subjective, but I've had enough years of living to estimate that pretty well. Then there's the impact of those back-to-back eight- and 11-hour flights, zipping through eight time zones and all that goes with that . . . repeated in reverse to come home. Travelling is gruelling. And airline travel saps a huge amount of the earth's resources.

There are lots of reasons to say no thanks to the open door.

On the other hand, there are compelling reasons to walk through the door. In this case, I was invited to get an up-close look at the amazing work of MCC and its partners, as they labour to bring relief, development and peace in the name of Christ. Also, my spouse has travelled to Africa repeatedly; it seemed important to join him on one of those trips, to glimpse a bit of the continent's pull on his soul.

Also, it's summer in southern Africa when it's winter in Winnipeg. Another great reason to overcome my reluctance and walk through the door!

God opens doors and nudges us to walk through them; we all know such stories. Take Abraham, for example. The account in Genesis 12 sounds pretty straightforward. God tells Abraham to go from his country *to the land that I will show you* (emphasis mine.) God doesn't even tell Abraham where he's going! Yet Abraham goes, just as instructed.

Probably lots of factors come into play as to who strides confidently through the open door, who steps through with fear and trembling, and who never ventures forth, keeping feet firmly planted on

also has spectacular views spread through its mountains and valleys. Both countries have courageous, inspiring people working hard to address the violence, poverty and injustice within their borders. All of this I understand better because I stepped through the open door, met the people, heard their stories, saw and walked on their land.

And I heard the word of God through them. Keke, a young woman in Lesotho, reflecting on her year-long internship with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, spoke directly to the matter of open doors. Acknowledging her uncertainty about what such an experience might mean for her, she counselled others facing similar opportunities. “Go for it,” she enthused. “Seize every opportunity. Just go. You'll [only] see what's in front of you. Don't be cautious or afraid of the newness of the experience. Take risks.”

We don't all have the opportu-



*God opens doors and nudges us to walk through them . . .*

familiar turf instead. Reading Abraham's story, I do wonder about Sarah, and whether she shared Abraham's confidence in sallying forth, or was a more reluctant traveller.

Now that my trip has come to an end, I am grateful for the opportunity, and grateful that I said yes. South Africa is a beautiful country, with expansive ocean shorelines, towering mountains, fertile farms and orchards. The tiny country of Lesotho, where MCC also has workers,

nity to walk in the Indian Ocean or see the Southern Cross shine brightly in a Lesotho night sky. But we do have God opening doors at every turn, nudging, pushing or compelling us to step through and into the big work he is doing in the world. How do we respond?

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

## ✉ Peter's vision an example of unlearning the Bible

I'M PUZZLED AND perturbed by the "Unlearn the Bible? A thousand times no" letter, Feb. 17, page 12.

What bothers me is the attitude that the way we've understood the Bible, the way we were taught the Bible, is somehow what we are stuck with. The Bible

itself models unlearning and coming to fresh, Spirit-inspired insights and convictions.

An example of this is Peter's experience as reported in Acts 10-11. The vision Peter received that he should go to the home of Cornelius was contrary to his upbringing, his Jewish culture and his convictions. Thankfully, he was obedient to the vision and the call of God, and he went to the home of Cornelius.

## GOD, MONEY AND ME

# A ri\$ky topic to ignore

SHERRI GROSZ

*"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).*

She waited patiently for others to finish before approaching me. We'd spent the previous two hours talking about personal finances from a Christian perspective. How should Christians in Canada think about sharing, saving and spending? What should they know about debt, retirement and estate planning?

There are often questions and comments shared during and after the presentation, and this one had been no exception. A single parent, a retired civil servant and a self-supporting university student had all offered comments about living in their particular financial situations, as well as their doubts, their mistakes and their successes.

This woman, however, had remained silent through the presentation, taking few notes but listening intently. I was curious what she would say.

She began by explaining that she'd grown up in a Christian home and had been an employee for 10 years, quickly moving up the ranks from entry-level

employee to mid-level management. She'd begun a business on the side that flowed out of a personal interest. Five years prior, she'd quit her job to work full-time in her business and now had a few full-time employees.

I'd apparently shared all the things she was expecting to hear: spend less than you earn, share some, save some and enjoy some money. Then she said this, "I have done a lot of reading and research,

honesty and her urgency. Money is an important topic for Christians, and one that churches too often choose to ignore, fearing it will cause discomfort or anxiety.

Research and my own experience at the Mennonite Foundation of Canada say the opposite. Churches that speak openly and frequently about all aspects of money tend to have congregants who feel confident with their day-to-day money management. Money is an important topic for Christians, one that is risky to ignore. If I believe everything I have belongs to God, and God is generous, it changes my perspective. The challenge then becomes how to faithfully use this money that God has entrusted to my care.

More importantly, our attitude and relationship to money is a key discipleship issue. Money can be the rival god and a barrier to spiritual growth and de-



*Money is an important topic for Christians, one that is risky to ignore.*

and have been managing my money according to those common principles. Tonight, you reminded me that everything I have is God's and that God is generous. I know that I have homework to do. I need to change some things about how I am managing my money and my business, including being more generous with my charitable giving. Thank you for reminding me of what is really important."

Her comments have stayed with me for the last few years. I appreciated her

velopment. So I continue to teach about personal finance and include the biblical principles . . . and I think of her every time I do.

*Sherri Grosz is a stewardship consultant in the Kitchener, Ont., office of Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC). For more information on impulsive generosity, stewardship education, and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit [MennoFoundation.ca](http://MennoFoundation.ca).*

His experience there stimulated him to new insight: *“Now I truly understand that God shows no partiality . . .”* (Acts 10:34). Peter literally unlearned his former understanding and faith. He came to fresh and surprising insights and convictions.

How could the Anabaptist movement have begun without Conrad Grebel and Menno Simons unlearning what they had been taught about baptism, communion and church, and coming to fresh insights and convictions?

There are other examples in Scripture and in history that challenge the attitude that we have nothing to unlearn when it comes to biblical understandings and Christians convictions.

Biblical truth is not static truth; it is embryonic truth that needs to be nurtured, considered and developed over time, in each new cultural situation. Not all the implications of the gospel can—or must—be found in the Bible. The gospel slowly permeates history and society, and transforms in fresh ways. We do not simply repeat what was known and understood at an earlier time. Jesus’ own word to the disciples underlines this: *“I have much more to tell you, but you are not able to bear it now; but the Spirit will guide you into all truth”* (John 16:12-13).

Let us be thankful for all those who re-examine Scripture in the light of experience and tradition. Let us be thankful to God for the opportunity to unlearn inadequate understandings and change our minds as we move to ever-greater maturity in Christ.

JOHN H NEUFELD, WINNIPEG

### ✉ Quebec charter meant to ‘stir up’ francophone insecurities, phobias

**RE:** “PROPOSED QUÉBEC Charter not a threat to religious freedom” letter, Feb. 3, page 11.

John Klassen wrote that Québec’s Charter of Values “reduce[s] the chances of a citizen facing a religiously biased official or policy in daily living.”

Why is a Muslim daycare worker wearing a head scarf, a Sikh parliamentarian wearing a turban, a Jewish surgeon wearing a kippa or a Catholic nurse wearing a cross such a threat to non-Muslim, non-Sikh, non-Jewish and non-Catholic citizens? How are they less able to act professionally than a secular Quebecker? Québec is a very secular society, with only 16 percent of native-born Quebeckers attending services at least monthly, while 40 percent of immigrants in Québec born outside of Canada attend religious services of all kinds.

The proposed charter in no way envisions a “neutral” society; on the contrary, it promotes a very secular society.

If I lived in Québec and had a child in a daycare with a Muslim caregiver, lived in a riding with a Sikh as my MP, was in hospital in the care of a Jewish surgeon, or was cared for by a Catholic sister, I would be encouraged because they take their religion seriously enough to wear a symbol of their faith.

Every major religion has a system of ethics and respect for fellow human beings, just as Mennonites do. I believe that each of these representatives would be just as able to interact with me professionally as a non-church-going Quebecker.

The proposed charter asks religious immigrants to choose between articles of their faith and their profession.

Why is the Parti Québécois proceeding with its Charter of Values? In the Feb. 26 edition of the *Globe and Mail*, columnist Jeffrey Simpson wrote that the PQ intends to “stir up insecurities, phobias, fears and pride among the province’s francophone majority, especially in areas where there are almost no ‘others.’”

If the PQ receives a majority in the next provincial election, Simpson wrote, another referendum on secession is on the horizon. Remember the last referendum on separation, when Jacques Parizeau, having narrowly lost the vote, stated that it was defeated by “the ethnic vote,” the “others”?

RUTH HEINRICHS, REGINA

### ✉ ‘Food foresters’ can feed the world

**RE:** “WHO FEEDS the world,” Feb. 17, page 21.

I find it quite amazing the lack of information in the average farmer’s field of perception (pun intended), considering that most have iPads/iPhones that they use while driving their \$300,000 tractors.

I am a permaculture practitioner, and have found that the concept of “food forestry”—a low-maintenance sustainable plant-based food production and agro-forestry system based on woodland ecosystems, incorporating fruit and nut trees, shrubs, herbs, vines and perennial vegetables which have yields directly useful to humans—could easily feed the world with a zero-mile diet. The hard part is getting this information to the farmers of North America, several of whom are neighbours and friends.

They look at what we do and shake their heads, saying, “That can’t work.” This seems to be the biggest block to the food forest working: the belief that it can’t work, and the belief that fossil-fuel-driven food production can.

North America currently averages 10 calories burned for every calorie of food eaten. That is unsustainable and wasteful, depleting the planet and all life thereon.

BRYCE MURPH’ARIENS (ONLINE COMMENT)



## ✉ Thanks for exposing the 'dirty underside' of the Olympics

RE: "I'M AN Olympic atheist," Feb. 17, page 14.

My gratitude to Will Braun for speaking to the dirty underside of the Olympic Games.

The grace and beauty of the competing athletes is wonderful, but at what cost? As soon as the Games began, we heard little besides cheerleading from the media.

The blatant corruption of the Russians and the indulgence of the International Olympic Committee are not pretty sights. Furthermore, the cost of staging the Games—in this case, at the expense of the Russian poor—is simply inexcusable.

In this context of corruption and media frenzy, the way of the Beatitudes would seem almost laughable.

ROBERT MARTENS, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

## ✉ Money is the reason for new 'Bible' movies

RE: "GOD'S WORD coming to the silver screen," Feb. 3, page 13.

In response to Carl DeGurse's Viewpoint column, he rightly asks the question: "Why the sudden interest" in Hollywood films about the Bible?

The answer that he fails to mention is money. While I, too, appreciate that these films will provide an opportunity for everyone to see the Bible portrayed on the silver screen, let's not forget that these studios have only one agenda: to make films that make money. Even the endorsements by evangelical pastors is a thinly veiled attempt to get those pastors to push the movies on their congregants so more bums will fill the theatre seats. More bums equals more money!

MATT VAN GEEST, WINNIPEG

## ✉ The church needs 'our best discernment and visions'

WHEN SOMEONE DOES not know what day it is, or the time of day, we say they are getting older, they have cognitive problems and they may need 24/7 supervision or support.

When an institution or organization does not know what time it is—when a task force on future direction does not know the time—what do we say?

First of all, we say that sounds drastic.

But consider this: If you look at discussion questions from the Future Directions Task Force for a larger meeting, and if those questions could be read equally well in 2014 or in 1964 or in 1914, what do we say?

We might say, "Quiet, do not disturb. Mennonites are worshipping here."

We might say such questions are either very profound or they are meaningless. If the task force does not recognize today, how can they think into tomorrow? I'm sorry to say this, but the bits and pieces I have read or experienced about the task force are not inspiring or challenging. Am I just missing it or where is the spark?

If the task force is to lead us into tomorrow as a national group, or as congregations, we need more. The children and the sparrows, the least and the lost, the earth itself, all need our best discernment and visions about ourselves, about the Word and about the world. It may be hard to dream when belts have to be tightened, but there are few other choices.

Our future should be less about making sure that the fences are strong, the gates are secure and the temple courtyard stays clean, and more about creating a house of prayer for all nations.

RAY HAMM, NEUBERGTHAL, MAN.

## ✉ Letter writers need to 'become informed about sexual abuse'

RE: "MENNOMEDIA QUESTIONED over John Howard Yoder disclaimer" letter, March 3, page 11.

