

CANADIAN MEN OF THE NIGHT

October 13, 2014
Volume 18 Number 20

Borscht brings relief



PM40063104 R09613

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EDITORIAL

Listening or doing?

BARB DRAPER
INTERIM CO-EDITOR

Mainstream Mennonites tend to be doers. We have been taught to work hard and take satisfaction from getting things done, whether that is fixing up houses through Mennonite Disaster Service or sending relief kits and food aid through Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) to places where people are destitute. We like to feel that our hard work is getting results.

In the second half of the 20th century, Mennonites developed a number of institutions and programs to spread the gospel and to respond to human need. By the 1950s and '60s, there was growing prosperity in Mennonite communities and a sense of urgency to reach out to a hurting world. Like other Canadians, we felt optimistic that we could successfully make a difference. Robust Mennonite mission boards established new congregations in new communities, some in cities, others in more remote places.

As Esther Epp-Tiessen describes in her book *Mennonite Central Committee in Canada: A History*, MCC also began a variety of new programs during these years. Among these new programs were services such as the Ailsa Craig Boys Farm, a foster home for troubled teenage boys in Ontario. Epp-Tiessen writes that it was a "brash and naïve experiment," but the Mennonites "loved it and supported it enthusiastically through the 1950s and 1960s."

Another 1950s MCC program sent

teachers and nurses to Newfoundland as voluntary service workers. Voluntary service was widely supported, as young Mennonites travelled to new places in North America and around the world, responding to the needs of disadvantaged people. These were exciting years, as programs of the church and MCC did good works. There was a "can do" attitude.



Today, we have a harder time feeling so enthusiastic. We have discovered that the world is very complex and we're no longer so confident that all this work makes a significant difference. Ongoing social problems continue in spite of all the time and energy we've poured into improving situations. We have lost some of our passion and we struggle to know which programs to keep and which are not worth the effort.

In this issue's main feature on page 4, senior writer Will Braun examines what has been happening with the relationship between Mennonites and Canada's Indigenous Peoples over the past 40 years. He points out that there are fewer Mennonites living with and working with indigenous people than there were in previous decades. He wonders about the ongoing commitment of Mennonites to indigenous relations.

Like other Christian denominations, Mennonites worked to establish indigenous churches in the mid-20th century. The assumption was that the Christian gospel message, along with a proper education, would improve the lives of

indigenous people. The missionaries who lived in first nation communities were eager to bring hope and prosperity, but today, as major social issues linger, we wonder if the benefits outweigh the challenges.

Braun calls Menno Wiebe the granddaddy of MCC Canada's Aboriginal Neighbours program. Under Wiebe's leadership in the 1970s, MCC Canada was able to shift its priorities and take a gentle listening stance, rather than a program-based one. There is something of a chasm between traditional Mennonite culture and the culture of indigenous people, and Wiebe believed that it was important to bridge that gap, rather than trying to persuade indigenous people to adopt a Mennonite view of the world.

And so we struggle with the Mennonite-Indigenous relationship. It takes a great deal of patience to bridge the cultural divide between these two cultures. At the same time, we see that indigenous people face problems that are so pervasive and systemic that we want to do something, but we don't know how to respond. Simply listening and being a presence doesn't feel very effective. As our area churches, mission boards and MCC face financial challenges, common sense tells us to cut away those programs that seem to be unproductive. But other voices say that tying funding to measurable short-term goals is short-sighted.

So where do we go from here? Should we listen to the practical voices among us and only do the work that brings results that we can see? Or should we spend time listening to another culture, affirming its spirituality and bringing practical solutions only when we are asked? In today's world, what does it mean to act with justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8)?

ABOUT THE COVER:

Volunteers from churches in the Greater Toronto Area—including Mississauga Mennonite Fellowship, which contributed a large batch of traditional borscht kept hot in a kettle over a small fire—worked together on Sept. 20 at the Black Creek Relief Sale, raising about \$43,000 for the work of Mennonite Central Committee around the world.

PHOTO: JOANNA REESOR-MCDOWELL, SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

Circulation: Please contact Lisa Jacky toll-free at 1-800-378-2524 ext. 221 or by e-mail at office@canadianmennonite.org for subscriptions and address changes. Subscriptions can also be ordered at our web site. We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund for our publishing activities. ISSN 1480-042X

Canada

CANADIAN MENNONITE

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40063104 REGISTRATION NO. 09613

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE ITEMS TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

490 DUTTON DRIVE, UNIT C5

WATERLOO ON N2L 6H7

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

Web site: canadianmennonite.org

Please send all material to be considered for publication to:

General submission address: submit@canadianmennonite.org

Readers Write: letters@canadianmennonite.org

Milestones announcements: milestones@canadianmennonite.org

Obituaries: obituaries@canadianmennonite.org

Calendar announcements: calendar@canadianmennonite.org

Material can also be sent "Attn: Submissions/Readers Write/Milestones/Obituaries/Calendar" by postal mail or fax to our head office.

Reprint requests: reprints@canadianmennonite.org

Mission statement: *To educate, inspire, inform, and foster dialogue on issues facing Mennonites in Canada as it shares the good news of Jesus Christ from an Anabaptist perspective. We do this through an independent publication and other media, working with our church partners.*

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

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

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Head Office Staff:

Dick Benner, Editor/Publisher, editor@canadianmennonite.org (on sabbatical)

Ross W. Muir, Managing Editor, managinged@canadianmennonite.org

Barb Draper, Editorial Assistant, edassist@canadianmennonite.org (interim co-editor)

Dan Johnson, Graphic Designer, designer@canadianmennonite.org

Lisa Jacky, Circulation/Finance, office@canadianmennonite.org

Aaron Epp, Young Voices Co-editor, youngvoices@canadianmennonite.org

Rachel Bergen, Young Voices Co-editor, rachel.bergen19@gmail.com

Virginia Hostetler, Web Editor, webeditor@canadianmennonite.org (interim co-editor)

Advertising Manager: **D. Michael Hostetler,** advert@canadianmennonite.org,

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

Correspondents:

Will Braun, Senior Writer, seniorwriter@canadianmennonite.org

Amy Dueckman, B.C. Correspondent, bc@canadianmennonite.org, 604-854-3735;

Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, Alberta Correspondent, ab@canadianmennonite.org, 780-436-3431;

Donna Schulz, Saskatchewan Correspondent, sk@canadianmennonite.org, 306-232-4733;

Evelyn Rempel Petkau, Manitoba Correspondent, mb@canadianmennonite.org, 204-745-2208;

Dave Rogalsky, Eastern Canada Correspondent, ec@canadianmennonite.org, 519-577-9987.

One-Year Subscription Rates

Canada: \$44 + tax (depends on province where subscriber lives)

U.S.: \$66

International (outside U.S.): \$89.10



Award-winning
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Canadian Church Press



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Our bloggers post at www.canadianmennonite.org/blogs:

- MC Canada worker Palmer Becker takes on short-term teaching assignments in various parts of the world. His latest posts are from Gaza.

- Cassandra Bangay works with Christian Peacemaker Teams. She accompanies people in conflict situations and seeks to reduce violence in Colombia.

- Tamara Petkau is a mother to two young children in Canada and shares her thoughts about parenting, consumerism, the environment and more.

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD FEATURE

Can we talk?

Taking stock of Mennonite relations with Canada's Indigenous Peoples

BY WILL BRAUN

SENIOR WRITER

Tension gripped my gut as I drove to a Mennonite church in Altona, Man., with an indigenous friend. We were doing a joint Sunday morning presentation about hydropower impacts.

I wondered if an indigenous person had ever been in that church. I debated making excuses for whatever suspicion, or worse, my people might direct toward him. I tried to muster grace.

It went fairly well, although in such settings one mostly encounters a silence that leaves much to interpretation.

That nerve-rattling experience repeated itself often between 1998 and 2001, when I worked on indigenous issues for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Manitoba. And I know the tension is well-known to others who have been officially tasked with building bridges between Mennonites and indigenous people over the past 40 years.

Some Mennonites are warm and welcoming towards indigenous people, others are uncomfortable, and still others brim with accusation. A Mennonite politician once came into the MCC office to give me a blustery lecture.

Ultimately, I was left to explain to indigenous people that MCC's commitment to them—a commitment they valued greatly—was limited by the reluctance of some donors to align with them, particularly when it came to anything deemed “political.” I was also left with some lessons about how to pursue cross-cultural understanding and how not to. And, of course, I was left with many enduring relationships with the Cree people I worked along side.

The task of building cross-cultural bridges is rewarding and intense.

For the past four decades, Mennonite organizations have given a small cadre of people this task. Some have worked right in indigenous communities, some have worked on specific issues and some have worked more generally at connecting indigenous and settler people groups through exposure trips, camping trips, speaking events, websites, books and the like.

I am blessed to know many of these people. That is to say, in part, that I come to this subject with a bias as deep as my relationships to friends and colleagues both Mennonite and indigenous.

Overall, Canada has worked much better for Europeans and others who have arrived since, than for its indigenous inhabitants.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MCC UN OFFICE



Harley Eagle, right, Mennonite Central Committee Canada's co-coordinator of Indigenous Work with his wife Sue, speaks with other MCC staff and partners at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

The granddaddy of this work is Menno Wiebe, who led MCC Canada's Aboriginal Neighbours program from 1974 until his retirement in 1997. He established an astonishingly broad and deep network of relationships with chiefs, grandmothers, artists, national leaders and every-day folk in indigenous communities from coast to coast. He created a tremendous amount of goodwill toward Mennonites.

Others have carried on that work in various ways and places, often, as in my case, with Wiebe as a beloved mentor and elder.

Now, after 40 years of official Mennonite-Indigenous engagement, perhaps it is worth taking stock. Where does the relationship stand? That is a difficult question, but some observations can be made.

Personnel

First, in terms of commitment of personnel, MCC offices across Canada employ seven people to do this work—some part-time, some not, with various changes pending. In the past, there were considerably more, including more people living in indigenous communities. Then there are other MCC programs that involve indigenous people, such as prison visitation initiatives. The Ottawa Office also addresses indigenous issues.

Mennonite Church Canada offices employ two people devoted to this work—one based in Winnipeg, one in B.C.—and others whose duties include indigenous-related programming.

Unfinished business

Second, the work is far from over and it remains controversial. Mennonites and indigenous people share a country, but our lives are remarkably separate. There are a few Mennonite churches in indigenous communities and I'm sure there are some indigenous people who attend non-indigenous Mennonite churches. Then there are Mennonites who encounter indigenous people outside Sunday

Some Mennonites are warm and welcoming towards indigenous people, others are uncomfortable, and still others brim with accusation.

morning. But for the most part, indigenous people are not found in our churches, our organizations or our living rooms. The gap to be bridged is wide.

And the footing on either side is delicate. Like many nations, Canada has profound guilt lurking in its national conscience. The entity we call Canada resulted from Europeans arriving here and slowly taking over from those who lived here before. The Europeans did some noble things and many ignoble—even genocidal—things along the way. Overall, Canada has worked much better for Europeans and others who have arrived since, than for its indigenous inhabitants. This is a fundamental element of our nation.

Earlier this year, James Anaya, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on

the Rights of Indigenous People, reported on "the well-being gap between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people in Canada," and the fact that it "has not narrowed over the last several years." The glum litany of trouble in the report is by now a national cliché.

What moves it out of the realm of cliché for me is to drive through an indigenous community, see children playing, and feel the aching reality that those

beautiful children of God face far more challenges and much tougher odds than my own children.

I think the common knowledge of such disparity is profoundly—if often subconsciously—unsettling to many Mennonites. It evokes both positive and negative reactions.

Mixed emotions

Negative sentiment towards indigenous people is still common in Canada. Just look at the comment section of online news sources. For example: "Is the *Globe and Mail* going to promote my hash tag #paynomore for those of us fed up with paying for natives to do nothing but live off taxpayers their entire lives while being professional victims?"

Darryl Klassen, who is concluding 25

years with MCC B.C., says the “get over it mentality” towards indigenous people is still “pretty pervasive” in the church. A teacher in a largely Mennonite high school in Manitoba reports the same prevailing attitude among students.

At the same time, Klassen says there is a growing degree of understanding that our histories affect “the realities of today.”

It is hard to measure trends in

Mennonite attitudes, but Sue Eagle is confidently optimistic about her job with MCC Canada’s Indigenous Work program. She says interest from MCC leadership and constituents has increased significantly in the last five years. The recent MCC Canada annual general meeting included a learning day focussed on indigenous relations. And Eagle lists positive involvements across the country.

“I have no fear for our program at all,” she says, after 10 years in the role along with her husband Harley.

Brander McDonald, who coordinates indigenous relations work for MCC B.C., says that in his context dialogue is the only realistic goal. Any engagement beyond dialogue is not a realistic expectation. As for the work of promoting dialogue, he is honest about the ups and

MCC B.C. ‘refocusses’ Aboriginal Neighbours program, releases staff

BY WILL BRAUN

Senior Writer

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) British Columbia has decided to dismiss long-time Aboriginal Neighbours program coordinator Darryl Klassen. The decision, which was made early this year, will take effect at the end of December. Klassen, 64, has worked with MCC B.C. for 25 years.

At the same time, the organization is “reaffirming its commitment” to indigenous relations work, and preparing for a “refocussing” process, according to associate executive director Ron van Wyk.

Van Wyk said a program review conducted of all MCC B.C.’s work by an outside consultant identified a lack of results arising from the Aboriginal Neighbours program. By way of example, van Wyk said such reviews generally look at results, such as number of events organized and number of people in attendance, among other “outcomes.”

Continuation of the program “could not be justified” from a “stewardship point of view,” he said.

At the same time, he said, “It’s not about Darryl.” Similarly, MCC B.C. board chair Len Block said he didn’t want to “bring Darryl’s work into question,” while also saying staff had identified a need to make changes to the program “to be more effective with the resources.”

Block did not respond with specificity to a question about what greater effectiveness would look like, although he said he has ideas that he will contribute as the process of refocussing the work proceeds.

A staff-driven consultation process is to produce recommendations that will be brought to the board in December.

Although indigenous issues are controversial across the country, Block said he was not aware of any donors expressing disapproval of MCC B.C.’s Aboriginal

Neighbours program. Van Wyk said he has received no direct criticism of the program from constituents.

Apparently, the task of informing the indigenous people with whom MCC B.C. relates about the changes fell to Klassen himself. Van Wyk and Block said they have not had any communication with MCC B.C.’s indigenous partners regarding the decision, with the exception of communication with Brander McDonald, who serves as Mennonite Church B.C.’s indigenous relations coordinator and is Cree.

