

# CANADIAN MONITE

June 23, 2014

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## EDITORIAL

## ‘Such is the kindgom’

BY DICK BENNER  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

**T**hey sat in rapt attention, taking in every word from the 80-year-olds sitting in front of them. The usual restlessness was gone. The children took in every word.

It was children’s time last Sunday at our church. It was also a new event—a special celebration of the seniors 80 years young. There were 26 of them in our 250-member congregation that is demographically diverse—persons spread across all age ranges. Having just satisfied our “sweet tooth” from several “birthday” cakes in the fellowship hall, you would assume the children were on a sugar high. Not so.

I watched those eager young faces in utter amazement. It is not an exaggeration to say they were spellbound by the stories three of our seniors were telling them at the behest of the worship leader, who was querying three of them about how different church was when they were children, what lessons they learned and what their hopes were.

Marcella told how she didn’t have a smart phone or Skype when she was a child, depending entirely on hand-written letters which could take up to two weeks to arrive at their destination.

Ralph recalled sitting quietly in church on the “men’s side” with his father and brothers because the church seating was divided between the men and women—something foreign to these children today.

Joyce told of memorizing certain Bible verses that came in handy in making decisions when she grew up. She asked them if they knew favourite verses and told them to remember them because they would be helpful later in life when they faced hard choices.



When asked about his hope for the future, Ralph said his one hope was that we keep up these age-specific worship rituals (a big word for children—but they got it!) so that everyone, young and old alike could feel a part of the church family. He was referring to such things as child dedications, giving a personal Bible at age 6, honouring high school graduates as they left for university or a job, parents speaking to the faith development of their children at baptism and now seniors as they enter their later sunset years.

The whole spine-chilling experience took me back to my own childhood and adolescence.

How fortunate, I thought, remembering that, even though I felt loved by my parents and had a strong sense of belonging in my congregation, I was never affirmed with these rituals that cemented the bond with the life-long experience of “church.”

Praise and affirmation were absent from my home, but there was plenty of chiding; the expectations for achievement were high. If it weren’t for a caring and dynamic Sunday school teacher

during my teen years and a loving bishop who made it a point to visit me in college, I probably would not be a part of the church today.

My heart overflowed as I looked into those young, innocent faces returning to sit with their parents—just as integral to our faith experience as those 80-year-olds with their wealth of experience, their wisdom, their seasoned perspective. How lucky I was to be a part of this dynamic faith community, who enjoyed, most of all, just being together.

And how far we have come. In this issue, we carry a story (p. 4) of a person who was not protected, as a child, from sexual abuse. The trauma of this experience carried into her adulthood, causing untold pain and loss of self-esteem and identity. Fortunately, in her congregation, she found redemption and wholeness—and gathered the courage to tell her story. Likely her story is all too common to our collective experience.

So, how do we have the church be more of a safety net for our children? By holding them closer with the rituals to which Ralph Lebold refers. If the congregation is bonded through these life-cycle rituals, there is no guarantee that perverse abuse will not happen, but with a watchful, caring congregation, there is less of a chance.

When his disciples wanted to shoo the children away as Jesus was teaching, because they were a distraction, he was displeased and said: “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God” (Luke 18:16).

If Jesus considered children “the kingdom,” why don’t we? They are a vital part of our congregations and should be celebrated, just as much as the seasoned 80-year-olds.

## ABOUT THE COVER:

Masie Sum, professor of music at Conrad Grebel University College, plays hand drum as part of the Grebel Gamelan players, at Sound in the Land on June 7. Gamelan are ensembles of Balinese percussion instruments. The Sound in the Land festival/conference was held at Grebel June 5-8. See story, page 29.

PHOTO: DAVE ROGALSKY

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WATERLOO ON N2L 6H7

Phone: 519-884-3810 Toll-free: 1-800-378-2524 Fax: 519-884-3331

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**Head Office Staff:**

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

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

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**Dan Johnson,** Graphic Designer, [designer@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:designer@canadianmennonite.org)

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**Aaron Epp,** Young Voices Co-editor, [youngvoices@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:youngvoices@canadianmennonite.org)

**Rachel Bergen,** Young Voices Co-editor, [rachel.bergen19@gmail.com](mailto:rachel.bergen19@gmail.com)

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

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

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

**Correspondents:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Web exclusives:

- Project explores connection between language education and peacemaking
- Information about the Mennonite World Conference Assembly, July 21-26, 2015
- Prayer that heals the heart- the theme for the upcoming MC Canada Ministers Conference

We will be in Winnipeg at Assembly 2014, July 2 to 6. Watch for updates on Facebook and Twitter. And spread the word to your friends!

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PERSONAL REFLECTION

The truth  
about **sexual  
abuse** will  
set you **free**

NAME WITHHELD BY REQUEST\*

SPECIAL TO *CANADIAN MENNONITE*

I came across an editorial by Dick Benner a few months ago and was distressed to read about the late—and highly regarded—John Howard Yoder having sexually violated 80 women “at last count” (“Healing sexual abuse,” Sept. 2, 2013, page 2). This was news to me, as I am relatively new to the Mennonite circle.

Then I turned over a few pages and read that there was a work in progress to preserve this same John Howard Yoder’s work digitally (“Works of theologian John Howard Yoder to be digitized, published online,” page 17). This troubled me even more, and I felt I needed to know more, so I booked an appointment to see the person I would trust to tell me the straight goods.

Richard and I had an honest discussion about Yoder’s work and his flaws involving the sexual violation of women that he had power over, and how he justified this within his theology. He shared that Yoder was a brilliant man who had broken ground theologically that had helped many people, but there was this other side of his character that we needed to be honest about.

I told him that my heart was with all the lives that he had wreaked havoc on, and the outcome for them and their families. I then shared with him a little of my story of devastation from sexual abuse and the recovery process I have been in over the last 22 years. Richard asked me if I would be willing to share my story, and I pray now that my story may be helpful for others:

### **‘Don’t tell, don’t feel, don’t trust’**

I was the first-born child of parents of Mennonite heritage. My parents were believers and they raised us in the church. We lived in farming communities while I was growing up. I was loved, but there were numerous issues in retrospect that I had no insight into. There was a code of “don’t tell, don’t feel, don’t trust—protect family no matter what.”

When I was 6, an extended family member started to sexually abuse me. This happened when my family would visit their family, which was a frequent occurrence since they just lived up the road from us. My parents were in the

home when this happened and I was with a “trusted” person who was supposed to be caring for me and my brothers.

This was a very confusing time for me. I experienced feelings that should never be awakened in a child. Plus there were shame and guilt for the abuse and also for the feelings themselves. When I was 7, we moved away and the abuse stopped. But the confusion did not.

I became very concerned that I could be pregnant. When I was 9, after much consideration and with considerable anxiety, I spoke with my mother about my concerns. Her response—“this just is something that happens when you are a girl”—caused me to push the trauma and confusion deep into my soul, delaying my healing until much later in my life, with serious and long-reaching consequences.

### **First comes love, then comes marriage . . .**

Bill and I met in high school and married when I was 21. I did tell him that I had been abused while we were going out, but assured him that it was in the past and all was okay; he accepted this and so did I, and our three-year courtship was sweet with few problems.

As soon as we got married, though, problems started and then grew. It seemed like this came out of the blue. But we were very much in love, and continued to believe that things would improve.

Cheryl came into our lives when we had been married for seven years, at which time we entered into four years of

reluctance, we did get back together with the agreement that we would each work on our own issues and that we would reassess our marriage in a year’s time.

### **Journey to healing**

After meeting with our pastor a couple of times for what I thought were marriage-related problems, he referred me to a Christian counselling service. I was blessed with a wonderful young therapist who was very insightful.

In my intake forms, I indicated that I had been sexually abused as a child. Meredith asked me if this had been dealt with. I said I felt it had been, but she suggested we change course for a while and look at this issue. I did not realize the journey this would take me on and how desperately I needed healing.

I still remember so clearly Meredith sending me home with the first chapter of a book on sexual abuse that she thought we might want to look at. The chapter was about coping mechanisms. I think I asked Bill about almost every coping mechanism listed, but he kept looking at me like I was from another planet. And it hit me—oh my goodness—this has really affected me!

And so I started the journey through therapy to healing. Meredith suggested that I have a verse to hold onto during this period, and offered Jesus’ words in John 8:31: “*And you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.*” I clung to this verse because I was becoming aware of what held me captive. Could Jesus really free

*Her response—‘this is just something that happens when you are a girl’—caused me to push the trauma and confusion deep into my soul . . .*

serious crisis in our marriage.

Not knowing where to turn when I found myself pregnant with our second child, I went to see the pastor of my parents’ church. I am convinced God used him to tell me what I needed to hear. By listening to me talk, he said it was clear that I still really loved my husband, and that if I was wanting to reconcile I needed to call him.

I called Bill and, although there was

me from all that I had become? I had to believe he could . . . and that he would.

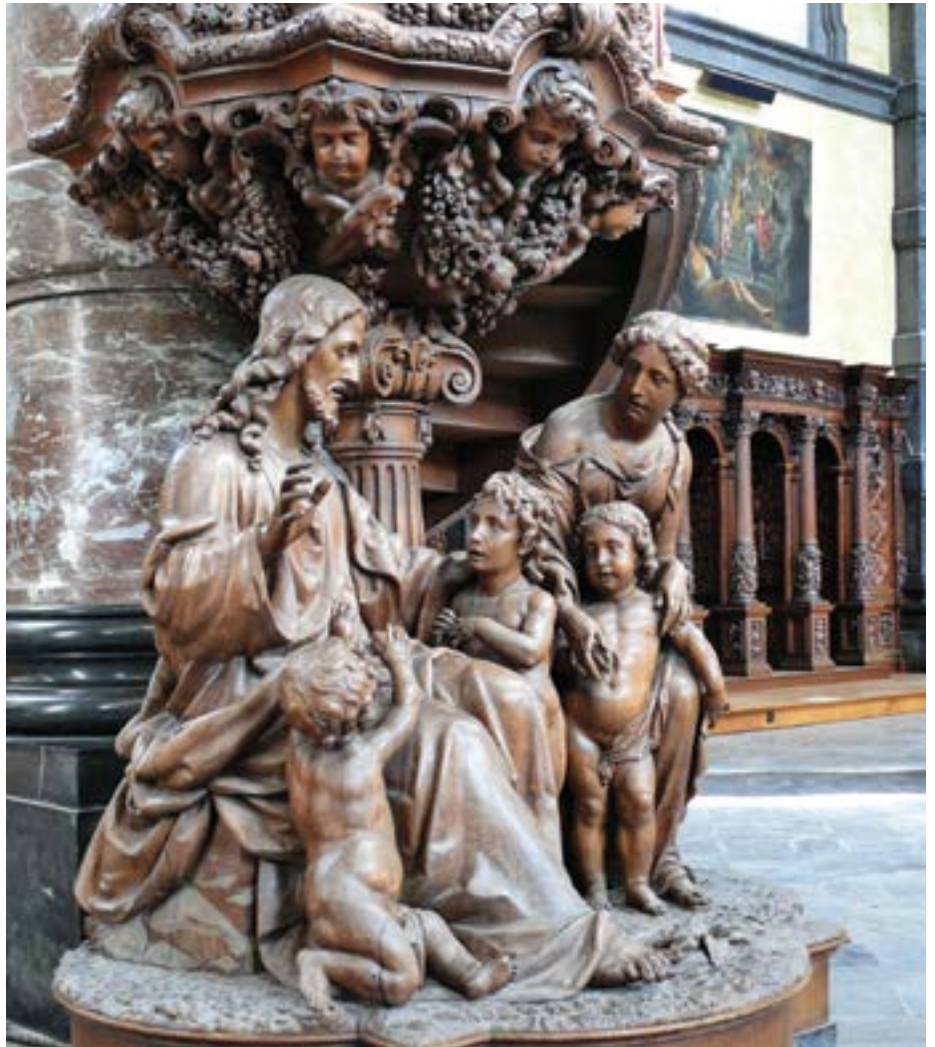
For the first number of months I was paralyzed by all the emotion that started to come to the surface. There was a lot of anger about the loss of my childhood and my childhood memories, about how the abuse had shaped my life, and also anger towards the perpetrator.

There were days I could barely care for my children, but I made it through those



*That evening I realized  
that God loved me and  
I had a vision of him  
holding me on his knee, as  
Jesus had done with the  
children who came to him.*

PHOTO © AD MESKENS / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



*The pulpit in the Jesuit Saint-Loup church in Namur, the Netherlands. The monumental sculpture, 'Suffer little children to come unto me' was made by the Dinant sculptor Benjamin Devigne (1827-94) in 1876.*

first six months. During that time I wrote letters to the perpetrator. In the end I never sent them because the writing itself was what I needed to release the emotion.

The anger started to dissipate as I released the emotion that came to the surface. We talked a lot about behaviours that were affecting my day-to-day relationships, especially issues around control. This was by far my most troubling behaviour, as it was so interruptive to relationships, and I could see how it was definitely a contributing factor to the breakdown of our marriage.

Over time I came to realize that, because my mother had her own story, she could not help me when I had spoken to her when I was 9. This insight was very helpful and I was able to forgive her, realizing that she was not capable of helping me

when she had never been healed herself.

I also started realizing the need to forgive was about me healing and not being stuck in bitterness and resentment. I began the process of forgiving the perpetrator. The work of forgiveness came in many layers. I remember Meredith saying that when a person has a serious accident because of a drunk driver, we do not rush to the scene and tell them that they will be healed if they will just forgive the perpetrator. The truth is, they still may need surgery, antibiotics and rehabilitation. Likewise, when we have emotional trauma, healing is a process and forgiveness is part of that process.

#### ***Our marriage redeemed***

During therapy we started to unravel why Bill and I had such a wonderful courtship,

but that problems started to surface as soon as we are married. Because the abuse had been such an out-of-control situation, I needed control of everything in my life, but the intimacy of marriage overwhelmed me. This escalated even more when I became pregnant and had our children, which at least in part explains the further deterioration of our marriage.

These issues and more were explored over a year-and-a-half of individual and group therapy sessions. There were times when I wanted to quit, but I was very motivated to work to save my family and to stop the cycle of abuse for my children. As I worked through the issues that had developed in my life, it was apparent that they were often directly related to the coping mechanisms I had once needed but were now no longer helpful or useful.

I gained insight and found healthier ways to manage my life. This resulted in being a healthier partner to my husband and a healthier parent of my children.