I do not wish to address the Yoder issue as such, since I do believe it is being dealt with by wise, competent leaders.

I am, however, disappointed and appalled by the general theme and tone of the letter signed by Walter and Ruth Klaassen, Harry Loewen and Vern Ratzlaff, which blames women when sexual violations occur.

In instances of sexual abuse, there is a significant power imbalance between the perpetrator and the victim. Therefore, it is an inaccurate assumption that women are to blame when boundary crossings and violations occur. Perpetrators are cunning when grooming their victims. The ultimate betrayal is the moment when trust is broken through sexual violations. And clearly the perpetrator bears total responsibility when violations occur.

I encourage the writers of the letter to become informed about sexual abuse, and I hope none of their daughters or granddaughters are ever sexually violated.

MARTHA SMITH GOOD,  
NEW HAMBURG, ONT.

## ✉ Father hopes his boys don't 'discover' a faith

**RE: "SUNDAY UN-SCHOOLING,"** March 3, page 17.  
Let me say I not putting down public education. Having said that, though, we would have never entrusted education about faith for our boys to either the public schools or a church. Neither can guarantee

an objective, Socratic approach to this subject. One wants to indoctrinate and the other presents faiths in a dominant-culture, western way.

We are both atheists, although my wife is "spiritual." Our boys are atheist, and we have left it up to them if they ever want to "discover" a faith. I hope not.

**THOM FOOTE (ONLINE COMMENT)**

## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Ellison**—Josephine Suzanne (b. Jan. 20, 2014), to Ian and Erika Ellison, Listowel Mennonite, Ont.  
**Filiatrault**—Gavin Hudson Neil (b. Jan. 16, 2014), to Ashley and Gary Filiatrault, Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.  
**Fisher**—Gregory Matthew (b. March 2, 2014), to Mark and Lori Fisher, Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.  
**Gould**—Archer Andrew (b. Feb. 27, 2014), to Jennifer Quiring and Kyle Gould, Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.  
**Mogk**—Mariah Grace (b. Jan. 19, 2014), to Naomi and Dustin Mogk, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.  
**Musselman**—Harvey Riel (b. Feb. 26, 2014), to Heather and Peter Musselman, Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont.  
**Schmucker**—Eli Nathaniel (b. March 12, 2014), to David and Damaris Schmucker, Toronto United Mennonite.  
**Thwaites**—Kayla Alison (b. March 3, 2014), to Graham and Emma Thwaites, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.  
**Tonon**—Brenna Ann (b. Jan. 22, 2014), to Rebecca and Paul Tonon, Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.  
**Wall**—Samuel David (b. March 6, 2014), to Dave and Maria Wall, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

9, 2014), Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**Bender**—Mary, 57 (b. Jan. 6, 1957; d. Feb. 4, 2014), Ottawa Mennonite, Ont.

**Braun**—Helen, 85 (b. Dec. 25, 1928; d. March 6, 2014), Bergthaler Mennonite, Altona, Man.

**Brubacher**—Cleon, 87 (b. Aug. 13, 1926; d. March 10, 2014), Listowel Mennonite, Ont.

**Dyck**—Helena (nee Bergen), 95 (b. July 13, 1918; d. March 1, 2014), Morden Mennonite, Man.

**Esau**—Henry, 90 (b. March 4, 1923; d. Feb. 18, 2014), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

**Fast**—Edward Henry, 75 (b. June 29, 1938; d. Feb. 5, 2014), Level Ground Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

**Fouk**—Jacob, 91 (b. March 26, 1922; d. Jan. 10, 2014), Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

**Friesen**—Katherine (Kay), 83 (b. May 31, 1930; d. March 3, 2014), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Friesen**—Tony H., 100 (d. Feb. 24, 2014), Rosenfeld Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

**Heinrichs**—Arthur, 91 (b. Jan. 1, 1923; d. Feb. 26, 2014), Morden Mennonite, Man.

**Litwiller**—Mary (nee Bellar), 92 (b. Nov. 15, 1921; d. March 3, 2014), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

**Neufeld**—Katharina, 103 (b. March 7, 1911; d. March 10, 2014), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

**Neufeld**—Ruth Regina, 84 (b. June 6, 1929; d. March 10, 2014), Carman Mennonite, Man.

**Neufeld**—William, 81 (b. March 17, 1932; d. March 1, 2014), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

**Reesor**—Murray Wideman, 87 (b. Aug. 23, 1926; d. Dec. 27, 2013), Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont.

**Rempel**—Arthur Donald (Don), 61 (b. April 22, 1952; d. March 4, 2014), Carman Mennonite, Man.

**Schoenfeld**—John, 82 (b. Sept. 26, 1931; d. Jan. 3, 2014), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones announcements within four months of the event.**

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

### Baptisms

**Natalie Enns, Jonah Langelotz**—Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, March 9, 2014.

**Shari Nash**—Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Jan. 19, 2014.

### Marriages

**Baer/Ostic**—Dwight Baer and Jennifer Ostic, both of Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont., at Shantz Mennonite, Dec. 29, 2013.

**Barnwell/Kroeker**—Wesley Barnwell and Jocelyn Kroeker, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont., March 6, 2014.

### Deaths

**Albrecht**—Brenda, 56 (b. April 25, 1957; d. March 11, 2014), Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.

**Bauman**—Adell (nee Snider), 97 (b. April 26, 1916; d. March

## LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

## Integrated wholeness

TROY WATSON

In my last “Spirit attunement” column, March 3, page 14, I explained why I believe “wilderness seasons” and solitude are essential for many individual’s spiritual vitality. However, it is noteworthy that Spirit attunement always happens in the context of community in the Christian tradition.



Spirit consciousness brings vulnerability, openness, sensitivity and humility into our relationships, qualities that make the ego very uncomfortable.

Ego consciousness is the rival of Spirit attunement. The Apostle Paul unfortunately frames this rivalry by pitting the flesh against the

Spirit. This terminology has misguided many believers towards an unhealthy asceticism throughout Christian history. Sadly, many Christians have been raised with toxic and antagonistic attitudes toward their physical beings and desires.

As Tony Campolo once joked, “We

*Some mystics have described Spirit attunement as realizing we never left the Garden of Eden. Once again, we walk uninhibited with God, naked and unashamed.*

When Pentecost occurs in Acts 2, the disciples are gathered together in “one accord” (in unity). In the upper room, it is a community that is permeated with God’s presence. In fact, I cannot find one example in the New Testament of an individual being baptized with the Holy Spirit outside the context of community. (If I’m in error here, please let me know.)

Spirit attunement is ultimately a communal condition. It quickens all our relationships and expands our awareness of being interconnected to the whole. It is not an introspective and solitary pipeline that connects us to God, setting us apart from the world and the people around us. It is grounded in our interconnectedness with others. You can’t be united with the vine without being united to the other branches of the vine.

Our communion with God is embedded in our communion with others. The Apostle John says that if we don’t love our fellow human beings, whom we can see, then we can’t love God, whom we can’t see. To be attuned to the Holy Spirit is to be conscious of our oneness with other human beings and creation.

When the Bible talks about being set apart from the world, it means being set apart from the pursuits of “empire” and ego—things like security, wealth and power—so we can love people as Jesus did. But our egos like to grab hold of concepts like “being set apart” in a way that makes us feel right, distinct and superior to others. On the contrary,

have ironically taught our children that sex is a dirty, terrible, wicked thing and they should save it for someone they really love.” Unfortunately, this negative attitude towards our physical reality has influenced how we treat our environment as well, resulting in heinous abuses of nature.

The physical realm, including our environment, our bodies, our sexuality and our love of beauty, is not bad. God created the physical world and said that it was good. Indeed, the incarnation is the good news of God being revealed in the flesh. Surely, God wouldn’t manifest God-self in something innately bad.

Yet we don’t like to dwell on the details of Jesus’ natural bodily functions as a result of his human digestive and reproductive systems. There is a shameful stigma surrounding our natural physicality in many Christian circles. Yet this shame about our raw physicality was not God’s intention for humanity. It was a

result of the Fall and our descent into ego consciousness. It is not our physicality that rages against the Spirit. It is our attachment to that which separates us from the whole.

Spirit attunement increases our sense of oneness with God, others and creation. It also reintegrates the whole of who and what we are as human beings, including our physical bodies, imperfections and shadows. Some mystics have described Spirit attunement as realizing we never left the Garden of Eden. Once again, we walk uninhibited with God, naked and unashamed.

When we are attuned to Divine Spirit, we see beyond our singularity and glimpse the greater unity and omnipresence of God in all. Paul affirms this when he proclaims in Colossians that “*Christ is*

*all and in all.*” We are no longer male or female, Greek or Jew; we are one in the Spirit. We no longer identify with that which separates us from nature, from others or from parts of ourselves.

The real litmus test of Spirit attunement is the fruit of the Spirit. Are the qualities of love, peace, joy and patience spreading like leaven into all our relationships with others, God, creation and our own complicated selves? ☿

Troy Watson ([troydw@gmail.com](mailto:troydw@gmail.com)) is a human being in transition on many levels. This article is part of an ongoing series on ‘Spirit attunement.’



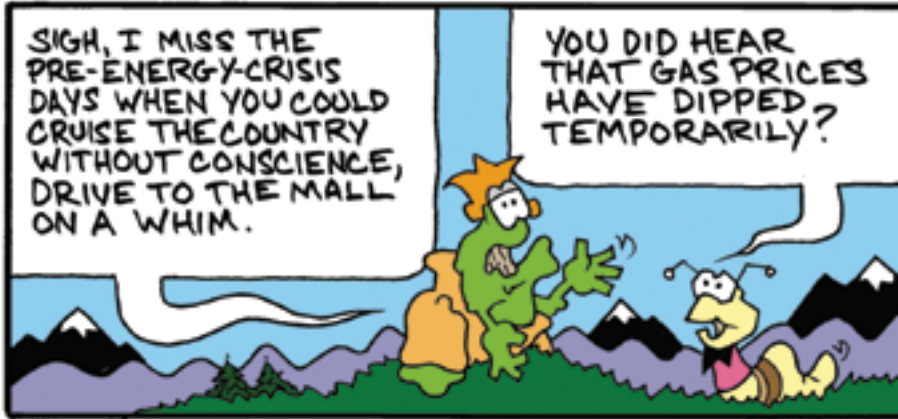

**Do you know of someone in your congregation not getting Canadian Mennonite?**

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





## Pontius' Puddle



### PERSONAL REFLECTION

# A self-imposed life without wheels

ALICIA GOOD

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

When I moved to the little town of Leamington in southwestern Ontario, my family made the decision to refrain from purchasing a second car. We had just left Toronto, and having even one car for our young family felt like opulence. And guilt.

I had prided myself on my Jesus-like life of environmental sustainability through the years we had lived in Toronto, using subways, bicycles and most often just my own two feet to go about my daily living. Never mind the fact that we were starving students, and couldn't have afforded a car even if we wanted one. I was able to warm myself with thoughts of my own righteousness as I pushed my stroller up and down Bloor Street through the cold rain.

Yet a year after our big move to the country, I discover myself beginning to talk about "needing" a second car for our family of three. I pastor a church about seven kilometres north of town. That's a

perfect distance for a bike ride on a warm summer morning. It's a much farther distance on a hot summer afternoon . . . or during a blizzard.

So for the last few months I have relied on hitching rides from a variety of friends and church members. I've also taken advantage of Leamington's wonderful

*Life without wheels has blessed me with some insights into the lives of the marginalized folks in our community . . . .*

taxi system, which has blessed me with the opportunity to hear some colourful stories about our town. These impromptu travel arrangements have helped me to learn about the community and the people who live here in ways I never would have experienced otherwise.

But what do you do without a car when you need to get to the hospital that's an hour's drive away? Or how do you cope

with a teacher's frustration after you get to the school to pick up your child late when the cabs are running behind?

Life without wheels has blessed me with some insights into the lives of the marginalized folks in our community, the folks who can't make the drive out to our friendly middle-class church just north of town.

The relationships I am developing with my car-driving friends through my dependence on them giving me rides have truly been God-given gifts. Yet as time goes by, I find myself increasingly frustrated by my lack of wheels. It takes longer to get to where I need to go. Sometimes planning how I will get to work seems to take more thoughtful energy than my work itself!

So now I find myself asking just how

much our family budget can be squeezed to accommodate a second vehicle. Yet I wonder what will I be giving up by choosing to drive all alone to work? And most of all, I wonder whether not having a car might itself be a form of ministry.