The MCC B.C. decision has created some concern and uncertainty within the community of people working on Mennonite-Indigenous relations, a community in which Klassen is held in high regard.

McDonald said he wouldn’t be doing the work he is now if it weren’t for Klassen. The two often planned events jointly. MCC B.C. provides financial support for McDonald’s position on a year-to-year basis and will continue to do so, according to van Wyk and Block.

Steve Heinrichs, who heads indigenous relations work for MCC Canada, said his relationship with Klassen helped get him into his work and has helped keep him going. With respect to Klassen’s dismissal, Heinrichs said it is important to realize that, for many people, Klassen has been symbolic of the overall relationship between MCC and indigenous people in B.C.

“I have tremendous respect for Darryl,” said Leonard Doell, who has worked in indigenous relations with MCC Saskatchewan since 1996. “He has spent the bulk of his adult life committed to building and nurturing trust, relationships and goodwill.”

Menno Wiebe, who headed MCC Canada’s Aboriginal Neighbours programming from 1974-97 commented on Klassen’s particular pastoral touch, adding general

downs it entails.

Like Eagle, he repeatedly expresses appreciation for the support of leadership within the organization he works for.

Leadership and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

This increased interest among leaders is a third observation about the state of Mennonite-Indigenous relations.

A related observation would be the role of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in nurturing this interest. The TRC is a federally mandated process to address the Indian Residential School legacy. Numerous leaders within MCC and MC Canada have attended TRC events. This appears to have deepened official Mennonite commitment to indigenous work.

Don Peters, who heads MCC Canada, attended three TRC events. In an e-mail, he recounted sitting in a room of a thousand witnesses as residential school survivors told TRC chair Murray Sinclair of their often horrific experiences. Trained attendants walked the aisles offering tissues, water and support to witnesses overwhelmed by the stories.

(Continued on page 8)

words of appreciation.

In a phone interview, Klassen spoke primarily about the profound relationships he established through his work, and his observation that recent changes to the MCC organizational culture across the country decrease the space for the less-results-oriented sort of work he has done.

The decision to let Klassen go raises several questions:

- **HOW WILL** indigenous people within the MCC realm in B.C. interpret the fact that MCC B.C. is reaffirming its commitment to indigenous relations while releasing the person who personified this commitment for 25 years?

McDonald expressed this concern: "From a human resources perspective, one could ask why MCC B.C. dismissed a 25-year veteran of the organization less than a year before he turned 65?"

Van Wyk would say only that MCC B.C. acted according to its policies.

- **HOW SHOULD** MCC's commitment to justice play out in its human-resources decisions?

- **COULD MENNONITE** organizations develop a set of best practices—informed by Scripture and their community ethic—around human-resources practices?

- **THE MOST** important question, perhaps, is, "What will MCC B.C.'s refocused indigenous program look like? Will it deliver more "results" or will a results-oriented approach even work?"

Block said he expects the budget allocation for the work to be at least as high next year as it was this year, but only time will tell what will come from the expenditure.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE B.C.



As part of a relationship-building event at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond, B.C., Darryl Klassen, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) B.C.'s Aboriginal Neighbours program coordinator, presents local elder Ruth Adams with an MCC blanket. In Salish culture, this is an expression of adopting someone into the family.

(Continued from page 7)

As a particular Dene woman told her devastating story, Peters says an attendant came over to him, asked if he was okay, and offered a tissue. "I took one and nodded," Peters recounts.

MCC Canada is now working on a strategic planning process that will "build on the impact of the TRC for MCC involvement in Canada," says Peters.

Willard Metzger, executive director of MC Canada, attended five TRC events across Canada. "That has really shaped me," he says. "I have been impacted by the generosity of spirit of the indigenous community in sharing painful stories," Metzger says, adding that stories were told not in a "blaming way," but in the spirit of saying "you didn't do it but you need to know this is what happened."

Metzger says that for a church to have integrity in the Canadian context it must be "working at strengthening relations with indigenous people."

He says Step 1 in that work is getting to know our indigenous neighbours. "A lot of the fear people have," he says, "is because they don't have any first-hand relations." Next, we need to understand that the indigenous worldview is not "anti-Christian." And ultimately Metzger says we need to move on to the "difficult conversations about land claims."

But he says he can't give a sense of whether MC Canada's level of financial commitment to indigenous work will increase, decrease or stay the same.

MCC B.C. sent a wave of concern through the community of Mennonites working on indigenous relations this year by announcing the dismissal of Darryl Klassen, who coordinated the Aboriginal

Neighbours Program for MCC B.C. for 25 years. (See "MCC B.C. 'refocusses' Aboriginal Neighbours program, releases staff" sidebar on page 6.) While MCC B.C. is simultaneously "reaffirming" its commitment to indigenous relations, some people I spoke with fear that MCC B.C. may not have a sufficient understanding of the nature of the work and the implications of sidelining the person that has personified the relationship in B.C. for so long.

The decision is a blow to McDonald, who works closely with Klassen and is indigenous himself. He says the decision has made him hesitant to risk his reputation in his own community. He's reluctant to enter relationships on behalf of Mennonites when the church may not stand by those relationships.

Despite the shake-up in MCC B.C. and budgetary uncertainty at MC Canada, Mennonite leaders in general appear to be more personally engaged in indigenous issues than has been the case in the past, in part because of the TRC.

Corporate culture

This trend may stand in tension with another trend noted by Darryl Klassen. While speaking with relative equanimity about his personal situation, he laments what he sees as a "significant change in the nature of MCC" across the country. He says that when he started, MCC was "like a family," but now staff are being "squeezed" into a "corporate" or "government" model marked by more formality, narrower requirements for reporting, more emphasis on numbers, and more "hierarchy."

Klassen feels the new structures are poorly suited to indigenous relations work. Beyond that, he feels the changes are "taking the heart out of MCC." Klassen says, "The beauty of MCC has always been its horizontal structure, and trust and integrity and honour within MCC and our relationships." Now

'I have been impacted by the generosity of spirit of the indigenous community in sharing painful stories.'
(Willard Metzger)

PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ



Roland Ray, left, of the Mathias Colomb First Nation, Sandy Bay, Sask., shows Les Hurlburt how ancient rock paintings depict the land that once belonged to the band, at the fifth annual Spruce River Folk Festival this summer.

he sees a “negative view” towards these “older ways”

MCC B.C. board chair Len Block says the essential task in terms of indigenous work is “keeping in touch” and “making sure we have a good program with results that show we are making a difference.”

But how will a results-oriented posture affect relationship-building efforts?

Elaine Bishop served with MCC in Little Buffalo, an exceptionally down-trodden Cree community in northern Alberta. In 1996, at the close of her four years of tireless, passionate work, I asked her about ongoing MCC involvement in the hurting community she so loved. She said MCC needed to stay there to “witness the disintegration.”

Bias

That raises a question about the theological and spiritual foundations of this work. Is our goal to encounter Jesus on the messy margins of society? Do we seek our own transformation through long-term relationships? Do our programmatic plans leave room for accompanying people through prolonged periods of failure and disintegration? Do we want successful programs or friends?

At the same time, indigenous people need more than friendship. They need a fairer society. They desperately need a certain sort of results. One message Klassen is getting from them is that now is the time for Mennonites to “walk the walk.”

Mennonites are well positioned to play a role in making change, but the only path to those sorts of results is through long-term relationships that nurture the incremental mending of the torn fabric of society.

As for the resistant attitudes within the church, the dialogue must face the many complicated, nuanced issues related to indigenous people: dependence, dysfunctional governance, a victimization mindset. These things, and their opposites, exist. But they look very different if you are sitting with an indigenous friend, instead of ranting from a distance.

Richard George, an indigenous friend whom I was honoured to have in my living room many times when I lived in B.C., and who I’m sure has shared many

laughs with Darryl Klassen, told me that Mennonites need to understand why things are the way they are in indigenous communities.

We need to understand why people are drunk, or mad at the church, or unemployed, or more “political” than we may like. Our bias should be towards

understanding. Our bias should be towards relationship.

Willard Metzger says of his experience with indigenous people: “They want to be good neighbours, they want to figure this [relationship] out. . . . Why wouldn’t we, as God’s people, want to respond positively to that?” ❧

MC CANADA PHOTO BY DAN DYCK



Vincent Solomon, the Aboriginal Neighbours coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Manitoba and a priest for the Anglican Church of Canada, says a blessing for the many MCC infant care and relief kits donated by Native Assembly 2014 participants this summer.

❧ For discussion

1. What have been your experiences in cross-cultural bridge-building with Canada’s indigenous people? What involvement does the church and organizations like Mennonite Central Committee have with indigenous people in your province?
2. Why has the number of Mennonites living and working with indigenous people declined over the years? Will Braun raises questions about the “theological and spiritual foundations of this work.” What do you think motivates the church to work with indigenous relations? What should be the goals? What role does guilt play in this relationship?
3. Braun quotes Brander McDonald, MC B.C.’s indigenous relations coordinator, as saying, “[a]ny engagement beyond dialogue is not a realistic expectation.” Do you agree? Is dialogue enough to justify the financial commitment to indigenous work? Do you agree with MCC B.C.’s decision to decrease support for the work of indigenous relations?
4. Braun says the church should understand the challenges faced by indigenous people and “[o]ur bias should be towards relationship.” How could the church best work at doing this? What should Mennonites be learning from indigenous peoples?

—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.

✉ Love our enemies because we worship the same God

RE: "GLOBAL CALIPHATE" a Muslim goal, not a myth" letter, Sept. 1, page 15.

It is my prayer that someday we will all come to realize that the God of Israel and Allah are the same. So long as we choose to separate and divide, we become paranoid and fearful.

We believe that it's our God who created everything we know. If the God we worship doesn't care for those who worship "another," then why would our God allow them to enjoy the same sunshine we do?

If we refer to them who are not like us as our enemies, then, according to Jesus, our only recourse is to love.

JOHN GASCHO, WARMAN, SASK.

FROM OUR LEADERS

Improving church communications

AFTEN THIESSEN

When it comes to graphic design and communications, everyone has an opinion. It's nearly impossible to please everyone, but we live in a day and age when we must engage in design on some level or another; whether it's weekly church bulletins, yearly directories or websites, churches have information to communicate.



To the younger generation, design—and not just the information—matters. And there is some theological justification for good design: we worship a God who is a good designer.

Here are some tips to make your print or digital communications better:

• **Find a trained graphic designer**

If your church is honestly interested in improving its communications, you will

need a professional's help. Often your church administrator or an interested volunteer will not do, and can add a relational strain if the job is not well done.

Find a self-employed graphic designer, since design firms—even Christian ones—will be more expensive because they have more overhead costs. Then make sure the person has actual credentials as a graphic designer and a portfolio, and ask for a non-profit rate.

• **Be clear about what you want**

When it comes time to give the designer content, make sure it is exactly as you want it to be; this will keep you and the designer from going back and forth needlessly. Basically, do as much of the administration as you can, so you aren't paying the designer to do it.

Give the designer examples of designs you like.

Ask to see three different versions. The content doesn't need to be there, just basic colour scheme, layout and other design features. Ask for an explanation of the designer's choices.

Include a wider circle for feedback. Ask the church council to give its input. By about the third round of feedback, you should have the final version. For something as important as a logo, you might want to include the whole church because that logo and accompanying colour scheme should go on to influence all other church communications.

Make sure you can change content. You can even ask the designer to train you and a few others how to manage the website for yourselves. The same principle goes for directory or bulletin templates: make sure it's in a file format that the pastor and administrative assistant can update for themselves, if necessary.

If the designer sets up accounts for your new website, make sure you get all the usernames and passwords. And ask for a sheet with the colour information on it, along with a disk that has all relevant files on it, including various versions of your logo in various file formats and sizes.

Aften Thiessen is MC B.C.'s communications coordinator and administrative assistant.

✉ To be blessed themselves, Arabs need to bless Israel

RE: "FROM MILK and honey to a land of rubble," Aug. 18, page 4.

All nations are God's and each nation is supposed to honour and serve him. Isaiah 19:2: "Blessed be my people Egypt, and Assyria the work of my hands, and

Israel my inheritance."

God fights for Israel. Joshua 23:10: "For the Lord your God is he who fights for you, as he has promised you."

God gives every nation its territory, according to Acts 17:26-27. Therefore, concerning Israeli settlements in the West Bank, or Judea and Samaria, I can

(Continued on page 12)

OUTSIDE THE BOX

When time becomes the right time

PHIL WAGLER

The New Testament speaks of time in two ways: there is *chronos* (chronology, the movement of time by clock and calendar), and there is *kairos* (the opportune time, the right moment).

Life is full of *chronos*. We wake up at a certain time. We eat at certain times. We go to work, school and appointments according to the calendar. Every day is *chronos*.

But there are a handful of moments in our lives that are "just the right time." These become the transforming moments that propel life in a different direction. Rob Thomas's song, "Little Wonders," captures what we have all known in some way:



*Our lives are made
In these small hours
These little wonders,
These twists and turns of fate
Time falls away,
But these small hours,
These small hours still remain*

Those transformative, benchmark *kairos* hours come in a variety of ways. No two are the same. A tragedy, an opportunity, a disappointment, a serendipitous conversation no one could

have orchestrated. We may even make a decision that seemed right at the *chronos*, but eventually crumbles, leaving us with questions we never would have considered and moving us in a direction that is entirely new and unexpected. That is the in-breaking of *kairos* when time becomes the right time!

Everyone has these opportune times, but do we maximize them? Do we have people in our lives to help us recognize them?

Jesus made disciples in these moments.

As the moment of the cross approached, Jesus sent out his followers

Sometimes we call these interruptions, what we don't have time for, or as the worst timing, but what if heaven is actually breaking in at these moments?

to prepare for another Passover: "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house'" (Matthew 26:18).

Guess what word "appointed time" is? Yup, *kairos*. There had been other Passovers, but none like this one. This was the teachable moment, the moment of liminality, and something transforming was afoot.

Over and over again Jesus did this. Some fishermen paid attention to what he had to say: *kairos!* Zacchaeus climbed a tree: *kairos!* A bleeding woman worked up her courage: *kairos!* A rich young man asked for a deeper meaning of life: *kairos!*

Sometimes we call these interruptions, what we don't have time for, or as the worst timing, but what if heaven is actually breaking in at these moments?

Jesus maximized these otherwise mundane moments in a chronological world. And he often created them by sending his disciples into situations they didn't know what to do with, where their only hope was to commune with God and learn his reign, find their cross to carry, learn to love wholly, trust the new community, and be strengthened for the commission to go.

One of the simple ways of discipleship

is to not dismiss or despise the *kairos* moments. There is the tick-tock tick-tock of every day and then there are moments when the alarm clock blares. Have you, your church or someone you love had one of those lately? What did you do with it?