There was an evening in group therapy when I had a significant spiritual breakthrough. We each drew a picture of ourselves with God and I drew him in an authoritative position with me basically cowering before him. I realized I was afraid of God; it was not a position of trusting, but of fear. That evening I realized that God loved me and I had a vision of him holding me on his knee, as Jesus had done with the children who came to him. For the first time I knew that God loved me, that Jesus was setting me free. And I was becoming free indeed.

Through therapy Bill stood with me and supported me, which showed me how much he loved me, and how committed he was to our marriage and to God's plan for us. Before I completed therapy Bill and I attended a weekend marriage seminar, from which we learned many communication tools that have helped us over the years. And at the end of the weekend we recommitted our vows to each other. This was one of the happiest days of my life. Our marriage had been redeemed.

### **Jesus is a gentle healer**

My journey did not end with the end of therapy. Control issues, in particular, would resurface when I was under stress. I gave Bill permission to address issues as they came up, and, although it was difficult, through his support and God's intervention victory was gradually being won. Because control is my auto-response, it still can resurface when I'm under stress, but I have clearer insight now and rely on Jesus to show me the early signs.

After 22 years, I have come to see that Jesus heals us gently. He comes to us when we are ready and shows us the truth and then leads us in his way, a way that brings redemption to that area.

Because of the abuse, I had no boundaries. It was years after therapy that I realized that this was an issue. The amazing thing is that God showed me this as my children needed my guidance in learning boundary-setting skills in their

*Today, I am happily married to the same man that I once thought was the worst husband in the world . . . .*

own lives. I had to set healthy boundaries first with my family. Although it was challenging, God helped me step by step, often using Bill to help me gain insight.

Today, I am happily married to the same man that I once thought was the worst husband in the world, have two wonderful children, and am nearer to God than I have ever been, because in his grace and power Jesus redeemed my life. I also have a healthy, respectful relationship with most family members.

### **Journey to freedom**

I have shared my story in the past for the same reason I agreed to share it in print: because very sadly there are so many people affected by abuse. My journey to freedom so far is 22 years and mine is just one story.

But what of the 80 women affected by Yoder? Personally, I am happy to know that the work on this is not complete, that there is a Mennonite Church U.S.A. task force reaching out to the women and their families who have been affected, and that Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical

Seminary and MennoMedia have issued statements in regard to approaching Yoder's work while acknowledging his sexual misconduct.

What, though, of the many other women and children who are affected in our other community and church circles? For those reading my words, does your life resemble the tragedy that was my life? Is abuse in your history? If so, how has it harmed your life?

I can truly attest that I have a redeemer who freed me from captivity, who helped me overcome the detriments in my life, who offset the bad effects of the abuse, who showed me I am worthwhile, and who bought me back from the abyss. Jesus is in the business of redeeming lives. He redeemed mine, and he can redeem yours too!

*\* The author seeks anonymity not because of shame, but to protect the privacy of those referenced in the story. Anyone wanting to discuss the issue with her should contact Dick Benner, who will then forward a message to her.*

### **For discussion**

1. Why do some of us find it so difficult to talk about sexual abuse? What is it about sexual abuse and allegations of misconduct that makes them so hurtful? Is sexual misconduct an open subject in your congregation? How important is listening in the healing process?
2. What steps has your church taken to protect children, youth and other vulnerable people? Do you have a safe church policy? How effective is it? How rigorous are you in applying it to volunteers who work with children and teens?
3. If allegations of sexual misconduct surfaced, what are the first steps that your church would take? Does your church have access to resources such as the Sexual Misconduct and Abuse Response Resource Team (SMARRT) of MCC Ontario ([www.mcco.ca/restorative/smart](http://www.mcco.ca/restorative/smart))? What are the challenges of dealing with such allegations? What role should the news media (including this magazine) play in covering allegations of sexual misconduct?
4. If sexual abuse is a by-product of unhealthy sexuality, how can we work at improving healthy sexuality? How can we work at breaking the cycle of abuse? Why is it important to talk about these issues, even if they make us uncomfortable?

— 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.*

## ✉ Informed scientists agree global warming is man-made

Stephen Kennel's letter in the May 26 issue of *Canadian Mennonite* unwisely attacks editor Benner for suggesting Mennonites divest in fossil fuel industries. Benner is certainly correct in pronouncing the climate change problem urgent enough for us to try to reduce our carbon emissions.

Kennel points to the U.S. Senate Minority report on Climate Change of 2008, available on the internet, as a worthwhile source of information. That report is a collection of statements by scientists of all sorts who wish to voice objections to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change conclusion that global warming is a significant threat and that it is generated by our industrial society. These statements are merely opinions by scientists whose expertise is not climate science and who have not submitted their conclusions to the rigors of peer-reviewed publication.

## FROM OUR LEADERS

## Gathering under the Assembly tent

HILDA A. HILDEBRAND

**F**rom July 3-6, our extended family of faith gathers underneath the Assembly "tent." We welcome newcomers and greet old friends, drawing closer together through praise, worship, prayer, thought-provoking speakers and group discernment on matters of faith and life. Our time together culminates by sharing communion under one roof.

Not so long ago, many families spent their summer vacations camping their way to "Conference." Whether or not this was your experience, it captures a sense of our collective story as a pilgrim people from many backgrounds, sharing a clear purpose and common destination. It is with gratitude that we have become an increasingly culturally diverse people bonded by love and united in spirit.

The tent offers a beautiful metaphor for the church. Diverse people are drawn through openings around its perimeter and into the shelter provided by its simple, impermeable membrane. That membrane is created from the fabric of

smaller tents, woven from threads tinged by lament and celebration. Those threads tell stories of binding, loosing and adjusting that become intricate parts of the larger organic whole.

We've all felt 21st century winds tug at the tent pegs. Life under the canvas can be unsettling. Yet amidst storm clouds, we remain faithfully committed to carrying out God's mission for the church. Collectively, we discern challenges and seek the voice of God amid spiritual unrest and ferment. In our gathering, we seek to listen with open hearts and to share our thoughts in ways that encourage and support one another. We join together, building up the body.

This year, our conversations include the ongoing work of two task forces that depend on our ability to respectfully listen with patience and open hearts and minds. Our Being the Faithful Church Task Force (BFC) and the Future Directions Task Force (FDTF) will provide updates on their work before inviting dialogue and "testing" to help shape



steps going forward.

Mennonite Church Canada's preferred approach to decision-making is consensus building, yet we know this is not easy. We recognize that within the tent, community life may not always reflect the particular uniformity of understanding we as individuals prefer. Some issues may be passionately held and debated, while other differences may be more readily absorbed. How do we respond to people with materially different understandings from our own, who also with integrity, confess Jesus as Lord and seek to be faithful to Christ's message? How do we engage one another in love with the same grace, compassion, patience and forbearance that God extends to each one of us?

Winds of uncertainly swirl within and around our tent. And it makes life uncomfortably messy, just as it was for the early church.

As the community worshipfully prepares to gather for Assembly 2014, may we prayerfully embrace the work God calls us to with humility and joy, fully trusting in the Spirit's leading.

Shalom.

*Hilda A. Hildebrand is moderator of Mennonite Church Canada, General Board.*



The American Geophysical Union in their 20 January 2009 issue of *EOS*, our professional newsletter, published results of a study designed to measure the strength of the consensus that global warming is significantly affected by human activity. Their invitation went to institutions that employ geoscientists of any stripe, and they received over 3000 responses. To the question of whether global warming is man-made, 82% said “Yes.” The general public’s response to the

same question according to a Gallup poll had only 58% agreement. The study found that the closer a scientist’s expertise is to climate change the more likely he/she is to agree, so that among scientists whose recent peer-reviewed publications were on climate change, 97% agreed that global warming is man-made. Thus the informed scientific consensus is almost complete.

So what about the 16 years without global warming

*(Continued on page 10)*

## FAMILY TIES

# The deadly sin of envy

MELISSA MILLER

**T**he green-eyed monster twined through my family tree in an almost funny way. It began with my 88-year-old grandmother. She was irritated because her older sister had just planted a garden. My grandmother was too unsteady on her feet that spring to do the same, and she fussed, “Why does she get a garden and I don’t?” Shades of jealousy. Shortly after my mother confessed that she was feeling envious of her younger sister, for reasons that had nothing to do with gardening. Simultaneously, I recognized the same insecurity within myself. My sisters had stuff that I didn’t, and I was jealous of them.

Occurring within a few days, these confessions were illuminating. First of all, I was surprised that other family members were struggling with the same feelings as me, and I was somewhat comforted to know of our common experiences. Secondly, I wondered about the duration of jealousies that are formed in families. Don’t we get to grow out of sibling rivalry? Well, apparently in my grandmother’s case, 88 years wasn’t long enough. And as I said before, it was kind of funny. With affection towards my relatives, I smiled, in recognition of our shared humanity.

We do learn from our families how to manage our emotions. Probably some of the jealousy I observed had been passed on through many generations. Still, while

we are influenced by our families, we are not stuck in those early teachings, but are given the capacity to move past them towards health and wholeness.

The Bible offers alternatives to negative family patterns. It contains dozens of references warning against the dangers of



*Envy [is] a marker, pointing towards something that is unfulfilled or in need of attention.*

jealousy, likely contributing to its inclusion in the seven deadly sins. Most familiar among the biblical references is the tenth commandment, “Thou shalt not covet.” A comprehensive list then follows of what should not be coveted: the house, wife, slaves, ox, donkey, or anything that belongs to one’s neighbour. The anything makes it pretty inclusive.

As an important aside, jealousy is not gender specific. The Bible has a bias towards the male-dominated society in which it was written, and its language reflects that perspective. Men are told not to covet their male neighbours’ wives; there isn’t a corresponding instruction to women. Similarly, though the participants were female in my family story, we can all think of examples that include men.

Back to the Bible, jealousy and envy often make it on to lists of sins. Jesus includes envy in his inventory of evil

intentions that come from the heart (Mark 7:22). Both envy and jealousy are included in Galatians 5:19-21. (Some people make a distinction between the two. Envy is a negative feeling towards someone who has something that is desired and difficult to attain: power, strength, or wealth, for example. Jealousy is relationally oriented; a person is jealous that another will steal their lover’s affections. Most of us, though, use the terms interchangeably.)

The classic antidote to a covetous spirit is kindness. Acts of kindness help remove

the blinders from our eyes, enabling us to see the other person’s humanity and vulnerability. When I see with God’s compassionate vision—holding both myself and others in that gaze—I am more prone to wholeness of heart. I am released from obsessive comparisons, and gnawing insecurity.

I also think of envy as a marker, pointing me towards something that is unfulfilled or in need of attention. If I am jealous of my sister’s children, might I need to develop relationships with youngsters? If I am envious of someone’s musical or artistic abilities, might I need to explore my own creative inclinations? Tending these yearnings frees me from the hold of the green-eyed monster.

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

(Continued from page 9)

that Kennel mentions? And what about this cold winter we just had? The vast U.S. network of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration claims on its public internet offering that this past April was the 46th warmest April on record in the contiguous U.S., and that Canada may have been colder. No warming there. Nevertheless, this same April ties with that of 2010 for the warmest on record globally. The reason is that Siberia, for example, was unusually warm. We

have to keep a global perspective in this debate.

I sympathize with Kennel that the only prominent Americans interested in evidence-based decisions are Democrats, but that doesn't mean they're wrong. I'm glad that Benner, independent of party, has also chosen to follow the hard science.

**RUDY WIENS, TORONTO**

*Rudy Wiens has a PhD in space physics and a 19-year career with a NASA satellite.*

## GOD, MONEY AND ME

# How to plan your digital estate

MIKE STRATHDEE

**T**he most surprising “friend” request I ever received on Facebook came from someone I knew only slightly.

That may not seem unusual, except the person was dead. When I clicked the Facebook page, which has since been taken down, I found an unusual memorial. It spoke of being glad to be free of pain and cancer, missing family and so on.

This memorial, a digital legacy, is becoming common.

That incident may seem silly to those of us who didn't come of age in the computer era. But the question of what happens to digital assets—anything stored in electronic form—is becoming a hot topic for lawyers, trust officers and anyone who helps people do end-of-life planning. Some people's digital assets may be worth more than their cars.

The list of things that qualify as digital assets and often don't get mentioned in a will is huge:

text documents, photos, multimedia files, user licences, profiles for online accounts (Facebook, LinkedIn) and subscriptions.

In some cases—accounts at financial institutions and rewards programs—substantial amounts of money are at stake.

Or someone just may want an account or pictures taken offline.

Changes in technology are way ahead of how we think about changes we need to make in estate planning. Soon we will need to add “tech savvy” to the list of qualities we want our estate trustee to have.

Issues we need to consider include making a list of our online accounts, passwords and security questions, and where the information that will allow someone to access these is stored: computers, mobile devices, flash drives or websites.

“Normal” rules of how trustees get access to information when someone dies don't apply to the digital world, complicating this new list of things to



*Soon we will need to add 'tech savvy' to the list of qualities we want our estate trustee to have.*

think about. Each company has different regulations on how it handles the situation, and standards are mostly lacking.

Google may require a U.S. court order before it will disclose any information. Yahoo allows no right of survivorship or transferability on accounts. There have

been lawsuits in the U.S. over these policies.

Shoppers Drug Mart won't allow the transfer of rewards points from a deceased person, but will allow the estate to donate them to certain charities.

One Kitchener, Ont., lawyer is now asking clients to do beneficiary designations for Air Miles points.

A handful of U.S. states have passed laws to impose some order. Nothing of the sort is in place anywhere in Canada.

An easy and important step for estate trustees to take concerning electronic assets is to notify credit agencies about the deceased's passing. Identity fraud is on the rise, and the risks increase with the amount of online activity.

If the potential complications of all this makes your head spin, you are not alone. Please pass the Aspirin. All the more reason to think twice when you are asked to serve as an estate trustee. Turning the job over to professionals and letting them worry about navigating these complications could be money well spent.

To help you keep track of a wide range of accounts and assets, MFC offers a free, downloadable Personal Information Directory at [MennoFoundation.ca/PID](http://MennoFoundation.ca/PID).

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

## ✉ Reader's commitment to BFC process 'waning'

BEING A FAITH Church (BFC) 5 was a process to obtain specific responses from congregations on human sexuality. On the basis of this consultation at the local level, we were promised the Mennonite Church Canada Board would formulate a question that would inform assembly deliberations in July. Instead, we received BFC 5.1 ("Between horizons," May 12, page 26). And in the "All 'church' is local" editorial on page 2 of the same issue, Dick Benner seeks to find a hopeful sign—the Board is drawing in local congregations—in BFC 5.1.

