

CANADIAN MENNONITE

April 28, 2014
Volume 18 Number 9

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shape
of church
to come?

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ESPACE TONUS

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EDITORIAL

It's time to divest

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

It's been called the greatest human rights issue of our time. Or if that sounds too secular for Anabaptist Mennonites, let's translate it to say it is the most pressing justice issue of our time.

We're talking warming of the planet (an increase of 3 degrees Celsius predicted by 2050) that is not only bringing extreme weather to Canada, but, more importantly, to the developing world, where drought and flooding are bringing untold suffering to the poor and underprivileged, ruining much-needed crops for food and destroying homes at a rate unknown in the past.

This is not a political left versus right issue, not a secular versus religious issue, not an elitist issue that divides the haves from the have-nots. This is a profoundly serious matter that is affecting all living beings regardless of race, creed or location on the economic or educational scale. To deny it is happening, or to ignore the proven findings of science on the matter, is to be living in fantasy. Living through the extremes of this past winter is only some of the evidence that we are living in a more dangerous time.

But what specifically to do about it? Rather than wringing our hands and waiting for the next catastrophic weather event, we can take action—right now. It goes without saying that we are far too dependent on fossil fuels for our daily living: electricity for our homes, fuel for our vehicles, airplanes, trucks and other

modes of transportation that criss-cross the country to meet our ever-growing demand for products and services.

There is a growing outcry against our fossil-fuel industry which, charges environmentalist Bill McKibben, is the “richest and most arrogant industry the world has ever seen. The five largest oil companies alone made \$137 billion in profits in 2012.”



This is a delicate issue. Much of Canada's economy is based on extracting our rich deposits of crude oil, especially in Alberta, where many of our families earn their living, put bread on the table and give to their congregational church budgets from income derived from this system.

We don't want to be flippant or arcane about the implications of our recommendations. This has to be addressed carefully and with sensitivity to our sisters and brothers, who should not be demonized for deriving their livelihood from the fossil-fuel industry.

But there is a growing conviction among some of us that we must go beyond rhetoric and carefully-worded statements. We must take some action.

A small group of our sisters and brothers has drafted an open letter to the leadership of Mennonite Church Canada that calls for fossil fuel divestment, joining an action taken by numerous schools and religious bodies across the continent. “Refusing to invest in the companies at the core of the fossil-fuel industry is an

important way to address the climate crisis,” the letter states.

The group acknowledges the significant steps already taken. It praises MC Canada executive director Willard Metzger for his participation in the 2011 United Nations climate conference in Durban, South Africa, and for his work as a commissioner of the 2013 Saskatchewan Citizens' Hearing on Climate Change that claimed global warming as a church priority.

FossilFreeMenno is calling on MC Canada leaders to commission a study that would provide specific options—based in part on what others have done—for fossil-fuel divestment. These options are for MC Canada itself, as well as other investing entities within the MC Canada family, including schools, non-governmental organizations and individual church members.

McKibben sees in us a supportive community of faith: “Mennonites are known in the Christian community for their peace witness. We need the Mennonite church to step up and engage the greatest issue of violence that humanity has ever faced—the destruction of the earth through human-induced climate change. The time has come to both speak and live for peace with costly action.”

High-profile names have joined the movement. Archbishop Desmond Tutu added his voice in support of the growing divestment movement and called for an anti-apartheid-style campaign against fossil-fuel companies, which he blames for the “injustice” of climate change.

We join others in signing the open letter and others in this specific action to stop global warming. Will you?

ABOUT THE COVER:

Churches across Canada—including this one in downtown Montréal—are closing for lack of congregants, to be replaced by gyms, spas, restaurants and upscale condos. Donita Wiebe-Neufeld's sabbatical reflection on 'The shape of church to come?' begins on page 4.

PHOTO: DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD, CANADIAN MENNONITE

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

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Online NOW!

at canadianmennonite.org

Web exclusives include sermons reflecting on the most recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission event:

- 'One thing lacking,' by Carol Penner
- 'Who is blind?' by Werner De Jong

See also, 'Is support for Israel waning among evangelicals?' and news about two recent additions to the Conrad Grebel faculty and staff roster.

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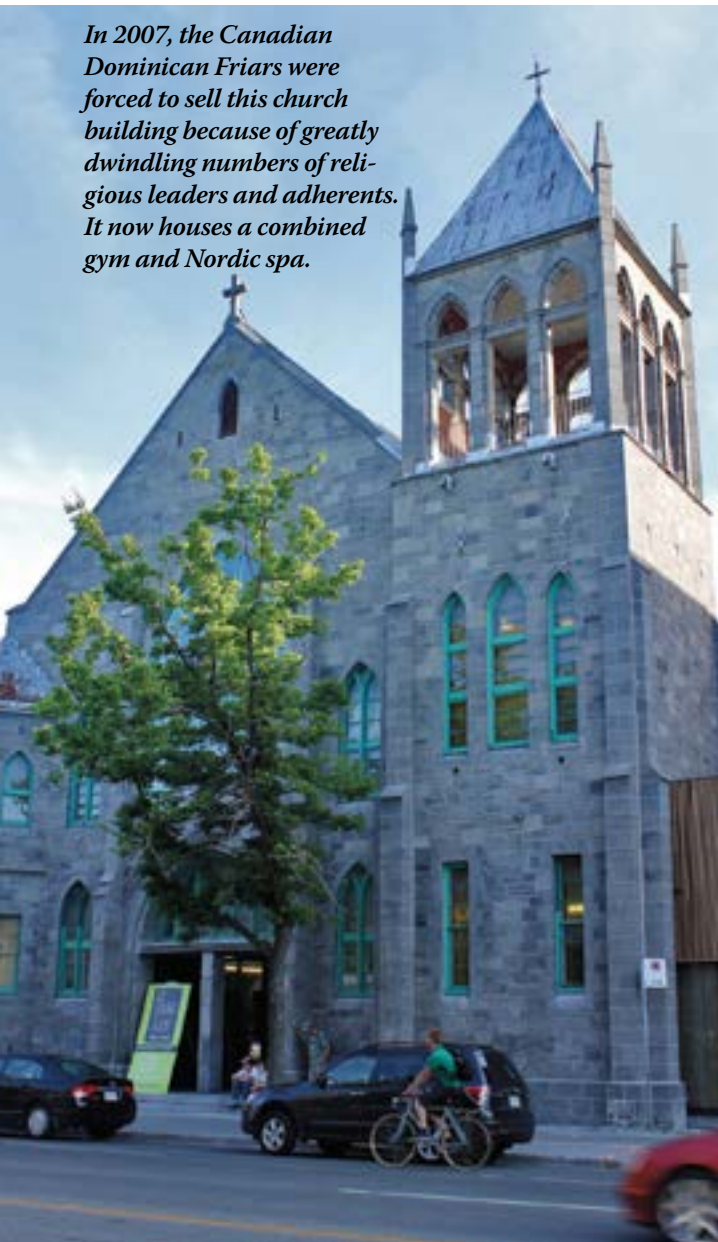
SABBATICAL REFLECTION

The shape of church to come?

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

ALBERTA CORRESPONDENT

In 2007, the Canadian Dominican Friars were forced to sell this church building because of greatly dwindling numbers of religious leaders and adherents. It now houses a combined gym and Nordic spa.



The skyline is liberally punctuated with steeples, but they loom like tombstones over the churches of Montréal. The beautiful buildings are mostly dead on Sundays, and I wonder where the church has gone.

As part of a four-month sabbatical, our family spent several weeks in Montréal, living in a student residence at Maison de l'Amitié (House of Friendship) and volunteering at a homeless shelter. It was an ideal place to reflect on the relevance of the church in an age in which Christendom is passé and people seem to have little energy to maintain traditional forms of religion. Do empty churches indicate a lack of faith, or do they need to adapt to different ways of nurturing faith in people both inside and outside their walls?

Symbols of Christianity are everywhere in Montréal. A brilliantly lit cross stands on the top of Mount Royal, an enduring symbol of thanks to God for answered prayer after a flood was averted in 1643. Many people on the streets wear crosses as jewelry. Gorgeous cathedrals like the historic Notre Dame and the newer St. Joseph's Oratory attract millions of tourists.

The church is everywhere, yet people do not belong to it. Around the corner from our residence, a beautiful stone church is now a spa, where worship of God has been replaced by devotion to the body. Other church buildings have become cinemas, storefronts, community halls, libraries and condos.

A very few still advertise Sunday services, and we were told these are mainly aging and dwindling congregations.

Where the Roman Catholic Church once dominated life at all levels, people now show little overt interest in church life. The Quiet Revolution of the 1960s saw political power move from the Catholic Church to an increasingly secular society. And in the 1970s, laws to protect the French language caused many Anglican Church members to leave Quebec.

Since then, scandals and misuse of power by clergy have turned many of the remaining people away. A palpable contempt for organized religion is evident in the fact that French swear words often reference the church.

I wonder if perhaps the church in Montréal is further along the same diminishing trajectory Mennonite Church Canada seems to be travelling on. Many of our congregations are shrinking, too, and



Darian and Jacob Wiebe-Neufeld, centre, enjoy a game of Sorry! with a couple of regulars at the St. James Drop-in Centre in Montréal.

the feeling that the faithful are aging and young people are leaving is not uncommon. Many drift away from denominational participation, and, like the Montréal populace, find the institution less relevant to their lives than in the past.

Today, when MC Alberta asks congregations for statistics, once a month is considered regular attendance! Busy work schedules, affordable recreation, outside interests, sports and new technologies fill people's lives. While people may find community through work or recreational opportunities, where do they find meaning . . . and God?

In a recent discussion with Abe Janzen, director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Alberta, we noted that many people now disillusioned with the traditional church are seeing charity organizations such as MCC and Mennonite Disaster Service as the place where faith finds expression and "church" happens. In such places, people are united by a common goal, they see the

positive outcomes of their service and they feel freed from the frustrations of church politics.

While commitment to relief and charity work fulfills the need for the practical living out of faith, what might happen if the church that underpins these practical ministries shrivels away? Where will people find connections to God and each other?

In Montréal, I found God in two places and a person.

St. James Drop-in Centre

There is a vibrant community in the basement of St. James the Apostle Anglican Church, in a part of Montréal once known as the "Golden Mile." The St. James Drop-in Centre is there, "offering a safe and supportive environment where those who are marginalized and/or homeless can experience community to its fullest," its website says.

The "drop-in" part of the name is a bit misleading. People at St. James don't

just drop in, they become intentional members of the community, agreeing to ongoing relationships and helping each other. The warmth and sense of ownership among the people is palpable.

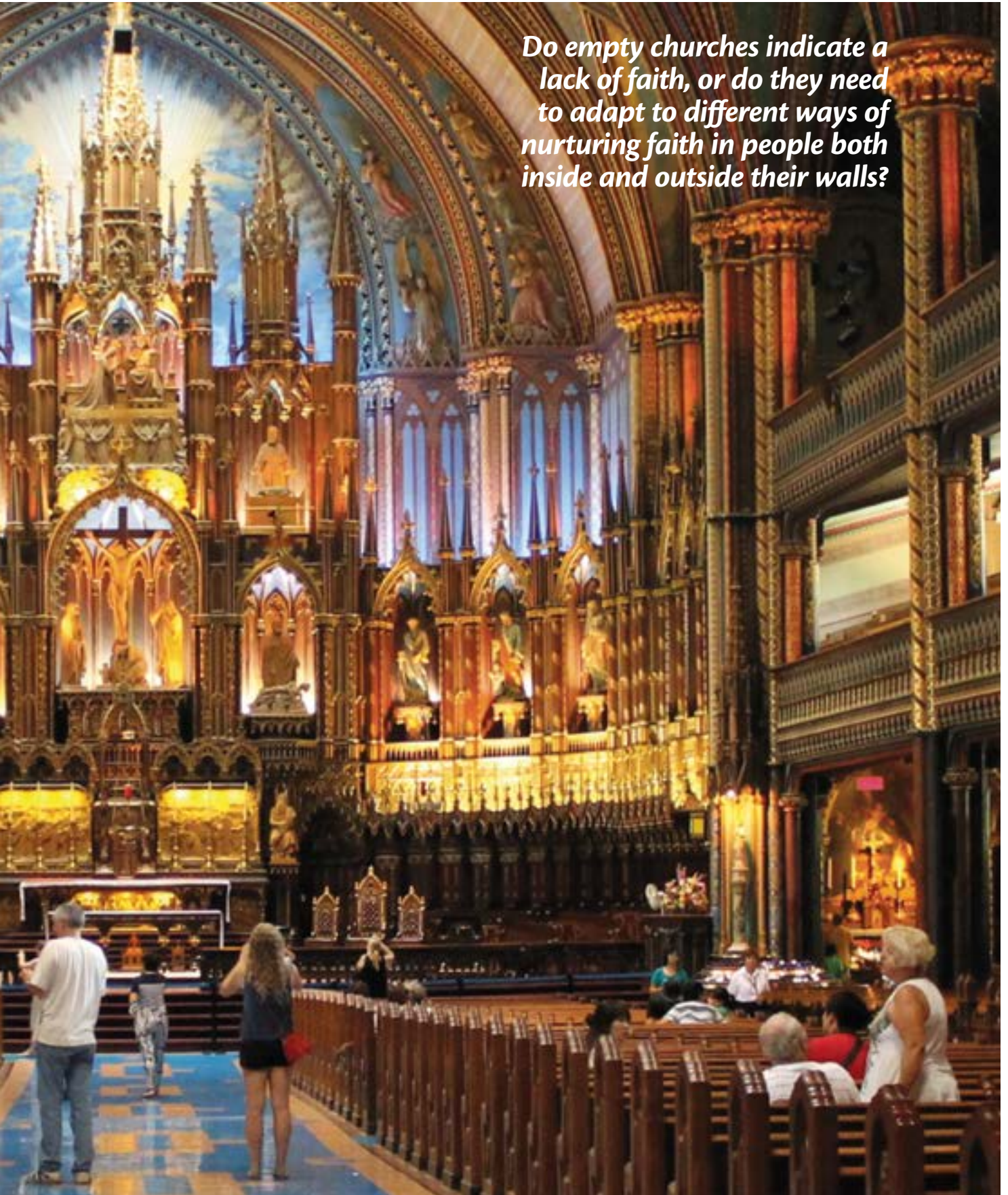
Our family—myself, husband Tim and our boys, Darian, 15, and Jacob, 12—were warmly greeted, and we couldn't easily tell who was staff, a volunteer or a member of the centre.

For three weeks, our job was simply to get to know people. Several of the members made sure Darian and Jacob had things to do, pulling them into the art room, playing board games and speaking in French, which was great, since both boys are in French immersion at school in Edmonton.

Helping the disadvantaged at the centre is much more than serving a meal. It is getting to know and value people for who they are. While there is no overt faith proclamation, Christian values are evident. Members are encouraged to

(Continued on page 8)





Do empty churches indicate a lack of faith, or do they need to adapt to different ways of nurturing faith in people both inside and outside their walls?



Two staff and a St. James Drop-in Centre member jam in the art room. The artistic and musical talents that were in evidence among the members were amazing. After meeting the people, the idea that anyone from any walk of life can become homeless really sank in.

(Continued from page 5)

treat each other as family. The centre directors, Alain Spitzer and Ron Melanson, noted that even though there is no faith requirement, all the staff are Christians, and the majority of volunteers are also people of faith.

One morning, Tim and I spoke with Linda Borden Taylor, the priest at St. James. She told us the church was experiencing emptying pews. In 1930, the church could hold 1,200 and was crowded on Sundays. Now, only 60 to 70 regular worshippers attend.

In response to this trend, Borden Taylor began to explore what good stewardship of the building could look like. It now shares space with various social programs, such as a group for women and children affected by family violence and a program for refugees, as well as the drop-in centre and other community mission initiatives.

“There’s something happening here. God’s Spirit is moving,” Borden Taylor said, noting that recently some young adults with no church background at all were coming and asking questions, drawn in by what the church is doing for people.

Maison de l’Amitié

Maison de l’Amitié is all about embracing community. Started in 1974 as a ministry of the Mennonite Churches of Ontario and Quebec (now MC Eastern Canada) and MCC, it holds language

classes; houses a program for survivors of organized violence; operates a student residence; and rents space to community, peace and environmental initiatives. The Mennonite Fellowship of Montréal uses the basement for worship services, and a number of its members volunteer in the programs.

Director Luke Martin said the purpose of Maison de l’Amitié is “to be a Mennonite Anabaptist presence incarnate. Not so much to share our faith—that’s the church’s job—but to be incarnate, to be present in community.”

Dora-Marie Goulet, another director, is passionate about the church’s connection to practical ministry. She described the church as “a place to worship and be in community. [Maison de l’Amitié] gives people a way to get involved in community first, before ‘church’ is brought into it.”

Both Martin and Goulet are concerned about the complete withdrawal of MC Eastern Canada funding in 2013 and what might happen if church involvement in the work disappears. There is “a high risk if the Montréal Mennonite Fellowship decides not to be involved,” Martin said, adding, “We want connection with the Mennonites.”



Maison de l’Amitié doesn’t look like much from the outside, but its tiny garden and park benches provide a good place for community members to talk. A Swiss couple who stayed in the student residence for a few nights told director Dora Marie Goulet, “It’s a one star facility, but gets five stars in its connections!”

Dorothy Mills-Proctor

One Sunday we worshipped with the Montréal Mennonite Fellowship, where I met Dorothy Mills-Proctor, a person of black, indigenous and Scottish heritage, who wrote the audio essay, “Born again Indian: A story of self-discovery of a red-black woman and her people.”

Keenly intelligent and engaging, she shared about her love-hate relationship with church. She grew up in small-town Nova Scotia, distrusting church institutions and authority figures. She said she was sexually abused as a child by family members and a Catholic priest.

With nowhere to turn, she ran away at age 13 and became involved in prostitution. At 16, in spite of being too young to be legally incarcerated, she found herself in the Kingston (Ont.) Penitentiary. In prison, she said the abuse by authority figures continued and that she was one of a number of people forced into horrible drug experiments.

Hearing her painful story, I wondered how she had come to faith when her experiences with the church were so twisted. She said a background in indigenous teachings allowed her to remain open to the Creator.