Phil Wagler has had a number of kairos moments. They've all been mysteriously good timing, though not always a good time.

(Continued from page 11)

only repeat Balaam's blessing, Numbers 24:5: "How fair are your tents, O Jacob, your encampments, O Israel."

Arabs have much more land than the Hebrews and don't need to fight against Israel. Life is hard for Palestinian Arabs because they use their resources to fight against Israel, instead of building up their own

infrastructure and developing their own resources in their own lands. Arabs have their own blessing and are also supposed to honour the God that heard Ishmael's cry in the desert (Genesis 21:17-18). If the Arabs blessed God and blessed Israel with peace, it would result in their own blessing.

In world history a nation's persecution of Jews was followed by the nation's demise. Canada is still doing

NEW CANADIAN VOICE

Identifying, investing, installing

FANOSIE LEGESSE

One of the many challenges that are common to most new churches is leadership. Those who have decided to be part of Mennonite Church Canada's area churches are not immune. This challenge can be both an excellent opportunity and highly demanding for the welcoming area churches. It's an excellent opportunity because one of the visions of MC Canada is growing leaders. But it requires time, energy, finances and more from the area church.

What are some of the most rewarding ways of facing this challenge head on? Does the area church have the means to tackle this challenge? How far is it willing to go when it comes to solving leadership problems of the starting churches? Identifying potential leaders, investing in their development as leaders and installing them to the right task would go a long way.



Identifying

Some of the gifts Christ—the chief executive officer of the church—has bestowed on the community of faith are leaders in many capacities. Identifying these potential leaders is the task of the community, especially of those who are already established as churches. Jesus himself is a prime example for this

process. He identified the fishers of Galilee as potential leaders of the future churches. Clearly seeing leadership in a fisher requires a divine set of eyes, hence praying and fasting to receive guidance from the Holy Spirit.

Newcomers need leaders who are eager to learn both the culture of being a people in this great country and the culture of being a church also. They desperately need leaders who play prophetic roles like Jeremiah (Jeremiah 29:4-7), and proclaim to them that they are here long term. They need leaders who enthusiastically encourage the community to learn the languages of the country, dream bigger than their ethnic group, pray and contribute to the well-being of the country, and seize every opportunity to grow as disciples of Christ.

How can we identify these leaders? This certainly should be the question welcoming area churches may explore and answer urgently.

Investing

Once potential leaders are identified, churches should be willing to invest their energy, time, money and expertise in the process of growing these potential leaders into actual leaders.

History proves that growing leaders is one of the most expensive tasks. If we

expect new churches to become healthy, growing communities of faith without heavily investing in their leadership development, we make a deadly mistake. It is time for the established church to make intentional investment in the future leaders of new churches.

Area churches may claim that they have made significant investments so far. True, but it is not enough. How many pastors of new churches have been studying in our seminaries? Do we have some graduates we are mentoring to the next step of their leadership life? Do the pastors and lay leaders of the new churches know the importance of formal education for the health and growth of their congregations? Who is responsible to create this awareness?

Installing

Telling a leader that he/she is a leader and taking every step in the process of the development of his/her leadership is nothing without installation. A leader is to lead. Installing leaders to a task of leading a congregation is not just a ceremonial exercise. It is entrusting leaders who have been carefully qualified and prayerfully empowered to the demanding task of leading a people of God. Therefore, this final step is as important as the first two.

Fanosie Legesse was born and raised in Ethiopia, but has lived "eight winters" in Canada. He and his family were volunteers with Mennonite Church Canada for three years at Meserete Kristos College in Debre Zeit, Ethiopia. He hopes to begin studies for his doctorate of ministry degree next year. He is a member of Bethel Mennonite Church, Elora, Ont.

okay economically while the rest of the world has been in an economic slump for many years. Could that be partially because Canada still supports Israel?

Gamaliel once warned the Sanhedrin not to kill Peter and the other apostles before they find themselves fighting against God (Acts 5:34-39). Likewise, before anyone says something against Zionism or Israel, I would encourage them to refrain, lest they find themselves personally fighting against God. Jesus is, after all, the light to the nations and the glory of Israel (Luke 2:32).

KARL FRIESEN, MORDEN, MAN

✉ **Yoder discipline, past and present, procedurally unfair**

RE: "MORE EVIDENCE of sexual abuse uncovered," Aug. 18, page 28.

Earlier this year, I analyzed the disciplinary hearing of John Howard Yoder from a legal perspective (<http://bit.ly/Y6B3pG>).

I believe the hearing was procedurally unjust, and that the evidence did not support the conclusions that some people drew from it. In particular, I do not believe there was evidence of sexual assault or sexual abuse within the meaning of the law at the time, or even the law as it exists today.

The discernment group now says it has discovered "additional evidence of sexual violation perpetrated by Yoder on many women," and, "There are documented reports of sexual violation by Yoder, including fondling and sexual intercourse. In some instances, women who engaged in sexual encounters were persuaded, at least initially, by Yoder that such behaviour was permissible between Christian 'brothers' and 'sisters.' Many others resisted his unwanted advances, and were perplexed and distressed by his pursuit."

Were there acts of sexual intercourse that were not consented to? If there was initial consent by an adult, then there was no sexual abuse and no sexual assault within the meaning of the law.

If there were acts that were not consented to, it is important to know the context. Was Yoder acting as pastor, teacher or as an individual? These details matter. If Yoder merely made "unwanted advances" that were resisted, that would not constitute sexual assault or abuse. The fact that some were "distressed by his pursuit" is also not sufficient to prove sexual assault or abuse.

Of course, the church may still find such conduct to be immoral. But morality and legality need to be distinguished, and the terminology needs to be correct if the Mennonite church is genuinely interested in seeking justice and fairness.

Perhaps, unlike the evidence at his disciplinary

hearing, the new evidence proves that there were sexual assaults within the meaning of the law. I would have the greatest sympathy for any such victims.

And yet I would still be troubled by procedural issues. Yoder, being deceased, clearly cannot defend himself. Since written materials will not be made public until 2015, judgments are being made by the discernment committee without evidence being made public.

I hope this will not set a precedent for how allegations of abuse are handled by the Mennonite church, whether in Canada or the U.S. There must be justice and fairness for the accused as well as for those bringing forward the allegations.

J. GLENN FRIESEN, CALGARY, ALTA.

✉ **Women's stories disqualified by Yoder online postings**

RE: "MORE EVIDENCE of sexual abuse uncovered" and "Works of John Howard Yoder now available online," Aug. 18, page 28.

I was dismayed that these two articles appeared on the same page. In doing this I felt it was disqualifying the women's stories by the good works of John Howard Yoder.

It's hard to fathom that another Mennonite institution would accept monies to make the writings of Yoder available online. I think that if the monies had been used to safeguard our Mennonite institutions from this atrocity ever happening again, it would have been a much more worthy cause. Are the women in our Mennonite institutions any safer than they were in the days of Yoder?

ELSIE WIEBE, MORDEN, MAN.

✉ **Did stewardship consultant subtly influence client?**

RE: "BEWARE OF 'undue influence'" column, Sept. 1, page 13.

I wonder if giving estate planning advice when you work for a charitable foundation could be considered "undue influence."

In the example cited, Maggie was clearly being pressured by her new friend in her estate planning. But was she also being subtly pressured by her stewardship consultant into choosing a certain charity over other charities and beneficiaries?

Is it appropriate for a charitable foundation to be giving estate-planning advice?

DELLA LEE, BRANDON, MAN.

VIEWPOINT

Come out: An open invitation

CARL DE GURSE

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

A traditional rhyme for children to chant while playing hide-and-seek is “Come out, come out, wherever you are!”

That lyric came to mind as I pondered the need for lesbian/ gay/bisexual/transgendered/queer (LGBTQ) Mennonites to step up.

I’m writing this as an open letter to people who are “fearfully and wonderfully made” homosexual. If you’re straight, you don’t need to read further.

Here’s my request to our LGBTQ church brothers and sisters: Please help us. Help us lift the conversation about homosexuality to another level by sharing publicly your accounts from the pews—and closets—of Mennonite churches.

Help us get to know you on a personal level so the conversation goes beyond theoretical arguments about ways in which the Bible is true. Open our eyes in positive ways by revealing that the ranks of LGBTQ Mennonites include the long-time tenor in our choir, the woman who volunteers for church council, and the guy who shows up early in winter to shovel the walk before the service.

Give us a chance to prove the coast is clearing, and that the vast majority of Mennos will not care about your sexual orientation if we’re given the chance to know you as more than the label of your sexuality.

I’m aware it might seem audacious and ignorant for a straight guy like me to urge LGBTQ Mennonites to come forward. Sexual orientation is a personal matter, especially when you are born with an orientation outside the mainstream. But this personal matter has become a knotty



church matter, and I urge you to speak up because I believe your voice is crucial to advance this matter from discussion to real-life implementation.

For the past several years, the Being a Faithful Church Task Force has encouraged conversation about sexual-

ity, but don’t hold your breath waiting for rulings on homosexuality. This group is not ensconced at the Vatican and it’s unlikely to issue papal-like decrees on whether churches should wed LGBTQ

I’m aware it might seem audacious and ignorant for a straight guy like me to urge LGBTQ Mennonites to come forward.

couples or ordain LGBTQ people. Rather, this group is doing it the Mennonite way, encouraging all church members to search Scripture, pray for guidance, share opinions, disagree respectfully and perhaps forge an understanding most of us can live with.

The Mennonite way might seem endless and indecisive, to the point where some of us are ready to scream and rend our garments when we hear the same predictable arguments for the umpteenth time, but it’s working at a basic level. The lengthy process is clearing the path for LGBTQ Mennonites by giving the entire church lots of time to get used to the idea and feel the topic has been fairly aired.

Unfortunately, I don’t have quantifiable evidence that most Mennonites are finally ready to affirm LGBTQ members. If I had a spare \$15,000, I would hire a professional polling company

to survey us and prove we’re ready for you to come out. Yes, there might be a few Mennonites who still shun LGBTQ members, but perfect unanimity is elusive on most aspects of church life. We can’t even get unanimous agreement on whether post-service coffee should be decaf!

It was heartening to see the reaction that greeted Ben Borne of Saskatoon at the assembly in Winnipeg in July. While asking a question from the floor, he mentioned he is gay, which many delegates already knew because he is the courageous pioneer who encouraged the discussion in 2011 with a resolution welcoming LGBTQ people into the Mennonite church. The vibes in July from the 600 or so Mennonites towards him were positive, without exception. He was liked by a chorus of tweets projected

in real time on the gym wall, and later hugged repeatedly in the hallway.

I also heard of a second encouraging example about a woman at one Mennonite church in Winnipeg who took the pulpit recently to disclose her lesbian orientation and another person in the congregation reacted by also coming out in the same service. Both received a beautiful welcome from their church family.

I beseech LGBTQ people like these to tell their stories beyond their home church. It’s our Anabaptist tradition to share our experiences and learn from each other. And feel free to come to my home for dinner so I can urge you to bear with our national church while we get this right.

Carl DeGurse is a member of Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Braun—Aria Claire (b. July 21, 2014), to Lyndon and Erin Braun, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Busa—William Henry (b. July 22, 2014), to Dean and Michelle Busa, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Byblow—Tyce Beckett (b. Sept. 7, 2014), to Denise and Adam Byblow, Hague Mennonite, Sask.

Crowe—Rowan Scott (b. Aug. 15, 2014), to Kevin and Esther Crowe, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Grandy—Atavia Kylena (b. Sept. 12, 2014), to Stephanie Hammar and Zach Grandy, Brussels Mennonite, Ont.

Oulahen—Jacob Stephen (b. April 30, 2014), to Becky and Greg Oulahen, Valleyview Mennonite, London, Ont.

Baptisms

Laura Doerksen, Janice Lemky, Travis Dyck—Carman Mennonite, Man., June 25, 2014.

Cheyenne Epp—Rosthern Mennonite, Sask., Sept. 14, 2014.

Marriages

Becker/Jantzi—Gary Becker and Donna Jantzi, at St. Agatha Mennonite, Ont., Sept. 7, 2014.

Campbell/Neufeld—Grant Campbell and Stephanie Neufeld, Rosthern Mennonite, Sask., at Eagle Bay, Sask., Aug. 9, 2014.

Cressman/O'Reilly—Matthew Cressman and Faith O'Reilly, Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont., July 26, 2014.

Emke/Reesor—Ivan Emke and Joyce Reesor, at Community Mennonite, Stouffville, Ont., June 7, 2014.

Ens/Obirek—Gerald Ens and Lisa Obirek, at Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, Aug. 2, 2014.

Golota/Meza—Viacheslav Golota and Ana Paola Meza, at Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, July 26, 2014.

Klippenstein/Nguygn—Jonas Klippenstein and Tien Nguygn, at First Mennonite, Kelowna, B.C., Aug. 30, 2014.

Olfert/Wiens—Jill Olfert and Curtis Wiens, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, at Shekinah Retreat Centre, Waldheim, Sask., Aug. 31, 2014.

Deaths

Enns—Anne (nee Funk), 86 (b. July 3, 1928; d. July 23, 2014), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Enns—Erna (nee Wall), 93 (b. Jan. 10, 1921; d. Aug. 29, 2014), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Friesen—Menno J., 97 (b. April 25, 1917; d. Sept. 6, 2014), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask., in Saskatoon.

Good—Doris Ada (nee Bearinger), 95 (b. Sept. 22, 1918; d. Sept. 14, 2014), Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Neufeld—Katherine (nee Friesen), 94 (b. Jan. 24, 1920; d. Sept. 13, 2014), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Petkau—David J., 90 (b. Oct. 27, 1923; d. Sept. 11, 2014), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Thiessen—Helen (nee Klassen), 84 (b. Feb. 27, 1930; d. Sept. 18, 2014), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Thiessen—Helen, 87 (b. March 12, 1927; d. Aug. 29, 2014), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Wiebe—Magdalene (Maggy), 78 (b. Aug. 16, 1936; d. July 7, 2014), Carman Mennonite, Man.