*Alicia Good is pastor of North Leamington United Mennonite Church, Leamington, Ont.*

## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

# César García calls for 'mission from below'

By RON REMPEL

Mennonite World Conference  
CHICAGO, ILL.

**“W**hat would happen if, following the example of monastic orders, there would be a ‘vow of poverty’ in multi-cultural mission teams for everyone?”

This question, posed by César García at the annual consultation of the Council of International Anabaptist Ministries in Chicago earlier this year, focused one of his proposals for how North American mission agencies might respond to shifting global realities.

MWC assembly scheduled for July 2015 in Harrisburg, Pa.

In one presentation, García described a number of realities for the global Anabaptist community of around 1.7 million members:

- **A THEOLOGICAL** reality is the primary influence of Pentecostalism in the Global South. García expressed concern “about ‘romantic’ views in North America which

*“Some attempts at a cooperative model between North American agencies and South agencies have failed because of huge financial disparities among members of the same team.”  
(César García, MWC general secretary)*

“Some attempts at a cooperative model between North American agencies and South agencies have failed because of huge financial disparities among members of the same team,” noted García, general secretary of Mennonite World Conference (MWC), of Bogotá, Colombia, adding, “An Anabaptist emphasis on simplicity as a requirement for each member of the team regardless of the country of origin could help us to avoid many problems.”

This call for a new style of missionary presence—also referred to as “mission from below”—capped several presentations by García at the consultation, which brought together representatives from North American mission and service agencies.

The theme for the day was: “What is the place of the North American mission agency amidst shifting realities in the global context?” The consultation this year was held in part as preparation for the next

equate Global South Pentecostalism with Anabaptism,” and overlook problems created by strong, divisive leaders who emphasize a “prosperity gospel,” rather than a gospel of peace and justice, and Christ crucified. “We need to avoid both ‘charismania’ and ‘charisphobia,’” he said. “We need both Anabaptist and Pentecostal values and commitment.”

- **AN ECCLESIASTICAL** reality is that many emerging churches still have relationships with mission agencies, rather than directly with other churches. García emphasized the importance of church-to-church relationships both for the supporting and the emerging churches.

- **A GEOGRAPHICAL** reality, which García highlighted with the use of maps, is that the majority of mission workers being sent outside of their own country are from the Global North. The maps also show the growth of churches and mission activity in the Global South, where churches have

fewer resources and where the mission reach tends to be local, rather than global.

In a second presentation, García proposed ways in which North American agencies might respond. He called for more interdependency. “Agencies must speak with each other or the witness is negatively impacted,” he stressed. He also called for a commitment to holistic mission. “The implicitly received message in the South in the past has been that service and mission agencies can’t work together.”

He concluded his final presentation with a proposal to take a fresh look at the “missional monastic roots of Anabaptism. . . . Anabaptist agencies have followed Protestant patterns of missions for many years. Could this be a time to turn to monastic patterns to learn from them on issues such as administration, multicultural teams, holistic ministries and mission from below?”

According to Stanley Green, executive director of Mennonite Mission Network and one of the organizers of the consultation, “The global shifts that are impacting all of us call for what I would refer to as ‘Third Way mission,’ which moves beyond imperialism, on the one hand, and the abandonment of our mission calling, on the other, to an engagement with our global partners that is characterized by mutuality and interdependence.”

To download a pdf of García’s complete presentation, visit <http://bit.ly/1LRQV8R>.



*César García would like to see a ‘vow of poverty’ for all members of multicultural mission teams.*



Steve Nolt, left, and Royden Loewen, right, speakers at Conrad Grebel University College's annual Bechtel Lectures, pose with Lester Bechtel, sponsor of the series, on March 6.

## North American Anabaptists getting whiter, more rural

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
WATERLOO, ONT.

If North American Amish and the Americas-wide population of Old Colony, Low German-speaking Mennonites are taken into consideration, the North American population of Anabaptists/Mennonites is becoming more white and more rural.

This provocative finding of Royden Loewen, chair in Mennonite studies and history professor at the University of Winnipeg, and Steve Nolt, history professor at Goshen College, Ind., came up as a comment during a question and answer session during Conrad Grebel University College's 2014 Bechtel Lectures, this year held on March 6 and 7.

Nolt noted that the horse-and-buggy Amish population in the U.S. is doubling every 18 years, rising from 6,000 in the early 20th century to almost 300,000 by its end. The 8,000 Old Colony Mennonites who left Manitoba in the 1920s for Mexico now number nearly 250,000, scattered across Canada, the U.S., Mexico, Honduras, Paraguay, Bolivia and beyond.

He noted later that, while Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A. are becoming more urban and racially diverse, this is not so of Anabaptists on a North

American average of all groups.

Nolt and Loewen have worked on a number of projects together over the years, most recently on *Seeking Places of Peace: North America; A Global Mennonite History* released by Good Books in 2012.

While Mennonites in Canada and the U.S. find the idea of the conservative groups being the most visible and the most quickly growing difficult for a variety of reasons, both speakers see areas from which the "assimilated" or "modern" Mennonite could learn from their more conservative sisters and brothers.

Loewen said that Old Colony Mennonites are transnational. While they often hold Canadian passports, this is a matter of convenience, facilitating their movement from Mexico and other Latin American countries, back to Canada or to other Latin American countries. Like the early Anabaptists who refused to hold earthly allegiance higher than their commitment to God, often expressed as their commitment to their congregation, Old Colony Mennonites disdain the modern nation-state, except perhaps when it suits them, as in regard to the Canadian health-care system.

Another area of study had Loewen referring to Arnold Snyder's work around the early Anabaptists' attempts to practise a kind of monasticism while living in the world. For many monastics, a vow of poverty was included in their practice. Some Old Colony leaders in Latin America say that they know their choices—no rubber tires, trucks or higher learning—keep them from becoming rich, but isn't that what Jesus calls Christians to do, Loewen mused. He suggested that this was a word to which "assimilated" Mennonites could listen.

For his part, Nolt noted that Amish communities are not anti-technology, but evaluate each new idea with regard to the community. Some tourist operators who take their customers to see "Amish country" have wondered about the use of in-line skates and the Amish practice of asking for rides in other people's cars.

He recounted an Amish joke about themselves, their growth and their use of technology. **QUESTION:** "With the quickly increasing population of Amish, what will happen to the non-Amish half of the world when the Amish are 50 percent of the population?" **ANSWER:** "They'll drive for the Amish."

Nolt thought that "assimilated" Mennonites could take more care in their acceptance of technology. He noted that one Amish group refused a piece of technology so that its members would be able to continue to intermarry with another group that had already refused that technology. ❧



# MC Saskatchewan adopts safe church policy

*Controversial amendment triggers debate at this year's annual delegate sessions*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent

REGINA

**M**ennonite Church Saskatchewan now has a new safe church policy, ratified during the area church's annual delegate sessions held in Regina on March 14 and 15.

But before the ratification vote took place, delegates had to wrestle with an amendment related to the policy's Section V on "Preventing discrimination," which states, "No person will be granted a position or prohibited from a position on the basis of age, gender, cultural background, physical appearance or sexual orientation."

It was this statement that delegates focused their comments on when Ken Schaaaf of Hope Mennonite Church in North Battleford proposed an amendment, calling for the section to be removed from the

safe church policy and "referred back to council to be reworded and included in a hiring policy" that would come before next year's annual delegate sessions.

Gerhard Luitjens, incoming MC Saskatchewan moderator and half-time pastor of Hope Mennonite Church, registered his support for the amendment, saying that, "with regard to hiring, it is better that we have no rule than a rule such as what is being proposed." To those opposed to the amendment, Luitjens said, "You have decided that the only way to deal with the pain in 'that' community is to be totally welcoming."

Craig Friesen, who identified himself as openly gay and a member of Osler Mennonite Church, countered that the



*Nguyen Thanh Tung, pastor of Saskatoon Vietnamese Mennonite Church, chats with Elmer Regier of MC Saskatchewan's Ministries Commission. Regier serves as an informal liaison between the area church and the Vietnamese congregation.*

pain Luitjens referred to is "a part of 'our' community," and that to omit Section V from the safe church policy would leave members of the community vulnerable to spiritual abuse, which the policy is supposed to prevent.

Allan Klassen of Nutana Park Mennonite Church in Saskatoon agreed with Friesen, saying, "If we do not include Section V, then we are not making our churches a safe place for everyone."

Ike Epp of Glenbush Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church said he would vote as his congregation wanted him to, in favour of the amendment, but he fears the consequences of forcing the issue at this time. He cautioned that there is "no winning way out of this one."

Ray Friesen, co-pastor of Emmaus Mennonite Church in Wymark, said that his "heart says no to the amendment," but that his "concern for the process says yes."

Emily Toews, pastor at North Star Mennonite Church in Drake, said she, too, would like more time for clarification, and warned, "This is God's church, not ours. We need to direct our hearts and minds to the right place."

When the ballot vote was taken, delegates rejected the amendment by a slim 56 percent.

A second amendment, proposed by John Bartel of North Star Mennonite

## /// Briefly noted

### MC Saskatchewan ends 2013 with surplus

Financially, 2013 was a good year for Mennonite Church Saskatchewan. In fact, the area church ended its fiscal year in the black, an enviable circumstance that hasn't occurred for 15 years. Reporting to the annual delegate sessions held March 14 and 15 in Regina, outgoing Finance Board chair Ken Warkentin explained that the good news was due, in part, to a one-time reduction in costs. For six months, MC Saskatchewan was without a youth minister, and so no salary was paid out. But, said Warkentin, the churches have continued to give and donations came in at close to \$14,000 over budget. Individual donations also registered at more than \$4,500 above the budgeted amount. The Finance Board presented a budget for 2014 of just over \$400,000. Warkentin cautioned that, although the area church's finances are in good shape right now, "we will have to look to different ways of raising funds and expanding the support base so that we continue to offer services and programs." He also suggested that, as the church struggles to find people to fill positions, some of the work that has, until now, been done by volunteers, may have to be hired out to paid employees. With that prospect in mind, delegates approved the 2014 budget that would see the surplus designated towards rebuilding MC Saskatchewan's reserve fund.

—BY DONNA SCHULZ

Church, called for a change to the section pertaining to definitions. In the definition for discrimination, Bartel moved that the words “sexual orientation” be added so that the definition reads, “unfair treatment of one person or group, usually because of prejudice about race, ethnic group, age group, religion, gender or sexual orientation.” This amendment was carried by a show of hands.

Ratification of the safe church policy followed, also by a show of hands, with about two-thirds of delegates voting in favour.

### Other church business

Not all issues brought forward for discussion were as controversial:

- A **SECOND** resolution presented by the Youth Farm Complex Board and passed with little discussion gives the board permission to develop plans for a 20-bed personal-care home and chapel adjacent to the existing Mennonite Nursing Home.

- **DELEGATES WELCOMED** Saskatoon Vietnamese Mennonite Church to the MC Saskatchewan family and acknowledged the closure of Breath of Life house church. They welcomed new personnel, including Carrot River Mennonite Church pastor Daniel Janzen, Hope Mennonite Church co-pastors Abel and Sonya Zabaleta, and Wildwood Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, youth pastor Krista Loewen.

- **AREA CHURCH** youth minister Kirsten Hamm was commissioned and licensed; outgoing youth minister Anna Rehan was thanked for her years of service. Delegates also showed appreciation for retiring MC Saskatchewan office administrator Charlotte Bueckert and welcomed her successor, Marianne Siemens.

