

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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EDITORIAL

My soul brother

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

The sky was a deep blue, the sun shining brightly as we gathered in the Zion Memorial Gardens to bury the ashes of a beloved family friend, my brother-in-law Frank R. Keller, in the community of our birth—Souderton, Pennsylvania. We all knew him as “Butch.”

Somehow the familiar words of Psalm 90 read by Pastor Mim Book took on new meaning in this setting, my favourite Psalm and what Walter Bruggemann calls “one of the most magisterial of the psalms.” This ancient text always puts life into perspective for me. End-of-life rituals have a way of reminding us of how short life is, that our true home is with God, that his love follows us from “generation to generation.”

The truth of this psalm, this inheritance of “joy in all our days,” was embodied in Butch. He was much more than a brother-in-law. He was my soul brother, my example, often my inspiration, a ready counsellor, always a reliable friend, a shoulder to lean on. Part of what made him so special, not only to me, but to members of this small family group gathered to honour his life, was his ability to listen with empathy, to counsel without judging, to take into account the uniqueness of one’s personality and struggle.

Paying public tribute to him, I said

he was really our Protestant rabbi, our shaman, one with whom we could share family secrets, our innermost thoughts; one to whom we admitted our frailties and disappointments but also our triumphs and high aspirations.



It was out of his own pain that he was able to enter into ours.

Struggling with his own identity early on because of growing up in the shadow of an accomplished older brother, he lacked self-confidence and what he thought was the lesser approval of his father. So he always tried harder, which made him an achiever above his peers.

This experience also formed his character which became evident in later years, when, after entering the U.S. Navy, he found himself at cross-purposes with the military establishment and checked himself out as a conscientious objector—a bold move in that era. Then, taking over the family meat business, he soon sensed a call to ministry and tackled seminary training amid doubts he could master the scholarship required.

After some 12 years as a pastor of a large General Conference Mennonite Church in central Kansas, he was asked to be conference minister, overseeing and advising many congregations in what was known as the Western District. In this role he encountered several church

conflicts, testing his mediating skills. Recognizing his limitations in reconciling differences, he employed a professional mediator in an attempt to bring unity to these various scenes. His openness allowed him to let the group dynamics play out so that reconciliation would stand a chance.

Standing there under the bright sun, surrounded by family, these scenes flashed through my consciousness. Butch, now resting “in the favor of the Lord his God,” had taught us to “number our days,” so that we can “gain a wise heart.” In modern parlance, he had given us a blueprint for living so that the “favor of the Lord our God is upon us, to prosper the work of our hands.”

I was struck, too, at this moment, with the frailty of life and the so-called spiritual issues which consume so much of our time and talents, all seen in the arc of a lifetime—in Butch’s case 88 years—as many times frivolous. How can we, in the church, spend so much time and passion on such issues as our sexuality and how it manifests itself when we tend to neglect the bigger issues of God’s dwelling place?

In the sweep of history, these issues which now so preoccupy us, are in the words of Moses “*like a dream, like grass that is renewed in the morning; in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers.*” (Psalm 90:5,6)

In the context of “*a thousand years as a day in God’s sight,*” these issues that loom so large in this present age are “*soon gone and we fly away.*”

Butch Keller left a large imprint in his life span. His example, his love, his wisdom, his companionship are far more enduring and are “*manifest of God’s power in his servant and God’s glorious power to his children.*”

ABOUT THE COVER:

Ken and Debbie Martin head out from Elmira (Ont.) Mennonite Church on a countryside tour as part of the MennoHomes fifth annual bike-a-thon for affordable housing on June 20. More than 100 adults and children participated by walking, cycling or riding, and raised \$40,000 toward apartments to be built in Elmira. For more information go to www.mennohomes.com.

PHOTO: MENNOHOMES

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Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press



It takes a (global) village

Being the people God wants us to be

This is the last in a five-part series leading up to Mennonite World Conference assembly in Harrisburg, Pa.

BY ARLI KLASSEN

MWC is the place where we are bound together by our shared convictions, experiences and relationships as Anabaptist Christians. Together, we are a bit of heaven here on earth.

When someone asks you to use a few words to describe yourself, what words do you use? Would you change those words to describe yourself when you are with your family? At work? Travelling to some distant place?