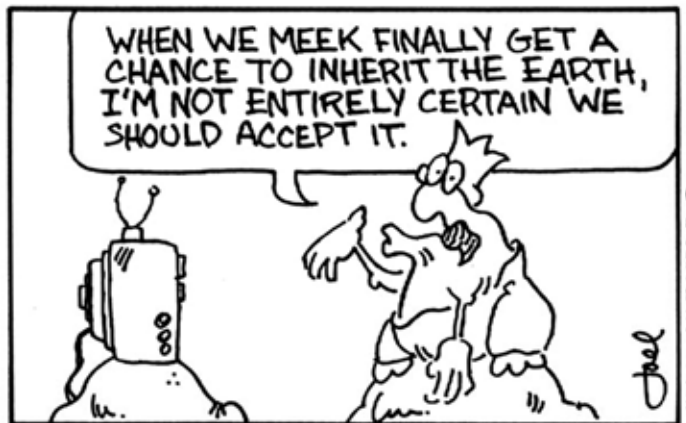
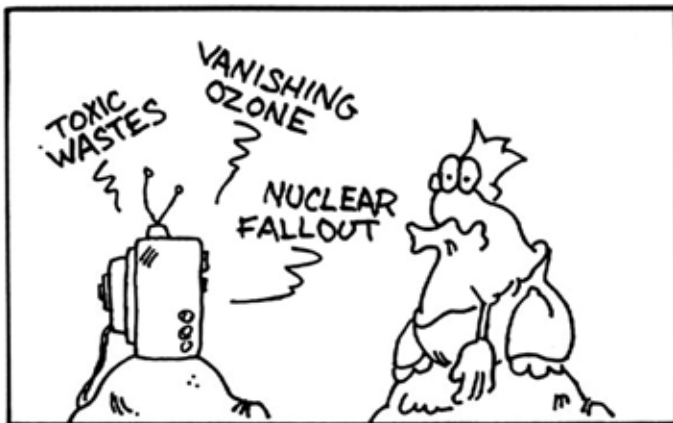
Willms—Jacob L., 64 (b. Oct. 1, 1949; d. June 9, 2014), Coaldale Mennonite, Alta.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones

announcements within four months of the event.

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

Pontius' Puddle



GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Creating beauty out of randomness

Retreat participants use quilting as a metaphor for God's creative work in their lives

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
WALDHEIM, SASK.

Assembling random pieces of fabric or paper to create something beautiful is what quilters and scrapbookers do. And they do it with gusto at the Shekinah Retreat Centre's annual Quilting and Scrapbooking Retreat. This year, "Random pieces into beautiful creations" was also the theme chosen for the retreat by speaker Sharon Schultz.

Schultz, who is pastor of Eyebrow Mennonite Church, is neither a quilter nor a scrapbooker, but puts her creative energy into writing sermons. She said that sermon-writing is not unlike other creative endeavours.

In three devotional sessions from Sept. 26 to 28, Schultz led participants in contemplating how God, like a quilter, takes the random pieces of a person's life and stitches them together, making a beautiful creation. Citing examples from her own life and the lives of biblical characters, Schultz suggested that God can create beauty out of difficulty, pain and ugliness:

- **TAMAR, WHOSE** story is told in Genesis 38, had a number of strikes against her, yet she is one of a handful of women identified in Jesus' genealogy.
- **THE SAMARITAN** woman of John 4 likewise had some rough edges, but Jesus took the rough and ugly pieces of her life and assembled them into something worthwhile as she got to know Jesus and introduced her neighbours to him.
- **ABRAHAM WASN'T** perfect, even though he was a man of faith. He and his wife Sarah grew impatient waiting for God to fulfill the promise of a son and

took matters into their own hands by having a son through Hagar. Their decisions resulted in strife and conflict, yet God brought healing and beauty to their lives.

Extending the metaphor, Schultz suggested that, as God assembles the random pieces of a person's life, Jesus acts as the thread stitching the pieces together. The underside of the quilt top, like sin and suffering, is rough and ugly, but is cushioned and protected by God's healing and warmth, represented by the thick, soft quilt batting. All of this is bound together by God's love and grace, symbolized by the backing and binding fabric, which hold the quilt together.

Retreat participants were asked to bring items they had created which they felt revealed something about them. These were used during a "get acquainted show-and-tell" time. One woman brought a quilt in warm shades of yellow showing her love for sunny days. Another brought scrapbook pages of her family, revealing her love for her grandchildren. Still another confessed her fondness for making things by hand as she demonstrated how to make a simple Christmas tree ornament out of fabric.

Edna Balzer, a quilter and breast cancer survivor, brought a quilt block she had pieced that depicted a butterfly. The various colours in the block represented her journey through diagnosis and treatment to recovery, she explained.

Rhonda Wright, a watercolour painter, brought a painting of a sunflower and a butterfly that she calls "Face to Face." The



Participants at the Shekinah Retreat Centre's Quilting and Scrapbooking Retreat gather for a group photo on their final day together. Many of the women are holding items they crafted during the three-day event.

painting, said Wright, revealed not only her love of the outdoors, but also her love for creating things and being with her sisters.

When they weren't cutting, stitching, pasting or painting, participants enjoyed walks along Shekinah's hiking trails. Visiting together over meals or coffee and admiring one another's creations were also significant parts of the weekend's activities.

As the retreat drew to a close, Schultz reminded the women that each of them is one of God's beautiful creations. Participants responded with warmth and appreciation for Schultz's words of encouragement. ❧

For more photos, visit www.canadianmennonite.org/sask-quilting-retreat.



Church left reeling after pastor charged

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent

It was a difficult and challenging summer for Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church Manitoba.

On May 23, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police announced that Marco Funk, 34, then pastor of the Gretna church, had been arrested on May 21 and charged with voyeurism, production of child pornography and possession of child pornography.

CBC News reported on May 30 that charges were laid after two girls found a mobile device taking photos and video of them in a washroom at a private Moose Lake Provincial Park residence in the summer of 2012. The RCMP began its investigation when the matter was reported last December.

"The suspect was a pastor in Gretna," the RCMP report states, claiming, "He took advantage of his role in the community to access potential victims. Police are aware of multiple victims, and the investigations are ongoing, so no further details can be provided at this time."

Funk has already had two scheduled court appearances, but each hearing was postponed as the police investigation continues. At this point, none of the charges have been proven in a court of law.

When contacted by *Canadian Mennonite*, Funk declined comment.

Church seeks way forward

"This is difficult news for all of us," says Ken Warkentin, executive director of MC Manitoba.

According to Warkentin, the Ministerial Leadership Committee (MLC) met on June 4 to discern the way forward. "MC Manitoba is currently assisting this congregation. . . . Marco Funk, who was not ordained or credentialed with our conference, has been suspended from all ministerial duties." Funk no longer resides in Gretna.

Warkentin has met several times with the congregation, which averages about 85 adults and children on a Sunday morning. "The congregation is very aware they have a healing journey ahead," says Warkentin, explaining that, in cases like this, the order of values the MLC has identified are:

1. **CARING FOR** alleged victims, making sure they have the privacy they need for healing to take place.
2. **CARING FOR** the congregation and community.
3. **CARING FOR** justice and righteousness, or right-making.
- 4 **CARING FOR** the alleged perpetrator.

With this in mind, MLC members will

continue to meet with Voices For Non-Violence to discern ways of supporting the alleged victims and the Gretna congregation. They have also created a support and accountability group modelled after a Circles of Support and Accountability program.

According to church council chair Lavern Siemens, the congregation has hired Harold Schlegel as an interim pastor to help it in the healing process. Siemens says the congregation reflects a full range of responses from those who support Funk to those who felt betrayed when the charges came to light. "Young people were mentored and nurtured by him, and so there is a whole range of feelings," she says.

"We are quite a resourceful bunch and have been blessed with good leadership from within," Siemens continues. "We have also received good support from other local congregations. Last weekend, the Blumenorter Mennonite Church invited our congregation for the service and a meal." ❧

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/// Staff change

Tom Roes seeks to link economics and mission

WINNIPEG—“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” Although philosophers could argue the nuances of this relatively new English proverb, the essence of the principle it inspires is the foundation of Tom Roes’ new assignment as missional capacity builder with Mennonite Church Canada Witness. The idea that it may be more worthwhile to teach someone to do something than to do it for them is driving a desire to link economic and missional sustainability in a church setting. Roes points out that a strong economic base allows individuals to provide for their families and support their calling to advance God’s kingdom around the world. By building capacity for mission, MC Canada and international partners hope to shift from a relationship based on shared church programs to one of engaging in new ministry together, responding to the needs of the communities around them. Roes comes to his position with plenty of experience under his belt. He’s spent more than six years engaged with community development in Kyrgyzstan and Indonesia, ran his own sawmill business and served as a pastor of Zurich (Ont.) Mennonite Church, where his family still attends.

—Mennonite Church Canada



Tom Roes

Can Mennonite boys cook?

Food history prof addresses Mennonite Historical Society of B.C.

BY HENRY NEUFELD

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

There is pleasure in eating and in a love for food. Multi-ethnic Mennonites often find common ground in sharing the diverse food at Mennonite Central Committee relief sales and church potlucks can readily become religious events.

In a wide-ranging talk to the Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia at its annual fundraising banquet at

MENNONITE STORY PHOTO

Del Gingrich, manager of the Mennonite Story in St. Jacobs, Ont., programs an audio guide allowing visitors to hear the Anabaptist/Mennonite story in six additional languages: Arabic, Dutch, French, German, Mandarin and Spanish. Digital technology makes it possible for the audio guides to easily be updated as future modifications are made at the interpretive centre. The system can accommodate up to 26 languages. Acquisition of the system was made possible through a sizable donation in memory of Eli Martin, who died in 2012 at the age of 107. ‘We are extremely grateful for the donation and for the technology that makes it possible to share our Mennonite story with visitors in other languages,’ says board chair Nelson Scheifele. ‘We want to continue to find ways to creatively and respectfully share our history, culture and faith.’



Emmanuel Mennonite Church, keynote speaker Marlene Epp dealt with food identity from religious, ethnic and gender perspectives. “What is your food heritage?” asked Epp, who teaches courses in Mennonite history,



Marlene Epp

Canadian immigration history, peace history, and food history at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.

Epp, who co-edited a 2012 collection of essays on food history entitled *Edible Histories, Cultural Politics: Towards a Canadian Food History*, in which she has a chapter on Mennonite cookbooks, used the image of a *miagrope*, a Low-German word describing an iron cauldron used for rendering lard when butchering hogs, which symbolizes a community working together, not unlike a much larger barn-raising event. Both symbolize communities functioning as a unit, she said, as work, food and fellowship are intertwined.

Epp pointed to Doris Janzen Longacre’s ground-breaking *More-With-Less Cookbook* that is nearly 40 years old, which encouraged readers to eat more grain and less meat. The book, well ahead of its time, “caused a food revolution in many homes,” she said. *More-With-Less* called for a lifestyle review, especially around food habits, describing a “holy frustration” for those who want to use less but are unsure about how to begin.

Epp noted that food helps shape the Mennonite identity and this is true for most cultures. When roasted, *Zwieback* (buns) survive for months and provided Russian Mennonites with food for their migrations. In a similar context, Lao and Hmong prepare sticky rice for their journeys.

Looking through a kitchen will reveal something about a person’s ethnic identity, since “food is a cultural marker,” she said. Traditional Mennonite cuisine is a mix of Ukrainian, Russian, Mexican and European traditions.

On gender and food, Epp said that women are often identified with food and meal preparation, suggesting that “*Mennonite Girls Can Cook* reinforces a female stereotype” that could perhaps be addressed with the publication of *Mennonite*

Boys Can Cook.

Epp quoted Edna Staebler, who wrote *Food That Really Schmecks*, in describing Mennonite women as “classic and well rounded.” Female self-worth is often tied to food and the ritual of meal preparation, Epp said, adding that some women experience cooking as oppressive and need

liberation from the kitchen.

With varied and culturally diverse views of the significance of food, she said Christians need to heed the Apostle Peter’s words: “*Offer hospitality to one another with out grumbling.*” ❧

Comedian Matt Falk headlines MC Alberta fundraiser

STORY AND PHOTO BY HENRY EPP

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

CALGARY

Comedy and music performances highlighted a recent Mennonite Church Alberta fundraising event that netted the area church nearly \$8,300.

Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary played host to comedian Matt Falk and the Chad Miller Flat Foot Band from Foothills on Sept. 27. The money raised came from direct donations and a silent auction.

The evening began with about 120 people of all ages seated around tables in the church hall, where special lighting created a club-like atmosphere. Guests came from Lethbridge, Coaldale, Drumheller, Airdrie, Didsbury, Carstairs, Cochrane, Edmonton, and from all over Calgary.

The show began with a rousing rendition of traditional country/gospel music by the Foothills Flat Footers. Their enthusiasm and harmony created the feel of a rural barn loft during a festive occasion, and the

audience loved it.

Falk provided first-class entertainment with joke after joke during two sets. He began by talking about “bridging the gap” among generations, and told hilarious jokes about “baby boomers.” Then he went through a series of marriage, wife, family, food and dog material. He has an amazing capacity to make a great variety of noises with his vocal cords, especially sounds of mechanical failures.

Between Falk’s performances, Ed Kauffman, pastor of First Mennonite, Calgary, and vice-chair of the area church, performed funny songs in praise of MC Alberta’s area pastor, Camp Valaqua and an outreach project in Edmonton, accompanying himself on the ukulele.

The second set included more numbers by the Flat Footers and comedy by Falk before winding up with door-prize draws. ❧



The Chad Miller Flat Foot Band from Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary, perform at a Mennonite Church Alberta fundraiser, which raised nearly \$8,300 for the area church.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JEFF FRIESEN



Brothers Aaron and Tommy Friesen enjoy the flowers they planted in their garden. Their seeds were from flowers that had been planted as a project of St. Catharines United Mennonite Church's children's story last year, which. The seeds given to the church came from the MC Eastern Canada assembly in the spring of 2013, whose theme was 'Scattered and sown, in every seed a promise.'

THANKSGIVING REFLECTION

Good soil, good seed, continuing growth

RANDY KLAASSEN

In April 2013, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada celebrated 25 years of ministry. Central to celebrations of God's faithfulness was the theme, "Scattered and sown, in every seed a promise."

At the annual gathering, delegates heard interpretations of biblical themes based on Jesus' three "plant" parables from the Gospel of Mark. The inspiration of the kingdom of God being like a

farmer who went to sow his seed became real as churches were entrusted with a flower pot, a bag of soil, some seeds, and the challenge to "plant seeds" with these words of blessing:

"God the Sower, bless the planting of these seeds. Give us the patience to watch them grow and the wisdom to prune and care for them as your fellow gardeners. Plant new seeds of hope and faith in us, that we

may see your promise in the tiniest seed and your glory in the garden of creation growing all around us."

At the same time, St. Catharines United Mennonite Church was in a period of transition, preparing itself for new pastoral leadership. The "sowing" assignment from MC Eastern Canada became the focus of attention during the Sunday morning children's story. Over a period of a couple of weeks, there was anticipation as the children waited to see if the seeds would grow, and what kind of plant might develop. After all, one of the parables included the scheme of an enemy slipping in some weeds among the good seed. There was also anticipation of a harvest, and being able to enjoy a meal from the hard work of caring for a crop.