All her life, Mills-Proctor said she felt nudged by the Spirit: “I was having spiritual experiences that I would resist and reject because I connected them to Christianity.” She eventually felt drawn to Jesus. “I was so determined to find out why these people [Christians] are talking about Jesus and doing the complete opposite,” she said.

When she began to focus on the Jesus story, she said she discovered “a counter-culture guy just like I’m a counter-culture woman! This is my guy. Man, I like him.”

In her 70s, Mills-Proctor attends church, although the institution still causes her some frustration. “Talking, talking, talking. What are we doing? Pick an issue and let’s get on with it!” she exclaimed. She said she stays with the church because “I thought they needed help in certain areas and I needed help in certain areas.”

Observations

I went to Montréal looking for the church. Although I didn’t find it in the

historic stonework or under soaring steeples, it became obvious a non-traditional form of church was alive and perhaps even thriving in the city. To see it, I had to shake off ideas of the old empirical measurements of success, like Sunday attendance and program variety. Practical faith lived every day is really where the church is alive.

Instead of thinking of church as centred in a building and moving out to the streets, I saw church in people who then sometimes gathered in buildings to worship and learn. The things that created the traditional expressions of church—a need for community, a desire to serve others, and Jesus’ message of love and redemption—still bring people together.

The less institutionally centred church emerging today seems more concerned about connecting people than categorizing them. This way of “doing church” is less creedal and proscriptive, more practical and engaged, and really is not much about bricks and mortar anymore. ❧



Donita Wiebe-Neufeld is Canadian Mennonite's Alberta correspondent. Read the sidebar 'Honouring a cross-country request' online.



A cross has stood on the top of Mount Royal in Montréal since 1643 as a lasting reminder of God's grace when a flood was averted. The cross standing there today is brilliantly lit every night and can be seen for miles.

/// For discussion

1. Do you have churches in your local community that are more-or-less empty on Sundays? Does your congregation regard once a month as regular attendance? If attendance drops, at what point is a congregation unsustainable?
2. Donita Wiebe-Neufeld says that some people see charity organizations as the place where faith finds expression and where “church” can happen. How healthy is this attitude? Could charities such as Mennonite Central Committee or Mennonite Disaster Service survive without the church?
3. Although St. James Anglican Church is mostly empty on Sundays, Wiebe-Neufeld quotes the priest as saying, “God’s Spirit is moving.” Do you agree that God’s Spirit is at work at St. James? Can you imagine this scenario at your church? How can we detect the moving of God’s Spirit?
4. What are the fears that keep us attached to our church buildings? Is Wiebe-Neufeld right that the church of the future will be more practical and engaged, and less about beliefs and rules? What does a non-traditional church look like?

—BY BARB DRAPER

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

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

✉ NHL players miss a 'coachable' moment

RE: "IT'S ALL part of the game," Feb. 17, page 33.

I attended the event held at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond, B.C., at which Mike Fisher and Nick Spaling from the Nashville Predators were interviewed by Willard Metzger of Mennonite Church Canada, and I even stood in line to get an autograph for my nephew's son.

I want to point out a couple of important aspects from this evening, as I left with much to think about.

I forget the specific question Metzger asked, but something about how each of them stays focused on what's important. Spaling responded that he looks at whether or not he is still enjoying the game. He shared that when he told his dad that he wanted to play hockey, his dad had said, "Okay, let's go have some fun and see what happens and where it goes."

Mike Fisher said he works at remaining "being coachable."

So am I coachable? I want to be. Often I'm not. I pondered what hinders my coachableness. Am I just

stubborn? Or could it have something to do with the people who are trying to coach me? Or a combination of the two? As I pondered that, I realized that my tendency to respond with a coachable spirit improves dramatically if the people who are trying to coach me are also coachable.

Since the evening was primarily geared for younger people I felt that the hockey players could have reminded the young people in attendance that for every person who dreams of playing in the NHL, there are only a very few who get to realize that dream. Young people need to know that often the dreams we pour our energy into just don't work out. Disappointment is part of life.

My nephew dreamed of playing in the NHL and he was living towards that dream, progressing in junior hockey, and then his dream ended. This can be devastating and yet it's a pill many of us have to swallow so that we can entertain a new dream. And who knows, maybe it will be a better one.

Finally, I was reminded that throughout history the younger have been teaching the older as much as the older have been teaching the younger.

GEORGE W. GOERTZEN,
NEW WESTMINSTER B.C.

✉ John Howard Yoder was reconciled to his church

RE: ONGOING COVERAGE and letters relating to John Howard Yoder's sexual abuse.

There is an essential side of the Yoder story that begs to see the light of day.

From its beginning, the Anabaptist movement emphasized the redemptive process of the Rule of Christ (Matthew 18:15-17). This process seems to have been skipped in the case of Yoder. Given the circumstances, one can empathize with the petitioners not desiring to face the accused, or even to be named. To be sure, the charges could have been made through an intermediary. Even in a public court case, the "who" needs to be identified in conjunction with the "what."

Fortunately, there was a conference/congregational process lasting four years that ended in genuine reconciliation. John M. Bender, a Prairie Street Mennonite Church (Elkhart, Ind.) elder, summed up the results of the process in an April 22, 2013, letter he sent to me:

"Dec. 6, 1996, Elder meeting minutes: 'It was noted from conference communication that the charges against John have been satisfactorily settled and closed. Action: Moved and carried to recognize John Howard Yoder's continued membership at Prairie Street Mennonite Church . . .' Elders and John and Annie again met for dinner on Feb. 1, 1997. . . . The

/// Correction

Mennonite Central Committee Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) also operate in Quebec, where there are more than 40 circles, and in Nova Scotia, where there are a few, according to Jean-Jacques Goulet, CoSA's Quebec coordinator. These two provinces were not listed in the "CoSA: cautious optimism" editorial, March 17, page 2. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the omission.

meeting turned the tables for me in terms of apology, repentance on the part of John, restitution and restored fellowship with the congregation. I recall it as a turning point, a moment of grace that summed up all previous steps of accusation, discipline, counselling, apology, repentance and efforts to make things right. . . . John wanted to make things right as much as he could, but the multiple parties in the process had no

clear lines of communication with each other.”

Yoder himself had established a fund to be used for those he had hurt. Those involved in the process came to the conclusion that he was aware of needed boundaries, and would from now on stay within such boundaries. Indeed, he apologized publicly for the “inappropriateness of his actions and his desire for healing for

(Continued on page 12)

FAMILY TIES

The deadly sin of wrath

MELISSA MILLER

“**T**he only problem with them,” my friend said as we admired the soft closure hinges on my kitchen cupboards, “is that you can’t slam the doors when you’re mad.”

Door slamming isn’t one of my main outlets for anger; instead, I’m more prone to loud stomping or yelling. I could readily see the appeal of strong-arming the door with a resounding thwack, and the frustration that might arise in a modern kitchen outfitted with devices that invite or even compel one to shut cupboards and drawers gently and peacefully. Who knows? Maybe such instruments could be utilized in counselling and conflict resolution sessions to reduce anger or redirect it into carefully measured responses.

Anger is not a problem, although we often think it is. Many of us have had troubling experiences that convince us of anger’s dangers. Like our other emotions—sadness, joy and fear, to name a few—anger is God-given, wired into our bodies and spirits, and serves a useful purpose. Anger alerts us to wrongdoing, warns us of boundary violations and urges us to be vigilant. Anger can give us strength to fight injustice.

The problem with anger occurs when we separate the emotion of anger from a reasoned response to it, or to the harmful event that has provoked the anger.



Thomas Aquinas, the 13th-century Italian theologian, understood anger to be a passion, with the potential to be good if it is filtered through reason. If reason is set aside, Aquinas taught, then anger could be evil. Without reason, anger can easily flame into rage or wrath. Unbridled, such anger is destructive, earning its place as one of the Seven Deadly Sins.

Reason helps us weigh the provocation and our reaction to it: What happened? Who did what? What is my part in this? What is the impact of the event? What are my expectations or goals? How can I best meet those goals? And yes, what would Jesus do? (His anger often arose in

us to patience, the virtue opposite of wrath. Patience is needed to bring thoughtful reason to bear on the surge of angry energy. If anger is red, hot and self-centred, patience is a temperate blue and includes the capacity to consider the other person. Patience is needed to work through the questions listed above! It can be compelling in the short run to strike back, to lash out with sharp words, or to press send on an inflammatory e-mail with a message one would never deliver

Patience is needed to bring thoughtful reason to bear on the surge of angry energy.

response to oppression and mistreatment of the poor and the vulnerable.)

The Book of Proverbs offers additional counsel: “Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding, but one who has a hasty temper exalts folly” (14:29), and “Rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing” (12:18). And many of us have likely memorized, “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (15:1).

Such wisdom offers a contrasting response to unreasoned anger, pointing

in person. Patience reminds us there are consequences to such actions, to all of our actions.

At the end of the exchange, at the end of the day, at the end of our lives, we probably would choose to have exercised restraint and discipline over our hot tempers, given the hurt and destruction that resulted when we didn’t. With patience, we gain control over these emotions, and that is empowering. There is something satisfying and virtuous in cultivating virtues!

(Continued from page 11)

the people he hurt," as reported by Ted Grimsrud, in the March 3, 1998, issue of *The Mennonite*.

We gave John his life back, rejoicing that an errant has repented!

LEONARD GROSS, GOSHEN, IND.

✉ Millennials shape their own morality without the church

RE: "WHO ARE the millennials?" editorial, March 31, page 2.

"Who are the millennials?" is the wrong question to ask ourselves. I suggest that the right question is: "What does the church have to offer millennials—or

GOD, MONEY AND ME

What's your 'money personality'?

BY DORI ZERBE CORNELSEN

"Can two people walk together without agreeing on the direction?" That's

from the Bible (Amos 3:3, New Living Translation). It was my parents' wedding text when they were married 65 years ago. It's a verse in the middle of a punishment text and I've always wondered how they came up with that.

It's a great question, though, for couples who are just starting out together, setting up a common household, potentially combining income and resources, or, in other words, doing money together. Given most relationships end because of conflicts and stress over finances, figuring out healthy ways to do money together as a couple is incredibly important.

But money is hard to talk about. Glossy magazines publish all sorts of tests couples can take to improve their sex lives. Why not their money lives?

When doing money together, it's not just the big purchases—car, condo or cruise—that can cause tensions. All sorts of little things can add up to growing frustration with a partner:

• **WHY DOES** he need that latte every day?

- **WHY DOES** she always need a sale to buy anything?
- **WHY DOES** she give such big tips when we go out?
- **WHY DOES** he nag me to pack a lunch instead of grabbing something with friends?

The reality is, each of us has a money personality. Some of us are impulsive while some of us ponder and stress over every financial decision.

We come by our personalities honestly. We're influenced by parents, life experiences, faith, media and friends. Unless we have a look at our money personalities, we assume our tendencies are normal and it's the other person who has a problem.



Some of us are impulsive while some of us ponder and stress over every financial decision.

So why not take a short money personality test as a couple? Think about the characteristics that describe your own style of dealing with money. The list could include words like: spontaneous, careful, compulsive spender, frugal, thankful, content, honest, stingy, generous, saver, borrows easily, worried about the future, deliberate, and the list goes on.

Before sharing lists, you may want to think about which characteristics you feel good about and which you might want to change. Then, couples can share their lists with each other. It's best to start a conversation like this by agreeing to ground rules like:

- **WE WILL** take this conversation seriously.
- **WE WILL** not interrupt each other.
- **WE WILL** listen to each other with compassion.

We may also want to admit that we make assumptions about money because of the household in which we grew up. Was the atmosphere in the room tense if the topic of money came up? Who paid the bills? Was there someone who had all the control when it came to money?

It's hard to agree to go in the same direction as a couple unless there is conversation. In the end, couples might not always totally agree on every detail when it comes to money, but talking is the first step to understanding.

For more ideas on couples and money personalities, visit <http://bit.ly/1qfzrRO>.

Dori Zerbe Cornelsen is a stewardship consultant in the Winnipeg 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.



anyone else, for that matter?

It's true that millennials have finely-tuned B.S. meters and they are leaving the church in large numbers. But maybe it's not because of the pastor with skinny jeans offering them a latte. I think it's because the very core of what the church offers is not relevant anymore. Scripture and faith tradition have little to no relevance to anything that millennials are doing.

Our religious traditions were born in frightening and superstitious times. Millennials have had the opportunity to grow up in a more educated and sceptical society, and it looks good. There are friendly people from so many other faiths out there, but most of the friendly people they know are very secular. How can we expect millennials to turn back to the one particular faith that their parents were taught to believe by the millennials' grandparents?

Many churches are patting themselves on the back for now accepting homosexuals. To a millennial, a church that says, "Welcome! We're now okay with gays," sounds about as backward as a church that says, "Welcome! We're now okay with black people!" Unburdened by the task of rationalizing how the New Testament is right, but Leviticus is wrong, millennials have a head start on shaping their own morality without the church.

The Bible still has important stories to tell all generations, and it is not irrelevant. But it is not any more relevant than Harry Potter. Both Harry Potter and the Bible have heroes, morals and life lessons to learn. And both have a central theme of magic. And no matter how hard we try, magic just doesn't work.

CLARK DECKER, WINNIPEG

FROM OUR LEADERS

For kids too!

MIRIAM TSHIMANGA-MAENHOUT

As the mother of two boys aged 6 and 11, I am happy to see the wide variety of faith-shaping resources for parents of young children available from Mennonite Church Canada's Resource Centre.

Children are sponges. Adding Anabaptist faith-based books, DVDs and downloadable resources to the other materials they view helps shape their faith as they grow.

Of the many children's story Bibles available, my family especially likes *Children of God, Storybook Bible* by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. It comes with audio CDs of Tutu reading aloud. Every story ends with a short prayer that will help children connect the biblical story to their own lives. Beautiful illustrations by 20 artists from all over the world acknowledge to the child's eye that the people of God are from all tribes and nations.

Great books help children articulate how they might see or perceive God. *Because Nothing Looks Like God* by

Lawrence and Karen Kushner extends a vibrant invitation to children and the adults to explore—together—what, where and how God is present in our lives.

I also want my kids to explore themes of peace and nonviolence. One popular MennoMedia book on this topic is *Plant a Seed of Peace*, written by Rebecca Seiling and illustrated by Brooke Rothshank. It's a delightful compilation of 43 stories about peacemakers of today, including Daniel and Joji Pantoja, Mennonite Church Canada international workers in the Philippines, and reflections on pacifists of the past, such as Dirk Willems. This Anabaptist book is particularly meaningful for older children and even teens.

Want your children to learn about the multicultural church? Shi-Shi-Etko and Shin-chi's *Canoe* tells the story of two children's experiences at residential school. Drawn from author Nicola I. Campbell's interviews with her family and elders who survived Indian Residential Schools, these poignant stories are beautifully illustrated by Kim LaFave.

In Jeanette Winter's book *Nasreen's*

Secret School: A True Story From Afghanistan, young Nasreen's parents have disappeared and she hasn't spoken a word to anyone since. In despair, her grandmother risks everything to enrol Nasreen in a secret school for girls. Will a devoted teacher, a new friend and the worlds she discovers in books be enough to draw Nasreen out of her shell of sadness?

Books highlighting global cultural and linguistic differences also illustrate how much in common we have as part of the larger human family and the family of God. It is important to introduce my kids to stories of war, landlessness, economic instability and injustice. I want my children to learn empathy and understanding for the "other."

In an age in which television programming, computers and video games threaten to consume so much of our children's time, I am glad that there are so many faith-building options available.

Miriam Tshimanga-Maenhout is the administrative assistant at Mennonite Church Canada's Resource Centre. She is happy to ship books free anywhere in Canada—both ways—and pay the return postage for a borrowed DVD. She recommends www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/2191 as a good starting point, and invites toll-free phone calls at 1-866-888-6785.



LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Small self vs. whole self

TROY WATSON

In my last article I wrote that Spirit attunement and ego consciousness are rival states of being. Jesus refers to this internal rivalry by pitting the self against the Self. Jesus teaches that in order to truly live, one must deny one's self, crucify one's self or lose one's self. Paul teaches this as well, with regular references to "dying to self" and being "crucified with Christ."



Now a certain question jumps out at me when I hear Jesus or Paul talk about crucifying or denying or losing one's self: If one's self is being denied, crucified or lost, then who or what is doing the denying, crucifying or losing? There must be another "me" doing these things to "me." So who or what is this other self?

In most of his teachings Jesus invites us to live out of a different "self" or state of consciousness or mode of being. Jesus is inviting us to recognize and live out of that part of us that is in sync with God's Spirit. The Quakers call this our Inner Light. I believe Spirit baptism is becoming conscious of that centre of light within me that is united with God. It is becoming aware that God's presence abides in the depth of my being.

Jesus says in Luke 17:20-21: "*The kingdom of God is not out there somewhere, the kingdom of God is within you*" (my paraphrase). Jesus wants to open our eyes to a new reality, not just in the world around us, but also within us. Once our eyes are opened to this new reality, to this new "self" within, we must choose which self we will let live through us.

There are many different ways of talking about these opposing selves or states of consciousness. The fallen self vs. the image of God; a new creature in

Christ vs. the natural self; "Christ in you" vs. the carnal self; the first Adam vs. the last Adam; the "new human" vs. the "old human"; or the true self vs. the false self.

I call them the small self and the whole self.

The small self is what most of us identify with most of the time, even us Christians. Remember, just because we have been baptized

with the Spirit doesn't mean we are walking in the Spirit.

Our small selves live in a state of ego consciousness—a state of separation from the greater whole—and this seems to be our default setting. The small self is focused on "me" and my groups, and is

primarily a social construct. I am who I think I am, who I've been told I am, who I've been conditioned to be and who I'm convinced I ought to be. It's fixated on my uniqueness—that which separates me from others in good or bad ways—and my social identity—that which separates my group from other groups.

Our small selves are programmed to find identity and importance in things like accomplishments, degrees, physical appearance, traits and titles, and to find social identity in belonging to groups such as a particular family, religion, church, sports team, ethnicity, gender or nationality.