I discovered that the words I use to describe myself change, depending on my cultural context. When we lived in Toronto, the two most basic words I used to describe myself were “Christian” and “woman.” Those were the two parts of my life that made the most difference in how I lived. Imagine my surprise when we moved to southern Africa and those words didn’t really matter as key parts of my identity. Everyone we interacted with defined themselves as Christian, so that was taken for granted; it was far more important that I was a mother than that I was a woman. In southern Africa, the most important thing was that I was white—an aspect of identity I had taken for granted in Canada.

A Christian woman—those were the important parts of my identity in Canada. A white mother—those different parts of my identity became the most important in Lesotho. My self-understanding of my identity changed, even though I had not changed.

This change illustrates the first point I want to make: Culture matters, because culture defines who we are.

Secondly, language matters. I have learned a little bit of several languages and I am fascinated by words that exist in one language and have no direct translation into another language. In Sesotho I learned that there is actually a word for a body part that heals badly after a

MWC PHOTO BY MERLE GOOD



Three Mennonite women from different countries share together during a Mennonite World Conference gathering in Ethiopia.

break or a wound—we have no such word in English. And in Spanish and French there is the lovely word “animateur” or “animador,” someone who plays a facilitating and encouraging leadership role in a group of people, a concept that just does not make it into English. And in German we have the lovely word “gemeinschaft,” a word that English speakers have translated into “brotherhood” and “community,” though these translations fail to capture the depth of meaning that word has in German. Each of these examples underscores the fact that language matters, because language gives us the concepts that are important in our culture.

There are some deep differences among all our various languages and cultures around the world, differences that go far deeper than we sometimes realize. Culture, shaped by language, impacts our worldview, our self-understanding and our sense of identity. And this is particular challenging for Christians, whose beliefs and practices are shaped by culture and language even though our faith transcends those categories.

Biblical examples of difference

There are many biblical images and stories that show us how these differences can in fact be part of God’s plan for building the church.

The first book of the Bible, Genesis, tells the story of the Tower of Babel.

This story gives two reasons for all the different language groups. One reason is that unity based on sameness leads to pride, and the other reason is that unity based on sameness is a response to fear. In Genesis 11:4-6, the people wanted to be famous and they were afraid of being scattered. Both impulses are rooted in dependence on oneself instead of depending on God: “*Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do.*”

The theologian Walter Brueggemann says this is a story of people who wanted to be great because of their cookie-cutter sameness—same language, same food, same clothes, same culture. There is a lot that can be accomplished in a homogeneous culture. Brueggemann suggests that God scatters the people to show them a better way. The unity God wants for the human race is diverse people drawn together by common faith and values, not drawn together by sameness in language and culture. The creation of many languages and the scattering in this story are not a punishment, but are actually an opportunity to live up to the much greater potential God wills for the earth, he says. God gave the people of the Tower of Babel the opportunity to experience difference in order to learn to depend on God and to be drawn together through faith rather than through culture. It takes a global village to be who God

wants us to be.

Another biblical image of difference occurs at the other end of the Bible—in the last book. In Revelation 7: 9-14, we read about an uncountable number of people, from every nation, every tribe and every language, all singing and worshipping God together. This is the opposite image to the Tower of Babel. This is a little glimpse of heaven!

This image comes to us as part of the story in Revelation of the opening of the seven seals—seven events with terrible consequences for the people. This image is actually in between the opening of the sixth seal and the seventh seal, like a little break in the story. Here we have this picture of the people of God from every culture and language, together worshipping God, regardless of the ordeals, persecutions and tribulations that they are experiencing.

A question is asked in verse 13: “*Who is able to stand in the midst of all these ordeals?*” The answer is given in this image: it is the multicultural people of God who together worship and praise God from every country and every language, and who are able to stand throughout persecution and tribulation. It takes a global village to be the people God wants us to be, and to be able to stay strong through persecution.

Becoming God’s multicultural people

For the Jewish people in Israel who thought they alone were God’s chosen people, this image of a multicultural people of God is a drastic shift in thinking. In declaring God’s new law as outlined in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7), Jesus appealed to the Torah-oriented crowds with “*you heard that it has been said. . . but I say I say to you.*”

In Ephesians 3, Paul very directly states that once the Gentiles were not only foreigners and aliens but uncircumcised, and therefore not part of Israel, not part of God’s people. But now, he concludes, through Christ they belong—fully belong. Paul’s commentary was an immense shift in thinking for Jewish Christians. Only then could they begin to understand that there could be different ways of

worshipping God than their own Jewish traditions, particularly the practices that gave them identity, such as circumcision and food laws.