For adults of the church, the whole "sowing" experience was one of waiting and anticipating new leadership. During this time the church interviewed, and extended a call to, Doug Schulz as lead pastor.

When the seeds produced a fine crop of marigold flowers, the church installed Pastor Schulz. The flowers symbolically became part of the church's fall Thanksgiving display.

While new church life took root, the winter season dried out the marigold flowers, and they produced another crop of seeds, many times what the church first received. Having an overabundance of seeds, it was decided to repeat the "sowing" experience. In the spring, again during the children's story time, each of the children was given a small bag of seeds with the assignment to "scatter" them with parental permission.

In the past year, a number of new ventures have begun, as new leadership continues the ministry of sharing God's faithfulness. The small packets of seeds that were entrusted to the church have multiplied, been scattered into the community, continue to grow and bring joy to others. That's a celebration of faith! ✎

Randy Klaassen is associate pastor of St. Catharines United Mennonite Church, Ont.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Waves of hope for the church

BY JOANNE DE JONG

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

So often our spiritual lives are dry. We try to remember the last time we felt the Spirit move. And then we go off to what we thought was just another church event and are surprised when suddenly we find ourselves encountering God in a fresh and powerful way.

That's what happened to me when I attended the Mennonite Church Alberta/ Alberta Women in Mission women's retreat held at the Sunnyside Retreat Centre in Sylvan Lake, Alta., this spring. The theme was "Pause: A weekend away," with keynote speaker April Yamasaki, who shared from her book *Sacred Pauses*.

Sixty-eight women of all different ages and cultures got together to connect, pray and grow in their faith. We laughed, we cried and we were blessed as Yamasaki challenged us to slow down and "pause."

In one session, she invited us to listen to the Spirit as she read multiple times from Matthew 11: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Afterwards, people repeatedly shared how God had spoken. In another session, individuals were invited to read the Lord's Prayer out loud in their own language. When the ladies from the Calgary Chin Mennonite Church read the prayer, it was like an angelic song.

We also got into groups and prayed for each other. I was moved by the genuine sharing and was reminded once again that the Spirit was active in these women. I felt waves of hope for the future of the church wash over me.

Yamasaki, pastor of Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, B.C., also mentioned that "having fun" can be a spiritual practice, so we experienced zero guilt as groups participated in a fashion show organized by Kate Janzen. One

thing I learned was that no matter your age or culture, there are those who can really work a runway, whether wearing mechanic's overalls or a pink onesie!

This was followed by a variety show with hostess Jungle June Miller from Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary, who was very gifted in karaoke and led us in a robust rendition of Billy Joel's "You'll Always Be a Woman to Me!"

For me, the climax of the whole event

was on Sunday morning when the ladies from the South Sudanese Mennonite Church in Edmonton came forward to sing and then shared their prayer requests as South Sudan is in the midst of civil war and a third of its population is on the brink of starvation. I told them we would like to pray for them and instinctively they knelt and we surrounded them and prayed for them, our voices cracking as we asked God for peace and safety for their families.

When the prayers died down, the women from Holyrood Mennonite Church, Edmonton, who had suffered through a 14-year civil war in Liberia and Sierra Leone, spontaneously started to sing, "From east to west, there is no one like you, Lord." When we rose to our feet, I looked down and the cement floor was covered in puddles of tears and our Sudanese sisters knew in that moment they were truly not alone. That was Spirit-filled fellowship. ☘

/// Briefly noted

Saskatchewan junior-high youth learn about the power in names

Name-calling is a painful part of growing up, and Autumn Dueck thinks those names or negative labels "hold too much power" in the lives of many young people. Dueck, a youth pastor at Grace Mennonite Church in Winkler, Man., spoke at the Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization (SMYO) annual junior-high retreat held at Youth Farm Bible Camp near Rosthern from Sept. 19 to 21. Twenty-two youth, along with their sponsors, youth pastors, and nine SMYO committee members, participated. In her sessions, Dueck encouraged the youth to identify the names people give them in order to "know which lies we're dealing with." She said they also need to know the names God has give them: names such as "temple of God," "children of God," and "heirs of the kingdom." Once familiar with these names, said Dueck, they can better understand their identity. They can be victorious conquerors who are no longer slaves to sin. Their lives can have purpose as they do good to others and live as light in the world. As God's children and heirs of God's kingdom, "we get to speak names over others," said Dueck. But, she cautioned, "we have to be careful to speak the truth."

—STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ



Sumo wrestling isn't typically part of Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization events, but at the junior-high retreat held recently at Youth Farm Bible Camp near Rosthern, anyone could be a sumo wrestler.

Putting sacredness back into the words

The Bible is more than a book to be read alone in private

By **DEBORAH FROESE**
Mennonite Church Canada

Ken Quiring and Pam Nightingale are using an ancient approach to solve a new problem. They are returning to the historical tradition of oral storytelling to share Scripture in an age in which biblical literacy is on the decline.

Quiring, pastor of Grace Mennonite Church, Brandon, Man., says he first tried biblical storytelling on his own, but sought more experience, attending the annual gathering of the U.S.-based Network of Biblical Storytellers (NOBS) in 2012.

"I came away spiritually and pastorally transformed by that," he says. He hungered for more, but the cost of studying intensively with the Academy of Biblical Storytelling was beyond the church budget.

A search for outside grants brought Quiring \$3,000 from Mennonite Church Canada's "Company of 1000," and \$1,000 from Mennonite Church Manitoba.

Quiring says that memorizing Bible stories and sharing them orally allows people to deepen their connection with Scripture. This is true for both the teller, who explores the related characters and culture as the story is memorized, and listeners, who benefit from gestures and intonations that Bible stories can't convey from the page.

"Something is lost when we only read [Scripture]," he says, noting that society is moving away from the printed page. Younger generations are less likely than ever to read the Bible, but they are deeply engaged with digital media like video—and biblical storytelling can translate well to video.

When Bible stories were originally put down on paper, they were intended for a wider audience, but only a small percentage of the population could read. In an article on the NOBS website, founder Tom Boomershine writes that the Bible "is a

series of compositions that were composed for performance for audiences, rather than a book of manuscripts that was meant to be read by readers."

Quiring is currently the primary biblical storyteller at Grace Mennonite, but Nightingale, who attended the NOBS event in 2014, often takes that role when leading the children's feature in worship. Both of them believe that the practice is an intergenerational one.

Nightingale, an early childhood education instructor at Assiniboine Community College, says children are natural storytellers. When she introduced the story of Daniel during worship, one child said

that he knew the story. Nightingale invited his help, and all of the children joined in, adding parts that they could recall. "It became a group storytelling, where one child picked up where the previous one left off," she says, calling it "a wonderful experience!"

Nightingale reports an appreciative response from the congregation, with comments like "the stories come more alive in the retelling," and, "I like the idea of the story guiding the theology, rather than story just to support a particular theology."

Nightingale's daughter Lynn says that Quiring's passion for biblical storytelling is contagious and "storytelling has taken the sacredness out of the paper and put it back into the words."

From Quiring's perspective, the venture into biblical storytelling won't be successful until he is able to nurture more storytellers within his congregation. "Biblical storytelling is a congregational practice, not entertainment," he says. "It's a foundational spiritual discipline more than anything else." ❧



Pam Nightingale and Ken Quiring are bringing biblical stories to life at Grace Mennonite Church, Brandon, Man., through biblical storytelling.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Blessed are the children

KAREN SUDERMAN

MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA

It was a moment we'd been hoping for since the day we arrived in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. After nearly five years of patiently waiting, we found an informal way to meet Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu.

At 7 a.m. on April 25, we went to St. George's Cathedral in Cape Town for the eucharist service led by the archbishop. He's short, bald—and utterly captivating. He interacted with the congregation through razor-sharp humour and genuine interest. During the service, he methodically worked his way around the chapel and greeted each person.

During a prayer, James began to babble

and talk, as he often does. When his echoes reverberated through the quiet space, I rose to take him to the back of the chapel. Just as I got there, the prayer ended.

Tutu focused his gaze on me. "You're not taking the baby away are you?" he asked. "You're not running away are you? You must stay. We like his voice!"

With great emphasis, Tutu pointed to me and then to the place where I had been sitting. Obediently—and somewhat sheepishly—I returned to my seat.

During that service, we were in the presence of a global church icon; a man of peace with incredible leadership skills

and fortitude in the face of a vicious and iron-fisted regime; a man who could have chosen to be haughty and inaccessible. But where was his focus? Where did he choose to spend the bulk of his limited time? With whom did he decide to engage?

It was with our nine-month-old son, James. They engaged in a wonderful game of peek-a-boo together, clearly enjoying each other's responses. It was a beautiful interaction to watch.

We were touched and amazed to see just how much this moment emphasized the importance of adults looking to children. When we look to those who are shorter than we are, we see the others around us. Looking at children allows us to see their faces staring up at us.

That moment was profound for me. It so clearly and strongly demonstrated an essential quality of excellent leadership. We've seen this quality expressed through friends of ours, those who hold leadership positions in their own communities. They could choose to focus solely on adults, to be cerebral and overlook the children. Instead, they meaningfully engage with them. They talk and play with our daughter Samantha, and

Obediently—and somewhat sheepishly—I returned to my seat.

she loves their company. Now James, too, is growing to love these people for their love and attention.

There is something very Christ-like about these interactions. Jesus was a very prominent public figure, sought out by many. Yet he took the time to look at children. He admonished his disciples to let them come to him. Jesus made the time to sit with children to talk and to play.

What a blessing indeed! ❧



Earlier this year, Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers Karen and Andrew Suderman, along with their children Samantha and James, had the opportunity to meet Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu. 'It was a moment we'd been hoping for since the day we arrived in South Africa,' Karen writes.

Karen and Andrew Suderman of St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, Ont., are Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers in South Africa. They are helping to build the Anabaptist Network in South Africa (ANiSA) by sharing Anabaptist perspectives across church denominations.

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Committed, supportive ... and 'just plain tired'

Morris MCC Relief Sale closes after 33 years; Brandon sale will continue; Winkler and Pembina Valley events in the works

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU
Manitoba Correspondent

"It almost felt like a huge sigh of relief coming from the volunteers," said George Klassen as he closed the books of the Morris (Man.) Mennonite Central Committee Relief Sale. On Sept. 13, about 250 volunteers served their last perogies, knitted their last slippers, baked their last pies and directed traffic for the very last sale in Morris.

Over the 33 years that the sale has taken place, the number of volunteers has been slipping from close to 400 to this year's low of 250, estimates Klassen, chair of the now defunct Morris MCC Relief Sale board. He has been involved with the sale for 13 years.

"We have never taken an actual account [of the volunteers], but their dedication is phenomenal," he said. "Many of them have been here from the beginning and they are just plain tired."

The relief sales began in Manitoba in 1963 and for the first 18 years they moved from one rural community to another before finding a permanent home in Morris.

Volunteer exhaustion and the difficulty recruiting more and younger volunteers are some of the main reasons this sale is shutting down, but Klassen identified others as well. "People do not need 'stuff' as much as they used to," he said. "These days, money seems more available, and if people need something they just go and buy it and the stuff we are getting for the sale is not as saleable anymore. Over the last three years, we have been getting much more careful about the quality of goods we accept."

Health regulations and rising expenses have brought challenges as well.

"I know of at least one local church that

had to hold a fundraiser to raise money to buy the cottage cheese it needed to make perogies for the sale," Klassen said. "They used to get cottage cheese directly from the farm, but now it has to go through the Market Board and costs much more."

Final figures are not in yet for this year's sale, but last year the sale brought in about \$80,000. In the past, the sales would bring in about \$150,000 or more, according to Klassen.

The Brandon MCC Relief Sale was held the following weekend, Sept. 20, and plans are for it to continue, "although

there is some talk of what comes next," said Ron Janzen, executive director of MCC Manitoba. "There are some of the same dynamics with the auction and sale of used goods spiralling down. Their meat and produce sales . . . and their annual cyclathon event comprise three-quarters of what is raised, around \$80,000."

"The future is not certain, but we began discussions with a group in the Winkler area several months ago," said Janzen, "and we are looking at starting a new event in the Pembina Valley area. It will follow more of a community festival model, with a focus on celebration and fundraising, hearing inspiring stories and connecting with the artistic community. Rather than an auction and used goods sales, more focus will be on the performing arts, crafts and visual arts. Fresh produce and meals may continue to be part of the new event."

Plans are to launch the first festival next summer, "but it may be a bit of an evolution over time," said Janzen. "We have to start with a new volunteer base. Most of the volunteers that have served with the Morris Relief Sale have been serving 10 to 30 years. They have been very committed and supportive, but they are tired." ❧

PHOTO BY KRISTIAN JORDAN



Volunteer exhaustion and the difficulty recruiting more and younger volunteers are a big part of the reason the Morris MCC Relief Sale is shutting down after 33 years, but George Klassen, chair of the now defunct board, identifies other reasons as well: 'People do not need "stuff" as much as they used to.'

VIEWPOINT

Overcoming ignorance and fear

LEON KEHL/ENGIN SEZEN

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

“Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right doing there is a field. I’ll meet you there.”

(Rumi, a popular 13th-century Sufi Muslim and mystic popular poet, provides this example of how some messages are so universal that they sail effortlessly across the barriers of time, distance, language, culture and religion. This Viewpoint piece is written by a Mennonite and a Muslim meeting in that field and they invite the reader to join them there.)

Dick Benner, in his excellent article, “Deconstructing Muslim myths,” July 28, page 10, did a significant job of summarizing the work of Donna Entz, both in Africa and Canada, to break down the myths and assumptions that both Christians and Muslims have about each other.

Yet, not everyone agrees, and Isaak Eitzen, in his Sept. 1, page 15 letter, “‘Global caliphate’ a Muslim goal, not a myth,” expressed a differing opinion that others undoubtedly share.

We strongly support an individual’s right to express an opinion, but question whether attacks on groups of people should also “not see the light of print,” as *Canadian Mennonite* states in its letters policy. Although Eitzen’s statements were not directed at an individual, but at a group, the comments were deeply painful for both authors. We invite the reader to consider how you would have felt if these comments had been directed at your black, Hispanic, Ethiopian, Chinese, Laotian or French friends.

We thank Eitzen for boldly stating what many people only whisper to friends or circulate via e-mail. In both of our communities negative stereotypes about the other circulate. Unless we talk about them in public, we remain ignorant of others because of what we have heard. So, although these negative stereotypes

can be rapidly spread through the Internet, this tool also provides a means to discover a more balanced, and, dare we hope, truthful perspective?