In short, our small self finds identity

and value in that which separates us from others and our group from other groups. We get sucked into "small-self" living in very subtle ways. Here's an example of the silliness of my own small self.

My ego felt a sense of personal validation and victory when both Canadian hockey teams won gold at the Winter Olympics a few months ago. Why? Because my social identity includes being Canadian and, therefore, good at hockey, even though I had nothing to do with winning those gold medals. In truth, I'm not that good at hockey. It activated a "my group is better" state of mind.

Another example is when I feel validated in my Christian faith when a

Now a certain question jumps out at me when I hear Jesus or Paul talk about crucifying or denying or losing one's self, namely, if one's self is being denied, crucified or lost, then who or what is doing the denying, crucifying or losing?

renowned celebrity or academic announces her belief in God or professes to be a Christian. Why do I feel this? Because part of my identity is found in being Christian, and whenever Christianity is affirmed as being good and right my identity shares in this affirmation. It activates a "my group is right" state of mind.

The small self is a stumbling block to authentic spiritual growth, but so are most of our attempts to eradicate it.

To be continued. . . .

Troy Watson (troydw@gmail.com) is pastor of Avon Mennonite Church, Stratford, Ont.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Banack—Bryn Carolyn (b. March 19, 2014), to Kendall and Clark Banack, Toronto United Mennonite.

Cressman—Daniel Allen (b. March 31, 2014), to Melissa and Andrew Cressman, Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Friesen—Bennett George (b. Feb. 12, 2014), to Ryan and Jodi Friesen, Blumenort Mennonite, Rosetown, Man.

Giesbrecht—Judah Owen (b. Jan. 22, 2014), to Gerry and Cassie Giesbrecht, Blumenort Mennonite, Rosetown, Man.

Jantzi—Aliyah Grace (b. March 18, 2014), to John and Mallory Jantzi, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Kradko—Nickolas (b. March 8, 2014), to Graham and Emma Kradko, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Rempel—Tanner Cole (b. Feb. 21, 2014), to Fred and Rachele Rempel, Blumenort Mennonite, Rosetown, Man.

Baptisms

Sarah Martin, Zach Wideman, Cheyenne Shantz, Kat Trytten, Natasha Braun—Community Mennonite, Drayton, Ont.

Deaths

Bach—Laura, 94 (b. Sept. 5, 1919; d. March 17, 2014), Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont.

Boschmann—Susan, 94 (b. April 2, 1919; d. April 1, 2014), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Collens—Jean Elizabeth (Bessie), 90 (b. Oct. 15, 1923; d. April 2, 2014), Preston Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.

Dyck—Ann (nee Loeppky), 84 (b. Sept. 22, 1929; d. March 11, 2014), Hanley Mennonite, Sask.

Gerber—Marion, 89 (b. Jan. 22, 1925; d. March 8, 2014), Cassel Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Gerber—Roy N., 92 (b. Jan. 28, 1922; d. March 11, 2014), Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Klassen—Maria (Marlies), 60 (b. Dec. 27, 1953; d. March 31, 2014), Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Letkeman—David, 78 (b. April 15, 1935; d. March 18, 2014), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Majanovic—Sero Peter, 84 (b. March 13, 1930; d. April 6, 2014), Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Martens—Taylor, 17 (b. July 22, 1996; d. March 1, 2014), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Pankratz—Margaret (nee Kornelsen), 101 (b. May 9, 1912; d. March 30, 2014), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Roth—Melinda, 98 (b. June 11, 1915; d. Dec. 19, 2013), Cassel Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Schroeder—Katherina (Tina) (nee Hildebrandt), 94 (b. Oct. 4, 1919; d. April 1, 2014), Blumenort Mennonite, Rosetown, Man.

Schultz—Alvin, 76 (b. Jan. 30, 1938; d. Jan. 30, 2014), Milverton Mennonite, Ont.

Snider—Bertha V (nee Bowman), 99 (b. Jan. 27, 1915; d. April 6, 2014), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Stanovich—Venus, 87 (d. March 17, 2014), Hamilton Mennonite, Ont.

Warkentin—John, 82 (b. Aug. 18, 1931; d. March 30, 2014), Hamilton Mennonite, Ont.

Witmer—John Eldon, 99 (b. Oct. 17, 1914; d. March 19, 2014), First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones

announcements within four months of the event.

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

Pondius' Puddle



GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Mutual aid or financial institution?

Mennonite Savings and Credit Union celebrates 50th anniversary

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

WATERLOO REGION

Fifty years ago—March 21, 1964—22 Waterloo County Mennonites got together and deposited a dollar each in a cash box to create a credit union to serve members of their faith community. From the beginning it was envisioned as an extension of mutual aid, a significant component of Mennonite self-identity, practice and theology.

As J. Winfield Fretz, a moving force in the founding of the Credit Union, wrote in 1947, which was quoted on the cover of its 50th-anniversary history, *Quilting a Credit Union: Stories of Mutual Aid*: “Mutual aid is a program designed to help set people on their own feet economically and spiritually, so that they can in turn become stronger members of the Christian body and bear their share of the load in church and community.”

Over the years, the Waterloo County Mennonite Credit Union became Mennonite Savings and Credit Union (MSCU), with offices in Aylmer, Elmira, Kitchener, Leamington, Milverton, Mount Forest, New Hamburg and Waterloo. The initial deposit has grown to more than \$900 million in deposits and loans, and the 22 initial members now total more than 19,000.

The push for ethical investments spawned a mutual fund company since sold, but in which MSCU still holds an interest. Unlike banks, the Credit Union offers low- and zero-interest loans drawn from monies deposited at zero interest for the sake of mutual aid. In combination with congregations, MSCU works with those who are in financial straits to help them to stability, continuing the mutual aid focus of the original founders.

MSCU members are drawn from many Mennonite groups—from modern Mennonite Church Canada, Mennonite Brethren and Brethren in Christ, through Old Colony Mennonites, Old Order Mennonites and Old Order Amish. In 2010, MSCU, which until then included only members in Mennonite and Brethren congregations, was expanded to include anyone who would accept the seven statements of shared faith with which all member churches in Mennonite World Conference agree.

This year’s annual meeting, held April 8 in Kitchener, with a video link to Leamington, used video stories, a panel discussion and a drama by Theatre of the Beat to focus on the theme of “mutual aid.”

In his address, Brent Zorzdrager, chief executive officer, shared his belief that MSCU remains a necessary component of Mennonite and Brethren faith and life now and into the future. He addressed three questions:

- **HOW DOES** MSCU authentically maintain a uniqueness that grows naturally out of a commitment to biblical principles?
- **HOW DOES** MSCU become the primary financial institution for the majority of members within our bond of association?
- **HOW DO** we maintain a sense of belonging to, and identity as, a caring community . . . that also offers a preventative approach to financial problems through education and financial planning?

Using stories from the present, he showed how mutual aid is alive in the work



Using a quilt to symbolize mutual aid, members of the Theatre of the Beat painted pictures of many of the ways in which the Mennonite Savings and Credit Union is doing the work of faith through money management. The Credit Union celebrated its 50th anniversary on April 8 at its annual general meeting held at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener, Ont.

MSCU is doing, how it is effectively supporting small and large businesses, and, using his own children as examples, how it is educating further generations in the principles that caused MSCU to be founded in the first place.

In a conversation afterward, he was clear that not all is easy for MSCU to continue. Unlike many credit unions and all banks, MSCU still works on the spread between the interest rates charged on loans and that paid on deposits. It has resisted increasing income through higher service charges or by entering into other financial fields like insurance sales or financial markets.

Zorzdrager noted that some members come in with advertisements from other institutions offering lower loan rates, seeking MSCU to match those, which makes him wonder whether MSCU is only a financial institution or whether it is an extension of the ministry the members carry out in their congregations.

Drawing attention to MSCU’s recent investments in both the new 50 Kent Avenue building that houses the Kitchener branch, and the MSCU Centre for Peace Advancement in the new addition at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Zorzdrager believes that MSCU is far more than a financial institution.

That means it may not be competitive in every way with other financial institutions. “It isn’t about growth, it’s about relevance,” Zorgdrager is quoted in the history book.

“What good are retained earnings and larger assets if our service isn’t improving and our members are burdened with larger debts, instead of living out faithful lives?” ❧

Still waiting

Old Order Mennonite community in Manitoba preparing for the return of their children with new school

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU
Manitoba Correspondent

Peter Rempel is holding on to hope that all of the children of an Old Order Mennonite community in Manitoba who wish to return will be back home by July. To date, 11 of the 40 children apprehended last year have been returned.

“Two infants will be returned by the end of April and there are some signals that the other young preschool children might be coming home a little while after that,” Rempel cautiously stated. Once the school year is over, the expectation is that more of the children will return, according to Rempel, former executive director of Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba, who has given over much of his retirement time to assisting this community as it negotiates with the Manitoba child welfare agency and legal system.

That hope is also reflected in the community as it makes preparations to build a new school building. It is waiting for one more permit before construction can begin. In the meantime, the old school is being emptied and dismantled.

“The children are excited about the prospect of a new school and one child has suggested that it be named ‘New Hope,’” said Rempel.

Traditionally, the community only offers education to Grade 8 or to age 14. Some of the children in care are expressing a wish to continue their schooling beyond this. This presents a new challenge to the community and one that the leadership has indicated a willingness to consider.

Preparations are being made for the return of the children in the three families whose parents face criminal charges.

“As long as those charges are pending

and unresolved, CFS [Child and Family Services] has said the children cannot live in the same home as the parent charged,” Rempel said. “They are upgrading one house where the mother, together with a single woman from the community, can live with the children.” In another situation where both parents face charges, they are looking at whether the children can be placed in the care of another family in the community under the supervision of CFS.

Communication has opened up between the Manitoba community and the Ontario Old Order Mennonite community from which it sprung. “There have been a few phone calls and some talk about bishops from Ontario visiting,” Rempel said, as there is a desire to bring some restoration to the severed relationship.

“Many of the children are having home visits now, which is a precursor to returning home,” said Rempel.

The events over the past two years have taken not only a physical and emotional toll on the community, but also a financial toll. The legal and transportation costs, time away from their labour-intensive work, and the lack of some of their younger workers, have put a strain on their economy.

One of the ways community members are earning money to pay for legal fees is by manufacturing bee boxes. “They have got an amazing assembly line of making bee boxes,” said Rempel. “Another couple of guys repair pallets for an outside company. All the proceeds from another project—putting up rafters on a huge dairy barn—went towards paying legal fees.”

A helping group made up of Mennonite professionals continues to work with the

community, providing counselling and parenting workshops, and connecting the community to resources that can help it in such areas as schooling. The group is prepared to work with the community for the long term, said Rempel.

Rempel recently visited with a family where some children had been returned. The children chatted easily in the English language, something that would not have happened earlier. “I enjoyed a delightful visit, but with a twinge of anguish, because, while I was enjoying a ‘grandfatherly’ conversation with the children, their own grandfather waited outside because of his bail restriction. He even felt he had to refrain from waving to his grandchildren who were looking out of the window as we rode away.” ❧

❧ Staff change

Grebel names new dean

WATERLOO, ONT—Trevor Bechtel, Ph.D., of Bluffton, Ohio, has been named dean of Conrad Grebel University College, succeeding Jim Pankratz, who has served in that role for the past nine years and is retiring in June. Currently associate professor of religion, Bechtel has spent the past 10 years at Bluffton University, a Mennonite university affiliated with Mennonite Church U.S.A. He has also taught at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary, Evanston, Ill., and Loyola University, Chicago, where he received his doctorate in constructive theology. Bechtel also attended Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, the University of Manitoba, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Conrad Grebel College and Rockway Mennonite Collegiate. An ordained minister, Bechtel is Grebel’s first dean who is also an alumnus. See full story at canadianmennonite.org.



Trevor Bechtel

—BY DICK BENNER



The Recycled Orchestra in concert!



From the slums of Paraguay comes an unlikely orchestra playing instruments made from trash found on the landfill. Join us for an evening of music and stories of hope!

Waterloo, ON
Friday, April 25th
First Waterloo Baptist Church, 7pm

Leamington, ON
Saturday, April 26th
UMEI Christian High School, 7pm

St. Catharines, ON
Sunday, April 27th
Bethany Community Church, 7pm

Wainfleet, ON
Monday, April 28th
Wainfleet BIC Church, 7pm

Steinbach, MB
Wednesday, April 30th
Steinbach Mennonite Church, 7pm

Winkler, MB
Friday, May 2nd
Winkler MB Church, 7pm

Winnipeg, MB
Saturday, May 3rd
Westwood Community Church, 7pm
Sunday, May 4th
North Kildonan MB Church, 7pm

Rosthern, SK
Tuesday, May 6th
Rosthern Junior College, 7pm

Chilliwack, B.C.
Thursday, May 8th
Broadway Church, 7pm

Vancouver, B.C.
Friday, May 9th
Willingdon Church, 7pm

White Rock, B.C.
Saturday, May 10th
Peace Portal Alliance, 7pm

Abbotsford, B.C.
Sunday, May 11th
Central Heights Church, 3pm



**All events are free with a
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more information, and to
watch a video of the
Recycled Orchestra, visit
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GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD



Len Franz of Edmonton First Mennonite Church, right, helps to carry a banner as a crowd walks from the site of the TRC event to the Alberta Legislature in a celebration and ceremonial walk of reconciliation on Sunday evening.



A picture hanging in the art area at the TRC in Edmonton. All participants were welcome to use art supplies to make and display their expressions of truth and reconciliation.

‘The truth was hard’

‘Reconciliation will be even harder,’ says Justice Murray Sinclair

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD
 Alberta Correspondent
 EDMONTON

I was standing beside Neill Von Gunten, former co-director of Mennonite Church Canada Native Ministries, and trying to peer over heads to see into the “Churches Listening Area” at the final Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) national event in Edmonton last month. An aboriginal leader had just

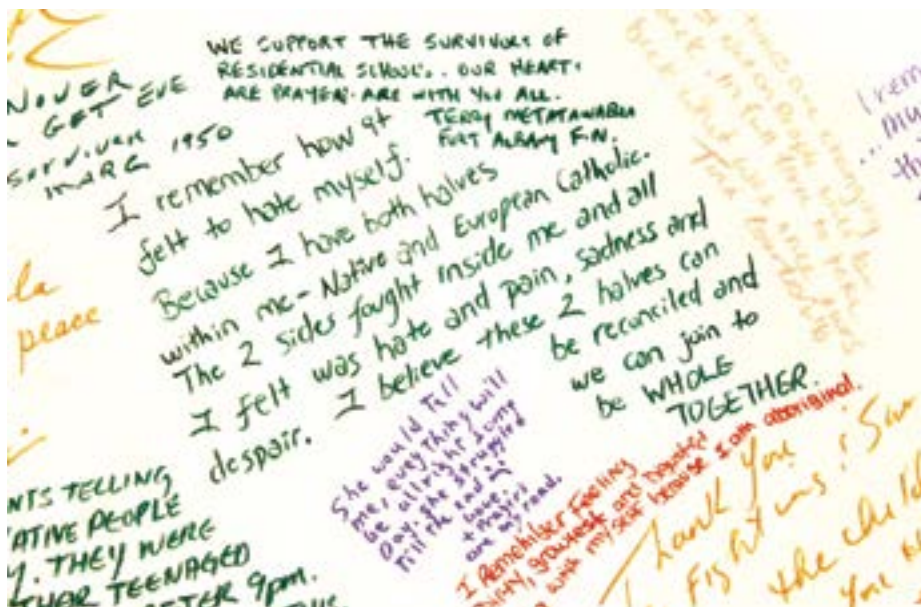
prayed, and a church leader suggested a song; “We are Marching in the Light of God.”

As the first notes sounded, an indigenous man pushed past us and left the area. “That man just walked away saying I’ve had enough of that,” Von Gunten explained. “For us, it may be meaningful, but for some survivors it brings up hard memories. They sang some of these songs in residential school.”

Indian Residential Schools have left a painful and crippling legacy; tore families apart; and subjected thousands of children to abuse, desperate loneliness, hunger and disease, and separation from all aspects of their cultural heritage.

Like the six events before it, the one in Edmonton encouraged survivors to record or tell their stories, providing a place for the telling of Canada’s shameful and hidden history of residential schools.

From 1870 to 1996, more than 150,000 indigenous children were placed in the federally funded, church-run institutions. In 1907, Dr. P.H. Bryce was sent to evaluate health conditions in residential schools. His report called the situation at schools a “national crime,” with unacceptable levels of student deaths occurring. Death rates of 24 percent were common. At the File Hills



A message left on a public board in the churches listening area.

TRC REPORT

First Nation in Saskatchewan, 75 percent of the students died in the first 16 years of the school's operation. Shockingly, Bryce's recommendations were suppressed and largely ignored.

The words "For the child taken, and the parent left behind" were emblazoned everywhere in the TRC venue, and it was poignantly clear that damage to indigenous people is intergenerational and ongoing. Dysfunctions resulting from trauma and loss are handed down through families, continuing to wound even though the schools are gone.

Survivor after survivor came forward to tell their stories in sharing circles. Many wept, saying they were unable to be good parents to their own children. Many spoke of alcohol as an escape from memories and nightmares, an escape that only adds to the hurt.

While the telling of truth may be a first step in reconciliation, it is immensely painful in itself. One survivor spoke about being put in a residential school as a small child and not being allowed to speak his language at all. "For the first three years, I didn't know what was said or what was going on," he said. "It was mass confusion."

A survivor from the Onion Lake Residential School told the sharing circle: "Being here at this conference has a lot of triggers for me. Listening to Christians, I heard Christians say they loved these children. . . . If that's your definition of love, that's not mine!"

At an interfaith panel discussion on reconciliation, panelist Leona Makokis of the Saddle Lake Cree Nation told some of her

story. "Speaking my truth is not intended to hurt anybody, but to remain kind," she said. "We cannot reconcile unless we know the truth of what happened in Canada."

She believes that people of all races and faiths must work together for reconciliation. "People are very well intended, but because they lack the knowledge, the whole colonial process continues," she said.