- **GUEST SPEAKER** Dori Zerbe Cornelsen of the Mennonite Foundation of Canada addressed the theme, “Generosity of spirit.” She cited author Malcolm Gladwell, who, in his book *Tipping Point*, says moments of unexpected change can act as a tipping point and bring enormous results. The feeding of the multitudes in Luke 9:10-17 is such a tipping point, in that it leads to an act of dangerous generosity. In the story, Jesus tells his disciples, “*You give them something to eat.*” Readers tend to forget that the “you” in the text is plural, Cornelsen

said; people feel overwhelmed by the need around them, thinking they cannot possibly meet that need, but they “overlook the genius of ‘we.’ We are better together even

when we disagree—and possibly because we disagree.” Whether MC Saskatchewan will come to agree with Cornelsen’s statement remains to be seen. ❧



*Representatives of the MC Saskatchewan council, Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization and Rosthern Mennonite Church flank new area church youth minister Kirsten Hamm in a prayer of commissioning at the annual delegate sessions.*

### /// Briefly noted

#### Guys and cakes help raise funds for Rosthern Junior College

ROSTHERN, SASK.—It may be billed as “Guys and Pies,” but cakes are the real stars in this popular annual fundraiser for Rosthern Junior College (RJC). This year’s event, held March 2, saw a dozen calorie-filled creations up for auction. A Buncha Guys, a Saskatoon-based men’s choir, entertained the appreciative audience. The RJC Man Choir, made up of current students and staff, also performed. Each year, A Buncha Guys chooses a cake to bid on as a group. That their chosen cake should bring in the most money seems a matter of pride for choir members, even if they have to bid against one another to achieve that goal. This year’s cake of choice—a hamburger-style vanilla cake with chocolate fudge buttercream and a side of sugar cookie fries (pictured) donated by recent RJC grads Sarah Bartel and Stephanie Willie—fetched \$4,400 for the school. A fondant-covered replica of the original RJC school building brought in \$1,000. As the choirs sang and the bidding proceeded, the audience savoured pie and coffee served by students.



—STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ



*Brent Charette of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, left, Arli Klassen of Mennonite World Conference, Fred Martin of Conrad Grebel University College, and Dan Driedger of MennoHomes talk about their roles as fundraisers at a roundtable discussion on March 4. Not pictured: Rick Cober Bauman of Mennonite Central Committee Ontario.*

## ***It's not about the money***

*Mennonite 'fundraisers' talk frankly about their calling*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
KITCHENER, ONT.

**F**undraising is proclaiming what we believe in such a way that we offer other people an opportunity to participate with us in our vision and mission," wrote the late Henri Nouwen in his "The spirituality of fundraising" tract. "Fundraising is precisely the opposite of begging. When we seek to raise funds we are not saying, 'Please, could you help us out because lately it's been hard.' Rather, we are declaring, 'We have a vision that is amazing and exciting. We are inviting you to invest yourself through the resources that God has given you—your energy, your prayers and your money—in this work to which God has called us.'"

Everyone around the table on March 4 at Kitchener's Mennonite complex at 50 Kent Avenue had read Nouwen's tract, and agreed with his basic ideas. Interestingly, none of the five are called fundraisers although they are all involved in fundraising to some degree.

Fred Martin, director of development at Conrad Grebel University College, said he self-identifies with his title as it makes clear what he is about. He also called what he does a vocation, a calling and a way to use his gifts for God. Quoting author/pastor Frederick Buechner, he said, "Vocation

is the place where our deep gladness meets the world's deep need."

All of these fundraisers are passionate about their roles, not because of the money itself, but because of the way that money can further the vision of the Mennonite "institution" for which they work. But they are shy of the idea of trying to interest people in an institution. The institution is the structure which brings about the potential for the vision to become reality. It's about the vision.

Dan Driedger, former Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario resource development director and current executive director of MennoHomes, said he still remembers the phone message from a supporter of MennoHomes: "Blessings to you as you continue the work of the church."

Rick Cober Bauman, executive director of MCC Ontario who is in the process of hiring a new resource development director, said, "If we believe our organization is the work of the church, or the church at work, we need to speak highly of the church whenever we can and be co-promoters of our churches, nationally or locally."

But their work is also primarily about

finding people who have a vision in mind and a heart for what their organization is promoting. Find the people and create a relationship between them and the vision-bearing institution. Nurture that relationship no matter how large or small the support the people can bring. Give people a chance to support that vision through money, as well as in other ways through their time and talents.

When Arli Klassen, Mennonite World Conference (MWC) chief development officer, was finishing up her time with MCC in Akron, Pa., she wanted to somehow work at supporting the worldwide church. She did not want to administrate the work, but she wanted to be in touch with the passion and vision at the centre of that work. She said her current position is a good fit for her, noting that the recent MWC "give the equivalent of a lunch" project was a way that everyone in the world could take part no matter how much or little they earn. Everyone could join the vision without shame, she said.

It was not long ago that Mennonite organizations in Canada began hiring fundraisers. MCC Ontario made sure that its first fundraiser was a person with pastoral experience who could work primarily at relationship building. But as more and more people give individually, instead of using the offering plate, and as congregations keep more and more of their gathered funds for their own projects, Mennonite agencies and schools have needed to get their message out to individuals.

Klassen pointed out that this is a North American phenomenon, with churches



PHOTO COURTESY OF VIN ENS

and individuals in Europe and the rest of the world wary of fundraising the way it is done in North America.

Martin said the job has gotten bigger as some folk respond to direct mail, others to e-mail, some to phone calls and some need to be visited one-on-one.

The five agreed that their job is not to guilt or shame. If they ask and people are not interested in the current vision or goals, and are giving elsewhere, they feel they have done well. They were clear that they are not competing with each other in raising funds. Martin believes encouraging generosity supports all the organizations.

Brent Charette, engagement minister for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, said there is still a reluctance to talk about money among area church staff and board members. He noted that busy people are asked for their time, talented people for their talents, so why not ask affluent people for money? "This is what we are doing, and we invite you to help with your money," is his approach.

While some quote Jesus' edict, "*Don't let the right hand know what the left is doing*," even he knew how much the widow had given. "We also depend on 'champions' in congregations to encourage their fellow brothers and sisters in their congregations that 'this is something we can do,' whether it's volunteering at the [New Hamburg Mennonite] Relief Sale or raising money," said Driedger.

The group also expressed concern about the future. Giving to institutions is down, as the national and area churches have clearly reported. Older congregants and supporters are on fixed incomes and younger people are often working at lower-paying jobs than their parents.

The five are also aware that it is easier to raise funds if "you have a goat to offer" or something concrete in which to invest. The proverb among fundraisers is: "It is always easier to raise funds to build a library than it is to fund the librarian and continued acquisitions for the library." "People need to see continued impact of their gifts," Martin said.

Despite all this, Bauman said that donors are still saying that they want to be asked for their money. ❧



**Two musical members of St. Catharines (Ont.) United Mennonite Church who have given more than a combined century of service to the church were honoured at a Christmas candlelight service last December. Pictured from left to right, front row: Betty Penner, pianist and organist for almost 50 years, and Art Wall, choir director for almost 60 years; and back row: church chair Alvin Enns, lead pastor Doug Schulz and senior members pastor Randy Klaassen.**

### /// Staff change

#### **Mennonite Foundation of Canada hires communications specialist**

KITCHENER, ONT.—Wendy Koch has been hired as a communications specialist for the Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC), working in the Kitchener office. Koch has prior experience working with Mennonite Economic Development Associates, Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, and the New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale. She is also the owner of Koch and Co. Graphics, a graphic design firm in Stratford, Ont. In her role at MFC, Koch will provide communications support in the areas of graphic design, content marketing, social media messaging and advertising. Her experience in the field of communications will help MFC to raise awareness of its services across Canada. MFC is a faith-based charitable foundation with more than \$160 million in managed assets. In 2013, MFC clients distributed more than \$14 million to charity using the services of MFC. —Mennonite Foundation of Canada



**Wendy Koch**

# Rome relaxes

*The 'people's pontiff' completes first year*

BY WILL BRAUN

Senior Writer

It's been a year since Argentina's Jorge Bergoglio became the 266th Roman Catholic pope. Although Pope Francis is 77 years old, he has brought fresh energy to one of the most staid institutions in history.

Leaving behind the stiff formality of his predecessor, the new pope's humility, casual style and moderate tone immediately endeared him to millions of Catholics, as well as to the media and a good number of non-Catholics. Here are some highlights of his year:

- **THE MORNING** after being chosen pope, Francis surprised staff at the hotel where he was staying by checking out in person.
- **HE URGED** fellow Argentinians to give money to the poor, instead of spending it on travel to his inauguration.
- **SHORTLY AFTER** his inauguration, Francis told a gathering of about 5,000 journalists: "Oh how I would like a poor church, and for the poor."
- **HE SET** aside some of the fancier vestments worn by previous popes and chose a modest guest house, instead of the grandiose papal apartment.
- **HE ABOLISHED** certain bonuses paid to some members of the church's governing body, the Curia.
- **AT EASTER** Mass in St. Peter's Square, Francis stopped to kiss and embrace a young boy with cerebral palsy.
- **ON ANOTHER** occasion at St. Peter's, the pope kissed and blessed a severely disfigured man in the crowd.
- **FOR THE** traditional Holy Thursday foot-washing ceremony, Francis broke with tradition, going to a juvenile prison where he included a Muslim and two young women in the ceremony.
- **HE INVITED** four homeless men to have breakfast with him on his birthday.
- **OFFICIALLY, FRANCIS** has held the church's hardline positions on abortion,

contraception, same-sex issues and ordination of women, although in some cases he has been able to do so in a non-hardline way, emphasizing love and tolerance over doctrinal rigidity.

- **AT A** baptismal ceremony in the Sistine Chapel, Francis encouraged mothers in attendance to breastfeed their children without inhibition: "If they are hungry, mothers, feed them without thinking twice. Because they are the most important people here."
- **TIME MAGAZINE** named Francis its "Person of the Year" for 2013. His Holiness also appeared on the January 2014 cover of *Rolling Stone* magazine.
- **FRANCIS HAS** 3.8 million followers on Twitter.
- **DURING A** visit to Brazil, an estimated three million people gathered on Copacabana Beach to hear Francis.
- **THE UNITED** Nations Committee on

the Rights of the Child said the Vatican has not acknowledged the extent of sex crimes committed by priests and "has not taken the necessary measures to address cases of child sexual abuse and to protect children"

• **SEVENTY PERCENT** of Italians say the pope's words have influenced their daily lives, and those who work with the poor in Rome say more people are volunteering to help. But while 85 percent of Americans have a favourable view of Francis, the number of people attending Catholic churches in the U.S. has not increased.

The challenge ahead for Francis is to ensure that his "gentle revolution," as *Rolling Stone* called it, will not be sidetracked by the deep divisions within the church over abortion, contraception, same-sex marriage and ordination of women. And, of course, if the message of compassion and love for the least is to prevail, Francis will have to take decisive action to address the far-reaching sex abuse and cover-up scandal that has plagued the church for many decades. ❧

To view the Vatican's online scrapbook marking the pope's first year in office, visit <http://bit.ly/PM1A8k>.

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*As Pope Francis finishes his first year as pontiff, 85 percent of Americans have a favourable view of him, but the number of people attending Catholic churches in the U.S. has not increased.*



PHOTOS BY DONNA SCHULZ



## GOD AT WORK THROUGH MUSIC

# Snapshots

*Each year, Rosthern Junior College and Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) collaborate to present a fundraising concert. The Festival of Choirs, as it has come to be known, features the CMU Singers, under the direction of Rudy Schellenberg, and the RJC Chorale, conducted by Richard Janzen. The Station Singers, a community choir based in Rosthern, Sask., and directed by Duff Warkentin, joined the two school choirs for this year's concert, held at Third Avenue United Church in Saskatoon on March 16. Warkentin pointed out that the Station Singers' participation was fitting, as many choir members are alumni of one or both of the Mennonite schools, or are parents of alumni. Each choir performed separately, with repertoire ranging from Schubert to U2, before joining their voices as a mass choir in three final works, chosen and directed by the three conductors.*



*Participants at the Prairie Winds Worship Retreat enjoy an impromptu time of singing, with resource person Marilyn Houser Hamm at the piano, left. Singing played a significant role in the event held at Saskatchewan's Shekinah Retreat Centre from March 7 to 9. Keynote speaker John Bell, a leader of the Iona Community in Scotland, said, 'Music allows our words to have a resonance they don't have when we speak them.' Music shapes Christian theology, Bell explained, adding that there is a prophetic aspect to singing together as Christians become an embodied sign of God's kingdom. Speaking to the weekend's theme, 'Why do God's people pray, sing, read Scripture and worship together?' Bell said they pray together because Jesus said, 'Our Father,' stressing that the Lord's Prayer is a corporate prayer and with it Jesus mandated that his disciples should pray together. Likewise, he said Christians read Scripture together because 'the truth of the Bible wasn't intended for private consumption.'*

## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

# CoSA Winnipeg faces funding cuts from all sides

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU  
Manitoba Correspondent

Recent weeks have been a financial roller coaster ride for Joan Carolyn and Daniel Epp, the program director and associate for Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) Winnipeg, respectively.