For those of us who think our ways of worshipping and understanding God are the right ways or the best ways or even the only ways, the image of God's multicultural people in Revelation 7 is also an immense shift in our own thinking. It takes a global village to be the people God wants us to be.

We are cultural people, and our own cultural traditions and languages are the means through which we understand and worship God. There is much to celebrate in many of our ways of worshipping and understanding God, wherever it is that we live and worship. But our own ways are not the only ways! Our ways are comfortable and familiar, and our leaders can even usually give extensive biblical explanations for why we think our practices are the right way. Like the people at the Tower of Babel, we are too often afraid that differences will create disunity and will scatter us. We are too often ready to depend on language and culture and tradition to hold us together, instead of depending on God's ways to hold us together across our differences. It takes a global village to be the people God wants us to be.

A glimpse of heaven on earth

Having studied sociology, I know that every group works hard to create its own identity and its own way of doing things, and that those ways of belonging are important. We all want to belong to a group with whom we share identity; that is normal human nature. Belonging is a good thing! However, these stories in Genesis, Revelation and Ephesians help us to see that God intends for us to share our primary identity with other Jesus-followers, rather than with those who share our language, culture or nationality. We belong to a people whose worldview is shaped by God, the Bible, and our faith community. Our primary identity is as Christians. We belong to a local church and a global church. This identity and belonging should be the primary influence on who we are.

Our congregations are places where we belong, where we know each other and where we enjoy similar styles of worship and following Jesus. Belonging to a local congregation where we like to sing the same songs or pray in the same way is a good thing. Many of us also belong to regional or national conferences—another setting in which we share customs and traditions that bind us together in common identity.

Mennonite World Conference is different from belonging to a local congregation or conference. MWC is our global Anabaptist church community, where we come together because we share convictions and experiences of God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the church. It is our place to catch just a little glimpse of heaven on earth—a glimpse of what it is like to worship God together with a multitude of others from different nations, different cultures and different languages. It is a glimpse of being the people God wants us to be—a people bound together by more than language, culture or local customs and traditions.

MWC is a place for us to learn from our cultural diversity about what it means to follow Jesus. I believe that we can best answer the question, "What does it mean to be an Anabaptist Christian in

my cultural context today?" by finding out how people in other cultural contexts answer that question. MWC is the place where we walk this journey of faith with others who are different from us—different cultures, different countries, even different types of Anabaptists in different conferences. MWC is the place where we are bound together by our shared convictions, experiences and relationships as Anabaptist Christians. Together, we are a bit of heaven here on earth. Together, we are strong enough to resist persecution and temptation. ❧

Adapted from an article that originally appeared in the April 2015

Courier. Arli Klassen of Kitchener, Ont., is the chief development officer for Mennonite World

Conference and coordinator of MWC continental representatives



/// For discussion

1. What are your experiences of worshipping God in an unfamiliar culture? How have these experiences been uplifting? How have they been challenging? What role does language play in the relationship between different cultures? What factors make it challenging to translate from one language to another?
2. Arli Klassen says that our worldview and our sense of identity is shaped by our language and our culture. Why is this concept important to remember as we come in contact with other cultures? What problems arise when we assume that our culture is the right one?
3. Klassen suggests that unity based on sameness is a response to fear and leads to pride. Do you agree? How important is it to have exposure to other cultures? How does a mix of cultures help us develop a broader concept of God?
4. How important is it for Mennonite Christians from around the world to meet at Mennonite World Conference assembly? Do you agree that worshipping with a diverse group of Christians feels like a little piece of heaven? Are you hoping to attend MWC assembly next time around?

—BY BARB DRAPER

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

We welcome your comments and publish most letters from subscribers. Letters, to be kept to 300 words or less, are the opinion of the writer only and are not to be taken as endorsed by this magazine or the church. Please address issues rather than individuals; personal attacks will not appear in print or online. In light of the many recent letters on the topic of sexuality, we will edit any letter on this topic to a paragraph and post the rest online at www.canadianmennonite.org. All letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines. Send them to letters@canadianmennonite.org and include the author's contact information and mailing address. Preference is given to letters from MC Canada congregants.