Roger Epp, who wrote "What is the settler problem?" column for *Canadian Mennonite* (Sept. 2, 2013, page 23), was a Mennonite representative on the panel. He said that Christians need to un-tame the Good Samaritan story and tell it again. "It powerfully undercuts all the powerful hierarchies we carry in our heads," he said. "The first step outside the settler mythology is to be a neighbour."

The road to healing and wholeness is long for residential school survivors and their descendants. While attendees heard many painful stories, there were also stories of hope and healing. Often in their speaking, survivors celebrated years of sobriety, spoke of reconnecting with their native language and culture, talked of the process of discovering and improving family relationships, and, above all, they spoke of connecting with the Creator as a critical element of healing.

What's next?

The national events are now over. As hard as it was for people to tell and hear the awful truths of residential school survivors, TRC attendees were told the process is going to become even harder.

During the closing ceremonies Justice



Jim Shantz of Mennonite Central Committee Alberta, right, serves a cupcake to Eric Large, an Indian Residential School coordinator and health support worker from the Saddle Lake Cree Nation in Alberta. The cupcakes were donated by volunteers to celebrate the birthdays of residential school survivors. While at the schools, survivors could not celebrate their birthdays.

Murray Sinclair was hopeful but blunt in his concluding remarks: "The truth will set us free, but first it's going to piss you off. . . . If you think the truth was hard, reconciliation will be even harder."

Sinclair has a very good point. The seven national TRC events provided a structured way for indigenous people to have their stories recorded and heard. It gave settler peoples a place to hear and learn. But now what?

Once the truth has been told and the structure for hearing it is gone, what happens? On March 30, Mayor Don Iveson proclaimed a year of reconciliation in Edmonton, announcing three specific initiatives the city will enact. These include aboriginal youth leadership initiatives, an education program for city staff to work at reconciliation in the workplace, and cooperation with aboriginal communities to create a venue for spiritual and cultural reconnection and celebration. ❧



TRC speakers on the steps of the Alberta Legislature.

✉ Anabaptist church leaders offer statement to residential school survivors

The following statement was presented at the final Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings in Edmonton in March.

WE ARE LEADERS of a group of Canadian Christian churches known as Anabaptist denominations. Our delegation includes Mennonite Church Canada, the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, the Brethren in Christ Church of Canada and Mennonite Central Committee Canada. Many people from our churches have come to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) events, including this one, to volunteer, to listen, to learn.

We acknowledge that we are all treaty people and that we are meeting on Treaty 6 territory, on land that is part of an historic agreement between first nations people and newcomers, an agreement involving mutuality and respect.

Throughout the period of the TRC events across the country, we have watched and listened with respect, as residential school survivors have told stories with graciousness and courage, sharing experiences of the residential school legacy from its beginning. We are humbled to witness this TRC event.

As we have listened to your stories, we've added our tears to the countless tears that you have shed. We acknowledge that there was, and is, much hurt and much suffering.

We have learned much and we have much to learn.

We heard the wise words of Justice [Murray] Sinclair encouraging us to acknowledge that all of us, in one way or another, have been affected by the residential school experience. We recognize that being part of a dominant culture, our attitudes and perspectives made the residential school experience possible, and that these attitudes and perspectives became entrenched in our relationships and in our culture.

We regret our part in the assimilation practice that took away language use and cultural practice, separating child from parent, parent from child, and indigenous peoples from their culture.

We regret that, at times, the Christian faith was used, wrongly, as an instrument of power, not as an invitation to see how God was already at work before we came. We regret that some leaders within the church abused their power and those under their authority.

We acknowledge the paternalism and racism of the past. As leaders of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ church communities, we acknowledge that we have work to do in addressing paternalism and racism both within our communities and in the broader public.

We repent of our denominational encounters with indigenous peoples that at times may have been motivated more by cultural biases than by the unconditional love of Jesus Christ. We repent of our failure to advocate for marginalized indigenous peoples as our faith would instruct us to.

We are aware that we have a long path to walk. We hope to build relationships with first nations communities so that we can continue this learning journey and walk this path together.

We are followers of Jesus Christ, the great reconciler. We are aware that words without actions are not only ineffective, but may also be harmful. We commit ourselves to take your challenges to us very seriously. We will seek to model the reconciling life and work of Jesus in seeking reconciliation with you. We will encourage our churches to reach out in practical and loving ways, including dialogue and expressions of hospitality.

We commit ourselves to walk with you, listening and learning together as we journey to a healthier and more just tomorrow.

TIM DYCK

(Evangelical Mennonite Conference general secretary)

DOUGLAS P. SIDER JR.

(Brethren in Christ Canada Canadian director)

WILLARD METZGER

(Mennonite Church Canada executive director)

WILLY REIMER

(Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches executive director)

DONALD PETERS

(Mennonite Central Committee Canada executive director)

PHOTO BY EILEEN KLASSEN HAMM



Anabaptist leaders present a blanket and a statement for inclusion in the Bentwood Box, a repository for offerings and commemorations at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) event in Edmonton last month. Standing with the TRC commissioners and survivor representatives are Tim Dyck of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference, centre, and Hilda Hildebrand of Mennonite Church Canada, fifth from left.

TRC REPORT

VIEWPOINT

A modest proposal for truth, reconciliation

JOHN SIEBERT

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is in the closing stretch of its five-year mandate.

The most important truth being conveyed is the experience of former Indian Residential School (IRS) students. Only they can tell their stories. The TRC appears to have effectively created the venues infused with ceremonial significance for this to happen with respect and the needed personal supports to address the pain that surfaces along the way.

In terms of the truth of what the IRS system was, how it was operated, who was in charge, and why things went so wrong, I am less confident that the TRC will succeed. As a result, the prospects for genuine reconciliation with non-aboriginal Canadians are remote. A modest proposal to enhance the possibility for truth and reconciliation in the future results from the 13 years I spent trying to understand the history and legacy of IRS.

In 1992, I started working for the national office of the United Church of Canada, which included the churches' response to IRS. From 1998 to 2005, I continued the work as a self-employed litigation researcher for churches and the federal government, which faced tens of thousands of IRS-related lawsuits.

By the early 1990s, the churches historically associated with IRS had apologized for their role and started supporting programs to assist community-level healing processes. I contributed to this work undertaken by the United Church. Sitting in sharing circles with former IRS students provided a window into the childhood agony of being separated from parents and home. Abuses of many kinds were recounted.

The work changed dramatically in 1995, when a former dorm supervisor in an IRS

in Alberni, B.C., pleaded guilty in criminal court to sexually abusing boys in his care in the 1960s. Civil lawsuits were filed in 1996, starting with 28 former students.

The United Church entered the formal legal process with lawyers and evidence. I took on the job of finding IRS documentation to assist in the legal defence.

In 1998, I gave a deposition for the United Church at the Blackwater trial before the B.C. Supreme Court, spending five days in total testifying in the pre-trial discovery process and then at the trial in Nanaimo.

My testimony boiled down to two basic points:

- **THE FEDERAL** government, not the church, controlled Alberni IRS and employed its staff.
- **THE ROLE** of the church in IRS was to: nominate the principal, but the federal government appointed him; provide chaplains; and liaise with Indian Affairs on IRS matters at the national level.

After a three-year trial, the court assigned 75 percent of the liability to the federal government and 25 percent to the church, and awarded damages to the plaintiffs. In 2003, the decision of the B.C. Court of Appeal was that the federal government was 100 percent liable. Two years later, the Supreme Court of Canada concurred with the earlier trial decision, assigning a 75-25 split in liability.

Having settled the liability split, the Supreme Court decision cleared the way for the federal government to finalize with the church and national aboriginal organizations a comprehensive out-of-court IRS settlement process.

Establishment of the TRC was part of the package. In 2008, the federal government

finally apologized on behalf of all Canadians in a moving ceremony in the House of Commons.

Obstacles to reconciliation

The first obstacle to reconciliation, from my review of millions of IRS documents in thousands of federal government files, is the popular view that IRS were church institutions, with the federal government merely contracting for a service and providing the money. This is factually incorrect.

I found key documents that convincingly prove the federal government's controlling role in IRS. Justice Department legal opinions from the 1960s confirmed that IRS staff were federal Crown employees. As a result, liability for staff actions rests fully with the federal government.

The second major obstacle to reconciliation flows from the first. Sadly, public ceremonies organized by the TRC over the past few years have been attended primarily by church people, who shared in the grief of former IRS students. With some exceptions, other Canadians have been largely indifferent because they don't see it as their fault or problem.

Turning the tables

A modest proposal for a concrete act of reconciliation and atonement for IRS would be the legally enforced removal of the next five generations of mainstream Canadian children from their homes to residential schools in first nation communities. The system would be purposefully underfunded to save taxpayers their hard-earned money.

Teachers would all be status Indians. The language of instruction would be the prevailing indigenous language where the particular residence is located. Children would be allowed to return home periodically, for summers or Christmas holidays. There would be no legal recourse for parents who objected.

After 100 years, we could sit down together and review the impact of this residential schooling on non-aboriginal Canadians. ❧

John Siebert is a member of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont.

VIEWPOINT

'A foolish act of love'

Winnipeggers walk in honour of IRS survivors

BRANDI FRIESEN THORPE

SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES

Because Jesus asked us to love our neighbours, a group of Christians from Winnipeg were willing to walk 550 kilometres to honour and remember their indigenous brothers and sisters who have survived the Indian Residential School (IRS) system. I was one of the organizers of this journey, which we called the Honour Walk.

The idea came from a group connected to Student Christian Movement Manitoba. For the past eight months, we have been exploring issues of building indigenous/settler solidarity in Winnipeg, or Treaty 1 Territory. Out of our group of organizers, four were commissioned to take on the three-week walk on behalf of the group and wider community.

Laurens Thiessen van Esch, Ann Henrichs, Brad Langendoen and Nathan Thorpe began walking on March 8 at Stoney Knoll, a community in Saskatchewan where Mennonites and Lutherans are supporting the local indigenous community in its land claim struggles. The walk ended March 27 at the sacred fire of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in Edmonton, also known as Treaty 6 Territory.

Why walk so far? Our group wanted to honour and remember: the 150,000 indigenous children who were separated from their communities and forced to attend residential schools; the many children who ran away from those schools, but never made it home; survivors who have courageously spoken their truths and continue to do so; and indigenous groups that have walked incredible distances for their communities; and to bring awareness to current injustices.

A main goal of this walk was solidarity, which played out in two ways:

• **FIRST, THE** four were walking to hear

the survivor stories of our indigenous neighbours.

These include stories heard in Winnipeg, stories from the Young Chippewyan First Nation, Little Pine First Nation, Poundmaker Cree Nation, Muskeg Lake Cree Nation and the Edmonton TRC, along with others heard during the walk. We organized the walk to honour these living testimonies.

Nathan shared that the most meaningful thing he experienced on the walk was the expressions of honour that are an integral part of the way indigenous people do life. While listening to personal stories of trauma and the difficult road to finding healing, he and the other walkers were invited into an other-cultural experience. Amid ceremony, smudging, drums, dance and traditional dress, every person present had a place. As stories were shared, relationships and compassion were built.

• **THE SECOND** purpose of solidarity was to invite often unaware Christian communities to join in the journey as well. There were several opportunities, as all of the lodging along the way was graciously provided by various churches, families and first nation communities.

For many Christians, it can be unsettling to realize that the early church in Canada is responsible for much harm to indigenous communities. Gross abuse and disrespect have happened under the supervision of the church, and it has happened here on the land we live on. These harms have left a traumatic scar on indigenous peoples that is only beginning to be healed.

In order to right what has been wronged, it is up to the current church to apologize and change how relationship happens with our indigenous neighbours. It is important to love and pursue acts of

young
voices 

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE HONOUR WALK



Honour Walk participant Ann Heinrichs says that experiencing the TRC event in Edmonton made the walk worth it: 'I felt so privileged to be in a gathering place with some truly incredible human beings.'

reconciliation.

When we were organizing the Honour Walk, we often called it "a foolish act of love," because that's what we felt it was. Walking itself accomplished nothing. What it did do was communicate to the church—and to first nation communities—that we care and are willing to walk with them.

These actions have been an opportunity for us to reflect on our own traditions and theologies that have legitimized the residential school system. We commit to work for right relationship with our indigenous brothers and sisters, with the Creator and with the land.

As we learn to journey with our Creator and our indigenous neighbours, we invite you to join us. ☸

Brandi Friesen Thorpe, 24, was a co-organizer of the Honour Walk. Her husband Nathan Thorpe was one of the walkers. The couple worships at a church plant in Winnipeg's West End. See more photos with the online version of this story.



TRC REPORT

Truth and reconciliation

BY IRENE CROSLAND

Gathering crowd surges
 Finding space
 Residential School survivors
 And listeners
 This is my time
 You listen
 Throbbing drum beats
 Pulsing loudly
 Tonal language singing
 Prayers lifting
 Bowed shoulders quake
 Remembering robbed childhood
 Secrets buried deeply
 Opening carefully
 Angry man turns
 "It is enough"
 Seated at round tables
 History books open
 Photos bring painful memories
 Faces longingly remembered
 Decorated man stands proud
 Preaching his story

Caregivers in red vests
 Give water and tissues
 Gather tears
 Sacred fire burns
 Accepting gifts
 Old friend reveals a hidden secret
 Embracing whole heritage
 Settler brings a gift to share
 Sage and special heron feather
 Together we gather
 To remember
 Together we meet
 To reconcile
 History is rewritten
 Honour given
 Repentance spoken
 In a circle building trust
 And reconciliation ☸



Irene Crosland adds some prairie sage to the sacred fire burning outside one of the main entrances to the Shaw Conference Centre in Edmonton, the site of the seventh and final national Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) event. She wrote this poem as a result of her experiences at the TRC event.

EARS to EARTH EYES to GOD

Native Assembly 2014

July 28-31, 2014 • Winnipeg, MB, Treaty 1

*"Ask the animals what they think – let them teach you...
 Put your ear to the earth – learn the basics...
 Isn't it clear that they all know that God is in control?"*
 -Job 12:7-10

In a time of ecological concern and ongoing loss of native lands, what is our Creator saying to us? At Native Assembly 2014, we'll attend the wisdom of Job, bending our ears to earth to know God more. Over three and a half days – through music, workshops, food, and learning tours – we'll discover old and new teachings which will bring us closer to the Spirit, to each other, and to the land.

Everyone is Welcome!

Please join us for a life-giving and memorable experience as we gather together on the campus of Canadian Mennonite University.

FOR INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION
home.mennonitechurch.ca/event/NativeAssembly2014

Ingrid Miller 1-866-888-6785 ext. 136

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conversation
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CANADIAN
 MENNONITE

'Four-directional thinking' on indigenous-settler relations

By JONATHAN SEILING

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
TORONTO

If a buffalo shouts or a salmon cries in the forest, does anybody hear?

A packed room of 50 people at the Toronto School of Theology (TST) hung on every word of four panelists gathered on March 18 to discuss *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry: Conversations on Creation, Land Justice and Life Together*, the 2013 Herald Press book edited by Steve Heinrichs, Mennonite Church Canada's indigenous relations director.

The purpose was to assess what strategies *Buffalo Shout* offers—or doesn't offer—for the ongoing struggle to address the challenges of "settler/indigenous" relations in North America. More broadly speaking, the aim was to gather diverse people together, to see others face to face, and to both express and listen to concerns from the inhabitants of "Turtle Island."

The Right Rev. Mark MacDonald, who became the Anglican Church of Canada's first national indigenous Anglican bishop in 2007, praised the book's format, which, he said, "communicates a very complex and difficult reality in a very good way," and which approximates the "four-directional thinking" of Canada's indigenous people groups, who, instead of hitting a topic head-on, tend to walk around it and approach it from several angles.

The complex reality of Indigenous Peoples, he said, is the fact that only about 5 percent conform to the fiction of a pure "aboriginal" heritage, with another 5 percent totally assimilating. The remaining 90 percent develop a strategy for survival involving a constant "complex negotiation." For many of them, Christianity serves as a translation or software system that allows

them to speak in different worlds they inhabit.

Jennifer Henry, executive director of Kairos, shared from her perspective as a settler who faces the grim realities of the unreconciled communities in Canada. The very integrity of Christianity is at stake in the task of deconstructing the oppressive forms of theology that celebrated domination in the colonial context, she said. At the same time, there are genuine elements that this same broad tradition possesses that can redeem itself. She expressed hope that her daughter would one day realize what seems but a dream amid the current nightmarish reality.

Chris Sabas, an attorney and member of the Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) Aboriginal Justice Team, joins indigenous communities in North America that invite others to oppose further injustices. She affirmed a statement in the book about supporting indigenous struggles "in a posture of reparations." She described how CPT's task of "undoing oppressions" has recently become more deeply self-reflective, even questioning whether the Aboriginal Justice Team name might effectively maintain a structure of oppression, rather than undo it.

Rev. Dr. Alan Hayes, TST's director, moved the participants toward a more general discussion of the present crisis in Canada, seeking to expose, rather than hide, the ongoing challenges, and admitting to no easy solutions. A key issue was the challenge of how naming the "peoples" involved—whether "settler" or "indigenous"—are helpful terms. Equally difficult was the issue of reparations and a just future for all parties.

Two years ago at meetings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Hayes had offered a blank notebook on behalf of TST and its member colleges, as an expression of the desire for reconciliation. He asked forgiveness for those times when theologies have presented Jesus as "an agent of foreign imperialism, like my people. He was a victim of foreign imperialism, like [indigenous] people." ❧

PHOTO BY KIM PENNER



Rene de Vries, left, part of a Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry study group at Stouffville (Ont.) Mennonite Church, chats with Chris Sabas, an attorney and member of the Christian Peacemaker Teams Aboriginal Justice Team, at a panel discussion on the book at the Toronto School of Theology last month. In the background is Murray Lumley of Danforth Mennonite Church, Toronto.

To view the event on YouTube, visit <http://bit.ly/1iEkZkU>.



ARTBEAT

FILM REVIEW

Unlocking a mystery

Heaven is for Real.

Directed by Randall Wallace. Written by Todd Burpo (book) and Chris Parker (screenplay).

Starring Greg Kinnear, Kelly Reilly and Connor Corum. A TriStar Pictures release, 2014.