Towards the end of February, they received word that Correctional Service Canada (CSC) Chaplaincy was cutting its funding of \$650,000 to the 18 CoSA programs across Canada effective March 31. CoSA supports high-risk released offenders with integration into their communities and helps them lead responsible and productive lives. For CoSA Winnipeg,

the withdrawal of this federal grant represents \$25,000, almost one-sixth of its total budget of \$147,000.

Then, about two weeks later, due to public pressure, CSC Chaplaincy reversed its decision and reinstated the funding. CoSA Winnipeg is moving forward with cautious optimism.

“We don’t know the details about this decision reversal,” says Epp. “We don’t know if and when we will still be honoured with that \$25,000. We don’t know if there will be conditions attached to that. At this point, we are still considering the money is gone.”

CoSA Winnipeg has decided to cut two part-time program assistants from its staff of four. Uncertain whether and when it will receive the \$25,000 that it has relied on for many years, the Winnipeg organization also faces other financial squeezes.

For the past five years, it has had a contract with the National Crime Prevention Centre that has provided \$1.5 million/year to CoSA programs across Canada, which amounted to upwards of \$50,000 for the Winnipeg program. This five-year contract runs out at the end of September.

“We also receive \$36,000 a year from the Provincial Special Needs Program, and, in light of these other decisions regarding the two federal funding sources, this may be up for change as well,” says Epp.

If that is not enough, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Manitoba has been decreasing its financial support every year. CoSA Winnipeg had its beginning 15 years ago under the MCC Manitoba umbrella, but just over three years ago it and three other organizations spun out on their own, forming Initiatives for Just Communities. Following that decision, MCC funding was designed to decline each year.

“Definitely in this past fiscal year, the pressure has been on to look for other funding sources,” says Epp. “We have made a decision to maintain the 12 circles currently running. We do not want to compromise any of the active circles, but it does mean that we can’t expand.”

What it amounts to is that a substantial waiting list of released offenders will have to wait indefinitely for a circle.

Carolyn and Epp hope that the results of a study being done by the National Crime Prevention Centre will give CoSA greater leverage to pursue other funding sources. The regular tracking of CoSA clients “shows that this program dramatically reduces the rate for re-offence,” says Epp. “But for now, when the contract with the National Crime Prevention Centre ends at the end of September, so will that funding.”

*‘We don’t know if and when we will still be honoured with that \$25,000.’  
(Daniel Epp)*

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# 'We need each other'

*Pre-sale fundraiser nets more than \$6,600 for MCC Alberta*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent  
EDMONTON

A jar of pickles for \$120? A twice-sold table runner for \$200? It was all part of the fun of giving for the cause at a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Alberta fundraiser!

The fellowship hall at Edmonton First Mennonite Church was packed on March 8 when area Mennonites gathered to raise funds to cover the cost of the Summerfest Relief Sale scheduled for June 6 to 7 in Sherwood Park, Alta.

Headliners Kim Thiessen and Darryl Neustaedter Barg performed selections from their latest CD, *Even in the Smallest Places*. Recorded in Guatemala, El Salvador and Winnipeg, it expresses hope for peace in the midst of violent situations. All proceeds from sales of the CD go to MCC's

Generations and peace programs.

MCC Alberta director Abe Janzen told stories about people and situations MCC is working with in Guatemala and El Salvador. He told the audience that, because of issues like cheap imports from the U.S. and foreign fruit producers owning the best land, local farmers are unable to make a living. More than 55,000 people leave Guatemala and El Salvador each year, often crossing illegally into Mexico, desperate to find work to feed their families.

Despite endemic violence and crippling

poverty, Janzen is hopeful about the work of peacebuilding. Peace is "totally realistic and God given," Janzen said. "That is what the relief sale is all about, that is what the Christian church is all about."

MCC is working with Central American communities to establish viable fish and flower farms, while providing peace initiatives and education in needy areas. "By ourselves we don't change the world," Janzen said. "We need each other"

The Edmonton event raised \$6,665 towards the cost of the sale in Sherwood Park, in an effort to be able to give all of the proceeds from the sale directly to relief work. CD sales at the event totalled \$880.

On March 7, Mennonite churches in La Crete hosted a soup and pie event featuring Thiessen, Neustaedter Barg and Janzen, which raised \$23,000 for MCC's work around the world. ☼

*[B]ecause of issues like cheap imports from the U.S. and foreign fruit producers owning the best land, local farmers are unable to make a living.*



Guenther Toews and Gordon Baergen were 'down-home' style auctioneers selling pickles, baked goods and hand-crafted items. Proceeds, which totalled \$6,665, went toward expenses for the June 6 to 7 Summerfest Relief Sale in Sherwood Park, Alta.

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## UPDATE ON UKRAINE

# Facing uncertain future

*Friends of the Mennonite Centre in Ukraine worry about the future of its ministry*

STORY AND PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent

WINNIPEG

On the eve of the referendum in Crimea, Friends of the Mennonite Centre in Ukraine (FOMCU) held its annual meeting. Board members and interested individuals gathered at Sam's Place in Winnipeg on March 15 to reflect on the involvements of FOMCU in the past year, but uppermost on their minds was the impending and uncertain change facing Ukraine.

The Centre began in 2001 with the purchase of a heritage building in Molochansk for the purpose of providing humanitarian assistance to individuals and organizations in the area of the former Mennonite colonies of Molotschna, Chortitza and Yazykovo. FOMCU has restored the building and over the 13 years of its operation, it has funded about a thousand projects.

"Our concern is that Crimea could come under Russian authority," said Ben Stobbe, FOMCU chair. "Most other Ukrainian organizations in Canada are located more in the west. We are in the southeast corner,

which people fear could be the next step in a takeover. We are in the situation of being quite close to the areas which suffered a great deal under the starvation, under World War II and where a lot of collectivization and industrialization occurred, and that is what brought in a lot of Russian people to this area. There is concern there could be a lot of disruption in the area and that could affect our work."

"Right now, we are just waiting like everybody else," Stobbe said, adding that the Centre hopes to continue its work. "We still see tremendous disparity between the very well off and the many poor, in particular the seniors. Food is plentiful, but for many they can only afford a diet of bread, potatoes, milk and eggs from local farmers.

"To get basic health care means to borrow from your neighbours," he said. "Many young men in the villages cannot find work and move to Russia or Kazakhstan to find employment. Housing in the villages



*Ben Stobbe, left, FOMCU board chair, and Wally Kroeker of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA), discuss the uncertainty around their programs in Ukraine. A seven-year MEDA project in southeast Ukraine, including Crimea, has concluded and just prior to the recent turmoil received approval for a second phase due to the success of the first project.*

remains very basic."

"We have discussed the situation with the staff there and feel there is some jeopardy because this organization is funded from the west," said Stobbe, noting that the Centre employs both Ukrainian and Russian staff. "I can't tell the difference between our Ukrainian and Russian staff. Nothing in their comments or behaviour tells us who is who. They work well together. The language on the streets is primarily Russian, although everyone probably

## Ukraine

BY MARIANNE HARDER

my feet step upon the soil of my ancestral home  
I feel a swelling in my heart of what I cannot tell  
it brings an indrawn breath, a sob, and dims my very eye

this is where my forebears felt both joy and pain  
hearts were joined in love and children played  
music filled the air with soul-felt praise  
to One who brought them here

then terror filled the night with screams of rage  
anguish, fear and dread spilled from their hearts  
to make them numb  
hunger ground their inmost parts  
and gnawed upon their bones

while prayers of desperation to their Saviour  
disappeared into a midnight sky . . .

will e'er again be felt that childlike joy . . .  
from eyes o'er-filled with pain and death  
the scabs of suffering fall  
or will bitterness fore'er replace  
those songs of soul-felt praise . . .

o, Lord my God, I pray it be not so

may once again a people walk this land with joy-filled step  
yet pondering still the storm of pride and hate and greed  
unleashed  
that washed this soil with a million drops of tears and blood

Father, forgive them all, they knew not what could come . . .  
And save us through remembering

## UPDATE ON UKRAINE

speaks Ukrainian too.”

Some steps have been taken in preparation for the uncertainty that lies ahead. “We have purchased a diesel generator,” Stobbe said. “We also have had our own water supply for awhile. We can heat with coal if natural gas is cut off. We have a building that can function even if some of the services are cut off. This building is a haven for lots of people in winter, who come and sit inside for the warmth.”

“The seniors still remember fondly the day when their pensions meant something and the significant contribution the Soviet

Union made to the liberation of Ukraine. They felt they had greater security,” Stobbe said, adding, “The young people, on the other hand, jump at the chance to travel to a western European country, like Switzerland. They have no interest in traveling to Russia.”

At the present time, FOMCU has made a decision to delay sending North American directors Mary and Alvin Suderman of Winnipeg to Molochansk until things become more settled. Originally, the Sudermans were to fly out on March 19. ❧

# How to pray for Ukraine

BY DAN DYCK

Mennonite Church Canada

**C**onflict and political tension in Ukraine is moving quickly. By the time this is in print, the situation may have already changed dramatically. It’s hard to know how to pray.

Gordon Janzen, director of Mennonite Church Canada’s Asia, Europe and Middle East ministry, sought information and advice from church partners in southern Ukraine near the Crimean peninsula, where the conflict is focused.

Anya Allipova, pastor of the Zaporizhzhye Evangelical Mennonite Church, north of Crimea, reports that numerous pro-European protesters were arrested in Zaporizhzhya at the same time protests happened in Kiev, the centrally located Ukrainian capital. *Pray for the health, safety and release of those who were arrested.*

Sergey Denykin and his wife Lena help lead a small fellowship in Kherson, just northwest of Crimea. Denykin says Russian fighter jets have flown overhead, and more Russian flags than usual are on display. *Pray that these symbols of tension will not evoke violence.*

In Odessa, 200 kilometres west of Kherson, Mary Raber teaches theology as a Mennonite Church Canada partner through Mennonite Mission Network. Raber reports that Odessa has remained calm. She says she believes that “Odessa

PHOTO BY GORDON JANZEN



*Last November, Mary Raber, left, a Mennonite Church Canada partner through Mennonite Mission Network, shares a meal in the Odessa Theological Seminary with Pastor Sergey Denykin of Kherson, his wife Lena and son Daniel.*

Theological Seminary is still a safe place to live and work.”

The government is temporarily headed by Oleksandr Turchinov, a member of a Baptist congregation in Kiev. Some reports say he is also a minister in the Baptist church. There are plans for elections to be held in May, but many questions surround Ukraine’s stability and the potential for voting to take place.

In her most recent prayer letter, Raber offers the following suggestions for prayer support for the church and Christians in Ukraine:

- **POLITICAL DIVISIONS** definitely affect the churches, as they do in North America. Generally, the north and west identify themselves with Europe and speak Ukrainian, while the south and east look to Russia and speak Russian. *Pray that churches in different geographical areas will be able to remember and act on their unity in Christ.* The relationship in what is referred to in the church as the “Russian-Ukrainian brotherhood” is strained.

- **THE GENERATIONS** tend to be divided along political lines as well. Younger church leaders support the protest and are frustrated by the older generation, which is more resistant to change. *Pray that the generations would be able to hear each other.*

- **THE CONTINUING** instability makes life difficult for schools, children’s homes, hospitals and all kinds of other social-service institutions, some of which are operated by churches. Will salaries be paid and supplies delivered? Will state-run utilities continue to function and government offices do their part? *Pray that needs would be met. Pray that people would remember and care for their neighbours during the unrest, especially the elderly and disabled.*

- **FOR A** long time there will be a need for people who can bring peace and reconciliation to the country. There is great potential for violence. Churches of many confessions in Kiev and elsewhere have served as first-aid stations and shelters. It is good to know that there are prayer tents operating 24/7 in the main square in Kiev. *Pray that Christians will be able to show the love of Jesus in all their words and deeds.*

- **PRAY FOR** the theological schools. What is said and done during these days will make an especially strong impression on the students.

“I’m very much looking forward to returning to teach Baptist/Anabaptist history, because it will seem much more relevant than usual against the backdrop of recent events,” says Raber, who had travelled to Armenia in December on a teaching assignment followed by a trip to the United States. She had planned to return to Odessa on March 1. She asks for prayer for “the timing of my return and especially that I would be faithful.” ❧





*With the new MCC Centre under construction across Gladys Street, a tent city stands as testimony to the problem of homelessness in Abbotsford, B.C.*

## A good place to be homeless?

*Abbotsford Mennonites react, respond to 'lightning rod' issue of homelessness*

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent  
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

**H**omelessness in the city of Abbotsford has made headlines in recent months. There was the dumping of chicken manure by city crew members on a homeless camp, a months-long protest campout at centrally located Jubilee Park, the rejection by city council of a rezoning proposal to build accommodation for homeless men, and a community rally at city hall to protest that decision and show support for the homeless.