✉ Thanks to those who attended TRC report in Ottawa

I WOULD PUBLICLY like to thank and acknowledge the presence of Mennonite Church Canada personnel and other Mennonite workers who attended the Truth and Reconciliation Report in Ottawa. I think it is awesome that you took time out of your busy schedules and made this a priority and that you not only came, you participated whole-heartedly. Thank you for being role models to the wider church.

Steve Heinrichs, *Chi Chi Miigwetch, Nya:wen* for organizing everyone, making sure we were kept up to date with what was coming! Your passion and willingness to be part of this process of reconciliation and teaching the wider church is amazing.

Willard Metzger, your willingness to be involved in the activities and connecting with many of us "Mennos in the crowd" was heart-warming. I appreciated your presence.

FROM OUR LEADERS

Garden dreams

LAURA LOEWEN

"All through the long winter I dream of my garden. On the first warm day of Spring I dig my fingers deep into the soft earth. I can feel its energy and my spirits soar."

~Helen Hays, quoted in *Like a Garden: A Biblical Spirituality of Growth* by Sara Coven Juengst (Westminster John Knox Press, 1996)

I may not dream of my garden all winter long, but as soon as the air is warmed by the sun, I itch to begin planting.

I love the growing season in Lower Mainland British Columbia! I live in a condominium and my garden grows on my patio. I so enjoy its growth and unfolding colour, both outside and from my kitchen table.

Purple is one of my favourite flower colours, so last year I chose to adorn my patio with purple lavender and pansies. It was quite lovely! However, by the end of the growing season, I realized that I missed flowers of other colours like red salvias, white petunias, and yellow daisies.

That's when I decided that this year would be different. My favourite purple

flowers are present, but so are red geraniums, yellow butterflies, orange marigolds, and sky blue felicia.

God planted the first garden. In the Genesis 1 rendition of the story, we see God's garden take shape in detail and in an orderly and planned way. God loved the result of his work. Six times we read the phrase "and it was good." The seventh

time, we read "and indeed, it was very good."

Scripture is filled with garden imagery like planting, watering, nurturing and pruning. Sometimes the imagery of a garden is used to describe humanity (Isa. 58:11).

In *Like a Garden*, Juengst writes, "Seeds are being planted all the time, according to a great and wonderful design of which we catch only fleeting glimpses. We are all part of an enormous, complex, formal garden, whose pattern, as with most gardens, we see more clearly at completion than while it is still in the process of unfolding."

The image of a garden is a rich one describing our relationship with each other as well as with the earth and our Creator. The church is always in the season of planning for tomorrow's garden, but at this time perhaps even more intentionally so. "To garden is to take part in mystery," Juengst writes. "To place seeds on the waiting earth, cover them with soil, moisten them, and wait in hope and expectation is a statement of faith."

May God bless the planting we are do-

ing today and give us both the joy and the faith as we wait for our garden to unfold.

Laura Loewen is a member-at-large on the general board of Mennonite Church Canada.



The Church is always in the season of planning for tomorrow's garden

Moses Falco, the man behind the lens, keep on running. I hope your photos and videos are posted somewhere that we can all see them. Your hard work did not go unnoticed.

Brander MacDonald, Lyndsay Mollins-Koehn, Henry Kraus, Sue Eagle—you guys are amazing! I know your path is not easy, but never lose your passion. You are our teachers even when we don't want to listen.

To the other "Mennos" who took time out of busy lives, we were asked to take a message back to our communities. We can be the pebble in the puddle that creates ripples but it has to start with us. In the words we heard from Clara Hughes, "We have to want to win for all"

To the wider church, I hope the time for listening and learning is upon us. We have a wonderful resource in our own backyards that we can learn much from. My prayer is that we will all take the opportunity to do so.

MIM HARDER, UXBRIDGE, ONT.

✉ Abortion should be of greater concern

I READ WITH disbelief (May 11 issue, page 19) that climate change is one of two issues Canadian

FAMILY TIES

Interruptions

MELISSA MILLER

So Jesus was striding down the street one day when a kid in front of him turned around and asked for a bus ticket. Jesus had noticed the boy—a skinny teenager wearing a too-big T-shirt—aimlessly tapping a stick on a nearby fence. Jesus had wondered why the boy wasn't in school, and if he was waiting for an adult doing business at the auto shop or picking up a coffee at the Tim's. Still, he was surprised when the boy spoke to him, interrupting his musing and asking for help. How did Jesus respond? What would Jesus do?