Rated PG.

REVIEWED BY DAVE ROGALSKY

EASTERN CANADA CORRESPONDENT

In 2010 Todd Burpo, a Wesleyan pastor from Nebraska, told the “astounding story” of his four-year-old son Colton’s “trip to heaven and back.” *Heaven is for Real* (Thomas Nelson Publishers) tells the story of the tribulations of the Burpo family: too little pay, Todd’s kidney stone emergencies, a business that was barely making ends meet, and finally Colton’s ruptured appendix, following which he started to tell stories of what could only be described as a near-death experience. Two years later, a million copies had been sold.

doesn’t want her church to become a place where people have to choose between faith and reason, where they stop thinking and believe in miracles. She reacts to her past, where heaven and hell had been used to keep people in line.

Todd (Emmy Award-winning actor Greg Kinnear) himself goes through a significant test of faith, researching near-death experiences, wondering about heaven and hell and other aspects of faith.

A media circus develops both in the small Nebraska town and in the United

A member of the church council doesn't want her church to become a place where people have to choose between faith and reason, where they stop thinking and believe in miracles.

The story has now been made into a feature-length film by TriStar Pictures that opened just in time for Easter. It has moved from a simple telling of Colton’s experiences to a reflection on how such experiences are responded to by others. A “non-religious” psychologist explains that during such experiences Christians meet Jesus, Jews meet Moses, and Muslims meet Mohammed.

Colton’s mother (Kelly Reilly) is sceptical of her son’s experiences at first, retorting to her husband that Colton (newcomer Connor Corum) is only repeating all the things he had been taught from childhood.

A member of the church council

States at large, as both believers and detractors want to get in on the story.

One by one, excepting perhaps the psychologist, people come to believe Colton’s story. His mother is convinced by Colton’s experience of his sister in heaven, who had died in utero and about whom he had never been told. His father is comforted that Colton met “Pop,” Todd’s grandfather, in heaven; Todd had never been sure of his grandfather’s faith and suitability for heaven. The council member is convinced as Todd comforts her about her own son’s military death, asking, “Does God love my son more than yours?”

Although *Heaven is for Real* is being



promoted by many evangelical organizations, the movie is not a simplistic “this happened, now you have to believe in Jesus” piece. The psychologist’s words are not challenged or refuted, and the audience is left with the idea that if Todd was an imam perhaps Colton would have met Mohammed, instead of Jesus.

The different responses and reactions of people in the film, as well as the very human behaviour of the whole Burpo family, keep this movie rooted in reality. And the fact that several people whose faith is in question are thought of as being in heaven opens a “God is love” kind of universalism potentiality.

With a significant budget behind it, professional actors on the screen, humour and great cinematography (the film was partially shot in Warren, Man.), *Heaven is for Real* makes a good piece of entertainment and a thoughtful meditation that could lead to good discussion about the nature of faith and reason, experience and revelation. ❧

FILM REVIEW

Film doesn't prove 'God's not dead'

God's Not Dead.

Directed by Harold Cronk. Written by Hunter Davis, Chuck Konzelman, Cary Solomon.

Starring Kevin Sorbo. A Pure Flix Entertainment release, 2014. Rated PG.

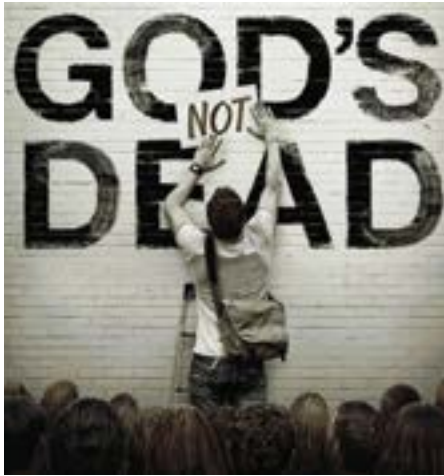
REVIEWED BY VIC THIESSEN

By the time *God's Not Dead* was released in Canada on April 11, it was already one of the highest-grossing films in the history of the Christian film industry, even surpassing the well-promoted *Son of God*. Given that the low-budget film has had a limited release and is the work of a small Christian production company, this is an extraordinary achievement.

It is not easy to pinpoint the reason for the film's success, especially since this story about Josh, a Christian university student, seems typical of such films. Josh has the misfortune of taking a philosophy class taught by Prof. Radisson, an atheist who does not want to waste the class's time debating the existence of God. When Josh refuses to sign a paper acknowledging that God is dead, he is given three sessions to convince his classmates otherwise or he will fail that part of the course.

Josh's girlfriend advises him to sign the paper to ensure he gets a good grade. "Your decisions have consequences," she says. That is precisely why Josh can't sign: He is thinking of the eternal consequences, because his pastor has referred him to Matthew 10:32: "Everyone who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven." Besides, God has given him a tremendous opportunity to have an impact on the lives of his peers.

God's Not Dead starts with an interesting premise, but fades quickly in the second half as Josh provides his arguments for the existence of God. Those standard arguments draw on questions surrounding creation, the problem of



evil, morality and the meaning of life. Radisson, who is angry with God because of the death of his mother, vehemently defends God's non-existence, but we all know he is destined to fail. Unfortunately, Josh's simplistic arguments are not remotely convincing, so it is a mystery to me why anyone would be swayed by them. For example, God must exist because otherwise there would be no meaning to our existence and no reason to behave morally.

I have never doubted the existence of God, but it is not for any of the reasons provided in *God's Not Dead*. Whether the film convinces any doubting viewers is, however, a moot point, because such viewers do not exist. Very few non-Christians would be willing to sit through this preachy film, especially during the ridiculously melodramatic last half-hour. Films

have been referred to as the sermons for the masses of our time, but those masses do not want to hear a literal sermon when they go to the theatre, and that's exactly what this film is.

While the technical production values in *God's Not Dead* are high, the story is poorly written, the characters are paper-thin, the acting is generally mediocre—Kevin Sorbo as Radisson is an exception—and the music is awful, making you feel like you're watching a TV soap opera for families. No one other than a Christian would consider the film worth watching.

So *God's Not Dead* has clearly been made for Christian audiences, and they are attending in droves. The purpose of the film, then, must be to encourage young Christian viewers to stand up for their faith, especially in a college setting, and witness to those around them. Such a purpose is not without merit, but it loses credibility when it promotes engagement with the world while remaining entrenched within an insular worldview that provides no intellectually sound responses to the questions being posed.

This is particularly problematic when the film is set in a university that is perceived as a threat to those with evangelical Christian beliefs. Unless education itself is suspect, which the film does not suggest, the film's arguments must be much more rigorous. In addition, the crude depiction of non-Christians as mean or abusive—a Muslim father who slaps his daughter twice before throwing her out of the house because she has become a Christian—will only alienate our engagement partners.

Prof. Radisson became an atheist because the God he had grown up with was not worth believing in. If *God's Not Dead* is trying to prove him wrong, the use of melodrama, stereotypes and pat biblical answers is not the way to accomplish it. ❧

Vic Thiessen, Mennonite Church Canada's chief administrative officer, is Canadian Mennonite's regular film reviewer.

Very few non-Christians would be willing to sit through this preachy film

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

Translation breathes new life into old history

Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan launches Walter Klaassen's translation of his great-grandfather's book

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent

SASKATOON, SASK.

“This book launch is 141 years late,” quipped historian Walter Klaassen. He was referring to the recent event celebrating the translation of his great-grandfather’s book, *History of the Defenceless Anabaptist Churches from the Times of the Apostles to the Present*, that was published by the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada in late 2013.

Translating the book afforded Klaassen an opportunity to get to know his ancestor, Martin Klaassen, a Prussian-born teacher in the Trakt Mennonite settlement along the Volga River. The Trakt and Molotschna

churches commissioned the original 1873 work in response to the threat of military conscription.

Martin believed that throughout the church’s history, there had always been groups of believers who practised non-resistance. He was particularly drawn to the Waldensians, who lived in poverty as a backlash against the church’s wealth and power. Until the Reformation, he maintained that pockets of Waldensians continued to exist, and wherever they were found, Anabaptist groups came into being.

He was impressed by the Anabaptists’

readiness to embody their convictions at a time when it was dangerous to do so, and he greatly admired their single-minded commitment and willingness to pay the price for it.

Adult baptism was also important to Martin. He believed that eventually the whole church would adopt the practice as well as the teaching of non-resistance.

Commenting on the relevance of his great-grandfather’s work for today, Walter stated, “The commitment to deal with human conflict without violence is never out of date.”

He also suggested that “the day is not far off where the baptism of adults will become the norm.” Churches that rely on infant baptism for growth have diminished as commitment to them has waned, so it may well be, in the not-too-distant future, that when baptism takes place in these churches it will be the baptism of adult believers, Walter said.

To view an interview with Walter Klaassen, visit canadianmennonite.org/history-of-the-defenceless.



Seeing the familiar in new ways

Saskatchewan pastor publishes a book of photographs of the Kerrobert Reservoir

BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent

Seeing the same old thing in a new way is Lois Siemens’s goal when she heads outdoors with her camera.

The Superb Mennonite Church pastor loves photographing nature. When a bed-ridden friend once told her, “I need something to look at,” Siemens started taking pictures and e-mailing them to her friend.

Photographic excursions often took her to the Kerrobert Reservoir near her home. She eventually compiled her shots into a book called *Turning Aside: Observing the*



*Vern Ratzlaff, left, interviews Walter Klaassen about his great-grandfather's book *History of the Defenceless Anabaptist Churches from the Times of the Apostles to the Present* and its relevance for today's Mennonites.*

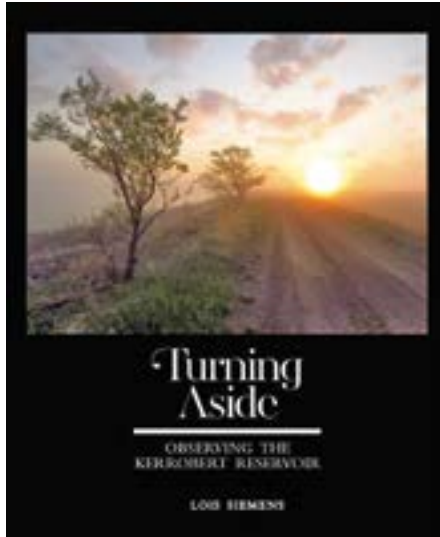
Kerobert Reservoir.

Referencing how Moses, on seeing the burning bush, had to “turn aside and look at this marvellous sight,” Siemens describes her book as “my record of the times I turned aside to take a closer look.”

Detailed close-ups and rich panoramas reveal Siemens’s fascination with the play of light on ordinary things. “How do we see something over and over again and yet see it in a new way?” she asks.

Her answer lies in looking at details and in finding connections between things. This, she says, is not unlike her pastoral work. In her sermons, she tries to make connections between Scripture and her congregants. Making connections takes time, however. In nature, one must take time to look around. In sermon preparation, one must spend time with the text.

Whether studying Scripture or photographing nature, taking time has its



rewards. Says Siemens, “I always see something new.”

Turning Aside is available for purchase online at www.amazon.ca. ☘

BOOK REVIEW

Menno maids help families survive

Daughters in the City: Mennonite Maids in Vancouver, 1931-1961.

Ruth Derksen Siemens. Fernwood Press, Vancouver, 2013. Softcover, 93 pages.

REVIEWED BY BARB DRAPER

BOOKS & RESOURCES EDITOR

Some of the earliest Mennonites to live in large cities in Canada were young women who went to work as domestics in upper-class homes. Before the 1920s, Mennonites were farmers and

the city was considered a foreign and dangerous place, but Mennonite refugee families who had fled from Communist Russia in the 1920s sometimes felt they had no choice but to accept work where it was available.

In her book *Daughters in the City*, Ruth Derksen Siemens tells the story of the girls whose families sent them to Vancouver to work. These Mennonite families had lost everything during the Russian Revolution and its aftermath, and they were struggling to repay the money loaned to them to make their way to Canada. The financial crash of 1929 and the ensuing Great Depression meant that repaying the travel debt was

a serious hardship. Although the church discouraged the practice, many families sent their daughters to the city because they felt they had no other option.

Working as domestics was not easy. These young women struggled with poor English skills and felt isolated, far from their family and friends. Many came from families that had been prosperous in Russia, and “maid” work was considered lower class and undignified. Many of the girls found it a relief to get together on their days off to find familiarity and friendship.

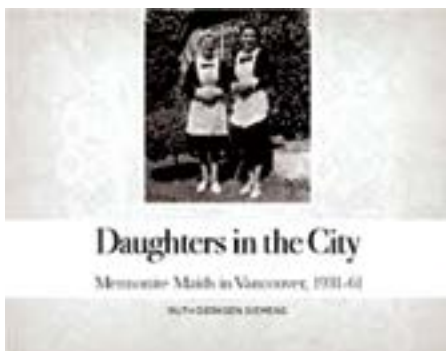
Two homes for these girls were established in Vancouver: the Bethel Home associated with the Mennonite Brethren Church and the Mary Martha Home, established by the General Conference Mennonite Church. Although the two homes were near each other, they rarely worked together. The homes served as a safe place for the girls just to get together to socialize and to get support when there were employment issues.

The number of Mennonite maids peaked in the 1950s after an influx of Mennonite refugees after the Second World War. Once again impoverished families depended on the income of their daughters to help repay the costs of immigration. Wages paid to domestics in the city, especially in Vancouver, were significant.

Using lots of large photographs, Derksen Siemens has done a great job of documenting the work of these young women. The book coffee table-like book is very easy to read, with more photos than text. A lot of effort has gone into identifying the young women in the photos.

While many of the photos in *Daughters in the City* are sharp and clear, others are not. It may be useful to include some photos of inferior quality because of the subject matter, but they should not be displayed in a large size, as is the case here. And while the book includes many interesting story snapshots of individuals, the overall text seems a bit loose in its organization.

Overall, however, many Mennonites will find *Daughters in the City* a great trip down memory lane. ☘



BOOK REVIEW

MCC from a Western Canada perspective

Mennonite Central Committee in Canada: A History.

By Esther Epp-Tiessen. Canadian Mennonite University Press, 2013, 328 pages.

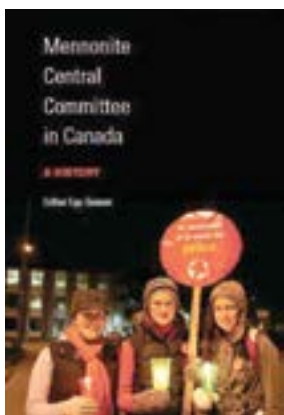
REVIEWED BY BARB DRAPER

BOOKS & RESOURCES EDITOR

In her history of the first 50 years of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada, Esther Epp-Tiessen repeatedly defends the decision to create a separate Canadian MCC, distinct from the older organization with its headquarters in Akron, Pa. She presents MCC Canada as the “little engine that could,” struggling for independence, rather than allowing Canadian efforts to be subsumed by the larger MCC, where decisions were made in the United States.

Although she makes a good case that MCC Canada has been a worthwhile and successful enterprise, Epp-Tiessen identifies many of the conflicts between MCC Canada and MCC in Akron in ways that make me suspicious there is another side to some of the stories. She writes from the perspective of Mennonites in western Canada.

On page 84, Epp-Tiessen writes, “The decision to establish MCC Canada’s home in Winnipeg was significant for the larger MCC system in that it ensured a different ‘MCC culture’ than that of Akron or even Kitchener [Ont.]. Surrounded by Mennonites who were of Dutch-German (usually described as ‘Russian’), rather than Swiss-German descent, MCC Canada’s culture would feel discernibly different than MCC’s, though not in easily described ways. The differences would at times contribute to conflict, but mostly they would complement each other.”



This comment is almost the only hint she gives that the creation of MCC Canada was a bit of a political triumph of the “Russian” Mennonites of Western Canada over the “Swiss” Mennonites of Ontario. She recognizes that historian Lucille Marr, in her history of MCC in Ontario, described these Mennonites as being reluctant participants in the creation of MCC Canada, but Epp-Tiessen dismisses this argument, insisting that “the western Canadians made significant concessions to meet the concerns of Ontarians.”

It is interesting that Epp-Tiessen can identify that Kitchener had a different culture than Winnipeg, but she hesitates to describe it. Perhaps she has chosen

to minimize this “Russian” Mennonite versus “Swiss” Mennonite controversy because 50 years later it has virtually disappeared. She is correct in her comment that the differences in culture of these two Mennonite groups mostly “complement each other.”

Epp-Tiessen provides good analysis of how the organization has changed in 50 years. She doesn’t get bogged down in too many details, preferring to describe

overall trends, now and then zooming in with anecdotes of specific people and situations to illustrate her point. She mentions many individuals, but always within the context of the larger story.

She points out that, although MCC began strictly as a relief organization, it has changed in amazing ways. By the 1960s, MCC was moving into development work. The concept of what it means to be a peace witness changed a good deal in the 1960s and ’70s, and by the 1980s there was new language of “justice.” As MCC Canada grew, it needed to become less “folksy” and more professional. In the 1990s, it deliberately changed its mandate to be less centralized and to give major responsibility for programming within Canada to the provincial bodies.

MCC today has a very complex constituency and the cultural diversity has grown a great deal in the last 50 years. Epp-Tiessen is not surprised that the Manitoba Sommerfelder Church has withdrawn its support from MCC Manitoba, and suggests that it is a bit of a miracle that more groups have not withdrawn. One reason she gives for the widespread grassroots support is that MCC does such a wide range of work that its diverse constituents can always find some project they feel comfortable supporting. She also argues that the hands-on volunteer opportunities have kept people engaged.

Epp-Tiessen provides good analysis of how the organization has changed in 50 years. . . . She mentions many individuals, but always within the context of the larger story.

Epp-Tiessen has produced a book about a complex organization that is interesting to read without getting bogged down in details. It’s too bad that the many photos are small, as they would be much more effective if they were in a larger format. The research has been very extensive and the author’s many interviews have given her the opportunity to describe some fascinating behind-the-scenes conversations. ❧

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

VIEWPOINT

All in the name of Christ

*MCC is at the heart of being Mennonite,
whatever the denomination*

BY HENRY NEUFELD

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

George and Sherri Klassen went to Bangladesh as Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) volunteers in 1977. Working with local farmers, George, an engineer, invented the “rower pump” using mostly locally available material. By 1986, more than 40,000 pumps were in use in 20 countries, enhancing irrigation and food production.