A quick Internet search shows that many of Eitzen’s statements mirror Hermain Cain’s to *Christianity Today* in March 2011. Cain said, “Based upon the little knowledge that I have of the Muslim religion, you know, they have an objective to convert all infidels or kill them.” He quickly discovered his “little knowledge” wasn’t correct, and his issuing of an apology wasn’t sufficient to undo the damage to his presidential campaign.

Eitzen correctly condemns the barbaric actions of the so-called Islamic State. We both agree that this organization represents a twisted and deviant understanding that in no way represents Islam. A few individuals in Islamic countries may support this terrorist organization and governments for their own purposes, but their actions cannot be defended theologically in Islam. The overwhelming majority of Muslim groups condemn the Islamic State in the same way Christians condemn the KKK, which claims to be defending Christianity.

The real problem in our society today is our lack of knowledge of, and tolerance for, each other. How many readers would know that Christians and Muslims recognize many of the same prophets: Adam, Moses,

Noah, David, Mary and Jesus? Muslims even refer to Jesus as Messiah, although they see Jesus as fully human only.

Are readers aware that Jews and Christians are also considered People of the Book, and that there is no need for conversion? Now some will rightly state that this principle hasn’t been consistently practised throughout history. Yet, we would invite the reader to follow Jesus’ admonition in Matthew 7:5: “*You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.*” What planks in Christian history should be repented of?

We both attended a recent talk at Conrad Grebel University College by Zeki Saritoprak on his recent book, *Islam’s Jesus*. The talk was academic, informational and respectful, recognizing that both communities hold distinctly different viewpoints about Jesus. We were delighted to see Saritoprak, a Muslim academic, in lively dialogue with Grebel professors, exploring common ground and differences.

We also direct the reader to Amanda Witmer’s article, “Mennonites learn about hospitality and living for others,” on page 18 of the July 7 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*, describing an intercultural tour to Turkey that one of the authors participated in and helped organize. How can we create similar opportunities in our respective communities to learn about each other, instead of remaining isolated in ignorance and fear?

We would like to end with another quote from Rumi and invite the reader to consider what barriers to love we have that block us from loving our neighbour as our self: “Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.” ❧

Leon Kehl is a life-long Mennonite who has been involved in interfaith dialogue for the last 10 years and has travelled to the Middle East on a number of occasions. Engin Sezen is director of the Kitchener-Waterloo Chapter of the Intercultural Dialogue Institute located in the MSCU Centre for Peace Advancement at Conrad Grebel University College.

A 'shower of prayer, solidarity and blessing'

MWC responds to urgent appeal from Middle East churches

Mennonite World Conference
BOGOTA, COLOMBIA

In response to urgent appeals from the Supreme Council of the Evangelical Community in Syria and Lebanon and from the Middle East Council of Churches, Mennonite World Conference (MWC) issued a call for "a shower of prayer, solidarity and blessing" to MWC member

churches on Sept. 21, the United Nations International Day of Peace and MWC Peace Sunday.

In a communiqué to "all the Evangelical and Protestant churches and organizations across the world," the Supreme Council declared a state of emergency "to preserve



what remains of the Christian and moderate non-Christian presence in the East, and to circumvent its complete demise."

The Council also identified "the possibility of the annihilation of Christian presence in the Middle East," and expressed concern about the "human suffering and political difficulties" faced in these countries.

MWC also received a statement from the Middle East Council of Churches based in Lebanon calling on the international community "to take bold initiatives and to stand against this fierce attack on the passive Christians of Iraq who remain steadfast in the land of their fathers and forefathers where Christianity started."

"We are moved to prayer," wrote MWC leaders in response to the Supreme Council. "We do want to assure you of the prayers of MWC. We have distributed your urgent appeal to each of the 102 national churches in 57 countries that make up the membership of MWC." MWC responded in a similar fashion to the Middle East Council of Churches.

Then in a letter to member churches, César García, MWC's general secretary, and Robert J. Suderman, Peace Commission secretary, urged each of the churches to write their own letter directly to the Supreme Council and to the Middle East Council of Churches, "assuring them of your prayers and identifying particular actions that you are doing in response to their appeal."

"We believe that such a 'shower of prayer, solidarity and blessing' will be highly appreciated by them," wrote García and Suderman. "They will be strengthened just knowing that there are churches around the world praying for them and acting on their behalf." ❧

/// Briefly noted

Surplus cemetery land becomes community garden

WATERLOO, ONT.— Erb St. Mennonite Church was looking for ways to connect more with its immediate community. At a visioning retreat brainstorming led to the idea of using surplus cemetery land for a community garden. Jim Erb, one of the leaders and an owner of Erb and Good Family Funeral Home in Waterloo, says that the project began as an experiment as some congregants wondered how this would impact the sense of the cemetery as "special space." Beginning with four raised beds, the garden now has 14 beds, with plans for more. While the first gardeners were from the congregation, soon neighbours to Erb St. members were granted space, as were neighbours to the garden itself. Gardeners agree to not use pesticides, to build no permanent structures on their plots, and to clean out their plots by the end of October each year; they can add compost and build low fences to keep out the local rabbits; and, if they comply, the \$20 deposit for each bed is returned. Erb notes that the congregation is now squarely behind the project, as flowers and vegetables are visible from the cemetery proper.

—STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



Tabitha Rogalsky celebrates her family's harvest in the Erb St. Mennonite Church Community Gardens on Sept. 14.

GOD AT WORK IN US

'The way of harmonious energy'

Kevin Peters Unrau practises Aikido martial art

BY DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent

Kevin Peters Unrau thinks that the Mennonite Church has gotten Jesus wrong. When Jesus calls on his followers to “not resist evildoers” in Matthew 5:39, many Mennonites have turned to nonviolent resistance. Unrau, however, has turned to Aikido, the martial art of using someone else’s energy to move past them.

Aikido differs from other martial arts in that it is not a warrior art, but, instead, focusses on “blending” with someone who considers a person a target. Practitioners of Aikido are taught to never consider someone an enemy.

The story is told in Aikido circles of a practitioner who was confronted by a drunk and violent man on a train. Thinking this was his chance to prove his prowess, he egged the drunk man on to attack him. As the drunk man complied, an old man sitting on the side called out to him, and with conversation went to the heart of why the man was drinking: loneliness and grief. Within a minute, the belligerent drunk was sitting by the old man weeping into his lap. The original practitioner knew that he had just watched a master of “blending” and harmonious energy, and that his own attempt had gone against the founder of Aikido’s principles.

Unrau, one of the pastors at Hillcrest Mennonite Church in New Hamburg, Ont., says he began practising Aikido to “lose weight, get fit and deal with anxiety.” While not all the items on his list have been met, he has found many benefits during his seven-year practice of Aikido.

“The first thing you learn is how to fall,” he says, so as to not hurt yourself or your partner for the day. And then “blending” has helped him to think about what his partner in front of him needs, and what he

already has at his disposal, in order to live a more balanced life. He finds that he has many conversations about spirituality with his fellow practitioners as they prepare for, or clean up after, a practice session.

O Sensei, the founder of Aikido, believed that “blending” was to be done with others, and with the universe itself, learning how to work with creation and with other human beings, to create a safe and whole place for all. The physical practice develops the thought patterns. Unrau explains.

Unrau’s two sons practise it with him and he sees them developing Aikido’s thought patterns. Learning to “blend” with your partner is a deep learning in yieldedness, he says. The practices, he adds, make him think, plan, notice others and predict what is coming next. It is a very mindful practice, similar to many forms of contemplative prayer, according to Unrau, who

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KEVIN PETERS UNRAU



Kevin Peters Unrau, right, sits with Stephan Barton, his teacher, on the day Unrau achieved his first-level black belt in Aikido.

adds that being fully present in his body makes him present in the now, rather than anxious about the past or future.

Of his practicing a Japanese martial art, Unrau says that his congregants are mostly curious, but not confrontational. He suspects that some who have concerns are not voicing them. But his practice of a martial art has deepened his own commitment to nonviolence and pacifism, and he believes it has made him a better pastor. ☸



Kevin Peters Unrau, in white, takes his test to achieve his first-level black belt in Aikido.

ARTBEAT

Parenting along the Road to Emmaus

MennoMedia

Managed chaos. That's how Rachel Gerber describes parenting three young sons.

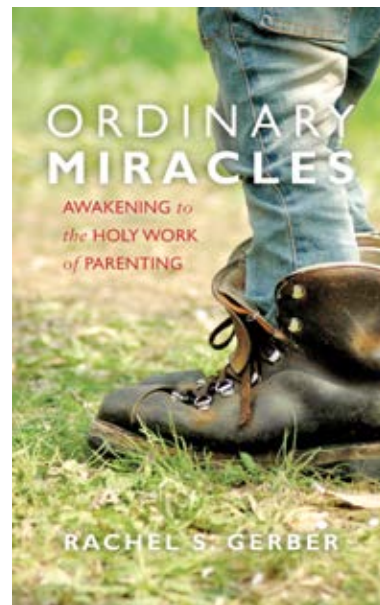
Herald Press has published her first book, a devotional memoir, *Ordinary Miracles: Awakening to the Holy Work of Parenting*. She also keeps a blog, "Everything belongs" (www.everything-belongs.com), in which she explores the intersection of parenting, faith and work.

"I. Don't. Know. Anything," Gerber recalls thinking when she was handed her first son, Owen, in 2006. With a cursory introduction to where the diapers, "onesies" and wipes were found in the hospital's nursery bassinet, a nurse left Gerber

and her husband Shawn on their own.

Ordinary Miracles uses the story of Jesus' walk to Emmaus after his resurrection to help readers see incidents in their own family's daily life and challenges as normal and instructional. As readers follow the dark days and disillusionment of the disciples after the death of Jesus, to the moment in which their "eyes are opened" and they see Jesus in the ordinary breaking of bread, Gerber learns to discover the gifts and holy calling hidden in the events of harried family life.

"It has been a joy to learn from the often crazy and unpredictable and disorienting days that parenting young children can



bring," says Gerber in reflecting on her book. "In the most mundane and ordinary days of motherhood, and in moments of exhilaration, joy and beauty, God is present."

Rachel Balducci, author of *Raising Boys as a Full-Contact Sport*, says of *Ordinary Miracles*, "As Rachel Gerber so beautifully reminds us here, God walks beside us. We are not alone in this journey. Even at our most lonely and discouraged, God has given us everything we need."

Bonnie Miller-McLemore, author of *In the Midst of Chaos: Care of Children as Spiritual Practice*, notes, "With humour and spunk, Rachel Gerber takes us on a wondrous, demanding Emmaus journey all her own, where she recognizes God and returns to spread the word. Good news for other parents needing encouragement in their own parenting!"

Gerber, who lives in Bloomington, Ind., with her family, currently works half-time as the Mennonite Church U.S.A. denominational minister of youth and young adults. She partners with the Youth Ministry Council, Mennonite Camping Association, and MC U.S.A. convention planning staff in working on Christian formation and leadership development. She earlier worked in ministerial positions in Mennonite congregations in Colorado and Indiana. ❧

/// Briefly noted

MennoMedia launches 'Lovina's Amish Kitchen' with Lovina Eicher

Lovina Eicher, an Old Order Amish cooking columnist for the past 12 years, is now syndicating her popular cooking column with MennoMedia under a new name, "Lovina's Amish Kitchen." It began July 1. Eicher is also the author of several cookbooks, *The Amish Cook at Home*, *The Amish Cook's Anniversary Book* and *Amish Baking Book*. "The past columns, written by my mother and then by me, are very much like a diary," Eicher writes.

"Sometimes I read through them and see things that I wrote about the children that I would have otherwise forgotten." Amy Gingerich, editorial director, says that MennoMedia has had a long history of working with Mennonites, Amish and other Anabaptist groups to bring their voices to a wider audience. "As Lovina was thinking about stopping her former column, we were pleased to be able to partner with her in launching this new endeavour and become her syndicate." Fees paid by newspapers are on a sliding scale according to their circulation, with the income shared between Eicher and MennoMedia. Newspapers or individuals interested in helping the column appear in local papers should call MennoMedia toll-free at 1-800-245-7894.

—MennoMedia



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Promotional Supplement

Schools Directory featuring Conrad Grebel University College



Paul Heidebrecht

On Sept. 21, Conrad Grebel University College intentionally celebrated the International Day of Peace with the official opening of the Mennonite Savings and Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement (CPA). The CPA at Grebel embraces an expansive view of peacemaking and brings together bold new partners from the business, government, church, civil society and academic sectors, fostering new ways to advance peace in a conflict-filled world. Newly named as director of the Centre, Paul Heidebrecht has already been actively collaborating with existing CPA participants.

As the former Ottawa Office director of Mennonite Central Committee Canada, Paul has shown adeptness at shaping government

policies in relief, development, and peace-building. He has a deep commitment to building peace through partnerships and has strong relationships and credibility among Canadian churches, NGOs, and government leaders. With his diverse and deep academic interests in engineering, theology and ethics, Paul brings many skills and research experience that will assist in shaping the CPA.

Currently, Paul is processing applications for the Frank and Helen Epp Peace Incubator. These “hot desks” are spaces used for peace start-ups. For example, the Global Peace Council of Canada is being initiated by Master of Peace and Conflict Studies graduate Jahan Zeb in conjunction with Ziauddin Yousafzai, the father of Malala, to develop a peace studies curriculum. Another CPA participant, Stephen Jarnick of Peaceworks Productions, is focussing on producing videos that promote peace issues. In his role, Paul will be facilitating connections and encouraging the development of these start-ups.

“Dr. Heidebrecht is superbly positioned to flourish in this new role at Grebel,” says Grebel president Susan Schultz Huxman. “As an academic, diplomat, peace advocate and Mennonite agency representative, he can give leadership to the three goals of incubating peace in the MSCU Centre for Peace Advancement: research, training and community engagement.”

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FOCUS ON TRAVEL

VIEWPOINT

The whole truth

GLENN EDWARD WITMER

MENNOJERUSALEM

“Have you ever watched those TV court programs where a witness is brought to the stand and asked to raise his hand and swear to tell the truth?” I ask my Israel-Palestine tour groups. I get knowing nods all around and inevitably someone completes the courtroom scenario by adding, “. . . the whole truth and nothing but the truth.”

“Why?” I retort with rehearsed surprise. “Isn’t the truth enough?”

But something suddenly dawned on me as I sat in the synagogue of a Jewish settlement in the West Bank near Bethlehem. Friday morning prayers had ended an hour earlier and a few black-draped men still bobbed their recitations of Torah facing Jerusalem. As we often do, we came to hear an educated professional man who has lived in the settlement with his family for more than 20 years.