For this initiative to be truly local, the Board would need to permit diversity among congregations. Currently, this is not the case on issues related to human sexuality. The Board continues to bow to a subset of congregations that requires disciplinary action against other congregations that do not agree with it. To be local, a commitment to continued dialogue needs to replace calls for disciplinary action.

I had a strong commitment to the BFC process, but was disappointed in the decision in Vancouver to place the process in neutral for two years. With BFC 5.1, my enthusiasm has waned. I now see the BFC process as a nice, comfortable rocking chair. It gives me something to do, but it gets me nowhere.

HENRY REMPEL, WINNIPEG

## ✉ 'Pretty girl' an inappropriate term for biblical reflection

RE: "GETTING BACK on track," May 12, page 37.

Although Young Voices co-editor Aaron Epp does say he went on a date with a woman, he uses the term "pretty girl" three times in his reflection.

This is problematic for two reasons. One, if an adult is trying to impress women because he/she is interested in dating them, the person should refer to them as women, as they are adults, not girls. Two, why the qualifier "pretty"? Why not intelligent, knowledgeable, well-read or interesting? These adjectives seem more pertinent to the issue of knowing the Bible well, more respectful and more important for building relationships.

ZOE CRESSMAN, WINNIPEG

## ✉ Reader supports magazine's 'open policy'

AFTER READING THE May 12 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*, I want to write to say I disagree with

several of the letters. I especially want you to know that there are many of us who appreciate what you are doing, your frankness, your willingness to show every side of an issue, your challenges to us all to think deeply and to risk thinking in new ways.

I do not agree that the magazine is going down the wrong path, nor do I feel irritated and alienated after reading it. I support your open policy. We do need to learn to listen to each other!

I really enjoy and always appreciate Young Voices.

We continue to pray for you and wish you well as you try to help us to be a faithful and caring church with an open mind.

RENATA KLASSEN, SASKATOON

## ✉ Arguments against same-sex relationships are 'flimsy' proof texts

RE: "CHRISTIANS MUST continue to call all sins 'sin,'" May 12, page 9.

Pastor Arthur Esau argues passionately that as a church we must have the courage of our convictions when it comes to naming lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered/queer (LGBTQ) relationships as sin. I want to challenge his thinking on several fronts:

- **FIRST, HE** argues that support for LGBTQ relationships is an act of politically correct acquiescence that puts us at risk of becoming friends with the world and enemies with God. I strongly disagree with this analysis. My support for LGBTQ relationships has nothing to do with winning points with "the world" and much to do with Christ's vision of equality and respect. I fail to see how loving, same-sex relationships are anything other than a boon to our church and the world.

I've carefully considered the arguments of fellow Christians against same-sex relationships and I consider them flimsy. I view them as a series of proof-texted admonishments plucked from across many contexts and centuries, and tacked together to serve an agenda that is ultimately rooted in a fear.

- **SECOND, I** see these arguments over sexual dogma putting our faith community in much greater peril than any gay wedding or Pride parade. Just like the Pharisees two millennia ago, our dogmatic arguments drown out Christ's clear call to a much larger mission: the pursuit of social and economic justice.

Until we make sure that everyone has adequate food, housing and water, why are we arguing about a handful of passages that some interpret as the definition of sexual morality? Until we've done everything in our power to end the wars that maim children and displace millions of refugees, why are we still debating



over a few lines of Levitical Code?

If satanic powers truly are at work in the world, they couldn't design a better diversion of the church's energy than an interminable debate on sexual morals. We need to refocus on the heart of the gospels where Jesus clearly defines our mission as a church. Love one another, love your enemies, feed the hungry, pursue peace. These are our clear, unequivocal instructions.

The greatest sins of our time are our greed and lust for power that fuel war and poverty. Those are sins that we must name and uproot from everyone's hearts—and it certainly will not make us many friends in this world. This is the mission we must carry out together.

**SCOTT MORTON NINOMIYA,**  
ST. JOHN'S, N.L.

### ✉ Nostalgia and 'cutting edge' both miss the musical point

RE: "THE GREAT music debate," May 12, page 34.

I was raised in the Mennonite church until I left at the age of 17. I became a Christian at age 19 and joined a non-denominational church.

While I hear the opinions expressed in this Young Voices article, I would point out that some of the friends of my childhood who continue to embrace hymns sung in traditional ways are also those who embrace and enjoy the culture of the Mennonite church, but do not necessarily profess a faith or devotion to Jesus.

This may seem like a harsh critique, but when nostalgia or culture is just as much of a motivator as being "cutting edge," we're still missing the point that musical worship is supposed to be about Jesus.

**CORRIE VANDER PLOEG**  
(ONLINE COMMENT)

### ✉ Altruistic young person 'taken in by propaganda'

RE: "A CONSTANT, terrifying threat," May 26, page 36.

While I do not dispute Chloe Bergen's description of the injustice done to Palestinian families, I must challenge her view of the history of the region. Israel is a the result of the Holocaust in Europe. The world chose to ignore the plight of the Jews of Europe from the rise of Nazism onward. Second World War death-camp survivors came home to find their families and their communities annihilated.

When the infant State of Israel was attacked by 13 Arab nations in 1948, there was no wailing about the unfairness of it. The Palestinians who became refugees were victims of propaganda, and were told they would be killed if they stayed. In fact, the Arabs who stayed are citizens of Israel with full rights.

While Bergen is not the first altruistic young person to be taken in by propaganda, finding a long-term solution to the problems there requires a balanced and truthful accounting of what happened in the past.  
**GEORGE SATORY, CAMBRIDGE, ONT.**

*George Satory is a member of Wanner Mennonite Church, Cambridge.*

### /// Correction

Annie Janzen, featured in Young Voices, "A really cool thing" on page 43 of the April 28 issue, is 84, and a member of the Grain of Wheat Church Community in Winnipeg. She was incorrectly identified as 86 and a member of Bethel Mennonite Church. She joined Bethel when she first came to Winnipeg in 1954 and later Charleswood Mennonite before joining Grain of Wheat in 1983. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the errors.

## Pontius' Puddle



## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Dawar**—Myra Bess (b. Jan. 4, 2014), to Annu and Melinde (Whitfield) Dawar, Floradale Mennonite, Ont.

**Kauenhowen**—Dominic Isaiah (b. May 5, 2014), to Kevin and Suny Kauenhowen, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Lupton**—Selena Nadyne (b. March 30, 2014), to Leanne and Daryl Lupton, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

**Reimer**—Bronwen (b. May 21, 2014), to Megan and Tobin Reimer, Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**Rempel**—Trenton (b. May 24, 2014), to Andrea Wiebe and Derrick Rempel, Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**Roes**—Georgia May (b. May 19, 2014), to Tony and Monique (Brubacher) Roes, Floradale Mennonite, Ont.

**Witzel**—Hannah Ashley Mae (b. May 15, 2014), to Ashley and Jon Witzel, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

### Baptisms

**Katy Cressman**—Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.,

June 1, 2014.

**Kevin Giesbrecht**—Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, June 8, 2014.

### Deaths

**Dick**—David G. 86 (b. Feb. 10, 1928; d. May 22, 2014), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

**Falk**—Eva (nee Schwartz), 92 (b. Oct. 3, 1921; d. April 30, 2014), Altona Mennonite, Man.


**Hammond**—George Harold, 49 (d. April 24, 2014), Erie View United Mennonite, Port Rowan, Ont.

**Wiebe**—John Sr., 87 (d. April 30, 2014), Erie View United Mennonite, Port Rowan, Ont.

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

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## LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

# Prayer is a way of being

TROY WATSON

**A**s we seek to better understand how we attune ourselves to Divine Spirit, it's helpful to look at how Jesus' original disciples attuned themselves to the Holy Spirit. Acts 1 tells us how they prepared for Pentecost and reveals what they were doing that resulted in their Spirit baptism.

*"These [disciples] all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer." (Acts 1:14 NASB)*

The first key insight here is that they were all with one mind. As I mentioned in my last article, entering a conscious state of "at-one-ment" with the greater whole (with God, one another and creation) is essential to Spirit attunement. (See my last article, May 26, page 15, for more on the subject of "at-one-ment.")

The second key insight here is that they were constantly devoted to prayer. To understand how the disciples constantly prayed in preparation for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, we have to understand how Jesus taught them to pray.

Jesus is called teacher more than any other name in the Scriptures. He is first and foremost our teacher, training us in a different way of life. The disciples were initially called "people of the way" because they were identified as followers of a new radical way of being. For three years Jesus taught the disciples an alternative way that was on many levels foreign to both the Greco-Roman and Jewish worlds.

The way of Jesus was essentially a path of contemplation and compassion. Take



Jesus' most famous sermon, the Sermon on the Mount. Much of his message is instructing people on how to live a contemplative life.

Here is a summary of Jesus' teachings in Matthew 6. (Thank you to Fr. Laurence Freeman and Fr. Richard Rohr for helping me see this.)

- Avoid external religion and public piety because it feeds the ego.
- Be wary of praying publically. Invariably the ego gets involved when you're praying out loud in front of others.
- Instead, when you pray, go into your secret place (your inner room or the

mystery place according to some interpretations). Jesus is teaching that prayer is about interiority.

- Don't use many words when you pray. Jesus is emphasizing silence in prayer.
- God already knows what you need. Prayer isn't about informing God—it's about God forming us.
- "Pagans" assume that if they say enough words or the right words in the right order or in the right way they can get God's attention and move God to do what they ask. This is not how we should pray. Prayer is not about getting God's attention. Prayer is about us learning to pay attention—to God, to life, to what is. Be mindful of what you offer others

(judgment or forgiveness) for that is what life will offer you.

Be mindful of what you value. You worship whatever you value most.

- Your eye—your perspective, the way you see the world, your state of mind—is the lamp of the body. It will determine your experience of reality. If your eye—your worldview or state of consciousness—is healthy, your whole being will be healthy and full of light. If it's unhealthy, your whole life is unhealthy.
- Don't be unduly caught up with material things like money, possessions, reputation, etc. Pay attention to ultimate reality. Set your mind on things above—on the things of the Spirit. What you focus on is of utmost importance.
- Be aware of your thoughts, not living on autopilot or jumping from one thought to another. Focus on the natural rhythm of the world we live in. Contemplate the beauty.
- Spend time reflecting in nature, on the birds and flowers of the earth. Let them reveal God's presence and the divine design to you.
- Be in the present moment. Don't let your mind dwell in the future or the past. Don't mentally wander to where you

*The present moment is the only time and place you can "find" God and experience peace, hope and joy. Now is the only moment Spirit attunement is possible.*

should be, could be, would be or were. Focus on the moment you are in—right here, right now. The present moment is the only time and place you can "find" God and experience peace, hope and joy. Now is the only moment Spirit attunement is possible.

I believe Jesus teaches prayer is a way of being. Understanding and putting into practice his teachings on prayer and the contemplative life are essential to attuning ourselves to Divine Spirit. ☿

*Troy Watson is pastor of Avon Mennonite Church. (troydw@gmail.com)*



## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

## Graduates challenged to imagine what the world could be

*Eighty degrees, two certificates awarded during university's 14th annual commencement exercises*

Story and Photo by Canadian Mennonite University  
Winnipeg

**M**ake the future a figment of your imagination. That was the message delivered to 80 graduates at the Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) graduation service on April 27.

"Faith in God compels us to imagine what the kingdom of God in our wildest dreams could be," said keynote speaker Don Friesen said during his address. "Imagination looks at the world as it is, and seeks to reshape that reality."

Friesen, who was lead pastor at Ottawa Mennonite Church for more than 30 years before retiring in 2012, encouraged graduates to envision human community as a place to find hope and healing, a place where fears and prejudices diminish. "Imaginative visions will help us to become, as a hymn expresses it, a welcome 'promise of the new humanity,'" he said.

During his valedictory address, four-year

English major Scott Sawatzky said that studying literature at CMU taught him the difference between "easy meaning and difficult, nuanced, complicated meaning." Easy meaning is what children are so often given, he explained, while good literature, like life, rarely offers such clear direction.

"All of this is to say that, as we move from the academics and relationships that have marked our studies here at CMU, let us never forget to revisit and rethink what we've learned, to see old things with new eyes and new things with old eyes," the young graduate said. "Let us enact what we have learned here in a way that is never static, but always grounded; never satisfied, but always loving."

Presiding over graduation ceremonies for her second time as president, Cheryl Pauls conferred 78 undergraduate degrees, two master of arts degrees, and two

certificates in biblical and theological studies (one at the undergraduate level, and the other at the graduate level).

Reflecting on his time at CMU during a chapel presentation at the end of the school year, Blayne Stobbe, a three-year double English and history major grad, said he came to the university uncertain of what he was looking for. "I am leaving CMU with the opposite," said Stobbe, who plans to become a teacher. "I am leaving with answers to some of my questions, but with many more poignant and tough questions to work through and a drive to discover more answers. . . . I am leaving with a passion to learn that burns more brightly than when I began."

During the same chapel, Danielle Bailey, a four-year biblical and theological studies and social science-counselling major, shared how CMU's community had changed her in profound ways. "My professors, mentors and peers kept encouraging me to think about pastoral ministry," she said. "I scoffed, but slowly this Anabaptist theology began seeping into my bones, and gradually I decided to listen to the voice of the Spirit, speaking through the people around me."

Bailey was offered a part-time position as pastoral associate at Springstein Mennonite Church, Man., after completing a practicum placement there as part of her degree. "I have been openly welcomed and encouraged to use my leadership gifts," she said appreciatively. ☞



*Cheryl Pauls, Canadian Mennonite University president, centre, awarded President's Medals to valedictorian Scott Sawatzky, left, and Justin Rempel, both English majors in the four-year bachelor of arts program, in recognition of their qualities of scholarship, leadership, and service.*

# Three Mennonite institutions launch Collaborative MBA program

By BONNIE PRICE LOFTON

Eastern Mennonite University

**B**usiness and organizational personnel who want to develop their leadership skills, enhance productivity and increase profits while contributing to the “common good” now have the chance to enrol in a master of business administration (MBA) program that is like no other.

Eastern Mennonite University (EMU), Harrisonburg, Va., Goshen (Ind.) College and Bluffton (Ohio) University have joined forces to launch “the Collaborative MBA” to shape “transformative leaders.”

The 36-hour program will focus on “skills in entrepreneurship, shared vision

development, mutual accountability, financial integrity, continuous innovation, empowerment of people and teams and systems thinking,” says Michelle Horning, chair of the business department at Goshen College.

The program director of the Collaborative MBA is Jim Smucker, former president of the Bird-in-Hand Corporation and board chair of the Lancaster (Pa.) Chamber of Commerce. For Smucker, a unique aspect of the new program is addressing “leaders’ needs for personal and spiritual growth. Almost all of the other MBA programs focus mainly on the usual topics of budgeting, strategic planning, marketing and such.”