For his invention, Klassen, now of Carman, Man., received a financial award from a British organization that he promptly donated to MCC. The rower pump is on exhibit in Ottawa’s Museum of Science and Technology.

Klassen’s story is one of many in the history of MCC Canada, which turned 50 last year. For many young people, the Voluntary Service program was a life-changing experience that promoted a culture of caring and a witness against post-Second World War materialism.

An important understanding with the various Mennonite denominations was the agreement that MCC’s role was to meet physical and social needs, while the mission boards would do the evangelism and church planting.

Early MCC work was done primarily through the head office in Akron, Pa., but Canadians sometimes felt the agenda was U.S.-focused. In 1963, a Canadian MCC was established, promoted by Frank Epp, with J.M. Klassen as the first executive director. Akron’s “turf” concerns were soon alleviated with the flow of money from MCC Canada to Akron.

MCC Canada brought together 11 different Mennonite groups—a major accomplishment with such a diverse



“family.” While MCC’s constituent churches rarely worshipped together, MCC’s success is an example of the triumph of lay leadership and the ability to overcome theological differences to serve the needy.

Denominational bigotry was challenged, life-long friendships established, and spouses found each other

Historically, relief and refugee assistance were the focus. Now, MCC is a multi-million-dollar enterprise serving the needy; working with victims of crime; providing prison visitation; spawning organizations like Pax, Mennonite Disaster Service, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and Ten Thousand Villages; and establishing relief sales, thrift shops, social housing, restorative justice and teacher exchanges, among others.

MCC Canada budgeted \$2,500 to assist American draft dodgers. Some were critical of this practice, reflecting an ongoing dilemma in MCC of how to respond to the wishes of the supporting constituency, many of whom saw MCC as primarily a relief agency, while, at the same time, pushing the prophetic edges.

The plight of Southeast Asian refugees in the late 1970s accentuated this dilemma. Some MCC field staff wanted to minimize resettlement and focus on the root causes of refugees. This put MCC Canada at odds with the Akron office. In 1979, MCC Canada negotiated a groundbreaking sponsorship agreement with Ottawa, and by 1980 half of all constituent churches were sponsoring refugees.

MCC Canada service also opened doors for women to assume leadership positions not likely available in their home communities. Despite no

representation on the MCC Canada boards, women have always contributed significantly to MCC. In 1986, more than 800 women in Yarrow, B.C., prepared material aid and Christmas bundles.

MCC opened its Ottawa office in 1975 despite questions about government involvement. Its value soon became obvious when Bill Janzen, based on his relationship with senior bureaucrats and politicians, was able to arrange Canadian citizenship for many Mennonites from Mexico.

But there are unanswered questions: How has MCC Canada managed these impressive accomplishments? Is it the service-driven faith of Mennonites? Is it the minor involvement of pastors? Is it that many MCCers serve only a three-year term? Is it the strong provincial-based grassroots connections?

There’s the constant challenge of holding together an increasingly diverse constituency, some of whom want to focus on relief work, while others see peace and justice as primary issues, and still others see a narrow proclamation of gospel as essential.

MCC is not without flaws: unresolved personnel issues, internal power struggles, maintaining constituency support, the degree of government involvement, and spending \$2 million on the Wineskins revisioning project a few years ago.

But MCC Canada is a ministry of the church. It has a remarkable history of successful service in the name of Christ, as exemplified by the Klassens. MCC is loved by many and is close to the heart of what it is to be Mennonite. Its genius lies in the way it has involved people from the grassroots in service, thrift stores, relief sales, refugees, advocacy, the Foodgrains Bank, and much more.

As a people’s movement, MCC embodies faith, caring and compassion, lessening suffering, building friendships, healing wounds and practising peace, all in the name of Christ. ❧

Henry Neufeld attends Point Grey InterMennonite Fellowship in Vancouver. He and wife Tena worked in Thailand with MCC Canada in the 1980s.

Faith formation and sacred spaces

My passion for solid curricula didn't start at birth! My story started off in my family home on a small farm in Southern Manitoba, a home where faith was lived more than discussed. I grew up in a church with people who were willing to help me enter into God's presence, with joyful and sometimes doubting witnesses who saw my very slow yet steady transformation from an incredibly shy young girl to a woman willing to stand behind the pulpit and preach the Good News. A journey that was made possible in no small part by Sunday school teachers and mentors who were willing to walk with me.

I'm passionate about life-long faith formation and resourcing one

I want a curriculum that is grounded in the person and mission of Jesus Christ.

another in the church. And for that reason, I value well-crafted curricula formed by passionate individuals with understanding of the faith development of persons across the life-span, and a theology grounded in their faith tradition.

Because my faith tradition is Anabaptist, I want a curriculum that is grounded in the person and mission of Jesus Christ. For me, this means the curriculum understands the biblical

story through the lens of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. This doesn't mean that it ignores or devalues the Old Testament, quite the opposite. I look for curricula where the writers have a strong understanding of Jesus' Jewish heritage and are willing to tell those stories for their own merit.

I look for a curriculum that understands the mission of God as one of peace and reconciliation through the person of Jesus. Where the writers demonstrate at their very core that the love Jesus demonstrated, is a love that always actively seeks justice, mercy, humility, and peace in the midst of community. And the fact that each of us is called to live in this way too, is simply a given.

Shine: Living in God's Light is a dynamic Sunday school curriculum for age 3 to grade 8 that engages Christian communities in their life together. Allow it to inspire your group too!

Shine:

- calls children to experience the transforming power of God's love.
- nurtures trust in God and invites children to follow Jesus.
- encourages imaginative, interactive biblical storytelling.
- explores the meaning of the Bible within the gathered community.
- cultivates the inner life of the Spirit through spiritual practices.
- expresses faith through lives of compassionate peacemaking and service.
- invites all ages to shine God's light in the world.



Shine Starter Kits

The Starter Kit is the best way to get acquainted with Shine. Each kit contains a quarter's worth of materials for each age level, plus the Early Childhood Music CD, one annual Shine songbook and CD, and *Shine On: A Story Bible*.

Available now. \$192.50, through August 1.
(a \$247.50 value)

Multiage Starter Kit: \$82.50, through August 1.
(a \$104.50 value)

Visit www.ShineCurriculum.com
for more information, sample sessions, and to order.



I want a curriculum that remembers that we are a people of story, ritual, and practice. I want it front and center in our material that we cannot live into the biblical story if we haven't heard it. We cannot develop deep relationship with self, other, and God, without spiritual practices that root us in the

Divine. Faith is about knowing, being, and doing.

I also want a curriculum that is completely transparent and upfront about the values, pedagogy, and theology embraced by the writers and supporting agencies. All of us come from a particular tradition, or embrace particular values, but it is rather uncommon, from my experience, to find curriculum writers that actually seek to articulate their beliefs upfront.

Because these are the things I value in curricula, I'm very excited to use the new curriculum from MennoMedia called *Shine: Living in God's Light*. The first quarter starts in fall of 2014 and is available for preview now, and no, I'm not being paid to say this! I know I'll need to adapt, that's a given with any curriculum. We

always need to remember that any curriculum is meant as a guide, and a springboard and requires contextualization. But I know without a doubt that the beliefs of the writers will be clear.

I know it will be Christocentric. I know it will value both the Old and New Testaments, it will be inclusive, rooted in peace and love, community, story, ritual, and practice. I know that the most important groundwork that needs to happen when writing curriculum will have been done, and with integrity, making it possible for me to focus my attention on my own faith development, and the developing faith of the children in front of me. Because that's what good curriculum writers do. They do the groundwork, so we have the tools we need to enter into sacred spaces together.

Carrie Martens (centre in photo) is a member of the pastoral team at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ontario with faith formation as part of her portfolio. This article was adapted from a sermon and blog post.



Spring 2014 List of Books & Resources

Theology, Spirituality

Discerning God's Will Together: Biblical Interpretation in the Free Church Tradition. Ervin R. Stutzman. Cascadia Publishing House, 2013, 175 pages.

Stutzman explores the practical implications of discernment in today's congregations, including a thorough investigation of how Anabaptists historically interpreted the Bible. This book is Part 7 of the Living Issues Discussion Series, and is published in association with the Eastern Mennonite Seminary School for Leadership Training and Mennonite Church U.S.A.

Living Gift: John's Jesus in Meditation and Poetry, Art and Song. Willard Swartley. Evangel Publishing House, 2013, 183 pages.

This hardcover book is a collection of meditations, poetry and art designed to

complement the Believers Church Bible Commentary on John's Gospel, also written by Swartley. The worship and prayer resources are organized by the scripture passages they relate to.



The Nonviolent God. J. Denny Weaver. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2013, 304 pages.

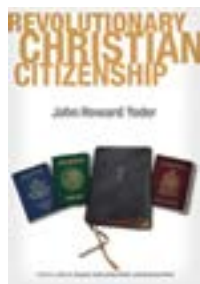
Weaver argues that since the character of God is revealed in Jesus, we can know that God is nonviolent, and he challenges the assump-

tions of divine violence found in atonement theology. As followers of Jesus, we are called to nonviolent living and to practise justice. Weaver is professor emeritus of religion at Bluffton University.

On Being Human: Essays from the Fifth Shi'i Muslim Mennonite Christian Dialogue.

Harry J. Huebner and Hajj Muhammad Legenhausen, eds. Canadian Mennonite University Press, 2013, 270 pages.

The essays in this collection were delivered at the fifth Mennonite-Shi'ite dialogue held at Canadian Mennonite University in 2011. Participants included visiting scholars from Iran and Mennonites Gordon Zerbe, Jo-Ann Brant, Harry Huebner, David Shenk, Peter Dula, Derek Suderman and Jeremy Bergen. The topics under discussion included the nature of man, perfection, culture, human rights, gender and the self.



Revolutionary Christian Citizenship. John Howard Yoder, edited by John C. Nugent, Branson Parler and Andy Alexis-Baker. Herald Press, 2013, 172 pages.

Here is another collection of previously unpublished sermons and articles from church papers by John Howard Yoder. Among the topics he explores are voting, civil religion, conscientious objection and self-defence. This is the second volume of the Yoder for Everyone Series by these editors.

Theology of Mission: A Believers Church Perspective. John Howard Yoder with eds. Gayle Gerber Koontz and Andy Alexis-Baker.

Intervarsity Press, 2014, hardcover, 432 pages.

The chapters in this book are taken from Yoder's lectures from a course on the theology of mission he taught at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary from 1964-83. Yoder explores the mission of the church biblically and historically, challenging some traditional evangelical attitudes.



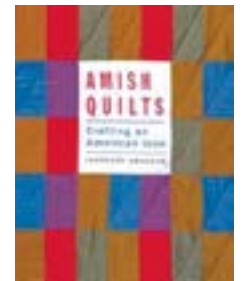
Worrying About Evolution: Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Goshen Conference on Religion and Science. Owen Gingerich. Pandora Press, 2013, 131 pages.

Gingerich, the speaker for this 2012 conference at Goshen College, is professor emeritus of astronomy and the history of science at Harvard University. As a man of faith, he wrestles with hard questions about evolution that raise questions about the role of God in creation. It includes his presentations and the ensuing discussion.

History

Amish Quilts: Crafting an American Icon. Janneken Smucker. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013, 270 pages.

Smucker traces the history of Amish quilt-making since its beginning in the 19th century. She describes how collectors first became interested in the old, dark quilts and how quilts grew to be very fashionable, especially through the 1970s and '80s. This hardcover book with many full-colour photos is part of the Young Center Books in Anabaptist and Pietist Studies edited by Donald Kraybill.



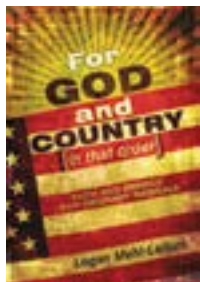
Blush: A Mennonite Girl Meets a Glittering World. Shirley Hershey Showalter. Herald Press, 2013, 272 pages.

This memoir by a former president of Goshen College explores the thoughts and feelings of a plain Mennonite farm girl growing up in Lancaster County, Pa. As a

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

teenager in a congregation of the Lancaster Conference in the 1960s, she resented some of the expectations, but also learned to value her Mennonite community.

For God and Country [in that order]: Faith and Service for Ordinary Radicals. Logan Mehl-Laituri. Herald Press, 2013, 225 pages.



This collection of 44 stories includes vignettes of a wide variety of Christian soldiers and pacifists from ancient times to the present. The objective is to invite dialogue about whether—or in what circumstances—Christians can serve their country through military service.

A History of Mennonite Youth Ministry, 1885-2005. Bob Yoder, ed., Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2013, 337 pages.

This collection of essays explores Mennonite youth ministry in the U.S. and Canada, both historically and in today's context. Among the topics explored are early experiences of youth ministry, Bible quizzing, camping, short-term service trips and CMU's Outtatown program. Contributors from Canada include Susan Allison-Jones, Dana (Honderich) Penner, Anna Rehan and Barb Draper.

I Remember: The Story of Otto Klassen. Otto Klassen, translated by Jakob Klassen. Privately published, 2013, 235 pages.

Otto Klassen was born in Ukraine and remembers how difficult the 1930s were for Mennonites there. He tells the story of his family as refugees fleeing from Russia to Germany, and their desperate plight after the war. With help from MCC, they sailed to Paraguay on the Volendam. In 1955, he emigrated to Canada and eventually became widely known as a filmmaker who documented stories of Mennonite history. The book and several of his films are available at the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg (204-888-6781).

Mennonite Central Committee in Canada: A History. Esther Epp-Tiessen. Canadian Mennonite University Press, 2013, 328 pages.

Epp-Tiessen not only tells the story of the many accomplishments of MCC Canada in the last 50 years, she also analyses how and why the organization has changed over the years. She identifies many of the criticisms and challenges that have made MCC Canada's ongoing work seem like something of a miracle.

Pacifists in Chains: The Persecution of Hutterites during the Great War. Duane C. S. Stoltzfus. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013, 272 pages.

This book deals with the experience of pacifists in the U.S. during the First World War. The story focuses on Hutterites because they were more apt to categorically refuse to do any type of work connected to the military and they experienced more torture. This is part of a series by the Young Center Books in Anabaptist and Pietist Studies.



Path of Thorns: Soviet Mennonite Life under Communist and Nazi Rule. Jacob A. Neufeld, translated by Harvey L. Dyck and Sarah Dyck. University of Toronto Press, 2014, 445 pages.

This memoir by Jacob Neufeld provides insight into the horrifying experiences of Mennonites living in the Soviet Union in the 1930s and '40s. Neufeld and his family eventually emigrated to Canada, where he wrote his memoirs before his death in 1960. This book includes an introduction by Harvey L. Dyck, who also served as editor and translator.

Village Among Nations: "Canadian" Mennonites in a Transnational World, 1916-2006. Royden Loewen. University of Toronto Press, 2013, 301 pages.

Loewen traces the migration of Low German-speaking Mennonites from Canada to Mexico and Paraguay in the 1920s and describes further migrations of these traditionalist Mennonites, some back to Canada and others to other Latin American countries. He says they see themselves as resident aliens in whatever



country they find themselves, but keep a sense of "village" through a strong sense of family by visiting each other and by reading letters in *Die Mennonitische Post*.

Other books



Deepening Community: Finding Joy Together in Chaotic Times. Paul Born. Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc., 2014, 169 pages.

Using stories from his own experience and the stories of others, Born explains our need for community and how our life choices can help or hinder our search for deep community. He identifies sharing our stories, enjoying one another, caring for one another and working together for a better world as the paths to deeper communities.

Jacob's Choice. Ervin R. Stutzman. Herald Press, 2014, 303 pages.

This historical novel, set in Pennsylvania during pioneer days, is based on the story of an Amish family who endured hardship because of their belief in non-resistance. This is Book 1 in a series of three novels that will explore different viewpoints of what was known as the "Hochstetler massacre."



On My Way: The View from the Ninth Decade. Daniel Hertzler. Cascadia Publishing House, 2013, 102 pages.

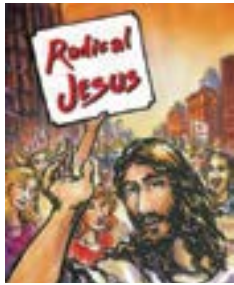
Daniel Hertzler, a former editor of *Gospel Herald*, reflects on his life with humour and simplicity.

Ordinary Miracles: Awakening to the Holy Work of Parenting. Rachel S. Gerber. Herald Press, 2014, 145 pages.

The author speaks frankly about the joys and challenges of parenting while always considering how God is present with her. She provides discussion questions for each of the nine chapters so that it can also be used by small groups.

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

Radical Jesus: A Graphic History of Faith. Paul Buhle, ed., Sabrina Jones, Gary Dumm, Nick Thorkelson, artists. Herald Press, 2013, 128 pages.



This graphic novel uses a comic-book style to tell the stories of Jesus, stories from the Radical Reformation and Mennonite history, and stories of radical resistance from the 20th century. The three parts have three distinct styles of drawings.

Songs from an Empty Cage: Poetry, Mystery, Anabaptism and Peace. Jeff Gundy. Cascadia Publishing House, 2013, 294 pages.

Jeff Gundy brings together theology and poetry in a new genre he calls theopoetics. Although he includes some poetry, this book considers various aspects of Anabaptist theology from a poetic point of view. Gundy teaches English at Bluffton University in Ohio. This is Volume 10 in the C. Henry Smith series edited by J. Denny Weaver.



The Wittenbergs. Sarah Klassen. Turnstone Press, 2013, 405 pages.

This is the first novel for Sarah Klassen, who is known for her poetry collections. Without being overtly Mennonite, the book

explores how a teenager experiences the challenges of modern life while she investigates some painful stories from her family's past. Klassen writes that the novel became a receptacle for stories told by her mother.

Resources

Children's Ministry in the Way of Jesus. David M. Csinos and Ivy Beckwith. InterVarsity Press, 2013, 208 pages.