In the midst of these events, local Mennonites have expressed various opinions on how to deal with the issues and Mennonite organizations are on the forefront of many of the activities.

Several years ago, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) B.C. was instrumental in the formation of Abbotsford's Cyrus Centre, a shelter for at-risk street youth, and MCC personnel are now asking, "How can we be part of the solution?" says program director Ron Van Wyk.

He says MCC B.C. has been involved

since 2004 in counting and interviewing the homeless population of Abbotsford and other cities in the Fraser Valley. Van Wyk believes a triage-type system is needed for evaluating the needs of those on the street through contact and relationships.

Following the city's injunction to force a homeless camp out of the public Jubilee Park, a tent city has arisen across the street from where the new MCC Centre building is being built. The building will house the MCC B.C. headquarters, a thrift shop and warehouse beginning this fall. Van Wyk points out that the continuing presence of homeless people so close to the MCC building could pose a challenge to those in the building, but would also provide an opportunity to help those in need directly.

Mennonite congregations are also doing their part. For the past several winters, Emmanuel Mennonite Church has opened its doors to a cold weather shelter, taking in overnight guests who cannot be accommodated at the Salvation Army, says Pastor

April Yamasaki. Church members and other volunteers staff the shelter, lending a listening ear to the guests, giving them a hot breakfast in the morning and sending them off with a bag lunch.

Pastor Karen Heidebrecht Thiessen of Level Ground Mennonite Church reports that her congregation is involved with helping the disadvantaged in the city in various ways, including Bible studies at recovery houses and support groups for people dealing with addictions and potential homelessness.

"We have many people in our congregation who have lived on the streets," she says. "We are located next door to the George Schmidt Centre, which is a facility for men at risk of homelessness, and we worship and interact with these men on a continuous basis."

Drawing headlines in recent weeks was the decision by Abbotsford city council to reject a proposal by Abbotsford Community Services (ACS) to rezone a small plot of land nearby to permit construction of a 20-suite housing unit for homeless men and those at risk of homelessness. Downtown business owners near the proposed site had raised concerns about the proposal, saying it would have a negative effect on their business.

In turn, concerned citizens, including many local Mennonites, braved snowy weather to stage a rally near city hall the following week to protest council's decision and ask for reconsideration of the proposal. Councillor Henry Braun, who had voted for the rezoning, cited his own Paraguayan Mennonite refugee family background and said he knew what it meant to be without a home. "This is not the end and we will not give up," he told the crowd in an impassioned speech.

Speeches by several other people and numerous signatures on a poster in support of the homeless were part of the event. ACS director Rod Santiago told *Canadian Mennonite*, "This is life-giving to see the community say that what happens to our homeless is important to them, to come and make a statement."

### **Mennonite councillors take opposite sides on zoning debate**

Two Mennonites on city council voted



on opposite sides of the rezoning issue. Dave Loewen, a member of Level Ground Mennonite Church, voted in favour, while Les Barkman, a member of Northview Community Church (Mennonite Brethren), voted against.

Loewen says he doesn't think Abbotsford is unique when it comes to homelessness, but that the city has become a "lightning rod" for the issue. He believes activism shown by local Christians and others on behalf of the homeless speaks to the character of the community.

"I spoke with a long-time street worker about Abbotsford's attraction to the homeless," Loewen says. "He told me that individuals from the B.C. Interior and Alberta have been attracted to Abbotsford because of all the available services. It's a good place to be homeless! That, I think, is a testimony to the community stakeholders who have been faithfully working with the homeless for many years, in many instances the faith community."

Barkman says his vote against the proposal does not mean a vote against the homelessness of the city. He says he has volunteered

his time at Emmanuel's cold-weather shelter and has visited homeless shelters in a number of Lower Mainland communities, as well as the notorious Downtown Eastside area of Vancouver.

"Council was unanimous on the need for a homelessness solution," Barkman said, "but if you look at the whole area [downtown residences and businesses], is that what Abbotsford needs?" Barkman says he believes that the placement of the proposed residence was not the right one, as putting such a facility away from the problematic downtown core would be more beneficial. He cites the example of the recent move of the Warm Zone facility for street-entrenched women out of the downtown area, with positive results.

The decision to pour chicken manure on an area inhabited by the homeless last summer was regrettable on the city's part, Barkman says, but he stated clearly that council was not informed about this beforehand and did not approve of it afterwards.

Barkman thinks one-on-one relationship-building would be one effective solution to help those on the street, many of whom

have substance abuse problems or mental health issues. "I think we have an opportunity," he says. Men's ministries could do their part. Why not go out and spend two hours once a week on the street?"

Homelessness is "a complex issue," Barkman concludes. "There's no silver bullet out there." ❧

### News flash

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.—On March 20, Abbotsford City Council struck a Task Force on Homelessness to address multiple issues surrounding homelessness in the city. Mayor Bruce Banman said, "We need to examine not only the conditions and responses to homelessness that exist in Abbotsford today, but address the steps we need to take to meet the requirements in our community going forward." The task force includes Ron Van Wyk of MCC B.C. The task force will begin meeting in April.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN




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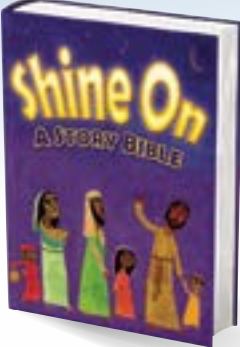
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GOD AT WORK IN US

# Feeding the demand for Anabaptist faith values

*MC Canada executive director Willard Metzger speaks out . . . to the church and the world*

BY DEBORAH FROESE  
Mennonite Church Canada

**A** growing awareness of Anabaptism is increasing interest in Mennonite Church Canada, and Willard Metzger is happy to respond.

"I hear so many people tell me that they have found a spiritual home in the Anabaptist expression of Christianity," says Metzger. "They may remain with their family of faith, whether that is evangelical or mainstream, but they closely identify with certain Anabaptist values, such as living simply, nonviolent peacebuilding, taking care of creation, or how they interact with people of other faiths."

Since assuming the role of MC Canada's executive director in November 2009, Metzger's passion for people and Anabaptist faith perspectives has sparked diverse connections in Canada and abroad. Youth, young adults, business leaders, educators, scores of Mennonite and non-Mennonite churches, other faith groups and politicians represent just some of the relationships he is developing or shoring up.

"When I get asked to contribute, I often ask, 'Why me?'" he says. "And just as often the response is, 'We need the unique perspective your faith background brings to this issue.'"

On a recent *100 Huntley Street* television interview, he shared a life-changing experience in Haiti following the 2010 earthquake.

While he escaped uninjured, he said, "Some friends would say that God spared me. . . . But if I lay claim to that, then I'd also have to say that God killed hundreds of thousands of people. . . . That's not the God I know."

His desire to reach out to people affected by the earthquake affirmed for him the idea that faith and a sense of fulfillment are not about being satisfied when God is at work in our lives, but when "we as individual followers align ourselves with what God is doing."

"In terms of its size, the Anabaptist community offers a disproportionate influence," says James Christie, director of the Ridd

Institute of Religion and Global Policy at the University of Winnipeg. "The contribution of the Mennonite community in Canada to both ecumenical and interfaith landscapes is only now beginning to be recognized."

Mennonites comprise about 1.7 million of an estimated 840 million Protestants worldwide. That's less than a quarter of 1 percent. Yet Google "Mennonite" and 3.1 million results will register, compared to 8.6 million for "Protestants." Despite their comparatively low numbers, Mennonites draw roughly 36 percent of the search returns Protestants receive.

This quick analysis is based upon dynamic, changing figures and it isn't a scientific study, but it is telling. It suggests there is plenty of interest in Mennonites and their Anabaptist heritage—at least online. And it is to that curiosity Metzger responds as he networks within and beyond Mennonite circles.

"He brings expertise and good, sound common sense, the ability to see what needs to be done, how to do it, and how to do it in an ecumenical context," says Karen Hamilton, general secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC). "He's very respected at the governing board table and has huge credibility."

MC Canada is one of 25 denominations in the CCC representing Anglican, Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, Protestant and Roman Catholic traditions. It is one of just six CCC members that also belong to the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC). That positioning gives Metzger the opportunity to address both groups.

Christie, a past-president of the CCC, says that MC Canada "has helped to bring

PHOTO USED BY PERMISSION OF THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER



*Last October, Willard Metzger, right, and seven other Christian faith leaders met with Prime Minister Stephen Harper on an Evangelical Fellowship of Canada delegation to discuss matters of importance to the church. Topics ranged from Canada's relationship with its host peoples to climate change and homelessness.*

together a far more unified voice among Christians in Canada since the turn of the century,” pointing to the contributions of Metzger and past general secretaries Dan Nighswander and Robert J. Suderman.

Metzger responds to invitations from a wide variety of faith interests. In 2012, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association flew him to North Carolina for a meeting with evangelical leaders, and the next day he joined an interfaith conversation meeting in Toronto.

“These two back-to-back meetings took me from one end of the faith expression spectrum to another,” Metzger says. “One emphasized conversion, the other collaboration.”

Metzger has followed through on several invitations to contribute to books and conferences, and he has participated on panel discussions covering a wide variety of topics ranging from Truth and Reconciliation to ecological justice and the prominence of Canadian companies in worldwide mining. He worked with the CCC to speak out about nonviolent solutions to conflict in Syria, and conversed with multi-faith leaders about Quebec’s proposed Charter of Values.

But not everyone always agrees with Metzger.

He recently met with the Canadian Council for Anabaptist Leaders (CCAL) to discuss MC Canada’s Being a Faithful Church (BFC) process, which has been reviewing biblical perspectives on sexuality and will lead to wider church discernment about sexual orientation and the church.

“Some CCAL members, and others, including people in the [MC] Canada constituency, seem to think the outcome is predetermined and that it is in my hands,” Metzger says. “But the BFC Task Force and I are assuring everyone that it is not. While we take the whole of the Bible into account when interpreting Scripture, we acknowledge that, as Anabaptists, Christ is central for our hermeneutics and denominational members will decide.”

“Willard is a kind, generous but strong voice,” says Jeremy Bell, executive minister of the Canadian Baptists of Western Canada and a CCC governing board member. “He gets away with saying some pretty strong stuff because he’s kind.” ❧

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## ARTBEAT

# Even in the smallest places ... can a garden grow

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD  
Alberta Correspondent

In the middle of the most violent places in Guatemala, music is a healing presence. While recording their most recent CD, *Even in the Smallest Places*, in Guatemala and El Salvador, Kim Thiessen and Darryl Neustaedter Barg had opportunities to interact with local musicians and talk about peace.

"It never ceases to amaze me that people maintain joy in the midst of struggle," Thiessen says. She saw first-hand how music, things as seemingly mundane as piano lessons, would take people away from violence: "In the middle of chaos, there is this normal activity that we get our kids to do, too."

"This collection of songs is about despair, sadness, faith and hope, found without failing, always and 'even in the smallest place,'" a blurb on the CD cover reads.

Thiessen's rich alto combines seamlessly with Neustaedter Barg's smooth voice and vibrant guitar. The challenging task of weaving in the international voices and instruments is well done and gives a joyful, authentic voice to the message of challenge

and hope present in the lyrics.

The CD was recorded in three locations. In January 2013, Thiessen, Neustaedter Barg and a small team from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) met with musicians in Guatemala and El Salvador. The recording environments were sometimes challenging. In one church building, cardboard boxes were stuffed into window wells to block the outside noise and blankets had to be draped over plastic chairs to reduce echo in the room. The recordings were then brought to Winnipeg, where the rest of the work and editing was completed.

*Even in the Smallest Places* is Thiessen and Neustaedter Barg's fifth CD, and proceeds from all five, currently totalling more than \$750,000, have gone to MCC's Generations at Risk program to provide relief and education to people suffering from AIDS. Their latest is unique, in that proceeds will be divided between the Generations and peace programs of MCC.