He passionately defended his choice in what many consider an “illegal” settlement. “I know about pacifist Mennonite attitudes,” he informed our group. “And, no doubt, your Arab family hosts last night told you all about horrible things we do and why we shouldn’t be living here. Or why they hate that security wall you drove through this morning.”

But when our group continued the discussion with reference to their conversations with soldiers at checkpoints, meeting with Muslim women in the Hebron Hills village who lived under the constant harassment of the radical Israeli settlement beside their fields, or listening to a Palestinian farmer’s frustration over losing access to fresh water on his land now controlled and charged for by the Israeli military authorities, the speaker denied any knowledge of them and disparagingly

MENNOJERUSALEM PHOTO



The At-Tuwani Muslim women’s co-op leader talks to tour group members about her life beside an Israeli settlement.

suggested we were unwitting victims of stories from isolated activists.

He was certain that our accounts of illegal arrests and lengthy detention by residents of Palestinian villages were deliberately overstated to gain our sympathy. He claimed no knowledge of “any real problems for the majority of Palestinians” in getting access to jobs, medical services or travel freedoms, “except for a few trouble-makers who were understandably restricted from leaving their villages.”

It was clear that he had not travelled to many of the places we did, had not spoken with people living under occupation, and was not too interested in hearing their life stories. He insisted he had the accurate Israeli account. He was telling the truth.

But the accounts remained so different,

it was as if there was a wall between them.

What dawned on me was that maybe he was wrong about something pretty basic. While we indeed were on a brief learning tour and lacked some of the background historical issues that affect much of the Middle East reality, our personal visits and conversations with people from many perspectives and experiences across Israel and Palestine, on both sides of the Separation Wall, gave us first-hand input. We could see with our own eyes the situations our speaker only read about and dismissed. We met in person with those who lived a daily life of oppression under occupation, people whom he ignored and denigrated.

As an Israeli, he was forbidden to cross into Palestinian territory, but spoke of things he knew. But there was clearly more to know. We had seen and heard it, and weighed the opposing accounts. What he lacked was the whole truth, and that made the difference. ❧

Glenn Edward Witmer is the leader of MennoJerusalem Tours to the Holy Land.

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Beyond the Taj Mahal and the Great Wall of China

How to safely travel off the beaten path

by Sandra Reimer

“Once in Jamaica, we met a Rastafarian who made cooking pots from old airplane parts. He took us to his home and showed us how he roasted his own coffee,” says Wilmer Martin, co-owner of a Christian travel agency called TourMagination. Martin has been leading tours around the world for the past 40-plus years and has visited more than 80 countries. He loves meeting locals and seeing sights that others miss in a new country. Martin and his business partner, Audrey Voth Petkau, offer some suggestions for safely going beyond a superficial visit when you travel.

Interact with Locals

If you want to interact with locals, Martin suggests frequenting natural gathering places like farmers’ markets, independent restaurants, grocery stores and fairs. But don’t assume that

everyone speaks English. If you’re not travelling with an interpreter, bring a phrase book. People will appreciate that you are trying to speak their language even if your pronunciation is not perfect.

Ask Questions for Deeper Discovery

“Most people aren’t curious enough,” says Martin. “They don’t ask enough questions.” He often asks those he meets, “What is the trademark of this town? What should I see?” In-country guides, hotel or B&B staff, and drivers can also tell you the best sights in a location. Martin says that when you ask questions, you’ll be amazed at what you discover.

Engage All Your Senses

“When you go to a country, use all of your senses—taste, see, smell, touch, listen,” says Martin. He likes

to go to independent restaurants to experience new food, but he does so selectively. “I like to eat in a place where all the locals are eating.” He looks for restaurants that are busy. If a place is empty, he stays away. Martin also emphasizes the importance of listening while travelling. “Listen to the stories of locals. Hear how they have been blessed and about some of their challenges.”

Accept Local Hospitality Respectfully

Whether travellers are guests of a family as part of a pre-arranged home-stay or are spontaneously invited in for a cup of tea, here are some tips to make the visit a pleasant one.

According to Martin, sometimes as North Americans we can be very self-confident and believe that we are special. A humble attitude is important as travellers accept the hospitality of locals. “Going into their home is going into their intimate space. When I am a guest in a stranger’s home, I don’t look down on them,” says Martin. “It is important not to compare their homes to what we have in North America.” TourMagination co-owner Audrey Voth Petkau advocates researching the customs and culture of a nation before travelling. She also recommends leaving flashy jewelry and expensive clothing at home. “Try to blend into the crowd.”

When travellers receive hospitality, they may be inclined to reciprocate with money, but this is usually not meaningful or appropriate. Martin plans ahead and packs gifts. He knows that in African nations, the adults often



In May 2013, a local imam in the village of Serabulak, Uzbekistan, invited travellers on TourMagination’s Great Trek Tour into his home for a meal.

like pens that click up and down, so he brings a supply of those to distribute as thank-you gifts. For children in Africa, he brings balloons. If Martin stays in a home, he may give a special tea towel from Canada for the mother. When he visited Siberia, he brought hard-to-get kitchen implements like much appreciated vegetable peelers.

Be Wise, Not Fearful

"Interacting with a stranger requires you to put away fear," says Martin. He adds, "Most of the hostilities around the world happen because of fear and because people don't know each other." A distinctive of Martin's travel company is breaking down walls of ignorance and bitterness by enabling people from different nations to meet

and dialogue.

Though Martin advises travellers not to be fearful, he encourages using wisdom when journeying off the beaten path. "We always divide our tour groups into clusters of three or four. They need to help each other to stay safe," says Martin. "Travel in numbers and at a decent hour when possible," adds Voth Petkau. She recommends asking hotel staff or travel guides for local safety advice. Understanding the political situation in a country and avoiding questionable locations are also important.

Armed with curiosity, humility, a supply of thank-you gifts, and a dose of common sense, it is possible to have a safe and authentic experience of a nation's culture and its people.



Locals in Ak Metchet, Uzbekistan, gave TourMagination co-owner Audrey Voth Petkau homemade pita. Audrey co-led the Great Trek Tour in May 2013, which followed the migration of Mennonites who left Russia in the 1880s for Central Asia.

While on a TourMagination European Heritage tour, the group had stopped to remember Anabaptists who were persecuted in 1528 in this Augsburg home once owned by Hans and Susanna Daucher. Knowing the house was important to Anabaptists, Thomas Jaudszing, the homeowner, saved a beam left over from a remodelling project. He gave the beam to the travellers and they transported it back to the Mennonite Heritage Center in Harleysville, Pa. Jaudszing hands the beam to TourMagination co-owner Wilmer Martin as Anabaptist storyteller John Ruth looks on.



MC Canada surveys young adults on their gifts

Global Youth Summit delegate connects with young adults

BY RACHEL BERGEN
Young Voices Co-editor

PHOTO COURTESY OF
CHRIS AND RACHEL BRNJAS



Chris Brnjas and his wife Rachel

“**Y**outh” is a strange term for people from 18 to 30-something, but Chris Brnjas has been given the task of connecting with at least 50 Mennonites between these ages from across Canada.

Mennonite Church Canada appointed Brnjas, 26, as its delegate for the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) World Youth Summit next year. He attends the Gathering Church in Kitchener, Ont., and recently graduated from the master of theological studies program at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.

His main task is surveying young adults on the subject of “gifts,” the theme of the summit. Brnjas created a Facebook group, published an online survey, and has e-mailed people, in order to get their viewpoints.

church context,” he says of the summit.

So far, Brnjas has only received survey results from 10 people. But he’s found there is an overarching theme of wanting the church to be more welcoming to marginalized people. He also sees a passion for the church in the responses he’s received so far.

“Young people have a willingness and an energy to participate in the church,” he says. “They’re just needing opportunities to do that. There’s a lot of energy and passion for the church among young adults.”

He is expecting many more surveys to come in before he submits his report to MC Canada at the end of October. He hopes he’ll exceed the minimum of 50 survey responses required, so MWC will have a better understanding of what

‘It’s a great opportunity to meet new people and learn about what gets people passionate about their particular church context,’ he says of the summit.

MWC wants country representatives to talk to a percentage of their young adult constituents and submit a report. Then he will attend the Global Youth Summit, which is taking place from July 17 to 19, 2015, in Mechanicsburg, Pa.; the theme is “Called to share: My gifts, our gifts.”

Brnjas is most excited about connecting with other Canadian Mennonites and Anabaptists from around the global church. “It’s a great opportunity to meet new people and learn about what gets people passionate about their particular

young Canadian Mennonites are passionate about.

Dave Bergen, executive minister of Christian formation at MC Canada, sees Brnjas as a future Mennonite church leader. Bergen was instrumental in appointing Brnjas as a delegate. “Chris, to me, is a young person with huge leadership gifts,” Bergen says. “This experience is very intentionally a way to help nurture the gifts he’s already developing and provide him with experiences that will stretch him in ways that he may not have had the opportunity

to explore in other circumstances.”

Bergen is excited about what Brnjas will discover about Canadian Mennonite young adults, and about how these discoveries will affect the local, national and global church. “[Young people] are less fearful of asking questions that others haven’t thought about, or have thought about but are fearful of asking,” he says. “They are pushing and leading the church in new directions.”

Brnjas is looking for more people to join the discussion. Anyone from 18 to 30-something who attends a Mennonite church is invited to fill out the survey (<http://svy.mk/1rxYqUL>). Surveys need to be in to Brnjas by Oct. 26 at the latest, so he can compile the results and submit his report to MC Canada for review by the end of October. Answers will be kept confidential, he promises. ✎

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Clarity and confusion in the Middle East

Learning tour allows young people to learn about Israeli-Palestinian conflict

SETH RATZLAFF

SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES

It’s easy to get fed up with talking about things while studying in college or university; the desire to do something hands-on can be overwhelming. When my religious studies professor told me about a three-week learning tour of Israel and Palestine called Yella, organ-

Paradoxically, it also brought both clarity and confusion to my faith.

For one thing, Scripture is now much more approachable. I can imagine the geography, the mountains and Galilee, the olive trees, the threshing of barley and the scattering of seeds. I have a bet-

We listened to an Israeli family tell the story of their daughter’s 16th birthday party, when she was killed by a suicide bomber in Tel Aviv.

ized by Mennonite Central Committee Ontario and Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, I didn’t hesitate to sign up.

Honestly, I did not know much about the politics of that region before going there in 2012. I did, however, have a smattering of confused knowledge from the news. I also knew that the conflict in the Middle East stems back to biblical times. Desire to gain knowledge, grow in my faith and escape from the stagnation of student life compelled me to go.

Yella delivered plenty of adventure.

ter understanding of the political context in which Jesus was embedded: the villages under the watchful eye of Rome and Jesus’ delicate political manoeuvring.

I now find interesting nuances in the Bible. For example, we visited Caesarea, a city on the coast of the Mediterranean, which includes the structural remains of Herod’s palace, an elaborate and indulgent building, judging from its foundation, which was curiously enough built on the sand. Who was that fool who built

(Continued on page 36)

PHOTO COURTESY OF SETH RATZLAFF



Seth Ratzlaff

PHOTO COURTESY OF SETH RATZLAFF



Seth Ratzlaff was part of a group of young adults who travelled to the Middle East in 2012 for a three-week Israeli-Palestinian learning tour. ‘I would love to go back,’ Ratzlaff writes.

PHOTO BY SETH RATZLAFF



Yella participants walk through Palestine during a 2012 learning tour.

(Continued from page 35)

his house on the sand?

But one step behind insight is confusion. The political climate of Israel-Palestine is complex and the resultant suffering is incomprehensible, potentially faith-shattering. Yella provided an overview of the religious heritage of the Holy Land, but it also put me face to face with the modern crisis, which is by and large a continuation of the one Jesus dealt with.

We listened to an Israeli family tell the story of their daughter's 16th birthday party, when she was killed by a suicide bomber in Tel Aviv. We heard from a Palestinian farmer, whose land has been slowly annexed by Jewish settlers, and who must regularly endure their relentless harassment; his olive grove—a crop that only begins to yield after eight to 10 years—had recently been torched.

What I appreciated about Yella is that I did not have to work through these experiences alone. The group I travelled with was made up primarily of young adults as well as guides with some expertise regarding Christianity and Israel-Palestine. For many of us, the stories and

people we encountered were entirely new and so we naturally felt similar emotions. Thankfully, there was plenty of time to debrief, ask the questions we weren't courageous enough to ask in the moment, and share our frustrations and our empathy.

I came back to Canada much more grateful for its security and peace. I would love to go back, though. Whenever I eat pita with *zatar* (a spice mixture), or drink Arabic coffee, I am teleported back to that terrible, beautiful land. I would love to experience the hospitality and gorgeous geography once again.

Whether you are an expert on the Israeli-Palestinian situation or apathetic towards the matter, you should know that Yella is happening again in May 2015. Visit www.mcco.ca/learn/more/yella-2015 for more information or to register by Oct. 31. ☺

Seth Ratzlaff, 23, lives in Kitchener, Ont., where he attends Rockway Mennonite Church. He is a member of the planning committee for Yella 2015.

PHOTO BY SETH RATZLAFF



Hearing the stories of both Israelis and Palestinians was a highlight of the Middle East learning tour Seth Ratzlaff participated in two years ago.

A surprise hit

T-shirts poking fun at Mennonite stereotypes prove to be popular at MCC Festival

BY AARON EPP

Young Voices Co-editor

It's 10 weeks until Christmas, and if you're looking to buy something for the fun-loving Mennonite on your shopping list, Jonathan Kornelsen has just the items for you.

Kornelsen is the creator of Menno Apparel, a line of T-shirts that poke fun at Russian and Swiss Mennonite culture. "Sure Mennonite girls can cook, but Mennonite boys can eat," reads one shirt, while another is emblazoned with "I love rock & rollkuchen."

Kornelsen created the first piece of Menno Apparel—a black T-shirt with Menno Simons' face on it with a slogan that says, "Menno Simons is my

homeboy!"—for the 2011 Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Festival in Abbotsford, B.C. Last month, he returned with a variety of new designs and sold more than 300 shirts, with all of the proceeds going to MCC.

Kornelsen has now launched an online store (www.mennoapparel.com), as well as a Facebook page that has garnered more than 2,000 likes.

"As Mennonites, we love Mennonite stereotypes," says Kornelsen, 31, who works as the associate pastor of students and young adults at Central Community Church, a Mennonite Brethren congregation in Chilliwack, B.C. "It's funny to have a

PHOTO COURTESY OF JONATHAN KORNELSEN



Jonathan Kornelsen, a 31-year-old youth pastor and creator of Menno Apparel, poses with another satisfied customer at the MCC Festival in Abbotsford, B.C., last month.

shirt with a slogan on it that shows people this is our heritage and we can have fun with it.”