Using their church experiences working with children, the writers present an up-to-date approach to developing spiritual formation in the children of today. They explore theories of how children learn, and provide practical suggestions for effective children's ministry.



Claim(ing) Faith: Youth Discover the Confession of Faith. MennoMedia, 2013, 71 pages and DVD.

This leader's guide with a DVD is designed to help youth explore their faith and to

introduce them to the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*. The 10 sessions provide step-by-step suggestions for leading youth with a video clip for each session.

Connections: Parables for Today. Jane Ann McLachlan. Pandora Press, 2013, 142 pages.

This collection of 10 stories with discussion questions and corresponding biblical stories will stimulate thought-provoking discussion

for book clubs or other small group settings. The stories are set in Canada and relate to issues that challenge us in our day-to-day lives.

Living Faith: Embracing God's Callings. Keith Graber Miller. Cascadia Publishing House, 2012, 126 pages.

In this little book, Graber Miller explores the idea of Christian vocation and how we find meaning in our life's work. He compares today's Mennonite professionalism with the early Anabaptist idea of appropriate vocations. The nine chapters conclude with questions for discussion so that it could be used by a small group or Sunday school class.

—Compiled by Barb Draper,
Books & Resources Editor

Staff changes

MennoMedia introduces new staff in Canada, U.S.

- **CRAIG ANDERSON** is the new office, sales and marketing manager of MennoMedia's Canadian headquarters, housed with the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario offices at 50 Kent Avenue in Kitchener. He succeeds Kathy Shantz in the roles. Anderson worked for 10 years at Ten Thousand Villages in New Hamburg, Ont., as the distribution centre manager and inventory coordinator. He has also worked with MCC in Quebec, Burkina Faso, Congo and Egypt. Anderson has a master of arts degree in theology and ethics from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., where he also worked as manager of the Mennonite Cooperative Bookstore.



Craig Anderson

- **LESLIE HAWTHORNE KLINGLER**, of Wheaton, Ill., began as part-time editor for the *Rejoice!* devotional magazine on Jan. 1. A previous writer for *Rejoice!*, Klingler has a master of arts degree in theology from Fuller Theological Seminary and teaches part-time at Wheaton College.

- **VALERIE WEAVER-ZERCHER** began last fall as a part-time managing editor for Herald Press. For Herald Press, she edited the 30th anniversary edition of *Living More with Less* on a contract basis. Her own book, *Thrill of the Chaste: The Allure of Amish Romance Novels*, was published by the Johns Hopkins University Press in 2013.

- **BARBARA FINNEGAN** was hired last year as director of finance and operations at MennoMedia's Harrisonburg, Va., office, succeeding Lowell Hertzler.

—MennoMedia

Great Gifts

for Mothers' Day

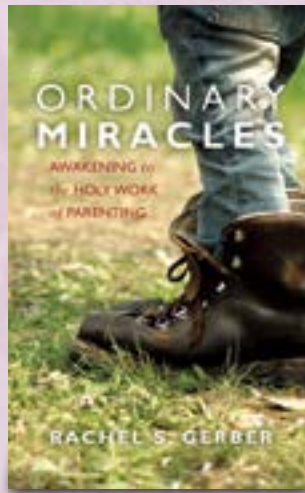
from Herald Press



Mennonite Girls Can Cook Celebrations

Hardcover. 978-0-8361-9675-7. \$29.99

Life is a gift from God, so why not celebrate? Join the Mennonite Girls for brunch celebrating a birth, campfire cooking with family, and even the more somber celebration of a life well-lived. Filled with reflections, personal stories, and beautiful photos, this book contains much more than recipes—it will soon become your kitchen companion for life's celebrations. Also includes gluten free recipes. **Royalties support the MCC WASH project in Kenya.**



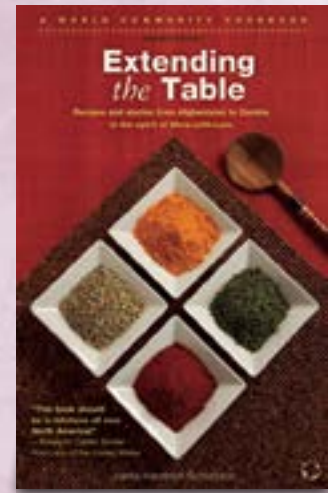
Ordinary Miracles

Awakening to the Holy Work of Parenting

Rachel S. Gerber

Paper. 978-0-8361-9857-7. \$14.29

Where is God in the midst of temper tantrums, accidents, and keeping the laundry monster fed? In this honest devotional memoir about mothering three what-are-they-up-to-now boys, ordained Mennonite minister and blogger Rachel S. Gerber gives voice to the grit of parenting with stories of hope and reassurance.



Extending the Table

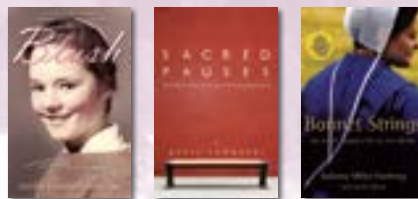
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FREEDOM FROM ADDICTION



Brandon

My life was out of control. I was 22 and couldn't keep a job. Lost my family. Lost my friends. Moved house to house. Manipulated people for places to stay. Continually used drugs to numb

the situation and past experiences. My addiction was controlling me. I knew I needed help and I was open to any suggestion. I reached out to my mom and told her everything bad I was doing and that I needed help. My mom referred me to WelcomeHome.

WelcomeHome has saved my life because the program works. I have learned so much about myself. I have learned to obtain, keep, and excel at a job. I have learned to be a diligent, hard worker with the leadership skills to live a healthy, successful life with the inner strength to handle any of life's challenge. I have opened my life and my heart to God and go to church every Sunday. Spirituality has become a huge part of my recovery. I have my family back in my life and they have supported everything about my recovery. I have the best help and support for life and I have to thank WelcomeHome for giving my life back. Thank you for a 2nd chance at life.

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Brandon's Mother

When we first heard about WelcomeHome I was reluctant to send our son so far away. In fact, while I was sitting in the airport on our way to the program, I actually considered turning around and coming back home. I called my husband crying as I sat in the airport

telling him I didn't know if we were doing the right thing. His response was firm, we have no other choice. This was our last chance and the alternative wasn't good. We had tried other programs nothing worked and we reluctantly proceeded on. A friend who referred us to the program continued to tell me "have faith". This is what blind faith is about. I hung onto those words with every bit of my being.

Our son Brandon has been in the program for 1 year now. My first visit to see him was on Mother's Day and I must say, it was the BEST Mother's Day gift ever. For the first time in Brandon's life he was actually holding his head up, shoulders strong and making eye contact. He has thanked us repeatedly for getting him into the WelcomeHome program and said it is the best thing that ever happened to him. With a smile on his face he said "Mom, this program is saving my life". "It is hard but I can do it" "I'm learning life skills to help me cope so that I don't return to my addictions".

We can honestly say this program is the best thing that has happened to our family. WelcomeHome Society has given us hope and given us our son back! Words cannot express how grateful we are that our son was fortunate enough to be part of this program. For any of those parents feeling just like I did in the beginning let me say one thing, "have faith". The journey is so worth it!

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SPRING 2014
VOLUME 24 ISSUE 2

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AMBS window

GOD'S RESTORING WORK IN CREATION

Janeen Bertsche Johnson, Campus Pastor

During orientation a few years ago, we asked returning students and employees to share some of their favorite spots on campus with our new students. I loved hearing why people had developed connections with certain spaces.

If I answered my own question today, I would name the AMBS prairie, planted in 2007, as part of the library construction. Now that the native wildflowers and grasses are well-established, I enjoy discovering the diversity of life found there. In a place that had been a corn and bean field and then a mowed lawn, we have restored the land to something like its original state, and now "the pastures of the wilderness overflow" with beauty and life. (Psalm 65:12)

During the last decade, AMBS has given increased attention to issues of creation care. Certainly a major reason is that several students, employees and volunteers have nudged us to recognize new possibilities for the land that we steward: we could plant wildflowers instead of using fossil fuels to mow so much, we could build our new library

to Green Building standards, we could replace old fixtures with energy-efficient ones, we could harness the energy of bees to provide honey for the meals we eat together, we could expand the garden to provide food for hungry people in Elkhart County. We have been gifted with community members who are passionate about sustainable living, local food and understanding our local environment.

AMBS has begun to embrace these concerns as an integral part of our institutional identity. We are catching a vision for participating in the nurturing, restorative work of our Creator God.

We recognize that God has given humanity the responsibility to care tenderly for the earth, not to exploit it. And we affirm that God so loved the world—the entire created cosmos—that God sent Jesus to redeem it (John 3:16). The ministry of reconciliation that Jesus has entrusted to us (2 Corinthians 5:18-20) includes reconciliation with the soil, the water, the air and everything that lives in and on them.

As we look toward the future, we will give more attention to how these themes are woven throughout our curriculum, and to the ways they challenge and reshape our lifestyles. In addition to theological reflection, we want to model sustainable practices for students and church leaders. We are also dreaming of ways our campus can be a teaching resource for the whole community.

It is my hope that our study, worship and life together at AMBS will continue to show us ways we can participate in God's restoring work in creation as well as in the lives of people. ●

Janeen Bertsche Johnson (right in photo above) is a naturalist and each year leads a hike during the all-seminary retreat at Camp Friedenswald, near Cassopolis, Mich. Participating are Thomas Hughes, Sara Wenger Shenk, Steve Mezsick, Sylvie Guden, Eric Vandrick, Gerald Shenk, Jeff Hochstetler, Kelsey Shue Hochstetler.

Janeen also represented the seminary at the second annual gathering of the Seminary Stewardship Alliance in October 2013, along with student Ryan Harker.

The Bible and creation care in my faith

Ryan Harker, Master of Divinity student

In preparation for further graduate work in New Testament, my studies at AMBS concentrate on the Bible. I am convinced that a faithful reading of the Bible is a tremendous resource for a Christian creation care ethic.

Both in my study of the Bible and in many other courses, I have taken seriously Wendell Berry's advice to



“learn to read and understand the Bible in the light of the present fact of Creation” (“Christianity and the Survival of Creation”). For me, this means getting to know

the agrarian world in which the Bible was written. In doing so, I'd like to help the church realize the truth of what Berry writes in another place in the same essay:

How we take our lives from this world, how we work, what work we do, how well we use the materials we use, and what we do with them after we have used them—all these are questions of the highest and gravest religious significance. In answering them, we practice, or do not practice, our religion.

As an aspiring biblical scholar and as a Christian, I believe that any legitimate Christian ecological ethic is grounded in the biblical text, and any good reading of the biblical text should lead a community

to care for the land. It has been the case for me.

As an agrarian text, the Bible is the primary and most important resource for the church in an age of ecological disaster. It can lead us back to God's vision for true life. AMBS has been an incredibly fruitful place for me to cultivate this love and respect for both the Bible and for God's creation. ●

Ryan Harker is a Master of Divinity student at AMBS. He co-leads creation care efforts at AMBS along with Janeen Bertsche Johnson, campus pastor. Ryan also helped to set up the composting system for the student-run vegetable garden on campus, and he and Brenna, his wife, tend several gardens—including one on campus—during the growing season.

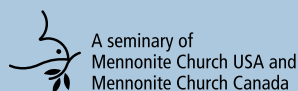
Photo above: The AMBS library, completed in 2007, was built with Green Building standards. Surrounding the facility are fields of prairie grasses, beds of native flowers and rain gardens that return rainwater to the aquifer.

AMBS Window SPRING 2014 Volume 24 Issue 2

Distributed three times a year as a supplement to *Canadian Mennonite* and *The Mennonite*. Editor: Mary E. Klassen
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ALUMNI NEWS

Janie Beck Kreider (Master of Divinity 2013) serves on the team that is writing creation care curriculum for MC USA congregations. She is involved in Mennonite Creation Care Network and works at Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center, Wolf Lake, Ind.

Ray Epp (Master of Arts: Peace Studies 2001) and Aki Aratani, his wife, are directors of Menno Village in Sapporo, Japan, a farm-based community, helping build relationships among people and between people and the land.

Matt Hickman (Master of Divinity 2008), associate pastor for Mennonite Church of Normal (Ill.), does consulting

on land stewardship for two Mennonite camps and is cochair of the stewardship committee for the ParkLands Foundation which protects natural lands in McLean and Woodford counties in Illinois.

S. Roy Kaufman (Master of Divinity 1969) is author of *Healing God's Earth: Rural Community in the Context of Urban Civilization* (Wipf & Stock, 2013)

Andy Alexis-Baker (Master of Arts: Theological Studies 2007) is coeditor of *A Faith Encompassing All of Creation: Addressing Commonly Asked Questions about Christian Care for the Environment* (Wipf & Stock, 2014). ●



Creation as an other

Safwat Marzouk, Assistant Professor of Old Testament

God's creation and our place in it is considered in several AMBS classes, and we are working to incorporate this theme more deliberately. One course, taught by Safwat Marzouk, challenges how we view ourselves in relationship with creation.

In the course "Constructing the other in the Old Testament" we study how human beings tend to define who they are by differentiating themselves from others who surround them based on ethnic, racial, economic, gender, sexual and bodily categories.

Students look closely into the historical and literary settings of many biblical texts that deal with notions of inclusion, exclusion, hierarchy, etc. The goal of the class is to provide biblical insights for the contemporary



church on how to deal with others in a world that tends to create binary opposites of us vs. them.

This binary opposite perspective influences how humans relate to the nonhuman creatures. For a long period of time biblical scholarship has argued that redemption and salvation should lie at the heart of theological reflection, and that it should be seen as something opposed to creation theology. According to this perspective, if nature and creation were to figure in theological discourse, then this would happen in a way that serves the central theme of salvation.

Engaging with more recent trends in biblical scholarship, we discuss how creation as an other invites us to move even beyond the language of creation care in which creation is seen as an object. Seeing nonhuman creation as an other means treating it as a subject that relates to God, independently from humans, in doxology or

rebellion. It also means we recognize it as a relational agent that influences humans and is influenced by humans. According to this perspective, creation and salvation are integral parts of God's work in the world. ●

For additional insight into Safwat Marzouk's work with self and other, listen to recordings of his sermon and lecture from Pastors Week: www.ambs.edu/pastorsweek

Photos above: (left) The Chapel of the Sermon on the Mount was refurbished and an annex added in 2011. One major goal was to improve energy efficiency in the 45-year old building. (right) Adam Graber Roth, AMBS student, established a beehive on campus last summer. Honey will be harvested for use with campus events.

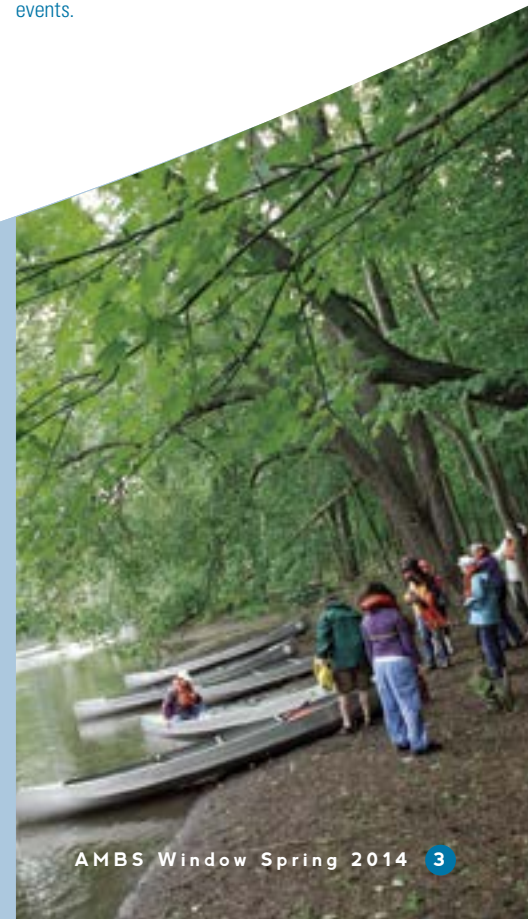
YOUR GIFTS AT WORK

When you join the Fidelity Circle, one of the President's giving groups, your contributions save paper ... and thus save trees. That's because the Fidelity Circle is for paperless giving. As a member, you will receive all information from AMBS electronically. You may choose one of two secure options:

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Visit www.ambs.edu and select *Give online*, or contact Missy Kauffman Schrock, director of development, mkschrock@ambs.edu or 800.964.2627. ●

Photo at right: AMBS students and several family members joined in a retreat focusing on water as they canoed down the Elkhart River last spring. Led by Janeen Bertsche Johnson, the group disembarked at the home of Sara Wenger Shenk, AMBS president, for lunch and a time of reflection.



PANORAMA

Conference on land and faith

AMBS will host "Rooted and Grounded: A Conference on Land and Christian Discipleship," Sept. 18–20. A call for papers is available at www.ambs.edu/rootedandgrounded. Suggested themes include watershed discipleship, land and place, eschatology and care for the land, place and contemporary life, and race and land or place.

Greg Boyd to speak at AMBS

Greg Boyd, PhD, internationally recognized theologian, preacher, teacher, apologist and author, will present a public lecture at AMBS on Thursday, April 24, at 7:30 p.m. Admission is by ticket only. To request a free ticket, visit www.ambs.edu/gregboyd

Journal explores economics

Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology focuses on economics in the spring issue. Read a selected article and find subscription information at www.mennovision.org

Enjoy recordings of Pastors Week and Martin Luther King Jr Day

You can get the benefit of the recent moving and challenging experiences in the AMBS learning community by listening to the recordings on iTunes U.

- **Martin Luther King Jr Day** brought a panel of three to campus, exploring issues of racism, violence and poverty in our communities. Speakers were Apostle Willie Coates Jr., Gilberto Pérez Jr., and Rev. Jennifer Tinsley.
- **Pastors Week** featured the five newest AMBS professors, speaking from their areas of expertise: Rachel Miller Jacobs, Andy Brubacher Kaethler, Safwat Marzouk, Jamie Pitts, Allan Rudy Froese.

Visit www.ambs.edu/news-events/iTunesU.cfm to access these recordings.