The Collaborative MBA will cover these topics too, says Smucker, who will also continue in his role as graduate dean at EMU. In addition, however, “our program will have an explicit orientation toward the well-being of people, community and planet. We will situate making profits within the context of ethical practices and contribution to the common good.”

Students will move through the program in cohorts that begin with one week of residential courses at one of the three sponsoring schools and include a week of residency in an international setting doing practice-based learning. In other months, coursework will be interactive with video-conferencing and independent with students pursuing projects and interacting with professors.

While organizers expect to enrol a broad range of students from a variety of backgrounds, including international, Horning says, “a key target student” is someone holding a full-time job in a small- to medium-sized business or organization, perhaps with family responsibilities, who needs to be able to pursue graduate studies in a flexible manner.

Prospective students can enter the program through the doorway of any of the three sponsoring schools: Bluffton, EMU or Goshen. For more information on the Collaborative MBA, visit [www.collaborativemba.org](http://www.collaborativemba.org). ❧

## /// Staff change

### Innovative composer takes faculty post at Conrad Grebel

WATERLOO, ONT—Timothy Corlis has been appointed as assistant professor of music at Conrad Grebel University College, beginning Aug. 1. He will focus his teaching on music theory, stepping in after Carol Ann Weaver retires in June, having taught at Grebel for 29 years. Currently a lecturer in music theory and composition at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Corlis has also taught at York University and the University of Waterloo (UW). His musical compositions, including dozens of commissioned pieces, have been performed worldwide, and he has directed numerous choirs across Canada. As a scholar with diverse interests, Corlis received a master of music composition degree from the University of Toronto, a master of arts degree in social and political thought from York University, Toronto, and a bachelor of science degree in anthropology and science with a physics minor from UW. Corlis lived at Grebel while studying at UW, where he sang in the Chapel Choir and was actively engaged in peace and justice issues. Corlis maintained his connection with Grebel over the years and was commissioned to compose a piece to celebrate Grebel’s 50th anniversary; “Psalm 150” premiered last November, showcasing the college’s three choirs.

—Conrad Grebel University College



Tim Corlis

### Goshen College cuts staff, reduces hours

As part of Goshen (Ind.) College’s multi-year strategic planning and reaccreditation processes, seven positions that were vacant due to attrition will not be filled, and five other full-time and three part-time administrative positions were eliminated. Additionally, five positions had hours reduced. The cuts are the partly the result of a decision to locate all key student services—housing, student activities, accounting, registration, financial aid—in the same place to increase convenience for students and to allow for extended office hours. According to Jim Histand, vice-president for finance, none of the positions were eliminated due to job performance issues. During the academic restructuring process, completed in early December, the college developed plans to move toward an interdisciplinary schools-based organization, with majors and programs associated with schools, rather than departments.

—Goshen College



## /// Briefly noted

### CMU ranks in Top 10 beautiful campuses worldwide

An online Christian publication—<http://bit.ly/1kpgjRE>—ranks Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg as the eighth most beautiful Christian college and university campus in the world. Christian Universities Online notes that CMU's campus in southwest Winnipeg "lies close by the edge of the Assiniboine Forest, the wilderness within a city. Founder's Hall . . . was designed by American architect John D. Atchison in the English Collegiate style for the 1922 opening of the Manitoba School for the Deaf. The 'Grand Lady of Shaftesbury' [pictured] features limestone walls, cove ceilings, Tudor arches, spires, gargoyles and a four-storey tower at the main entrance." During the Second World War, the students were moved to Saskatoon or Montreal and the Royal Canadian Air Force moved their radio communications school into the campus. After the war, the campus was utilized as the Manitoba Provincial Normal School, later Manitoba Teachers' College," the website states. "The barracks at No. 3 Wireless were converted into emergency homes for low-income Winnipeg citizens after the war. The four dozen families had the advantage of education for their children provided by the students in the Teachers' College in a 'model' school. The school's campus served as the administrative centre for the 1999 Pan American Games. In 2000, the campus was purchased by Canadian Mennonite University. The campus was renovated extensively to house this new, modern university."

—*Canadian Mennonite*



PHOTO COURTESY OF CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE



**Fred Martin (left)**, Conrad Grebel University College director of development, **Susan Schultz Huxman**, president at CGUC, and **Arno Riedel**, Austrian Ambassador to Canada, examine an exhibit about Bertha von Suttner which is travelling around the world. Von Suttner was an Austrian peace activist in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. She was the first woman and second person to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1905. The arrival of the exhibit to the new Project Ploughshares offices in the CGUC Mennonite Savings and Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement was celebrated by a reception attended by the Austrian ambassador on May 20.

## /// Briefly noted

### A call for Christians to be the kingdom of God

Elkhart, Ind.—"Look like Jesus, love like Jesus, serve like Jesus." Greg Boyd repeated this line several times during his visit to Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in late April. Boyd, a best-selling author and cofounder of Woodland Hills Church in St. Paul, Minn., was this year's "peace and justice guest" at AMBS.



**Greg Boyd**

The kingdom of the world, Boyd said, imitates Caesar, is based on mistrust and power over others, is self-interested and uses violence. In contrast, the kingdom of God imitates Christ, is based on trust and love, is other-oriented, and seeks to serve enemies and transform hearts. Humility must be a characteristic of Christians, Boyd said, who holds a Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary and a master of divinity degree from Yale Divinity School. In a discussion time Boyd emphasized even more strongly Jesus' call to love: "Our battle, our warfare is never against flesh and blood," he said. "Whether it is Democrat, Republican, Taliban, or communist, it's something we are supposed to be fighting for, not against. The way we fight for them is by refusing to make them an enemy." Several times during his AMBS visit, Boyd emphasized that it is important for Mennonites to recover a core identity that is separate from the world. "What's needed is for us to hold passionately to the distinctives of the kingdom, but hold loosely to our cultural distinctives." For a longer version of this story [see the website](#).

—MARY E. KLASSEN, ANABAPTIST MENNONITE BIBLICAL SEMINARY



# Author brings history alive

*Ruth Derksen Siemens speaks at two Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta events*

BY DOREEN NEUFELD

Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta  
COALDALE, ALTA.

“Too many Russian Mennonites don’t know who they are,” remarked Ruth Derksen Siemens, the keynote speaker at the annual meeting of the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta, on April 26 at Coaldale Mennonite Church.

Siemens has been actively engaged with a corpus of letters from Soviet Russia, stored for more than 50 years in a Campbell’s Soup box in an attic in Winnipeg. Peter Bergen’s brother had cleared them from their parental home and was tired of moving them from attic to attic. He never read the letters, as they were written in Gothic script, and asked Peter to take a look before disposing of them. To Peter’s surprise, they came from his uncle and aunt, Jasch and Maria Regehr, their six children and an uncle in Soviet Russia, dating from the ruthless Stalin regime.

Siemens became aware of the letters after Bergen and his wife Anne spent three years painstakingly and often tearfully translating them. They were subsequently published in 2007 in Siemens’s book, *Remember Us: Letters from Stalin’s Gulag (1930-37)*.

The letters—written on scraps of paper, old newspapers, postcards, in some cases on cigarette paper, and even, ironically, on Soviet propaganda pamphlets—tell the heartbreaking story of a family of nine forcibly removed from their home. They were allowed only the belongings they could fit into a small trunk. Along with scores of others, the family was packed into a windowless boxcar that was locked for the nine-day journey to the Siberian north. Miraculously, these 463 letters came through the rigorous censorship in a time when sending or receiving mail from outside the Soviet Union was considered a



Ruth Derksen Siemens

crime punishable with imprisonment or death.

When CBC became aware of the letters, it was quick to respond. The result was a documentary called *Through the Red Gate*. Included in this hour-long film are interviews with Peter Bergen, as well as with Lena Regehr Dirksen, whose

memories are still vivid. She now lives in Cologne, Germany, and was the youngest of the writers, only nine years old at the time. She recalls a crucial point in their escape when they were rescued by a prostitute. While the family huddled in fear upstairs, their benefactor remained downstairs, entertaining the investigating soldiers.

The historical society held a subsequent meeting at Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary on April 27, where Siemens talked

about her book, *Daughters in the City*, which highlights the ministry of the two *Maedchenheime* (girls homes) in Vancouver. She will be awarded a book award on June 6 by the B.C. Historical Federation.

There were girls homes in other cities as well. Andrew Sawatzky spoke about his parents who moved from Carstairs, Alta., to Calgary to establish an outreach ministry in 1945. The Sawatzky home became a shelter for young Mennonite women, part of a post-war wave of Mennonite refugees seeking employment in the city. Sawatzky recalled that not only did young women find shelter, protection and companionship at the home, but often help in finding jobs. The city was considered a dangerous and frightening place, but families were often in dire straits, needing to repay the debts (*Reiseschuld*) resulting from their journey to Canada. In time, a women’s choir was formed in the home, with Sawatzky as the conductor.

It is hard to overestimate the importance of these places of refuge and support. That these homes emerged in virtually every Mennonite community of western Canada when finances were so limited was a significant accomplishment, surely resulting in stronger, more deeply grounded wives, mothers and faithful church workers. ♣

PHOTO BY DAVID TOEWS



A quilt square made by one of the young women at the *Maedchenheime* in Vancouver.

# 'The Bible is both fire engine and arsonist'

*Tom Yoder Neufeld teaches about New Testament congregations*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
WATERLOO, ONT.

**B**rent Eelman has been driving up from Philadelphia, Pa., for the past three years to take courses in Conrad Grebel University College's Certificate Program in Conflict Management. In his present congregation for the past 13 years, he says that the program has given him conscious understanding of what he knew intuitively before.

His final course was "Forming peaceable congregations: A biblical perspective" taught by Tom Yoder Neufeld, Grebel's professor emeritus, on May 7 and 8. Eelman said that unless pastors can find ways of being peaceable in their congregations, they are not modelling the kingdom of heaven to the world. "What kind of kingdom of heaven are we modelling when we are angry and abusive?" he wondered aloud.

Yoder Neufeld prefaced the first session by saying, "The Bible is both fire engine and arsonist all at the same time in a congregation." Then the 16 pastors and lay leaders began to focus on new ways of thinking about forgiveness and truth from passages like Matthew 18 and Acts 15, as well as what it means to be unified as congregations.

Yoder Neufeld led the group in a study of Ephesians 2 and Romans 14-15, the passage about stronger or weaker sisters and brothers in the church. He noted that the very structure of Ephesians 2:11-22 focuses the diverse elements of the church on Christ: "For he is our peace."

The gentiles and Jews are made into one body through Jesus, and in Romans 14-15 Paul is speaking to a diverse group of congregations. Originally Jewish, the churches had begun to accept gentiles when the Jews were banished from Rome by Claudius around A.D. 49. When those

Jews returned a few years later, they found gentile Christians and gentile Christian ways of being Christian at the core of the congregations. This included disregarding Jewish holidays, moving from the Sabbath to the first day of the week (the day of resurrection) for worship, and eating food that Jews considered ritually unclean.

The solution, according to Yoder Neufeld, was for the members of the churches to remember to whom all the members, Jew or gentile, belong: God. Each member was to remember that the others also belonged to God and that all were responsible to have "a clear conscience" before God about what they ate or



*Tom Yoder Neufeld responds to a question at 'Forming peaceable congregations: A biblical perspective,' at Conrad Grebel University College May 7 and 8.*

didn't eat. This is unity without uniformity, he said. No one is to force their position on others, but for the sake of the body to consider the needs of others and not their own needs. "How to be unified," Yoder Neufeld asked, "if you can't agree on the day or the menu" for your feast?

Lisa Carr-Pries, associate minister at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, said she came away from the two-day seminar excited and passionate about the invitation she feels from God to participate in God's work in the world, adding that she now feels hopeful for the church. ☸

## /// Briefly noted

### Resource Centre passes on reduced shipping charges to users

WINNIPEG—Despite a recent hike to Canadian postage rates, Mennonite Church Canada Resource Centre will no longer charge for return shipping on all borrowed items. The Resource Centre has a long-standing policy of shipping loaned books free to and from anywhere in Canada. Now, a free service is being extended to the shipment of non-book items as well. The Resource Centre will pay for the return costs of loaned DVDs and other non-print items, essentially cutting the borrower's costs in half. "With Canada Post offering library rates for non-book items, we can ship more affordably and the customer is charged less," says Resource Centre director Arlyn Friesen Epp. "We are happy to pass on those savings. Borrowers receive a convenient pre-paid return label for every package." The Resource Centre, a donor-funded ministry of MC Canada, offers a wide array of loan materials for congregations and individuals. It is currently home to 716 DVDs, of which 671 were loaned out in 2013.

—Mennonite Church Canada



*Arlyn Friesen Epp, right, MC Canada's Resource Centre director, and administrative assistant Miriam Tshimanga are now able to offer free return shipping for non-print items borrowed from the Resource Centre.*

# No back row

*The pros and cons of house churches*

BY WILL BRAUN

Senior Writer

Florence and Otto Driedger's Regina living room is the opposite of the mega-church auditoriums that have become popular. On a typical Sunday, you might find a handful of refugees, a couple of people who have done time for sexual assault, and another handful of Euro-Canadian folk gathered around the retired couple's living room, with Bibles open on their laps. The scene would be similar on Tuesday evening. That's what Peace Mennonite Church looks like.

The group—one of about a half dozen house churches within Mennonite Church Canada—began in the 1980s as an amicable offshoot of Grace Mennonite in Regina. Grace had decided not to exceed a membership of 200 in order to help prevent a shift from being relationship-based to program-based. According to the Driedgers, the offshoot group originally met in a gym, but downsized to their house after several families left due to a recession. That's where they have been for over 20 years.

While there is something of a house church movement afoot in North America—according to the House Church Resource website, 11 million Americans meet “outside the institutional church”—Peace Mennonite is no mere trend.

The same is true of Pembina Mennonite Fellowship in the Winkler-Morden area of southern Manitoba. That church, which is made up of four house groups that meet all together once a month in a community centre, has been around since 1974. My family and I have attended there for a year and a half.

There are no designated leaders and membership of the four house groups is



reconfigured every two years by drawing names out of a hat. Members take turns hosting and leading Sunday mornings. While services tend to follow a Bible Study format, the host is free to be creative.

That sort of agility is one advantage of the house church model. Melody Neufeld-Rocheleau says “flexibility” is one of the things she appreciated about Breath of Life Mennonite Church, a house church she helped lead for seven years.