He and his brother had the idea for the “Menno Simons is my homeboy!” T-shirt when they were in high school at the time “Jesus is my homeboy” T-shirts became popular. They didn’t do anything with the idea for 10 years, when Kornelsen had a few T-shirts made just for fun.

He showed them to his father, who

... the idea is to create conversation among people.”

Dora Hoepfner, the relief sale coordinator for MCC B.C., says she wasn’t sure how the shirts would go over at first, but was pleasantly surprised to see them become a big hit, especially among young people.

“I think everybody enjoyed Jon’s enthusiasm, and his excitement at being there to sell his shirts,” says Hoepfner, who has co-

Kornelsen didn't originally envision selling the shirts outside of MCC festivals in B.C., but decided to launch an online store when he saw how popular they were.

laughed and encouraged him to get a bunch made up for the 2011 MCC Festival in Abbotsford. Kornelsen sold nine shirts that year, and returned to the festival in 2012 with a “Make borscht not bombs” shirt.

Kornelsen and his wife Heather adopted four children in 2013 and did not attend the festival as a result. But he returned last month with new designs that proved to be a big hit. They included an orange shirt with a picture of a crokinole board and the slogan “Mennonites got game,” as well as a grey tank top that reads, “This is how Mennonites bare arms.”

“Our desire when we started making the shirts was, No. 1, that we were going to have fun,” Kornelsen says. “I think God’s given me the gifting of making people laugh, so we just made shirts that made people laugh.”

At the same time, he adds, the slogans tap into things that Mennonites hold true.

“Whether it’s about pacifism or food

ordinated the sales for the past 12 years. “It was quite contagious.”

And she is thankful that Kornelsen donated the proceeds to MCC. “All the money goes to help disaster relief and provide for people who don’t have much, so everyone who’s willing to contribute to that is very much appreciated,” Hoepfner says.

Kornelsen didn’t originally envision selling the shirts outside of MCC festivals in B.C., but decided to launch an online store when he saw how popular they were. “It’s just gotten its own momentum and now I’m spending three or four hours a night on it,” he says.

There are eight designs available in a variety of sizes, as well as three different aprons. Kornelsen is donating \$3.50 to \$4 from each item sold to MCC.

“Everyone’s going to know what rollkuchen is, everyone’s going to know what borscht is,” he says. “I think when you embrace your heritage, it’s fun.” ☺

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MENNO APPAREL



Calendar

British Columbia

Oct. 30: MC B.C. fundraising dessert night at Eden Mennonite Church, Chilliwack.

Nov. 29,30: Abendmusik Advent Vespers with Abendmusik Choir; (29) at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford; (30) Knox United Church, West Vancouver; both services at 8 p.m.

Alberta

Nov. 1: Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta annual conference, at Edmonton First Mennonite Church, at 1 p.m. Speaker: Andrea Dyck, head curator of the Mennonite Museum, Steinbach, Man. Topic: "What historical treasures might you have in your home?" A fropa meal follows. To register, call David Jeffares at 780-438-0404.

Nov. 21: MCC Alberta hosts "Breaking down the walls... relief, development and peace," at Foothills Alliance Church, Calgary; at 7 p.m. Keynote speaker: Joe

Clark, former Canadian prime minister. For more information, visit www.mcccanada.ca/get-involved/events.

Saskatchewan

Oct. 25: MC Saskatchewan "Equipping to listen" event, at First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Discussion and information arising from the 2013 annual delegate session. Please bring a bag lunch.

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.

Nov. 22: RJC corporation meeting, at 5 p.m., and appreciation/fundraising banquet, at 6 p.m.

Manitoba

Oct. 31-Nov. 2: Quilting retreat at Camp Assiniboia. For more information, call 204-895-2267 or visit www.campswithmeaning.org/retreats to register online.

Nov. 1,2: Camps with Meaning fundraising celebration banquets; (1) Emmanuel Mennonite, Winkler; (2) Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Nov. 1,2: "Singin' in the Grain" fundraising concerts with the University of Manitoba Bison Men's Chorus and Eastman Male Chorus from Steinbach, for Canadian Foodgrains Bank; (1) at Springfield Heights Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7:30 p.m.; (2) at MCI's Buhler Hall, Gretna, at 3 p.m.

Nov. 2: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate fundraising concert. For more information, call 204-775-7111.

Nov. 6-9: MEDA convention, at the Fairmont Winnipeg Hotel, Winnipeg. Theme: "Human dignity through entrepreneurship." Speakers: Ziauddin Yousafzai of Pakistan; Laura Ling, an award-winning journalist and author; Art DeFehr, CEO of Pallister Furniture; and Jim Miller, founder and CEO of JMX Brands.

Nov. 9: *Peace, Pies and Prophets* presented by Ted and Co. Theater Works, at Home Street Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m. Freewill offering and pie auction fundraiser for Christian Peacemaker Teams. For more information, e-mail Canada@cpt.org.

Nov. 13: Face2Face community discussion: "Restorative justice: Soft on crime or building community security?" featuring Wendy Kroeker and Jae Yung Lee from Seoul, South Korea; at CMU's Great Hall, at 7 p.m.

Nov. 18: Evening of the arts at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate. For more information, call 204-775-7111.

Nov. 23: Mennonite Community Orchestra presents its fall concert, featuring Rossini's Semiramide Overture, Mozart's Clarinet Concerto and Beethoven's Symphony No. 5; at CMU's South Campus Chapel, at 3 p.m. Tickets available at the door.

Nov. 24: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate annual general meeting. For more information, call 204-775-7111.

Nov. 29: Grand opening and dedication of CMU's new library and learning commons, at 1:30 p.m.

Nov. 29: Christmas at CMU, at 2:30 and 7 p.m.

Ontario

Until Jan. 18, 2005: "Along the road

to freedom" art exhibit by Ray Dirks, at Conrad Grebel University College Gallery. For more information, visit uwaterloo.ca/grebel/grebel-gallery.

Oct. 19: 1970s MYF and sponsors reunion for Maple View, Crosshill and Wellesley Mennonite churches, at Mapleview, at 3 p.m. Potluck at 5; bring your own dishes. Program at 7. For more information, e-mail kijantzi@hotmail.com or ropddj@cyg.net.

Oct. 19: 11th annual Gospel Vespers, at 2:30 p.m., at Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville. Sing from *Life Songs No. 2*. Books provided. Leader: Bob Shantz. For more information, call Sam Steiner at 519-884-1040.

Oct. 19: Pax Christi Chorale presents "Blest pair of sirens: A celebration of voice and verse," featuring works by Parry, Elgar, Willan and Stephanie Martin (artistic director), at Grace Church on-the-Hill, Toronto, at 3 p.m. For tickets, e-mail boxoffice@paxchristichorale.org.

Oct. 24: Eby Lecture with Derek Suderman, Ph.D., at Conrad Grebel University College Chapel, at 7:30 p.m. Topic: "Seeking peace as the end of lament." For more information, visit grebel.ca/eby.

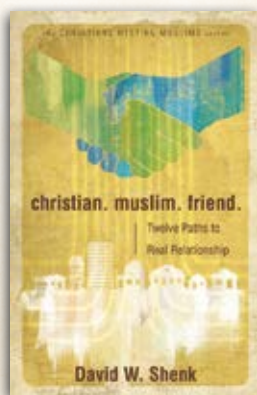
Oct. 24-25: "Reading the Bible with Jesus" retreat at Willowgrove, Stouffville, with Bryan Moyer Suderman; sponsored by MC Eastern Canada, the Markham-Stouffville Mennonite Ministerial and Willowgrove. Pt. 1: "Matthew: Scribes trained for the kingdom." For more information, e-mail miriam@willowgrove.ca.

Oct. 25: "Mennonite Memories of Migration," hosted by the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario and the Institute of Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies at Conrad Grebel University College's Great Hall, at 2 p.m. With art and archival exhibits of Mennonite immigration experiences. For more information, visit uwaterloo.ca/grebel/events.

Oct. 29: Mennonite/s Writing, a free public reading series with celebrated Canadian authors, at Conrad Grebel Chapel, at 7:30 p.m.: Rudy Wiebe will read from his newly released novel, *Come Back*. For more information, visit grebel.ca/mennolit.

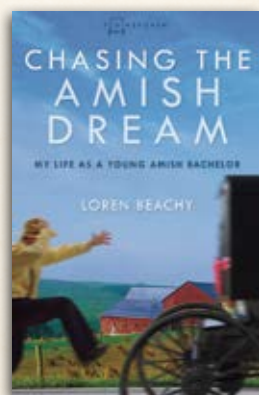
Nov. 9: Third annual Male Chorus Sing, at 2:30 p.m., at Detweiler

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Meetinghouse, Roseville. Former and current male quartet or chorus members, or want-to-be members invited. Leader: Bob Shantz. For more information, call Sam Steiner at 519-884-1040.

Nov. 10: "Peace quest: Remembering for peace 2014-18" event at Conrad Grebel University College Chapel, at 7 p.m. Speaker: Jamie Swift, co-author of *Warrior Nation: Rebranding Canada in an Age of Anxiety*.

Nov. 13-14: Bechtel Lectures in Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies, at Conrad Grebel University College, at 7:30 p.m. each evening. Speaker: Jeff Gundy of Bluffton (Ohio) University. (13) Topic: "Poetry, the sleeping king and creative doubt"; (14) Topic: "Circling defiance. For more information, visit grebel.ca/bechtel.

Nov. 14: Mennonite/s Writing, a free public reading series with celebrated Mennonite authors, at Conrad Grebel Chapel, at 7:30 p.m.: Jeff Gundy will read from his new book of poetry, *Somewhere Near Defiance*. For more information, visit grebel.ca/mennolit.

Nov. 14: "Spirituality and Aging" seminar at Conrad Grebel University College's Great Hall, at 7:30 p.m. Speaker: Kenneth Pargament, professor of clinical psychology at Bowling Green University, Ohio. For more information, visit grebel.ca/sa.

Nov. 15: Fairview Mennonite Home presents its annual Christmas Handicraft Sale of crafts, decorations, stocking stuffers, wearable items, wreaths, woodworking, baby quilts, used books and much more; from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Home in Cambridge. Plus Santa's Sweet Shop, fresh baking and tea room. For more

information, call 519-653-5719 or visit www.fairviewmh.com.

Nov. 15: Mennonite Mass Choir featuring Brahms' *Requiem*, at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, at 7:30 p.m.

Nov. 21-22: 23rd annual Spirit of Christmas music and craft show at Nairn Mennonite Church, Ailsa Craig; features include live music, Ten Thousand Villages, craft sale, tea room. (21) 6:30 to 9 p.m.; (22) 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, visit www.nairn.on.ca.mennonite.net.

Nov. 22: Nithview Christmas tea and bake sale, at Nithview Community, New Hamburg, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Nov. 22: MennoHomes annual general meeting and fundraising concert featuring The Deacons of Jazz, at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, at 7 p.m. For more information, visit www.mennohomes.com.

Nov. 22,23: Soli Deo Gloria Singers present their fall concert, "Sing Praise!"; (22) at UMEI, Leamington, at 7:30 p.m.; (23) at Leamington United Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m. For more information about tickets, call UMEI at 519-326-7448.

Nov. 26: Mennonite/s Writing, a free public reading series with celebrated Canadian authors, at Conrad Grebel Chapel, at 7:30 p.m.: Miriam Toews will read from her bestselling new novel, *All My Puny Sorrows*. For more information, visit grebel.ca/mennolit.

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

Classifieds

Announcement

Parent Support Group: Announcing a bimonthly support group for Mennonite parents of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (GLBT) persons in Southwestern Ontario. We provide confidential support, fellowship, resources and opportunities for dialogue in the Spirit of Christ. For more information please contact the following: rvfast@rogers.com, pmsnyderangel@rogers.com, or Roy and Mary Gascho, 519-742-1850.

Advertising Information

Contact
D. Michael Hostetler
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Travel

Visit Europe the Mennonite Way! Multiple Hotel Tours focussing on Mennonite-Anabaptist history in Holland, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Poland and Ukraine. Organized by Mennonite Heritage Tours, www.mennoniteheritagetours.eu

PHOENIX (Arizona) MENNO Guest House Bed and Breakfast welcomes guests coming to the Phoenix area. (Web site www.hscserves.org). Email phxmennoguest@gmail.com or call 623-847-0314.

Employment Opportunities

Seattle Mennonite Church seeks an experienced lead pastor for our multi-staff congregation with a strong commitment to Anabaptist theology and values, community development and involvement, radical

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hospitality, and conference involvement. Seattle Mennonite is a publicly affirming congregation. A position description, including contact information, is available on www.seattle-mennonite.org/leadership.



Lead Pastor

Community Mennonite Fellowship in Drayton Ontario is seeking a lead pastor for our vibrant rural congregation. Rooted in our local community and our Anabaptist faith tradition, we strive to live out our mission to be "Enthusiastic followers of Jesus Christ, spreading his Good News in our community and around the world".

Contact Henry Paetkau, MCEC Area Church Minister at hpaetkau@mcec.ca or visit communitymennonite.com



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MSCU Centre for Peace Advancement Snapshots

PHOTOS BY DAVE ROGALSKY



A young member of the many who gathered at Conrad Grebel University College on Sept. 21 for the opening of the Mennonite Savings and Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement listens to the 'Grebel Gamelan,' led by Maisie Sum, left. The afternoon included music; a Six Nations storytelling circle; Ray Dirks' 'Along the Road to Freedom' art exhibit; a chance to add to a larger peace art project; peace cookie and button making; the opportunity to engage peace practitioners like Reina Neufeldt, a Grebel professor; or take part in video or postcard projects recording commitments to advancing peace. The centre comprises the 560-square-metre fourth floor of the new Grebel building in Waterloo, Ont.

Jessica Dyck, left, and Kassia Kooy talk to Paul and Marilyn Brubacher about the figurines made from spent shell casings that the Brubachers are contributing to a larger art piece at Conrad Grebel University College during the opening of the college's new MSCU Centre for Peace Advancement. Paul had gathered both the casings and the figurines while working for MCC in Chad in the late 1970s. Located 'across the creek' from the University of Waterloo, the hope is that peace ideas and projects will be incubated in the cross-fertilization of many groups and individuals using the space.



Markus Schroeder, Jeremy Malloy with his daughter Madison, and Katie Gingerich make peace pins at Conrad Grebel University College during the opening of the MSCU Centre for Peace Advancement.