Summer hybrid courses

Hybrid courses, which combine online learning with one week on campus, provide an excellent opportunity for people from a distance to study at AMBS. Summer 2014 courses are:

- Canon and Community
- Gender and Justice
- Performing the Faith
- Pastoral Counseling and Theology

Visit www.ambs.edu/academics/summer-courses.cfm

Short course on Mennonite polity

A six-week online course on Mennonite polity is scheduled for May 7 to June 17. Instructors are Janeen Bertsche Johnson and David Boshart. For more information about this and other Anabaptist Short Courses, visit www.ambs.edu/AnabaptistShortCourses ●

PRESIDENT'S WINDOW SARA WENGER SHENK



Ari, my three-year-old grandson, was filling his dump truck while digging in the flower garden last week when he discovered a clump of green sprouts pushing through the mulch. "Grandma, Grandma!" his jubilant voice rang out. "The seeds are sprouting!" After a brutally cold winter, fresh green life is astonishing.

The day before, Ari and I and his baby brother, Jacob, spent many minutes gently interacting with a millipede. We marveled at how its hair-like legs rippled

in waves as it moved across the carpet. We wondered about where it lives, what it eats and who created it.

Care for creation begins with wonder—which is the heart of worship. I often remember Elizabeth Barrett Browning's words:

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire
with God,
But only he who sees takes off
his shoes;
The rest sit round and pluck
blackberries.

Teilhard de Chardin, the Jesuit paleontologist, said, "Less and less do I see any difference between research and adoration." He seemed to get the connection between science and earth as a sacred gift from the Creator. This is not unlike what Chief Lawrence Hart describes in a chapter called "The earth is a song made visible: A Cheyenne Christian perspective" in a new book, *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry*. "Today, we

need creative poets, composers, liturgists, and others to explore how to root our worship in the land. We need to sing the land, to experience it, to be transformed by its power, and so glorify God."

We need good science that teaches us how to restore ecosystems to a healthy, sustainable balance. And we need wonder awakened. "To cease to wonder, is to cease to be human," educator Thomas Green writes. "Wonder is the mother of motivation." Wonder is the gift and grace of the Creator when we stop to notice what is at our finger tips and sing out, "The seeds are sprouting!"

Staying alive to wonder: this is theology, this is prayer, this is worship—the mother of motivation to care for Creation. ●

'A really cool thing'

Annual art show bridges generation gap

STORY AND PHOTOS BY BRANDI FRIESEN THORPE

Special to Young Voices
WINNIPEG

A converted ballroom in Winnipeg's Exchange District served as home for MennoFolk 2014, the annual showcase of visual art, music and spoken word stemming from southern Manitoba's Mennonite community.

Under the banner, "Work of our hands: Beauty in utility," the April 4 event included paintings, quilts, photography, ceramic mosaics, musical instruments created from antlers, multi-coloured chandelier creations, paper embroidery and more.

Since its establishment in 1999, the exhibition has showcased work by predominantly young adult artists. But coming into

the pot was set on a pedestal where viewers were welcome to sample the goods.

Annie Janzen from Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, submitted a piece that was the culmination of a lifetime of memories. The 86-year-old showcased a collection of more than 100 jars, each filled with pictures and objects that reflected moments, memories and occasions of significance from throughout her life. Janzen called them symbols of her life, and shared that she was delighted to be able to exhibit them.

Veith said the organizing committee was excited when it received a phone call

This year, the six-person MennoFolk organizing committee welcomed submissions from three generations.

sharp focus this year was one particular point in the MennoFolk Manitoba mission statement: "To provide a welcoming atmosphere for people, regardless of age." This year, the six-person MennoFolk organizing committee welcomed submissions from three generations.

"I don't think that was a real conscious decision we talked about," said Matthew Veith, one of the organizers. "It maybe had something to do with where we advertised [our call for submissions]. Regardless, it was a really cool thing."

George Dyck III, another one of the event's organizers, created one such inter-generational submission with his mother, Teresa Dyck, and his oma, Louise Dyck. The trio cooked a large pot of soup as an art submission. Entitled simply "Borscht,"

from Janzen, saying she was interested in participating.

"It's a piece that deals with telling a story of her entire life," Veith said, noting that Janzen spent more than 20 years as the cook at Canadian Mennonite Bible College, one of Canadian Mennonite University's predecessor colleges. "It's interesting to see a piece of art by someone that says so much about their life."

Clare Schellenberg, another member of the MennoFolk Manitoba organizing committee, said that the "Work of our hands" theme emerged from an intentional focus on "what makes us Mennonite, why it's important and why it should be celebrated."

The 22-year-old added that she felt a personal connection to the theme. "Working

(Continued on page 44)



Shelves lined with jars, each containing a photo or other object of significance from throughout the past 86 years, make up Annie Janzen's contribution to MennoFolk 2014.



Man the Selector—Mike Choi, left, Nick Luchak and Charles Enns—was one of three bands performing at MennoFolk 2014.



Clare Schellenberg, a member of the MennoFolk Manitoba organizing committee, says she and her fellow committee members chose the 'Work of our hands' theme carefully. 'This theme of working with our hands connects me back to the Mennonite culture,' she says.



Artist Annie Janzen, 86, and Mennofolk Manitoba co-organizer George Dyck III, 23, bridged the generation gap at Mennofolk 2014.

(Continued from page 43)

with my hands is how I connect to things,” she said. “This theme of working with our hands connects me back to the Mennonite culture, and [reminds me] of who I am and where I come from.”

In addition to the visual art, Mennofolk 2014 included musical performances by three bands: Man the Selector, The Arlington Trio and Animal Teeth. The evening also included stand-up comedy by Justin Fuhr (performing under his stage name, Frankie Dooberstein), as well as

spoken word poetry by Erin Sawatzky.

More than 250 people attended this year’s event.

“We were very impressed with the turnout and the very good artist submissions,” Veith said. “A lot of people from different generations came. I think it went very well.” ❧

Brandi Friesen Thorpe, 24, is a writer living in Winnipeg. With files from Aaron Epp. For more photos, visit canadianmennonite.org/really-cool-thing.



Online daters, don't be embarrassed!

BY RACHEL BERGEN

Young Voice Co-editor

Match.com, OkCupid, eHarmony, Plenty of Fish, ChristianMingle: These are just some of the sites that more than 25 percent of all Canadians are using to meet new people and start relationships.

If those statistics translate similarly to Canadian Mennonites, there’s about 7,750 of us looking for love online, not including those who attend Mennonite churches but aren’t baptized in the church.

Yet when I tried to find people who would talk about their online dating experiences, people were pretty reluctant to talk. I know you’re out there. Don’t worry, you aren’t alone.

Meredith Hutchinson, 30, met her husband Scott on the Plenty of Fish dating website in 2009.

It all started when she and a friend decided to try Match.com for something fun and new after they graduated from university. Hutchinson, who grew up attending Grace Mennonite Church in Steinbach, Man., had just graduated with a degree in music education from Canadian Mennonite University. She was working full-time and was single.

“I was still in contexts or environments where I would meet people,” she explains. “I don’t know if I would have done it if it wasn’t something I was doing with my girlfriend.”

Hutchinson thought paying a nominal monthly fee to try Match.com meant it was more legitimate and trustworthy, but she was disappointed because it drew a crowd of much older men. She decided to switch to the free Plenty of Fish alternative.

For those of you who are contemplating online dating, it can allow you to meet a lot of people in a short amount of time, and you can focus your search and screen out a lot of people you definitely aren’t interested in. You can also get to know people pretty well before you actually meet in person, because they put their hobbies, interests and some of their beliefs on their profile.

Hutchinson says it also allows users to trust their gut: “I realized quickly that your gut is a powerful force when you’re online. The first contact is in the chat. I wouldn’t pursue any conversations when my gut was telling me, ‘This is not someone who is worth your time.’”

From my own personal experience—don’t judge me!—there are a lot of weird people online. There aren’t a lot of Mennonites or people from similar cultural and religious backgrounds online, either. Finally, it can be discouraging if you don’t meet anyone that you click with.

Hutchinson met three people from Plenty of Fish in person, but had no luck.

“We had nice dinners, conversations, but

PHOTO COURTESY OF MEREDITH HUTCHINSON



Meredith Hutchinson 30, met her husband Scott on the Plenty of Fish dating website in 2009.

they were nobody who would change my world in any way," she says. "I never met anybody weird"

But then she got a message from Scott Hutchinson, who would later become her husband. They added each other on Facebook and texted before they met in person.

"Suddenly it didn't feel so . . . online-ish," she says with a laugh.

When she first introduced Scott to her family and friends, she was embarrassed to tell many of them they had met online. She is not alone. People who have tried online dating may have experienced the awkward first question when you introduce the person you're dating to your friends or family: "Where did you meet?"

Numerous studies suggest Canadians are some of the most active users of social


networking, including online dating. But the stigma persists. Many people still think that people who choose to try online dating are those who have poor social skills, have difficulty meeting people, are desperate, or are just looking for a sexual tryst.

Hutchinson says she notices this quite a bit when she talks to people about their new relationships. "I will talk to strangers or acquaintances about their relationships," she says. "If I ever get a sense that they're humming and hawing, I'll say, 'I met my husband on Plenty of Fish.' And they'll say, 'Oh me, too!' I'd say four out of five conversations go that way."

So, what do you say, Young Mennos? Shall we all shed our embarrassment? ✎

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Pause
a weekend away

Mennonite Church Alberta and Alberta Women in Mission invites Alberta women to take a Pause. April Yamasaki, author of *Sacred Pauses*, will share her journey to find daily renewal through sacred pauses. Come along for a Pause:

May 23-25
Sunnyside Retreat Center, Sylvan Lake, AB

For more information check out Pause2014.blogspot.ca or contact Kate Janzen kajenzen13@gmail.com.

Calendar

British Columbia

May 17: Mennonite Men's breakfast, at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond.

Alberta

May 23-25: "Pause, a weekend away" women's retreat at Sunnyside Christian Retreat Centre, Sylvan Lake. Speaker: April Yamasaki, Emmanuel Mennonite church, Abbotsford, B.C. For more information, visit Pause2014.blogspot.ca or e-mail Kate Janzen at kajenzen13@gmail.com.

June 6-7: Summerfest at Millennium Place, Sherwood Park. For more information, call Trish Elgersma toll-free at 1-888-622-6337 or visit www.mccreliefsale.com.

June 9: Public lecture at Trinity Mennonite Church, DeWinton, at 7 p.m. Speaker: Gordon Matties, CMU professor of biblical and theological studies. Topic: "Joshua and the legacy of scriptural violence." For more information, visit www.mennonitechurch.ab.ca.

June 9-11: "Joshua and the legacy of scriptural violence," a Christian faith studies event, at Trinity Mennonite Church, DeWinton. Presenter: Gordon Matties, CMU professor of biblical and theological studies. Sponsored by MC Alberta. For more information, or to register, visit www.mennonitechurch.ab.ca.

June 14: Camp Valaqua hike-a-thon. Enjoy a day of hiking in the mountains while raising money for the camp. Hikers and sponsors needed. Details available in April.

Saskatchewan

May 24: RJC fundraising golf tournament at Valley Regional Park.

June 20, 21: RJC year-end musical performances.

Sept. 19-21: SMYO junior high retreat at Youth Farm Bible Camp.

Sept. 26-28: Quilting and scrapbooking retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre, Waldheim.

Manitoba

May 28: Westgate Mennonite

Collegiate Grade 7-9 spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

May 29: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Grade 10-12 spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

June 10: CMU President's Golf Classic. For more information, visit cmu.ca/golf.

June 16-27: Canadian School of Peacebuilding, at CMU. For more information, visit csop.cmu.ca.

July 5-6: Mennonite Heritage Village 50th-anniversary celebration in Steinbach. (5) Schmeckfest Jubilee featuring traditional cuisine, a dessert bar and entertainment by improvisational violinist Rosemary Siemens; (6) Worship, guided tours of the village, a traditional saengerfest and fasha/vesper table meal.

Ontario

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.

May 7: "Healthy Pastoral Relationships": an MC Eastern Canada workshop.

May 10: Paddle the Grand fundraiser for Silver Lake Mennonite Camp.

May 10: Menno Singers presents "Explorations: Concert No. 4—South," with Debbie Lou Ludolph and Inshallah, performing *Missa Criolla* by Ramirez, at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, at 7:30 p.m.

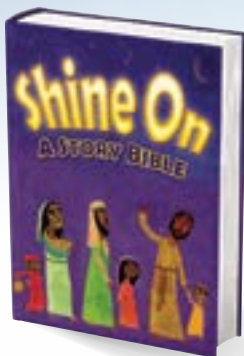
May 10: Hidden Acres hosts the 19th annual Road Hockey Tournament for players 18 year old and up. Register by May 5. All proceeds help send children to summer camp. For more information, visit www.hiddenacres.ca e-mail roadhockey@gmail.com.

May 16-19: MC Eastern Canada youth spring retreat at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp. For more information, visit slmc.ca/retreats or mccc.ca.

May 20: Conrad Grebel University College presents "1914-2014 Concert with Violin and Piano," in the Chapel, at 7:30 p.m. Featuring Elena Denisova on violin and Alexei Kornienko on piano. For more information, visit grebel.ca/



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events.

May 21: Conrad Grebel University College presents "The loss of history: Memory, humanity and peace after 1971," in Room 1208, at 4 p.m. Speaker: Yasmin Saikia, Ph.D., history professor at the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict at Arizona State University. For more information, visit grebel.ca/events.

May 23-25: MC Eastern Canada junior youth retreat at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp.

May 24-25: Hillcrest Mennonite Church celebrates its 50th anniversary: (24) evening meal servings at 5 and 6 p.m., DVD launch, musical program; (25) morning worship with speaker Jeff Wright of California, potluck lunch, displays. For more information, call 519-662-1577.

May 26: Retired Pastors Retreat (including spouses) at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp; from 9:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Bring your own lunch. For more information, call Amsey Martin at 519-662-3314.

May 28-June 1: Mennonite Education Agency's Marpeck Conference at

Conrad Grebel University College.

June 4: MC Eastern Canada Administrators' Day at 50 Kent Ave., Kitchener.

June 5-8: Sound in the Land III ("Music and the Environment") at Conrad Grebel University College. Keynote speaker: Canadian composer R. Murray Schafer, founder of the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology. For more information, or to register online, visit grebel.ca/sound.

June 16: MCC Ontario 17th annual networking conference, at the University of Western Ontario, from 8:15 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Keynote speaker: Kathryn Edmunds. Topic: "We are tired of thinking and working with poverty." For more information, e-mail Lily Hiebert: lilyhr@mennonitecc.on.ca.

June 21: MennoHomes annual fundraising bike-a-thon, Out-spoken for Affordable Housing IV. For more information, call Dan Driedger at 226-476-2535 or visit www.mennohomes.com.

June 21: Nithview Community strawberry social, New Hamburg, from

2 to 4 p.m. and 6:30 to 8 p.m.

June 22: Grand opening of the "Next Chapter Building Project" at Conrad Grebel University College. For more information, visit grebel.ca/events.

June 26: Ralph and Eileen Lebold Endowment for Leadership Training Banquet, in the Conrad Grebel University College dining room, at 6:30 p.m. Speaker: Roberson Mbayamvula, pastor of Hagerman Mennonite Church, Markham. Topic: "Our present future: Being an intercultural learning community. Tickets available at grebel.ca/lebold.

ca/lebold.

June 27-29: Family Camping Weekend at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp. For more information, or to reserve a cabin, call 519-625-8602 or e-mail info@hiddenacres.ca.

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

Classifieds

Employment Opportunities

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 or visit communitymennonite.com
Please submit applications to Henry Paetkau by April 15th.

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



**Mennonite
Central
Committee
British Columbia**

MCC is a church-based agency that serves in the name of Christ by providing relief, development and peace initiatives in over 60 countries. MCC British Columbia supports the international work of MCC and operates several local programs that serve needs here at home. MCC BC has an operating budget of \$10 million with 75 staff and 3,000 volunteers who work in 10 thrift shops and a range of other activities. We also own several subsidiary enterprises that operate local programs and hold legacy investments.

Employment Opportunities

Finance and Administration Director

The Finance & Administration Director is a new position that reports to the Executive Director and is responsible for all financial services related to the operations of MCC BC, and also provides expertise and oversight related to subsidiary enterprises. Administrative responsibilities include property, office equipment, information systems, and insurance.

Qualifications include: certification in a professional accounting association, proven track record in a related leadership role, knowledge and experience related to the charitable sector, proficiency with computer systems and accounting software, experience with policy development, and the ability to work effectively in a collaborative team environment.

Advancement Director

The Advancement Director reports to the Executive Director and is responsible for all fundraising, marketing and communications activities including direct mail, monthly giving, major donors, fundraising events, media, church relations, planned giving, marketing a wide range of MCC activities, and creating new initiatives to engage our constituency and expand the donor base.

Qualifications include: proven track record as a leader in fundraising and communications, experience with related best practices, passion for networking and constituency relations, effective communicator in various mediums, proficiency with fundraising software, aptitude for creating innovative strategies for growth, and the ability to work effectively in a collaborative team environment.

MCC workers are required to have a personal Christian faith, active church participation, a commitment to non-violent peacemaking, and support for the mission of MCC.

Please send a cover letter and resume to - Attention: Human Resources (confidential)
MCC BC, Box 2038, 31414 Marshall Rd., Abbotsford, B.C. V2T 3T8
Or by fax to: 1-604-850-8734, or by email to: hrdirector@mccbc.com

Check www.mccbc.ca
for more information on MCC
and this job posting.

Weaver remembers Mandela Snapshots



Carol Ann Weaver, at the piano, has run the Noon-hour Concert Series at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., for the past 20 years. On March 26, she performed her last concert before retiring this summer after 29 years as a music prof there. With vocalist Rebecca Campbell (pictured), the University of Waterloo Chamber Choir and Kyle Stillman on drums, Weaver paid tribute to the late Nelson Mandela with traditional South African music and her own compositions. Over the years, Weaver has focused on South African music both in her own work and in teaching future generations of musicians at Grebel.