Asked why he and Thiessen continue to give volunteer time and effort to these projects, Neustaedter Barg replies: "That's



PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

*Even in the Smallest Places is the fifth fundraising CD Darryl Neustaedter Barg and Kim Thiessen have recorded for Mennonite Central Committee's Generations at Risk program, raising more than \$750,000 to date.*

easy. It is super rewarding to bring awareness about people's lives in other places. I love MCC. . . . We are doing as good a job as we can helping build awareness of MCC's work with partners around the world." ❧

*To watch videos of Kim Thiessen and Darryl Neustaedter Barg perform 'Take Your Place' and the Holyrood Mennonite Church women's group sing praise songs at a March 8 MCC fundraising event at First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, visit [www.canadianmennonite.org/smallest-places](http://www.canadianmennonite.org/smallest-places). The duo is available to perform in local churches; if interested, call Thiessen at the MCC Alberta office toll-free at 1-888-622-6337.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF MCC ALBERTA



*Cardboard boxes fill window wells to block out street noise and donated MCC comforters are draped over chairs to muffle echoes in a Guatemala City church where music for *Even in the Smallest Places* was recorded.*



PHOTO BY MARION ROES



**Todd Scheidel**, front row in dark blue shirt, plays the role of Noah in Erb St. Mennonite Church's presentation of *Noah, the Ark and the Rainbow*, a musical composed by Joanne Bender, the Waterloo, Ont., church's lay leader of Christian worship and the arts. Presented on March 1 and 2, this was an intergenerational community production directed by Gord Davis. Seventy-five Erb St. members, community neighbours and friends were involved on and off stage. About 600 audience members were inspired by the variety of musical styles, creative dance and the contemporary telling of this universal story of hope and promise.

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## Where are the young worshippers?

*Regular church attendance dropping among youth, young adults*

BY RACHEL BERGEN

Young Voices Co-editor



Megan Enns

**W**hat are your church attendance patterns like? Special occasions only? Once every couple of months? Every other week? Every Sunday?

If your attendance has become less frequent over the last few years, you are not alone. Statistics show young people aren't attending religious services as frequently as they did 20 years ago.

According to a Statistics Canada General Social Survey (<http://bit.ly/1ebFhRY>) in 1995, 15- to 24-year-olds were the least likely, at 22.6 percent, to attend religious ceremonies frequently, or once a week. This age group was also the most likely to attend church less frequently than once a week, at 55 percent. And less than a quarter

Mennonite Central Committee Alberta as a factor.

"Because I do so many weekend events, trips and visit other churches, that significantly affects my attendance at my own church," she says. "But it's also my choice not to attend very regularly."

Enns values community in her life. Although she says she does find it at Foothills, she feels supported and motivated by the community of faith in her work environment and through her group of friends as well. And while she's been involved with her church as a youth sponsor and a mentor, Enns doesn't believe attending church is the only way to support others or feel supported by a community

*'My alarm clock would go off and I would be like, "Nope, not happening," and would go back to sleep.'*  
(Jennifer Regehr)



Jennifer Regehr

of 25- to 44-year-olds attended church once a week in 1995, while 50 percent attended less frequently.

A decade later, those numbers had dropped. Just over 15 percent of 15- to 24-year-olds attended at least once a week; just over half attended less frequently. Just under 16 percent of 25- to 44-year-olds attended once a week, while 48.2 percent of this demographic attended less frequently.

Megan Enns, 25, of Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary, is one of those young people who doesn't attend her church very regularly, citing her work as a peace and youth engagement coordinator for

of faith.

"They're available at church, but I have them elsewhere," she says of her spiritual support. "Church isn't the one place I get them."

On the other hand, some young Mennonites still try to attend church every week.

Jennifer Regehr, 26, attends Erb Street Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., as often as she can.

"I think that creating a habit of doing something affects the way you think about things," she says. "Creating a habit of regular [church] attendance reinforces

the importance of Christianity in my life.”

Regehr admits that it was more difficult to attend church regularly when she was a student at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ont.

“When I was at university I attended less regularly because my sleep schedule was messed up,” she says. “My alarm clock would go off and I would be like, ‘Nope, not happening,’ and would go back to sleep. . . . It’s better now that I have a 9-to-5 job, so my sleep schedule is somewhere approaching normal,” noting, though, that she still made an effort to make it to church as often as she could during her university years.

James Dueckman, 23, is a member of Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, B.C. He is a medical student at the University of British Columbia and lives in Vancouver. Although he doesn’t always make it home for church on Sunday, he does worship with a congregation in Vancouver.

For Dueckman, church and community are synonymous, which is why he prioritizes regular attendance. “At Emmanuel, all my friends growing up were there. And in the last couple of years, all my really good Abbotsford friends are there every Sunday.”

When he’s in Vancouver, Dueckman attends church with his roommate. Both are very busy, so church is a good place for them to spend time together.

Dueckman says, though, that his

attendance may drop when he gets into his third and fourth years of medical school, and his schedule becomes less predictable. Currently he’s able to get most of his work done during the week and on Saturday.

Gordon Zerbe, a New Testament professor at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, believes young people’s infrequent church attendance can result from a number of things, including the fact that young adults are more transient than ever.

“The duration of the in-between zone between coming of age and becoming an adult is now longer,” he says, adding that young adults often have difficulty getting settled into a career, and often have to get more education in order to reach their career goals. They are also getting married and having children later, and are generally taking longer to reach “adulthood” than their parents and grandparents did.

In his experience, Zerbe says that, when young adults become settled, their church attendance becomes more regular. And when the roles of young people are re-imagined in the church, these people respond well.

“My daughter was invited to be chair of our church’s Youth and Young Adult Committee,” Zerbe says. “Young adults are supposed to be the babysitters, but to give it another angle was a draw for her, like the church was taking her input seriously. It put her in a place of responsibility and helped her take ownership of her role in the church.” ❧



James Dueckman

## Being a light wherever you are

*Cara Baergen uses her gifts as an engineer to make a difference in the world*

BY AARON EPP

Young Voices Co-editor

Ask Cara Baergen what an average workday looks like for her, and she replies that there is no such thing as “average” these days.

Day-to-day operations have yet to start

at the advanced energy research facility where Baergen works as a process engineer. Once it is up and running, the facility—owned by the City of Edmonton and

*(Continued on page 36)*



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CARA BAERGEN



*Cara Baergen is a process engineer for Enerkem, a green technology company that produce biofuels and chemicals from waste.*



*Cara Baergen's work in Tanzania from 2009-10 included coordinating a spring protection project and assisting with the development of a five-year plan for water projects in the Mara region.*

*(Continued from page 35)*

the clean technology company Enerkem—will produce biofuels and chemicals from waste.

“Some days I’m out in the plant checking things or planning for start-up—working on plans, tracking where construction is at,” explains Baergen, 29, who started at Enerkem a year ago. “Eventually, I will be a part of the operations team, involved in the day-to-day running of the facility.”

It’s an exciting project, Baergen adds, because Enerkem is working to complement Edmonton’s current waste management practices by converting non-recyclable and non-compostable waste materials, which would otherwise be sent to a landfill, into renewable fuels and chemicals. Ultimately,

engineering was her best career choice. She grew up at First Mennonite Church in Edmonton, where she is still active today as a member of the Worship Committee and the choir. In high school, as she considered her options, she wondered if going to Bible college or pursuing a career in a helping profession might be the best thing to do.

Ultimately, she decided that, since her gifts lay in mathematics and science, pursuing a bachelor of science degree at the University of Alberta, focusing on chemical engineering computer process control, would be the best fit for her.

But studying engineering from 2003-09, and focusing on being a good engineer, felt separate from her church life. “[After

*‘I think that each of us has certain gifts that God gives us, and it’s our responsibility to use them to try to make the world a better place’  
(Cara Baergen)*

Enerkem will help increase Edmonton’s waste diversion rate from 60 percent to 90 percent.

The City of Edmonton has agreed to supply Enerkem with 100,000 metric tonnes of municipal solid waste per year, after recycling and composting. Using thermochemical technology, Enerkem’s Edmonton facility will convert that solid waste into 38 million litres of methanol, ethanol and other chemical intermediates that form everyday products.

“I think that each of us has certain gifts that God gives us, and it’s our responsibility to use them to try to make the world a better place,” Baergen says, adding that she, like many Mennonites, is concerned with creation care. “This is a cool opportunity to use my engineering skills to be part of something practical that makes a difference.”

Founded in 2000 and headquartered in Montreal, Enerkem employs more than 150 people and is developing facilities in Varennes, Que., and Pontotoc, Miss., as well.

“The goal for us is that this [Edmonton location] will be the first of many facilities in Canada and the world,” she says.

But Baergen wasn’t always so sure

graduation] I wanted to do something that connected to this other side of who I am, and that which is core to who I am and what I think is really important,” she says. “These two sides of my life—the engineering and the faith life—felt off balance. Doing an engineering degree was good, but I wanted to do something different.”

Baergen, a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Alberta board member who travelled to Laos and Cambodia in 2008 on a learning tour, applied to the organization’s Serving and Learning Together (SALT) program and spent 2009-10 in Tanzania.

There, Baergen worked with a local organization in the Tabora region to assess its capacity to run development projects, and to complete a survey of water and environmental issues. She also coordinated a spring protection project and assisted with the development of a five-year plan for water projects in the Mara region.

Baergen describes her time in Tanzania as difficult. She has always believed in the development work that MCC does, but her SALT experience showed her how messy that work can be. “It doesn’t always go the way you want it to, even with the best



## Daily guide for A Year of Reading Biblically: Part II



May 1: 1Chron 3-5	Jun 2: Job 5-7	Jul 4: Ps 106-107	Aug 5: Is 36-41
May 2: 1Chron 6	Jun 3: Job 8-10	Jul 5: Ps 108-114	Aug 6: Is 42-44
May 3: 1Chron 7-8	Jun 4: Job 11-13	Jul 6: Ps 115-118	Aug 7: Is 45-48
May 4: 1Chron 9-11	Jun 5: Job 14-16	Jul 7: Ps 119:1-88	Aug 8: Is 49-53
May 5: 1Chron 12-14	Jun 6: Job 17-20	Jul 8: Ps 119:89-176	Aug 9: Is 54-58
May 6: 1Chron 15-17	Jun 7: Job 21-23	Jul 9: Ps 120-132	Aug 10: Is 59-63
May 7: 1Chron 18-21	Jun 8: Job 24-28	Jul 10: Ps 133-139	Aug 11: Is 64-66
May 8: 1Chron 22-24	Jun 9: Job 29-31	Jul 11: Ps 140-145	Aug 12: Jer 1-3
May 9: 1Chron 25-27	Jun 10: Job 32-34	Jul 12: Ps 146-150	Aug 13: Jer 4-6
May 10: 1/2Chron 28-1	Jun 11: Job 35-37	Jul 13: Prov 1-3	Aug 14: Jer 7-9
May 11: 2Chron 2-5	Jun 12: Job 38-39	Jul 14: Prov 4-6	Aug 15: Jer 10-13
May 12: 2Chron 6-8	Jun 13: Job 40-42	Jul 15: Prov 7-9	Aug 16: Jer 14-17
May 13: 2Chron 9-12	Jun 14: Ps 1-8	Jul 16: Prov 10-12	Aug 17: Jer 18-22
May 14: 2Chron 13-17	Jun 15: Ps 9-16	Jul 17: Prov 13-15	Aug 18: Jer 23-25
May 15: 2Chron 18-20	Jun 16: Ps 17-20	Jul 18: Prov 16-18	Aug 19: Jer 26-29
May 16: 2Chron 21-24	Jun 17: Ps 21-25	Jul 19: Prov 19-21	Aug 20: Jer 30-31
May 17: 2Chron 25-27	Jun 18: Ps 26-31	Jul 20: Prov 22-23	Aug 21: Jer 32-34
May 18: 2Chron 28-31	Jun 19: Ps 32-35	Jul 21: Prov 24-26	Aug 22: Jer 35-37
May 19: 2Chron 32-34	Jun 20: Ps 36-39	Jul 22: Prov 27-29	Aug 23: Jer 38-41
May 20: 2Chron 35-36	Jun 21: Ps 40-45	Jul 23: Prov 30-31	Aug 24: Jer 42-45
May 21: Ezra 1-3	Jun 22: Ps 46-50	Jul 24: Ecc 1-4	Aug 25: Jer 46-48
May 22: Ezra 4-7	Jun 23: Ps 51-57	Jul 25: Ecc 5-8	Aug 26: Jer 49-50
May 23: Ezra 8-10	Jun 24: Ps 58-65	Jul 26: Ecc 9-12	Aug 27: Jer 51-52
May 24: Neh 1-3	Jun 25: Ps 66-69	Jul 27: Solomon 1-8	Aug 28: Lam 1-3:36
May 25: Neh 4-6	Jun 26: Ps 70-73	Jul 28: Is 1-4	Aug 29: Lam 3:37-5
May 26: Neh 7	Jun 27: Ps 74-77	Jul 29: Is 5-8	Aug 30: Ezek 1-4
May 27: Neh 8-9	Jun 28: Ps 78-79	Jul 30: Is 9-12	Aug 31: Ezek 5-8
May 28: Neh 10-11	Jun 29: Ps 80-85	Jul 31: Is 13-17	
May 29: Neh 12-13	Jun 30: Ps 86-89	Aug 1: Is 18-22	
May 30: Est 1-5	Jul 1: Ps 90-95	Aug 2: Is 23-27	
May 31: Est 6-10	Jul 2: Ps 96-102	Aug 3: Is 28-30	
Jun 1: Job 1-4	Jul 3: Ps 103-105	Aug 4: Is 31-35	

*Part III of the guide will appear in the July 28 issue.*

intentions," she says.