For her, the house church model provided a vital opportunity for healing, worship and communion within a small, intentional group that was highly responsive to each others needs. She said via email that she also valued the “blurring of lines between sacred and secular” with worship happening in the same space where life takes place.

The adaptability of a small group means that one house church may look quite different than the next, but they all tend to share certain pros and cons. An obvious advantage is that many house churches have no building or staff costs. As the

Driedgers pointed out during our phone interview, that leaves money for other things. It also makes them an option for congregations who can no longer pay the bills.

The Driedgers also noted that house churches can be good for the sort of marginalized people who would not fit in well or would tend to “get lost” in a bigger

congregation. If you stop attending, people will notice and care. You can't hide in the back row.

Of course, house churches are not for everyone. Some people like to sit in the back row. They are not looking for the degree of engagement and participation that most house churches entail; and that's okay.

Another potential downside that Neufeld-Rocheleau noted is that worship can “easily slide into a time of visiting.” Or as I would put it, house church can become more house than church.

Small numbers have their up sides and down. There are no big choirs and kids may not have peers. The Driedgers said that some families left for bigger churches when their kids reached Sunday School age. My family would not attend Pembina Fellowship if there were no other kids. We have also experienced the flip side of that: house churches, by virtue of their small numbers, can provide opportunity for very significant intergenerational relationships to form.

In many churches small numbers are never considered a matter of virtue. In many churches, numbers are a matter of considerable angst. But in many ways house churches simply opt out of the numbers game. That can be freeing.

Neufeld-Rocheleau says that “limited concern with numbers” at Breath of Life was a plus. They would “worship with two or three” if that's who showed up.

That said, the church disbanded last year. Neufeld-Rocheleau said she needed to step back from leadership for personal reasons not related to the church, and no one was

*But in many ways house churches simply opt out of the numbers game. That can be freeing.*

in a position to step in. She says there was also a sense that after seven good years, it was time for a new season.

Like the Driedgers, Neufeld-Rocheleau does not necessarily see house churches as a superior model, or the true biblical model, as some house churches claim. It is simply a unique alternative among various valid models. ❧



# No 'one-size-fits-all' pastors anymore

*Mennonite Church Eastern Canada richly supplied with ministers*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

Growing up at Grace Mennonite Church in St. Catharines, Ont., I remember a church or church school leader preaching and then later coming to our house for dinner in the mid-1970s. He noted that as Mennonite in Canada had made the move from a mostly unpaid to a mostly paid pastorate in the late 1950s and early '60s, congregations had come to depend on Bible schools and the seminary in Elkhart, Ind., to supply them with pastors. But, he said, schools could not send pastors to churches unless churches first called individuals to the pastorate and sent them to the schools.

Fast forward 30 years in what became Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, as the retirement of those pastors seemed to be outpacing the development of new pastors. Around 2005, leaders like Marianne Mellinger, leadership formation coordinator for MC Eastern Canada, and Muriel

Bechtel, then in area church ministry, also saw the statistics on how many new pastors did not thrive in ministry, some of whom had their ministry come to painful ends.

Together they developed Transitioning into Ministry (TiM), a three-year program of practical experience, training, peer cohorts and mentoring for pastors new to MC Eastern Canada. The program is now in its seventh year and it seems to Mellinger and Bechtel that more of the new pastors are successful in their ministries, or at least they have a less painful exit if they and their congregation end a relationship.

For several years now, pastors have been noticing that there seem to be more pastors than congregational openings in MC Eastern Canada. Mellinger, Bechtel and Henry Paetkau, current area church minister, give TiM some of the credit for this

situation, but note that pastors are also staying longer in pastorates because they receive the supports they need to thrive.

With spouses working, and pastors finding appropriate support systems for themselves and their families, they are less likely to move to places where pastors may be needed but which don't have the needed support in place.

Paetkau and Mellinger have both heard from many pastors that MC Eastern Canada is a preferred destination, with its two regional ministers, the proximity of Conrad Grebel University College and its master of theological studies program in Waterloo, and the area church's own rich educational program. Paetkau notes that the current situation helps congregations to look for a pastor who is a good fit and that the area church, congregations and pastors no longer think of a "one-size-fits-all" pastor. Pastors are a resource to congregations and not a "commodity" which can be in surplus.

Looking into the future, Mellinger points out that many of the openings and many of the filled pastorates are part-time in nature, calling on pastors to be bi-vocational. As the number of full-time pastorates is shrinking, this leads to more pastors applying for them. ☞



*Muriel Bechtel, retired area church minister for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, left, Henry Paetkau, current area church minister, and Marianne Mellinger, coordinator of leadership formation for MC Eastern Canada and supervisor of the applied studies-theological studies program at Conrad Grebel University College, discuss the current state of pastors in Eastern Canada.*

# Are congregations able to find pastors?

## **Securing pastors not difficult in MC Manitoba**

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU  
Manitoba Correspondent

**F**inding and securing pastors for Mennonite Church Manitoba congregations has not been difficult, reports Henry Kliewer. In his six years as director of leadership ministries for the area church, Kliewer has observed that generally congregational searches for pastors have been successful. With nearly 90 pastors serving in 48 congregations, “it has not been difficult to find the right leadership fit in most situations,” he says.

Many MC Manitoba congregations seek pastors who have trained at Mennonite schools and approach their teaching and preaching from an Anabaptist perspective and understanding, Kliewer says.

Although most congregations value their MC Manitoba ties, they also reflect diversity in their leadership. Several larger congregations have three or more pastors, some of whom offer leadership with a particular focus on one kind of ministry, such as music, pastoral care, or community outreach. Conversely, two small rural congregations have together hired one pastor who divides her time between the two communities.

Several congregations have chosen to have no salaried leadership at all, but rely instead on lay pastors.

One congregation is affiliated with several denominations, including MC Manitoba and MC Canada.

Interim pastors have become increasingly important in the process of leadership transition. Interim pulpit supply pastors typically serve a congregation from several months to a year during a leadership transition when there are no difficult issues in that congregation.

“Intentional interim pastors have special training and usually fill an interim position in congregations that have experienced some conflicts or schisms that need to go

through some journey of conflict resolution and healing before they call the next pastor,” says Kliewer. Those assignments are usually longer, from 18 months to 2 years.

The Ministerial Leadership Information (MLI) List, compiled by MC Canada, is a very helpful resource. “We discern which candidates might be a good fit for which congregations,” Kliewer says. “I get in touch with the search committees and will give them the names of two or three on the MLI listing.” Occasionally, though, a leader is called from within a congregation.

“The MLI is a huge resource, but often not the only one,” he says. Kliewer encourages search committees to follow up on names or other avenues they may know of and to do regular reporting to the congregation, which may also be a source for suggestions. “We have been blessed in Manitoba because many of our congregations are well connected to the conference and very open to involvement of MC Manitoba in the search,” he adds.

Kliewer has confidence in the search process that MC Manitoba congregations follow. “It’s excellent,” he says. “I couldn’t think of anything better.”

He also believes that MC Manitoba congregations do a good job of looking after their pastors. “There are those with difficult endings,” Kliewer says, “but generally they are good at working within the guidelines and expectations.”

## **Mennonite Church Saskatchewan**

*Stable pastoral leadership the current reality*

BY DONNA SCHULZ

At the moment, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan might not be the best place for prospective pastors to search for employment. In fact, of the area church’s 32 congregations, only one—Saskatoon’s First Mennonite Church—has indicated it will begin searching for a new pastor in the near future. This hasn’t always been the case, says Jerry Buhler, area church minister, noting

that in the past there have been up to eight vacancies at one time. But for now the pulpits are filled. Some churches have looked to Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary graduates to meet their pastoral needs, while others have found pastors locally. Only six congregations employ youth or associate pastors. Several welcomed new pastors in the past year. Among them are Carrot River, where Daniel Janzen began serving in late 2013; Hope Mennonite in North Battleford, with Abel and Sonja Zabaleta joining Gerhard Luitjens in part-time ministry; Wildwood Mennonite in Saskatoon, which hired Krista Loewen as youth pastor; and Saskatoon Vietnamese Mennonite Church, where Nguyen Thanh Tung became the congregation’s first salaried pastor. Currently, says Buhler, MC Saskatchewan is “enjoying good, stable pastoral leadership,” with a strong “youthful element that can represent pastoral possibilities for a long time to come.”

## **Mennonite Church Alberta**

*A shortage of pastors willing to move*

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Although it is Mennonite Church Canada’s smallest area church, MC Alberta is the most ethnically diverse. Nine of its 16 congregations are of Russian/German heritage, and the seven others represent Chinese, Vietnamese, Chin, Spanish and Sudanese Christians. One previously “traditional” Mennonite congregation, Holyrod in Edmonton, now has a significant Liberian membership. Currently, all pulpits are filled. Dan Graber, MC Alberta’s area minister, says, “Generally the non-Russian/German congregations have a harder time finding pastors that they think suit them theologically and culturally. I don’t know all the cultural issues involved. . . but I do believe they want someone more evangelism-oriented than most Mennonite pastors tend to be.” Often the “non-traditional” churches hire pastors with other denominational backgrounds and training. Congregations that are new, small, rural or struggling with difficulties can also have difficulties attracting a pastor to Alberta. “Alberta often is new/strange territory for pastors,” according to Graber. We don’t really have a shortage of pastors. We have a shortage of pastors who are willing to

move far from family, familiar territory, as well as the spouse having a good job. More than once I've wondered, 'What about the sense of call that we talk about? Is it more about convenience?'"

### **Mennonite Church British Columbia**

*Good relationships with current pastors key to finding new ones*

AMY DUECKMAN

MC B.C. is in a good position right now as far as filling pastoral positions. "We are on the verge of filling the youth pastor position at Level Ground, so that would have

all but one of all of our pastoral positions filled," says Garry Janzen, the area church's executive minister. Only an associate pastor at Peace Chinese Mennonite Church, Richmond, remains to be filled. "I would say that our strength in finding good pastors for our congregations is a regular and good relationship with our pastors through monthly gatherings," he says. "This keeps Mennonite Church B.C. on top of any upcoming openings, so that we can help with good endings and engage search processes with good resourcing to help them get a good new pastor and a good new beginning. Secondly, we have found a

lot of our more recent new pastors locally, and not through the listings coming from Mennonite Church Canada. This said, because of the good relationship we have with our congregations, we have been able to get these 'outside' pastoral candidates to complete the [ministerial leadership information form], so that the congregation can get a good reading as to their fit with the Anabaptist perspective. We have also found that the 'outside' pastors who have shown interest in our openings are already moving toward the Anabaptist perspective in their views." ❧

### /// Briefly noted

#### **Mennonite Heritage Museum looks to the future**

ROSTHERN, SASK.—It's an exciting time to be on the board of directors for the Mennonite Heritage Museum in Rosthern. The museum (*right photo*) recently embarked on a renewal project that will transform at least one room of the old brick schoolhouse into a Mennonite interpretive centre, using interactive displays to illustrate both the history of the Mennonite people

and their present faith and practice in the Saskatchewan Valley area and the broader world. In addition, this spring the New Church Society (Swedenborgian) of Rosthern offered its sanctuary and lot (*left photo*) to the museum; the historic building was the first Mennonite worship space in Rosthern. The museum board is currently exploring the feasibility of either utilizing the building on its current site or relocating

it to the Rosthern Junior College campus, adjacent to the museum. In addressing museum supporters at the annual meeting and fundraising banquet held May 16, board chair George Epp, said, "The current climate is urging us to rethink the museum so that it can catch the vision and energy of the next generation." Epp thanked the New Church Society congregation for its generous gift to the museum, and Eigenheim Mennonite Church for providing start-up funds for the interpretive centre initiative.

—BY DONNA SCHULZ





## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

# Niagara-area thrift store marks 40 years

STORY AND PHOTO BY MARIA H. KLASSEN  
ST. CATHARINES, ONT.

The Niagara-area Mennonite churches celebrated the 40th anniversary of the thrift stores in this area on March 24 with a dinner and potluck dessert. Over 200 past and present volunteers attended. Among those participating during the evening were: Rick Cober Bauman, executive director of MCC Ontario; Patty Ollies, MCC Ontario thrift development officer; Kathleen Leadley, board chair for the thrift store; and Matthew Kok, general manager of the store.

The idea for a thrift store came to Ontario via Olga Rempel who had seen one in operation in Manitoba. The purpose was two-fold—to raise money for MCC and to serve needs in the local area. Individuals from 14 Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren churches in the Niagara area formed a committee, found a property in a low-income area on Pelham Road in St. Catharines, and signed a lease on January 1, 1974.

In 12 days the building was ready for

opening under the name of Christian Benefit Shop. Mary and John Harder of Vineland were the first co-presidents. Local Mennonite businessmen and farmers donated all the costs of the rent and utilities allowing the store to give all of the income that first year to MCC.

On November 1975 a second store was opened on Facer Street which relocated in 1977 on the same street. Another move occurred in 1979, and a building expansion took place in 1985. Another move took place in 2003, and in 2009 the idea to combine both stores into one larger store seemed logical. The current store opened at 254 Grantham Avenue in 2010.

Other changes occurred in 2009 with the hiring of volunteer managers Joan and Phil Steininger. Today there are three paid positions: Matthew Kok, general manager; Irene Heyder, assistant manager; and Scott Prince, receiving manager. There are 185 volunteers working at the store, which has computerized pricing and sales in the last six months. In 40 years these stores have contributed \$6.75 million to further the work of MCC—to serve those in need. ☸

MCC PHOTO BY CLARKE FRETZ



**Naomi Martin** of Hamilton and her family held their sixth annual 'Naomi's Colouring Recital,' raising \$2,600 for Mennonite Central Committee's Global Family project. When Naomi was three, she declared, "Mommy, I'm going to have a colouring recital." Initially, her parents didn't take it seriously, but when Naomi shared that the recital would help other children, they decided to do it. On March 29 the family held its sixth colouring event where children, their parents and grandparents joined together to colour, draw, make collages, sculpt, and do other various arts and crafts.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MATTHEW KOK



*Patty Ollies (left), MCC Ontario thrift development officer and Kathleen Leadley, board chair, cut the cake celebrating the 40th anniversary of the thrift store in St. Catharines.*

# Responding to flooding in the Balkans

By EMILY LOEWEN

Mennonite Central Committee

When three months of rain fell in only three days and caused severe flooding, Serbia as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina declared states of emergency. More than 40 people have died, hundreds are injured and hundreds of thousands more were forced to evacuate. With the displacement and lack of access to water and electricity, more than three million people have been affected.