At the same time, Baergen describes her time with SALT as a growing experience, during which she learned to see God, herself and others in new ways. It also helped her stop idealizing some of the jobs she initially thought of as "good, Christian jobs," like development worker, pastor or teacher.

She realized that the two sides of herself that she struggled to connect while in university—her life as a Christian and her life as an engineer—weren't so separate after all.

"You can be a presence wherever you are, whether it's in Tanzania, working with the people there, or working in an oil sands company and being a presence among

them, or working at a green technology company," she says.

"It's about being a light wherever you are in a way that makes sense." ❧



*After graduating from university in 2009, Cara Baergen spent time in Tanzania with Mennonite Central Committee's SALT program.*

## Calendar

### British Columbia

**April 26:** Paddle-a-thon for Camp Squeah.

**May 3:** Mennonite Women B.C.'s 75th Inspirational Day at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford. Speaker: Karen Martens Zimmerly.

**May 8,9,10,11:** Recycled Orchestra, a youth orchestra from Paraguay is on tour across Canada; (8) Broadway Community Church, Chilliwack, at 7 p.m. (9) Vancouver, venue and time TBA; (10) Peace Portal Alliance Church, Surrey, at 7 p.m. (11) Central Heights Church, Abbotsford, time TBA; all concerts with Calvin Dyck and Abbotsford Youth Orchestra.

### Alberta

**April 26:** Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta annual general meeting and spring conference, Coaldale Mennonite Church; AGM starts at 1 p.m., followed by a presentation by Ruth Derksen

Siemens on "Letters from Stalin's Russia." For more information, call Ken Matis at 403-345-3507 or e-mail kenmatis@gmail.com.

**April 27:** Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta fundraiser, at Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary, at 2:30 p.m. Speaker: Ruth Derksen Siemens. Topic: "Young Mennonite immigrant women who worked as domestic servants in Canadian cities. Fasma will be served. For more information, call Lil Bartel at 403-288-1297 or e-mail lilbartel@shaw.ca.

**May 4:** 2014 Canadian Association of Mennonite Schools Music Festival, at Ambrose University College, Calgary, at 3 p.m.

**May 10:** Camp Valaqua spring work day. Volunteers needed to help get the camp ready for summer by splitting wood, installing docks and setting up tipis. For more information, call 403-637-2510.

### Saskatchewan

**April 22-23:** "Honouring the Earth,"

an SMYO service and learning opportunity for students in grades 8 to 12, at Shekinah Retreat Centre, Waldheim. This event replaces the SMYO "Worship extravaganza" scheduled for March 29.

**April 26:** Saskatchewan Women in Mission Enrichment Day, at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**May 6:** Recycled Orchestra, a youth orchestra from Paraguay is on tour across Canada; at Rosthern Junior College; at 7 p.m.

**May 10:** RJC spring choir concert, at RJC.

### Manitoba

**April 12:** Southern Manitoba Choral Society performs Mendelssohn's *Elijah* at Buhler Hall, Gretna, at 7 p.m.

**April 18:** Haydn's *The Seven Last Words of Christ* will be sung in English with an orchestra under the direction of Yuri Klaz, at First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m. An offering will be taken.

**April 26:** CMU spring concert, at 7 p.m. For more information, visit [cmu.ca/events.html](http://cmu.ca/events.html).

**April 27:** The 45-voice adult choir of

Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, performs Haydn's *The Creation* with orchestra and soloists, at 7 p.m.

**April 30, May 2,4:** Recycled Orchestra, a youth orchestra from Paraguay is on tour across Canada; (30) Steinbach Mennonite Church; (2) Winkler MB Church; (4) North Kildonan MB Church, Winnipeg. All performances at 7 p.m.

**May 6:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate fundraiser banquet, at the Marlborough Hotel, Winnipeg, at 6 p.m.

**May 14:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate work day.

### Ontario

**April 8:** Mennonite Savings and Credit Union's 50th annual general meeting, at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener; registration at 6:30 p.m., followed by the meeting at 7 p.m.

**April 12:** MC Eastern Canada Youth Bible Quizzing.

**April 15:** MennoHomes hosts a retirement celebration for Martin Buhr at Gale Presbyterian Church, Elmira, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. For more information, visit [www.mennohomes.com](http://www.mennohomes.com).



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SAVE THE DATE!

## Recycled Orchestra Canadian Tour

Out of the slum of Cateura, Paraguay comes an unlikely orchestra, playing instruments made from trash found on the landfill.

Join us for an inspirational evening of story and music to see how hope is rising in one of South America's poorest communities.

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April 30 - May 4	<b>Manitoba</b>
May 5-7	<b>Saskatchewan</b>
May 8 - 11	<b>B.C.</b>

Visit [www.globalfamilyfoundation.ca](http://www.globalfamilyfoundation.ca) for more information



## UpComing

### Good Friday blues service to aid 'street-entrenched youth'

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.—Homeless youth will get some support from a group of musicians who want to use their talents to benefit others. The Good Friday Blues Band will hold two worship services at the House of James in Abbotsford on April 17 and 18, at 7:30 p.m., with ticket sales benefiting Cyrus Centre, an Abbotsford ministry that works with street-entrenched youth. Now in its third year, the worship services are designed around blues songs and focus on the events of Good Friday. The services include prayers, readings and a "sermon" delivered by actor John Dawson. New this year will be the addition of art work and an original poem presented by Adam Roper. And while that sounds pretty traditional, it's the addition of more than a dozen blues tunes that makes this service truly unique. A blog—[www.goodfridayblues.wordpress.com](http://www.goodfridayblues.wordpress.com)—that began on Ash Wednesday highlights one of the songs each week during the Lenten season, and offers enthusiasts a way to engage with the music prior to the event.

—BY ANGELIKA DAWSON

**April 25-26:** MC Eastern Canada annual church gathering in the Niagara Region.

**April 25-28:** Recycled Orchestra, a youth orchestra from Paraguay is on tour across Canada; (25) First Baptist Church, Waterloo; (26) UMEI Christian High School, Leamington; (27) Bethany Community Church, St. Catharines; (28) Wainfleet Brethren in Christ Church. All performances at 7 p.m.

**April 26,27:** Pax Christi Chorale presents "Passion and Peace," featuring the True North Brass; (26) St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, at 7:30 p.m.; (27) Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto, at 3 p.m. For tickets, call 416-491-8542 or e-mail [boxoffice@paxchristichorale.org](mailto:boxoffice@paxchristichorale.org).

**April 27:** Silver Lake Mennonite Camp annual general meeting, at Rockway Mennonite Church, Kitchener, at 1 p.m. Pizza lunch at 12:30 p.m.

**April 28:** New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale promotion dinner at Bingemans in Kitchener, at 6:30 p.m. Speaker: Eileen Henderson, MCC Ontario restorative justice coordinator. Topic: "Finding God in unexpected places." For tickets, call 519-745-8458.

**April 28, 30:** Spring Seniors Retreat at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp (same program offered both days).

Speakers. Martin Buhr and John Neufeld. Topic: "Building hope and community: Responses to poverty." Each day includes, worship, learning and fellowship. For more information, call 519-625-8602 or e-mail [info@hiddenacres.ca](mailto:info@hiddenacres.ca).

**May 1:** Deadline to apply for participation in Silver Lake Mennonite Camp's new Navigate program for young adults aged 18 to 20. For more information, visit [slmc.ca/navigate](http://slmc.ca/navigate).

**May 2-3:** Engaged Workshop at Maple View Mennonite Church, Wellesley. For more information, or to register, e-mail Denise Bender at [denise\\_bender@yahoo.com](mailto:denise_bender@yahoo.com).

**May 3-4:** Bethel Mennonite Church, Elora, youth homecoming event. For registration information, call the church at 519-846-0180.

**May 4:** Inter-Mennonite Children's Choir presents "When the Spirit Says Sing," at Floradale Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m. Tickets are available at the door.

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

## Employment Opportunities

Community Mennonite Fellowship in Drayton, ON seeking a full time Lead Pastor. Position available Summer 2014. For more details contact Henry Paetkau, MCEC Area Church

Minister at: [hpaetkau@mcec.ca](mailto:hpaetkau@mcec.ca) or visit [communitymennonite.com](http://communitymennonite.com) Please submit applications to Henry Paetkau by April 15th.



Waterloo North Mennonite Church invites applications for the full-time position of lead minister. We are a theologically diverse, urban congregation.

We are seeking a person with a well-integrated Mennonite/Anabaptist theological orientation who is committed to team ministry, with gifts in preaching and planning worship, pastoral care, ministry team leadership and administration. Candidates should have a Master of Divinity degree or equivalent, and previous pastoral experience. Supervised training in a pastoral setting is desirable, as is additional education in areas relevant to pastoral leadership.

Review of applications will begin on Apr. 25, 2014.

Preferred start date: Fall 2014

Please submit inquiries, resumes and references to:  
Henry Paetkau, Area Church Minister  
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada  
#201 - 50 Kent Ave.  
Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1  
Tel: 226-476-2500 or 855-476-2500

## Classifieds

### Travel

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

PHOENIX (Arizona) MENNO Guest House Bed and Breakfast welcomes families and business guests coming to the Phoenix area. Call 623-847-0314 or email [phxmenno-guest@gmail.com](mailto:phxmenno-guest@gmail.com). Visit our web site [www.hospitalityservicescenter.org](http://www.hospitalityservicescenter.org).

### Student Housing

**University Student Housing in Winnipeg**  
Inspired by an Anabaptist Christian faith perspective, Emmaus House is a residential community where university students in Winnipeg, Man., will find support academically, spiritually, in lives of service, healthy living and relationship. Go to [emmaushousewinnipeg.ca](http://emmaushousewinnipeg.ca) for more information and the Fall 2014 application form.

### Learning Opportunity

Learn to grow food organically (vegetables, livestock, field crops). Internships available. Murray Bunnett Family Farm, New Brunswick. House & Board included. Members of Petitcodiac Mennonite Church. 1-506-756-8261 [cmbunnett@hotmail.com](mailto:cmbunnett@hotmail.com)



## Employment Opportunity

UMEI Christian High School invites applications for the position of RECRUITMENT & ADMISSIONS DIRECTOR.

- Post-secondary college diploma or university degree.
- Experience and/or education in the area of marketing, business and community relations will be given preference.
- The successful applicant will have a passion for Mennonite School Education and be aware of the distinctiveness expressed from a Mennonite & Anabaptist perspective at UMEI.
- The applicant must be a self-starter and be willing to take initiatives on his or her own, and be able to engage in effective teamwork with staff, board and parents.
- Responsibilities include implementation and supervision of all Recruitment & Admission initiatives.
- Full-time equivalency of the position will be determined in consultation with the successful candidate.
- Remuneration will be commensurate with experience and education.
- UMEI Christian School is a privately funded Mennonite Church secondary school offering a full complement of Grade 9-12 courses, fully recognized by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

For a more complete job description and to submit applications, contact Sonya Bedal, Principal, UMEI Christian School, 614 Mersea Road 6, Leamington, ON N8H 3V8. 519-326-7448. [office@umei.ca](mailto:office@umei.ca), [www.umei.ca](http://www.umei.ca). Applications accepted until March 28.





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