"This is all very stressful and people are extremely frustrated since the water is still decreasing very slowly," says Davor Majstorović, coordinator of the Trauma Centre at Bread of St. Anthony, an MCC partner. "Water surrounding houses is also very dirty and poses a direct threat to health."

The United Nations has identified water, sanitation and hygiene items as high priorities, as well as food for children under five in displaced families.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is working with partners in both countries on an emergency response.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina MCC is providing funds for a one-time distribution of food and water purification supplies to 5,000 people affected by flooding in Sarajevo. In northeastern Bosnia, 400 children under three will receive baby food, baby bottles and clean water. MCC is also sending containers of blankets, dried soup mix, hygiene kits, relief kits, infant care kits and school kits. The distributions will be carried out by MCC partners Merhamet and Bread of St. Anthony.

And in Serbia, MCC partner Bread of Life Belgrade is providing 100 displaced families with emergency food packages as well as 100 baby kits with food and diapers to children under three.

In addition to food and water concerns, landslides in Bosnia and Herzegovina have dislodged landmines from the civil war in the 90s. Furthermore, many warning signs

around the minefields have been washed away.

The fact that "there have already been victims in this past week from landmine detonation is a sad reminder of the remains of war still in the region," says Ruth Plett, one of MCC's representatives for East Europe. "It is difficult to consider all those now affected, many of whom experienced war and trauma within their lifetimes, now experiencing trauma, again, due to this disaster."

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bread of St. Anthony is providing psychological support for displaced people living in temporary community shelters.

MCC is accepting donations for its disaster response in the region. There is also

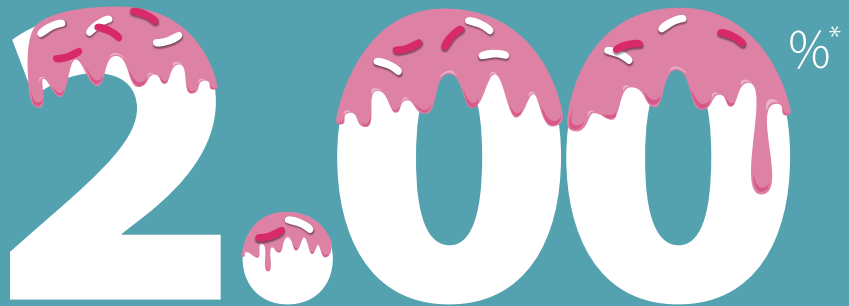
PHOTO COURTESY OF BREAD OF ST. ANTHONY



MCC relief supplies are being distributed on a visit to Orašje by MCC partner Bread of St. Anthony in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

an urgent need for MCC relief and hygiene kits for use in this and other disaster responses. ❧

We turned **50** this year. Not bad for a local credit union that started out with \$22 in a cashbox. That got us thinking, "We need to thank our members for 50 awesome years!" So what did we do? We *sweetened* our 1 year GIC with 0.50% extra interest and we want to share this with you! Come in and celebrate our anniversary with some *icing* on our rates.



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# Investing in Ukraine's future

*B.C. donors help people on other side of world*

BY AMY DUECKMAN  
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Relationships between two social service agencies half a world apart were strengthened May 20 when supporters of Florence Centre in Ukraine met for an information lunch hosted by Abbotsford-based Communitas Supportive Care Society. Special guests for the event were Otto and Florence Driedger of Regina, Sask., who have had an ongoing relationship with the Florence Centre in Zaporizhzhya, Ukraine, through Canada Ukraine Agrarian Development Inc.

Like Communitas, the Florence Centre was established to help empower people living with disabilities. Communitas has helped support the Florence Centre with

an exchange of information and resources since 2007.

Addressing the group by phone was Lucy Romanankova, director of the Florence Centre since 2004, who said the needs in her community are great. "We are always impressed that people who live in Canada think about Ukraine," said Romanankova. "We are very, very grateful for your support and encouragement."

Some of the programs the Florence Centre operates include care for those with autism, cerebral palsy and Down syndrome. Families who used to keep such children at home, ashamed of their disabilities, now have a place to gather for

PHOTO BY JEREMY LIND



*Former Communitas CEO Steve Thiessen (left) visits with Florence and Otto Driedger. The Driedgers represent the Florence Centre, a social service organization in eastern Ukraine.*

support. The Florence Centre also carries out other kinds of community development, including education programs to help curb violence in schools. University students who come to the Florence Centre to do social work practicums find their lives are impacted positively as they interact with the local community around them.

While Canadians may take for granted the idea of community service and helping others, volunteerism is not part of the fabric of Ukrainian society. Under Soviet rule, the Driedgers explained, the state was assumed to take care of all citizens' needs. People helping other people directly was discouraged as it implied the government was not doing its job. As a result, ideas such as compassionate care and community development are just beginning to take root in Ukraine.

"The idea of Ukrainians helping Ukrainians is amazing," said Communitas board chair, Marlyce Friesen. "The mindset is changing and people are beginning to show compassion for each other."

Today, Communitas continues to partner with the Florence Centre. "It is a natural fit," says Karyn Santiago. "We get the joy of supporting what is taking place in a similar service on the other side of the world. We are investing in the next generation of Ukrainians."

Donations at the May 20 luncheon in ongoing support of the Florence Centre totalled \$2,000. Visit [CommunitasCare.com/florencecentre](http://CommunitasCare.com/florencecentre) to learn more about the Florence Centre, or to make donation. ☘

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# New MEDA project supports global enterprise development

Canadian government announces \$19.9-million commitment at Mexico City summit

Mennonite Economic Development Associates  
WATERLOO, ONT.

**M**ennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) is partnering with Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada and two other Canadian organizations to promote sustainable economic growth globally. The initiative is made possible through a \$19.9-million federal contribution,

announced by Christian Paradis, international development minister, at the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation meetings being held last month in Mexico City.

Impact Investing in Frontier Markets (INFRONT) is a public-private partnership that involves MEDA working with Saronia Asset Management and the MaRS Centre for Impact Investing to reduce poverty by supporting small- and medium-sized enterprise development over the next five years. Small businesses are vital to job creation and wealth generation in developing country markets.

The federal commitment provides:

- \$15 million for Saronia to invest in emerging and frontier markets in Asia, Africa and Latin America through its Frontier Markets Fund 2LP;
- \$4.75 million to MEDA, as executing partner agency, for technical assistance; and
- \$200,000 for project monitoring and evaluation.

“We are excited and pleased to have the support of [the federal government] in this new venture with Saronia and MaRS,” says MEDA president Allan Sauder. “In launching INFRONT, we are building on MEDA’s long experience in impact investing, which started with our investment in the Saronia Dairy in Paraguay in 1953. Through this initiative, more than five million women and men in emerging and frontier markets will have access to products and services that will be delivered more effectively and by more socially responsive firms.”

## /// Briefly noted

### GC students save a life in Munich airport

GOSHEN, Ind.—On May 1, as 30 Goshen College students and faculty were flying to Greece they made an emergency landing in Munich, Germany, due to a cracked windshield. Frustrated and jet-lagged, the group gathered in the terminal when one of the students noticed that a man nearby had collapsed. Seth Conley, assistant professor of communication and a co-leader of the class, ran over to a group of Goshen College students, asking if they knew CPR. Molly Malone and Julianna Tennesson had recently completed CPR training and they began chest compressions and called for an AED machine. Fortunately, a third student, Brett Conrad, had noticed one in the airport earlier and sprinted to grab it. Soon paramedics arrived and took over. The students were told that the man was alive and talking to paramedics when he was taken away, but never learned his identity. Conley couldn’t help but wonder if there was a reason the group ended up in Munich. “Did God allow us to be diverted to give this man a chance at life?”

—from Goshen College release by Brian Yoder Schlabach

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## GOD AT WORK IN US

## Briefly noted

## World champion takes 3 swimming medals

CONESTOGO, Ont.—At age 80, Stuart Martin, a member of Waterloo North Mennonite Church, has earned three medals as a world champion swimmer in the Windsor-area masters and is looking forward to the nationals in the world competition this summer in Quebec. He contributes his wins to the 21 medals won by eight members of the squad in March, taking gold in 100-metre freestyle and 50-metre freestyle and silver in the 50-metre stroke, according to the *Woolwich Observer*. Martin has been to the world competition seven times in his 35 years of swimming with the masters. His first world competition was also in Quebec in 1994 followed by Sweden, Germany, Italy, Brazil, New Zealand and California. This summer he hopes to come full-circle back to the 15th FINA World Masters Championships in Montreal, starting July 27, after competing in the 2014 Canadian Masters Swimming Championships in Quebec. “Winning isn’t everything,” he told the newspaper. “I go for the experience of it rather than necessarily the competition. The goal is the social aspect of it—the cardiovascular training, flexibility—swimming is just an exercise as far as I’m concerned.”

—DICK BENNER

WOOLWICH OBSERVER  
PHOTO /SCOTT BARBER



## Briefly noted

## Kratz gets second chance in major leagues

TORONTO—A professional baseball player with Mennonite roots got his big break in the major leagues on the night of May 1 when the Toronto Blue Jays starting catcher Dioner Navarro suffered a strained right quadriceps running the bases, according to Richard Griffin of the *Toronto Star*. That injury gave Erik Kratz, 33, a 2002 graduate of Eastern Mennonite University, a second chance to rejoin the major league club from Triple-A Buffalo. Kratz is now one of three catchers on the active roster, an unusual situation since there are just four players on the Jays’ bench. That could change any time, writes Griffin, but Kratz, as he always has, treats his lot in MLB life philosophically. “I know that God has an opportunity for me here in Toronto and I’m going to go out and I’m going to do everything I can every day to be ready to be in that game,” Kratz is quoted as saying. “Is it in the seventh? Is it starting tomorrow? Is it DHing? It might be one at-bat. It might be two at-bats and a start and then that’s it. Throughout my career I’ve learned how to hopefully have success and deal with that.” Kratz, whose home town is Telford, PA, was reared in a Mennonite home and graduated from Christopher Dock High School.

—DICK BENNER



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## ARTBEAT

# Music and the Environment—a locavore feast for ears and soul

Conrad Grebel University College hosts music and environment conference ‘Sound in the Land’

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
WATERLOO, ONTARIO

**S**ound in the Land. Sound of the Land. Sound for the Land. Sound with and behalf of and from the Land. Sound. Land. Take your pick, there was something of all these in the 2014 Sound in the Land festival/conference, June 5-8 at Conrad Grebel University College. Following the success of the 2004 and 2009 festival/conferences, Carol Ann Weaver, Associate Professor of Music, brought to fruition one more feast of music and thought as she retires in June this year after 29 years at CGUC. In 2004 the festival explored Mennonite ethnic musical culture; in 2009 it was expanded to include world music, especially Africa where Weaver spent several sabbaticals. This year the circle expanded to include the earth itself.

Key to the success of the festival/conference was the presence of R. Murray Schafer and his partner Eleanor James. In the 1960s Schafer pioneered a move to soundscapes, to make music in nature that took nature seriously, and included its sounds in the music. Several of his pieces were performed, and he gave the keynote address on Friday afternoon. There he noted that “creation is blind, but creation is ‘soundful.’” Humans see what is before them, but are immersed in sound from all around them, he said. “Sights are nouns, sounds are verbs” he and James noted. “God created by speaking, and then saw that it was good.”

These themes were echoed by many speakers through many means. Leanne Zacharias, cello professor at Brandon University’s School of Music, together with Douglas Friesen of Wilfred Laurier University and Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, led an outdoor workshop



*Leanne Zacharias plays cello as R. Murray Schafer, seated on ground, plays his shoes in rhythm at Zacharias’ and Douglas Friesen’s workshop at Sound in the Land on June 7. The participants were invited to join in, making natural sounds they heard, remembered or could make on the spot.*

incorporating Schafer’s “ear cleaning exercises” and cello music. The participants were invited to listen in silence with their eyes closed for sounds near and far, loud and quiet, inviting and off-putting. Then they chose one of the sounds and made it, listening to the other sounds around them.

A series of speakers spoke about natural sounds. Virgil Martin, a planning information specialist for the Region of Waterloo, birder and local historian, described what might have been heard at the Brubacher House, now on the grounds

of the University of Waterloo, in a series of journal entries beginning in 1814 and at 50-year intervals. Bird song was a key natural sound that was explored in music, presentations and on a dawn walk led by Lyle Friesen, a songbird biologist with the Canadian Wildlife Service.

Saturday night’s keynote speaker, Gus Mills, a large-carnivore researcher from South Africa, presented “Hearing Songs from the Earth—Carnivore Soundscapes and Images in the Kalahari Desert” in an evening that included African and African inspired music.

Friday night’s concert featured Southeast Asia in a multimedia presentation, Earth Songs by Cecilia Kim, professor at Sangmyung University in Seoul, South Korea, with traditional Korean instruments and vocals, as well as English vocals by Rebecca Campbell, a Canadian studio musician.

While it sometimes seemed that the Christian or Mennonite concern for the environment was assumed, the festival/conference had ample expressions of faith. Larry Nickel, a Vancouver composer, arranger and publisher spoke of God’s creation “through the Word” in John 1. Participants gathered at the Detweiler Meetinghouse on Sunday morning to sing “Hymns and Songs about the Earth” led by Marilyn Houser-Hamm, conductor, educator and musician, and Ann Schultz, conductor and principal of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener. A featured song was “Servants of the Soil” by Bryan Moyer Suderman, singer-songwriter at Smalltalk music.

Joanna Moyer, a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Toronto’s School of the Environment, presented a paper on “The Consumption Sabbath: Considering a Faith-based initiative to inspire simplicity and environmental action” on Friday morning, and together with Bryan Moyer Suderman provided leadership for the Thursday Mennofolk concerts.

Dozens of other mini-concerts and presentations filled the four days. The general sense of participants—scholars and musicians—was that there is a Christian and Mennonite responsibility to care for creation. There were small nods to the work of farmers large and small in this calling. ☘



## ARTBEAT

## Bethel Place residents host an art, craft and antique show

STORY AND PHOTOS BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent  
WINNIPEG, MAN.

A buzz of excitement filled the common room at Bethel Place on June 5. A button collection with buttons dating as far back as the 1700s, photos over 100 years old, a beautifully polished samovar that was brought from Russia in 1923 and many other artifacts and artwork were among the items that evoked conversations and memories. The residents of this senior housing facility adjacent to Bethel Mennonite Church were hosting their first Arts, Crafts and Antiques Show.

Susan Froese, a resident for nearly four years, spearheaded the idea last winter. This project gave the residents something to distract them from the long, cold winter,

she said. It also provided them with an opportunity to get to know each other in a different way. Residents were invited to contribute anything that was precious, old or handmade and to write a little explanation about it.

“At first many said they didn’t have anything but when they came down and saw some of the items to be displayed they realized they had this and that and changed their minds. But we managed to find a place for everything,” said Froese, who is over 80. “We had no idea how many people would participate or how great the interest would be. It’s been stressful but it’s also been a lot of fun.”

A walk through the show quickly dispelled any notion of inactive seniors biding their time in rocking chairs. Henry Neufeld displayed his fine woodworking craft. He has created hundreds of talking sticks carved from diamond willow along with other hand carved items. Just the week before he sold 17 talking sticks, 11 to Colombia and six to China. Not long ago one was presented to Justice Murray Sinclair, chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Lillian Toews had a few of her recent paintings on display as well as a child’s violin that she made in 1977. Wedding gowns that spanned the decades lined one wall. Ruth Heinrichs brought both her mother’s wedding dress worn in 1911 and the one she wore in 1951.

Mildred Giesbrecht, 98 years old, was visibly excited to display several of her artifacts. Especially meaningful to her was a homemade table soccer game and wooden dice that her father had made in 1914 with which she remembers playing. Her grandfather Abram Loepky, born in 1844, had kept a diary that was still in her possession.



*Ruth Heinrichs displays her mother’s wedding dress worn in 1911. Hanging beside it is her own wedding dress that she wore in 1951.*



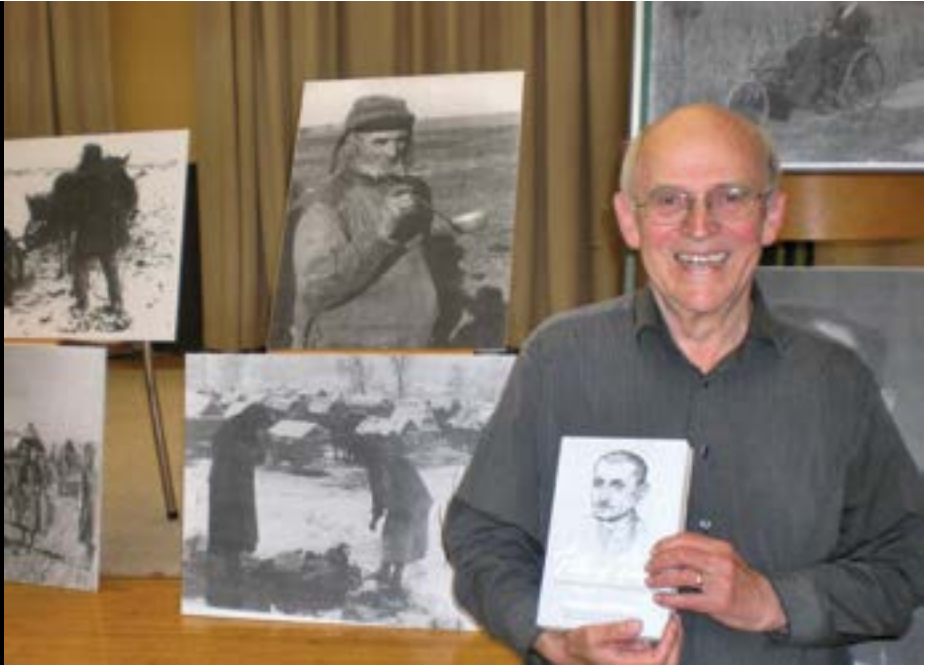
*Henry Neufeld holds an ornamental walking stick that he carved from wood he picked up at Camp Assiniboia*

For Froese, it was an opportunity to show some of her treasures as well as getting to know her community better. She lovingly stroked a red velvet tablecloth, over 100 years old, that her grandmother had brought from Russia in 1930. “They had to flee so quickly I am surprised it was saved.” She also had a little well-worn German book. “When we were refugees in Germany that Christmas in 1929, all the refugee families were given this little book with the inscription ‘from the people of Germany.’ As children we all got paper plates with nuts and candy.” The memories are vivid as people stopped and talked and asked questions about each other’s precious items.

“I came to know a lot of people better through working on this event,” said Froese. ☞

PHOTO BY RANDY KLAASSEN / TEXT BY MARIA H. KLASSEN

**Harvey L. Dyck** of Toronto read an excerpt from his book *Path of Thorns* for a gathering at Niagara United Mennonite Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., on May 25. He and Sarah Dyck spent many years researching and translating Jacob A. Neufeld's original German book, *Tiefenwege*, which details Soviet Mennonite life under Communist and Nazi rule. In addition to the translation, this new publication includes the never-before-published account of Neufeld's five-year imprisonment in a Soviet labour camp from 1933-37. Neufeld's descendants from the Niagara area led the evening's tribute.



## Youth ministry explored in new AMBS book

STORY AND PHOTO BY MARY E. KLASSEN

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary  
ELKHART, IND.

A new book published by the Institute of Mennonite Studies (IMS) documents how youth ministry efforts of the Mennonite denominations have been an essential element of the life of the church for more than a century.

*A History of Mennonite Youth Ministry, 1885–2005* documents a wide variety of efforts that Mennonite congregations, conferences and denominations employed to nurture the faith of young people over 120 years.

Bob Yoder, who is campus pastor and assistant professor of youth ministry at Goshen College, solicited chapters from long-term youth workers and directed the research and writing of several Goshen College students in creating and editing the book.

"Some of the most creative, intentional and faithful church-shaping work has happened in youth ministry," said Andy Brubacher Kaethler, professor at

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) and director of the seminary's Explore program for high school youth.

At a Dec. 3, 2013, celebration of the book's release, he also said, "Like any good history book, it does not simply recount the past, but it asks questions of the past which are instructive for the present and the future."

Efforts included in this history and analysis include Christian Endeavor, Youth for Christ, Bible quizzing, Mennonite Youth Fellowship, Mennonite camping programs, short-term service programs, denominational youth conventions and more. Among the writers are people involved in youth ministry in both Canada and the United States, such as Anna Rehan, Susan Allison-Jones, Randy Keeler and Kent Miller.

Yoder expressed his gratitude for several forms of help in creating the book. Goshen College's Maple Scholars program linked

him to four students in the summers of 2008 and 2009, who conducted research and contributed chapters to the book.

In addition, Yoder thanked Mennonite Education Agency for grants that supported the work of a copy editor, Sarah Rohrer Schlegel, and that now make possible the distribution of the book to leaders across the church.

For more information, or to purchase a copy, visit [ambs.edu/ims](http://ambs.edu/ims). ❧



**Bob Yoder, right, editor of *A History of Mennonite Youth Ministry, 1885–2005*, signs a copy for Daniel Yoder, pastor of junior and senior high youth at College Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind.**



# CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

## Place matters

*Susan Schultz Huxman*

*President,*

*Conrad Grebel University College*

50 years ago, when Mennonites accepted the invitation to build a Christian liberal arts college “across the creek” from the fledgling engineering school, the University of Waterloo, they were making a profound statement: we can deliver quality Arts education to a secular, research-intensive university; and we can pioneer a unique hybrid model of Mennonite higher education in all of North America!

Today, in this place along Westmount Road in Waterloo, we celebrate and give thanks for the 50th anniversary of Conrad Grebel University College—a college that has embraced its bold and beautiful “both/and” connection to the Mennonite church and the world as an affiliate college of the world-class University of Waterloo. It remains the only Mennonite private-public educational partnership of its kind in North America.



Today, in this place, we are placing another cornerstone on the campus. It is the fifth capital project since Grebel began. The “Next Chapter Campaign” for Academic Building Expansion is a multi-purpose, four-storey renovation and addition to the College. Grebel’s Director of Operations, Paul Penner, went above and beyond his regular duties to ensure that this project moved ahead smoothly and five committees helped to steer the project to completion. Our construction partners, Nith Valley and Architecture Incorporated, have provided the grand plan and worked tirelessly with us and over 50 trades and 300 workers

to deliver a beautiful, functional and invitational new space!

We broke ground in March of 2012 having surpassed our bare minimum fundraising goal (\$3.7 million). In August 2013, we laid a new cornerstone at our kick-off 50th anniversary celebrations. Today, as we dedicate our new space on June 22, 2014, we are thrilled to have raised \$6.3 million from many supporters and alums near and far who are equally passionate about Grebel’s special mission to “serve church and society.” As a Grebel community, mindful of the symbolic importance of laying new foundations, we remember that Jesus is “the cornerstone of our faith” and that “no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.”

Today, in this place, we are also mindful of the familiar hymn: “Here in this place, new light is streaming... gather us in all peoples together... call us anew to be salt for the earth!” We thank all of you for being a “great cloud of witnesses” for the “Next Chapter” in the life of Conrad Grebel University College—your MCEC church college and educational partner with University of Waterloo!



*Level 2: The main level includes a gracious entry from the parking lot, a new reception area, a seminar room for our growing graduate studies program in Theology and Peace and Conflict Studies, and a community education space.*



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Over 23,000 square feet of new space plus renovated spaces have augmented Grebel's existing facilities, making them more welcoming and accessible to students. Working towards stewardship of creation, Grebel used sustainable principles to guide the design of the building. Green features include high insulation values, low VOC products, low water consumption fixtures, automatic lighting, and an efficient boiler. The roof is rated for the future addition of photo voltaic panels and an electric vehicle charging station was installed. Trees that were cut down to make room for the new building have been turned into tables and benches.



Level 4: The Mennonite Savings and Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement is 6,000 square feet of new space devoted to research, training and community engagement around peace issues in our communities and around the globe. Spaces include: an art gallery, faculty and guest offices, seminar and project rooms, incubator collaborative spaces, graduate student space, and areas for various peace partners, including Project Ploughshares and Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement.



Level 1: An additional 5,000 square feet of music teaching space, a digital music lab, ensemble room, 4 practice rooms, and 2 studios.



Level 3: The Milton Good Library and the Mennonite Archives of Ontario will be updated significantly, including new equipment and work spaces, 2 group study rooms, 18 study carrels, and 3 times the previous book capacity.



"I am so grateful to see the response from over 1180 friends and alums of Grebel who helped to generate \$6.3 million in funds raised for The Next Chapter Campaign," says development director Fred W. Martin. "There are so many wonderful stories of donations made to honour friends and family members as well as generous contributions from people who are passionate about peace-making, music, and our Mennonite heritage. It is really heart-warming to see a building as a concrete testament to this generosity of spirit". See [grebel.ca/building\\_for\\_stories](http://grebel.ca/building_for_stories)

# young voices



*Kyle Penner's first dinner during his five day challenge consisted of canned corn, boiled potatoes, and rice.*



*Kyle Penner*



*Jeanette Sivilay*

## Mennonites raise awareness about welfare rates

BY RACHEL BERGEN

Young Voices Co-Editor  
STEINBACH, MAN.

**K**yle Penner had one apple in his fridge and some leftover potatoes from his meagre meal the night before for lunch. After nearly a week of living on about five dollars worth of food a day, he says he started to look at his food differently.

The 30-year-old associate pastor of Grace Mennonite Church in Steinbach took part in a food security challenge May 26-30 to raise awareness about Manitoba's Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) rates—specifically the amount allotted for food.

Nearly 35,000 Manitobans live on welfare. A single person's daily food and basic needs allowance amounts to about \$3.96. Their total income for the month for everything, including rent, is \$750. People with children get marginally more.

The challenge was a bit easier. Participants could spend \$5 a day on food and could use a cheat list. They were able to choose five of the following foods out of their cupboards to supplement their diets: oil, salt, flour, baking powder, baking soda, sugar, ketchup and soy sauce.

In total, 10 people participated in the challenge which was a part of Grace Mennonite Church's three-year plan of talking about local, national, and global issues.

Even with these "cheats," Penner says it was a rough week.

Each morning, he ate a piece of toast with peanut butter and a banana. For lunch he ate leftovers from the last day's supper, or part of a can of soup. And for dinner he ate some potatoes, rice and corn. He was able to have one glass of milk and one and a half apples a day as well.

"I didn't get close to following the Canadian Food Guide," he says.

Penner also noticed his worldview shifting as the week progressed. "It went from one of abundance to one of scarcity. If I had something today, I might not be able to have it tomorrow," he says.

The participants blogged along the way and their website received more than 1000 views.

Alyssa Lord, 20, also participated in the challenge. She says she's seen poverty in many contexts, but has never been poor, so she took part in the challenge to understand what it's like.

Lord says she got a taste, but knew she could continue as normal after the five days were up.

"I can't say that I know how every person on social income feels. I don't. I did it for five days and knew that on Saturday my life and spending choices would continue as normal. It did open my eyes and I'm thankful for this learning experience," she says.

Most days Lord went to sleep hungry with no hope that the next day would be any better. She says it helped her identify with the people she volunteers with at the Steinbach soup kitchen.

Penner says that when he talked to some of the people who eat at the soup kitchen, they appreciated the effort the participants were making to stand in solidarity with them.

Jeanette Sivilay says her interest in food security at home and abroad inspired her to help organize and participate in the challenge. The 26-year-old who works at the Canadian Mennonite University urban farm says she came to understand



how easy it is to compromise your health to meet your budget.

“I really wanted to eat as nutritiously as I could, and that took more planning than I realized,” she says. “But for folks living on EIA, the food budget is the easiest one to dip into for other essentials—the goal is to get full, not to eat healthy, or to eat for enjoyment. There are deep, systemic issues

at play in regards to the low levels EIA,” she says.

Grace Mennonite Church supplies 90 percent of the local food bank’s rice and many members of the church volunteer there. They hope to move forward with more compassion as they work towards food security projects they’re already involved in. ❧



*Alyssa Lord*

## Report shines light on Canadians’ Bible-reading habits

*Confidence, conversation and community drive Bible engagement*

**AARON EPP**

Young Voices Co-Editor

As **A** Year of Reading Biblically continues, a handful of people have drawn my attention to a recent study on the Bible reading habits of Christians in Canada.

“Are Canadians done with the Bible?” is the compelling question at the heart of the Canadian Bible Engagement Study (CBES), a 32-page report commissioned by the Canadian Bible Forum and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Released at the beginning of May, the report found that the majority of Canadian Christians read the Bible either seldom or never. Only about one in seven Canadian Christians, or 14 percent, read the Bible at least once a week.

Last year, market research company Angus Reid Strategies polled 4,500 Canadians in every province about their use, trends, beliefs about, and attitudes toward, the Bible. Weekly Bible reading has fallen by half since 1996, the survey found.

I can’t say I was surprised when I read these results. I also was not surprised at the survey’s conclusion that Canadian Christians don’t read their Bibles not because they are too busy, but because they question the reliability and trustworthiness of the Bible.

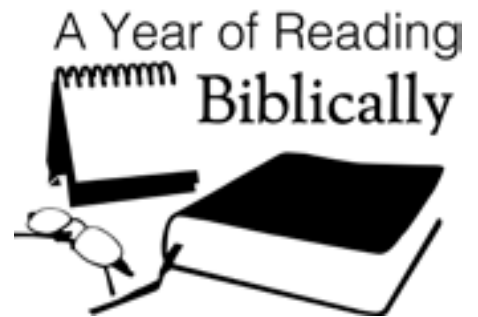
Instead, what interested me most about the report was its findings on what drive Canadians’ Bible reading frequency: confidence, conversation and community.

In 1996, 35 percent of Canadians agreed strongly that the Bible is the Word of God. Last year, the survey found that number was down to 18 percent. “Canadians who strongly agree that the Bible is the Word of God are 10 times as likely to read the Bible frequently (at least a few times a week) and six times as likely to attend religious services weekly as those who just moderately agree,” states the CBES executive summary.

Thirteen percent of Canadians and 23 percent of Christians strongly agree that the Bible is relevant to modern life. Canadians with that sort of confidence in the Bible’s relevance “are more than 10 times as likely to read the Bible frequently, four times as likely to attend services weekly, five times as likely to reflect frequently on its meaning for their lives and almost 10 times as likely to talk to others about it at least weekly as those who just moderately agree,” according to the report.

Conversation plays an important role in how Canadians engage the Bible, the survey found, because Canadians who reflect a few times a week on the meaning of the Bible for their lives are four times as likely to read the Bible frequently and twice as likely to attend services weekly as those who reflect just once a week, or once or twice a month.

The survey also suggests that more





frequent church attendance is associated with confidence in the Bible. That's the role community has to play: "The more frequently Canadians attend religious services, the more likely they are to strongly agree the Bible is the Word of God. Those who have only moderate confidence in the Bible are less likely to attend services."

One of the CBES Report's conclusions is that Canadians know very little of the Bible's content. Even when they have access to a Bible, they are more likely "to read in the meaning they assume lies under it"

than to really dig in and engage the text itself.

"This suggests that the Bible is not directly shaping much of the church in Canada," the report states.

So if the Bible is not directly shaping much of the church in Canada, what is? This study suggests that most Canadians are, in fact, done with the Bible.

Are you done with the Bible?

You can read the CBES Report at [www.bibleengagementstudy.ca](http://www.bibleengagementstudy.ca). ❧

## Dreaming of a better life

*Reflections on a MCC learning tour to the US-Mexican border*

BY RACHEL BERGEN

Young Voices Co-Editor



Joel Bueckert

The American dream is just that for many—a dream. For Latin Americans facing violence in their home communities, the journey to make that dream a reality can be a nightmare.

The Uprooted learning tour, a collaborative effort between Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Alberta and Saskatchewan brought eight young adults to Arizona and Mexico. Participants were hosted by MCC Mexico and West Coast to learn about migration issues.

"There's a huge crisis in Latin America where people face murder, robbery, and rape on the migration route instead of staying home. They carry on because they can't go home," says Joel Bueckert, 25, who attends Eyebrow Mennonite Church in Saskatchewan.

It starts at home. Mexico's Pacific coast has a long history of drug trafficking, and most of the country's cartels originated there. For those who want to escape the violent cycle, fleeing the country is the safest option.

But Mexican human rights organizations estimate that between 20,000 and 70,000 people are missing along the migrant trail between Mexico and the United States. Some people die exposed to the elements in the desert, others face race-based

violence at the border.

The learning tour participants heard stories of people who survived the migration. These were some of the most difficult times for Bueckert because he couldn't do anything to help.

"You go to four different interviews a day, you hear terrible things and then you pack up and leave and go to the next place. It was frustrating to see the problem and say, 'Good luck. We're off,'" he says.

Krystal Esau, 20, who attends Abbeydale Christian Fellowship in Calgary says she was confronted with her own privilege on the learning tour.

"As this happened, I was drawn into seeking what God's will was for me in situations of injustice. This is something I already felt very passionately about; that we as Christians are called to proclaim and bring about peace and justice to those in conflict and those mistreated," she says. "This truth became even more real as we met with real people who were struggling."

She believes the learning tour helped her learn to listen and use her voice purposefully.

The American government officials and workers like border guards see many migrants as illegal aliens. Esau believes this dehumanization contributes to the cruelty

PHOTO BY MEGAN ENNS



*The Uprooted participants in the Mexico City airport. Top row: Sherianne Penner, Karla Fairbrother, Danielle Klassen, Tyler Retzlaff. Bottom row: Davida Bentham, Krystal Esau, Jolene Peters, Thomas Coldwell, Joel Bueckert*

that many migrants face.

“There is a desperate need for humility and the willingness to look people in the eye and become equals. Part of our call as Christians is simply to listen and to tell the stories of those we met, because it gives them a voice and affirms their humanity,” Esau says.

Megan Enns and Jolene Peters of MCC Alberta and Saskatchewan, respectively, led the eight young adults on the tour.

“We had a lot of fun together but also struggled with these real themes with real intentions to engage with them in

our home contexts as we move into life at home,” Enns says.

For Bueckert, this means submitting himself to the cause.

“I don’t plan on writing letters to my local politicians. I don’t plan to ask people to donate. You look at the American government and this is the smallest thing on their mind. The best thing you can do is apply yourself and make a difference one person at a time.”

He hopes to move back one day to do humanitarian work. ❧



## The Balm of Gilead

### 5th Canadian Festival of Biblical Storytellers

October 17 and 18 at  
Richmond Hill United Church,  
10201 Yonge St. Richmond Hill, ON

Keynote Speaker: Cynthia Maybeck,  
a respected and admired  
professional storyteller

Come, learn and experience the  
joy and power of biblical  
storytelling. This event is for  
ministers, Christian educators,  
lay readers and laity.

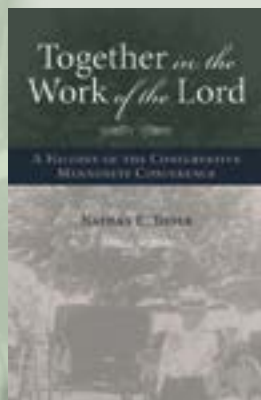
\$160 before September 1, 2014  
and \$180 afterwards, includes  
lectures, workshops, storytelling  
concert and meals.

For further details and registration  
information go to  
[www.biblicalstorytellingCAN.ca](http://www.biblicalstorytellingCAN.ca) or  
contact Ron Coughlin at  
[NBSCan@aol.com](mailto:NBSCan@aol.com) or 514-694-0214.




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## Calendar

### British Columbia

**Sept 12-13:** MCC festival sale and auction, TRADEX, Abbotsford.

**Oct. 6-8:** MC B.C. pastor/spouse retreat at Camp Squeah.

**Oct. 17-19:** MC B.C. Women's ministry fall retreat at Camp Squeah. Theme: Unwrap your Gifts—Romans 12, with speaker April Yamasaki. From Fri. 6 p.m. to Sun. 2 p.m. Go to [www.mcbc.ca](http://www.mcbc.ca), [waltrude@shaw.ca](mailto:waltrude@shaw.ca) or 604-756-0707 for more information.

### Saskatchewan

**Aug. 16:** Fifth annual Spruce River Folk Festival, at the Spruce River Farm, Prince Albert. Pipe ceremony at 10 a.m. "Landless band" conference at 11:30 a.m. Music begins at 1 p.m. For more information, e-mail [gracemennonite@sasktel.net](mailto:gracemennonite@sasktel.net).

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

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

**Nov. 8:** Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, hosts Peace, Pies and Prophets presented by Ted and Co. Theater Works, at 7 p.m. Fundraiser for Christian Peacemaker Teams. For more information, e-mail [canada@cpt.org](mailto:canada@cpt.org).

### Manitoba

**June 26-Sept. 13:** Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery summer exhibitions.

Moved by the Spirit, a multi-artist exhibit inspired by the life of Jesus, curated by artist Louise Tessier, and Awakenings, paintings by Faye Hall. **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 faspas/vesper table meal.

**Aug. 26:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's 10th-annual golf tournament, at Bridges Golf Club, Winnipeg.

**Nov. 6-9:** MEDA convention, at the Fairmont Winnipeg Hotel, Winnipeg. Theme: "Human dignity through entrepreneurship."

### Ontario

**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](http://grebel.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](mailto:info@hiddenacres.ca).

**June 29-July 1:** Mini-camp for

## UpComing

### MCC Manitoba celebrates 50 years with gala, play

Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba is celebrating its 50th this year with a series of events around the province, culminating in a Nov. 15 gala featuring former prime minister Joe Clark as keynote speaker, as well as the University of Manitoba Women's Choir, the Buffalo Gals Drumming Circle, and the Faith and Life Men's Choir. The event will take place at Immanuel Pentecostal Church in Winnipeg. Along with its November gala, MCC Manitoba will host events throughout the year, including the tour of a newly commissioned play written to help celebrate the occasion.

—Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba



campers aged 6 to 10, at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp. For more information, call 519-422-1401 or visit [www.slmc.ca](http://www.slmc.ca).

**July 25-27:** Family camp weekend—for all ages—at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp. For more information, call 519-422-1401 or visit [www.slmc.ca](http://www.slmc.ca).

**June 28:** Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support is holding a fundraiser “Zumbathon for refugee claimants” at Waterloo Public Square 7-9 p.m. Zumba is a workout that feels like a celebration! Go to [www.mcrs.ca/event](http://www.mcrs.ca/event) or call (519) 571-1912 ext 4 for more information.

**Aug. 8-18:** CPT aboriginal justice delegations to Kenora allow participants to be allies to indigenous communities engaged in healing, resisting colonialism and struggling for sovereignty. For more information, visit [cpt.org](http://cpt.org) or e-mail [delegations@cpt.org](mailto:delegations@cpt.org).

**Oct. 17-18:** 5th annual Festival of Biblical Storytellers at Richmond Hill United Church. Learn and experience the joy and power of biblical storytelling. Keynote speaker: Cynthia Maybeck. For information and registration go to [www.biblicalstorytellingCAN.ca](http://www.biblicalstorytellingCAN.ca) or (514) 694-0214.

**U.S.**

**July 24-27:** Bridgefolk—the Mennonite-Catholic ecumenical organization—annual conference at St. John’s Abbey, Collegeville, Minn. Theme: “Mennonites and Catholics: An overflow of Christ’s love.” Keynote speakers: Vincent Guider and Elizabeth Soto Albrecht. For conference schedule and registration, visit [www.bridgefolk.net](http://www.bridgefolk.net).


**Aug. 1-2:** The 2014 Schürch (Shirk/

Sherk/Sherrick) Family Association Reunion takes place at the Millersville University of Pennsylvania. For more information, e-mail Sue Shirk at [suesbug@msn.com](mailto:suesbug@msn.com) or visit [www.schurchfamilyassociation.net](http://www.schurchfamilyassociation.net).

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

/// Classifieds

**Employment Opportunities**



Bethany Christian Schools, Goshen, Ind., is seeking a Head of School to lead a private Christian school that provides Christian education to about 280 students in grades 4-12. Bethany Christian Schools is a dynamic learning community that integrates faith development with academic excellence. Grounded in Mennonite values, Bethany equips students for Christian discipleship in the church and around the world.

Qualified candidates must have:

- prior experience in school administration and organizational leadership, preferably in a senior administrative position with church school experience
- a master’s degree in education from an accredited university
- an Indiana Building Level Administrator License prior to starting this job
- proven skills in leading educational institutions while exhibiting a passion for entrepreneurial pedagogy and administration
- a mature, growing commitment to Jesus Christ and be a contributing participant in the mission of their congregation
- a commitment to Anabaptist-Mennonite belief and practice

Cover letter and resume may be sent to:  
 Kirk Stiffney  
 1114 N. Main St.  
 Goshen, IN 46528  
 (574) 537-8736  
[Kirk@stiffneygroup.com](mailto:Kirk@stiffneygroup.com)

## Senior Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

**Mennonite Savings and Credit Union (MSCU)** has an exciting full-time position for an experienced administrative professional to provide executive level administrative and organizational support to the CEO, as well as to the Board of Directors and various Board Committees. In this capacity you will pro-actively support the CEO on current and emerging priorities and the senior leadership team as they discover, plan and act towards creating our best shared future. Together with the CEO you will act as a key point of contact between staff and leadership, Board and MSCU members, partners, and credit union peers.

**For a full description of this position please visit [mscu.com](http://mscu.com).**

MSCU is a Mennonite financial cooperative serving communities of faith across Ontario. We provide every day banking services to over 19,000 members with the “barn-raising” mutual aid traditions of the Waterloo County Mennonite community. From our modest beginnings in 1964, we have grown in size to over \$950 million in assets under administration and rank eighth among credit unions in Ontario.

**Interested persons should send their cover letter and resume by June 30th to:**  
 Mennonite Savings and Credit Union  
 1265 Strasburg Road - Kitchener, ON N2R 1S6  
 Confidential Fax: 519.772.5828  
 Email: [talent@mscu.com](mailto:talent@mscu.com)

*Thank you in advance for your application. Only those selected for an interview will be contacted.*




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[www.mscu.com](http://www.mscu.com)



Initiatives for Just Communities (IJC) is seeking to fill the position of Executive Director. This full-time position requires commitment to restorative justice issues and processes, and the ability to direct operations and provide visionary leadership. A detailed job description is available at <http://www.initiativesjc.org/index.php/involvement>.

Application deadline is June 30. Please send Resume and Cover Letter to James Stobbe at [jstobbe@initiativesjc.org](mailto:jstobbe@initiativesjc.org).

IJC is a faith-based, charitable organization in Manitoba offering friendship, support and care to those who need it most.



*Fifteen women from the Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Ont., who call themselves the Knotty Ladies, met two or three Wednesdays a month to create 30 blankets that will be distributed by Mennonite Central Committee to refugees displaced from their homes. The blankets were 'blessed' by the congregation in a prayer by Ben Cassels, associate minister of youth and young adults, far right behind the pulpit, during a May 11 worship service. Pictured from left to right: Marcella Martin, Maggie Thiessen, Elsie Flaming, Kathryn Good, Helen Baergen, Ursula Harms, Pearl Shultz, Ardys Becker and Shirley Martin.*



*Eric and Megan Bergey are helped by their mother Shawna Leis with their ice cream from "Grandpa's homemade ice cream" at the 2014 New Hamburg Relief Sale on May 31. This year's sale raised \$320,000 for relief.*