Of course, it wasn't Jesus walking down the street. It was me. But the question remains: what would Jesus do? We are often confronted with interruptions; sometimes they're requests for help, like the pleas I hear for bus tickets or spare change. Or it may be the child who asks us to read, the lonely family member who wants to talk, or the troubled stranger who seeks our succor to ease their suffering.

There is the dilemma about what is the most helpful response. Does a bit of cash enable addictive behavior? Does the bus ticket take the boy further away from his immediate responsibilities or his

network of support? No easy answers to those questions. I did slow my stride long enough to look in the boy's eyes, and to reply that no, I did not have a bus ticket, before I sailed away, carrying with me a slight and familiar whiff of guilt that my response had been inadequate.

Jesus isn't walking beside me on the street telling me what to do. But Jesus' teachings of the past are available to me through the gospels, and the ever-present spirit of the living Jesus is at work guiding and directing me. I'm pretty sure it was the spirit that offered me a new lens that day by which to view such encounters. This is the flash of awareness I received: interruptions are opportunities! I'm pretty sure I heard this before, probably

Isn't each day filled with such moments where one can joyfully live out the work God calls us to do?

even read it in a book somewhere. But that day I got it.

In my purpose-driven life, I am often striding vigorously toward a goal (literally as I often do on sidewalks or paths, or figuratively in other ways). The interruptions are irritations throwing me off my path and delaying my progress. What would Jesus do with such interruptions?

There are plenty of stories that answer that question. There was the centurion who came asking for healing of his paralyzed servant (Matthew 8). There were the ten lepers who called out for mercy as Jesus came near their village (Luke 17). And the memorable encounter with the bleeding woman who sought Jesus' help by simply touching the fringe of his cloak (Matthew 9). Interruptions all. He looked people in the eye, listened to their deep questions, sometimes saying yes to their request, sometimes not, but always offering God's love. Jesus' response was driven by his mission, by his firm grasp on the work God had sent him to do. Might we too see interruptions as opportunities to join in God's mission?

While I had no bus ticket to offer the boy, did I not have other things to offer? If my mission is to help people develop healthy, vibrant relationships with God, self and others (as stated in the by-line), aren't these unplanned-for encounters opportunities to enact my part in God's

mission? Isn't each day filled with such moments in which one can joyfully live out the work God calls us to do (whether or not it's on the to-do list)?

Melissa Miller (familyties@mymts.net) has a passion for helping people develop healthy, vibrant relationships with God, self and others.



Christians are most concerned about according to the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC). It is certainly trendy to be talking about climate change, but surely when one in five unborn babies is aborted in Canada, Christians should have different priorities. It seems to be a case of straining the gnat and swallowing the camel.

If CCC, including Mennonite Church Canada, have the time and resources to travel across the country warning of climate change and agitating for government

action, then one would think they would be concerned about this widespread but mostly hidden abomination.

Where is the outrage among Canadian Christians against the killing of thousands of unborn babies? Have we really become so distracted by the “in” causes that our moral compass no longer functions? Or is it too uncomfortable and untrendy to be part of the struggle against this evil? When has *Canadian Mennonite* last mentioned this subject?

In the coming federal election how many will vote

GOD, MONEY AND ME

When a little becomes a lot

SHERRI GROSZ

“**A**nother of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, spoke up, ‘Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?’” (John 6: 8-9)

I’ve always loved the story of Jesus and the disciples feeding the five thousand. Crowds of people have been following Jesus. Upon seeing the crowd, Jesus asks Philip where they can buy bread to feed these people, and Philip responds that it would take six month’s wages to buy enough bread so that each person could have one bite. It’s clear to Philip that there are not enough resources to feed this crowd.

Then Andrew speaks up, “Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?” Andrew knows that this isn’t the solution they need—the loaves and fish won’t even give each person a taste. It’s not enough.

And yet Jesus takes the boy’s meager offering, gives thanks and distributes it to the crowd. Somehow, there is more than enough—twelve baskets were filled with leftovers!

The boy who shared his food is only

mentioned in passing. Have you ever wondered what prompted his generosity? Had he grown up with a little or a lot? How did he learn to share?

In my work at Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC), I meet people of all ages and income levels. Many of them have seen generosity and the value of sharing demonstrated and encouraged by their family of origin. Often, but not always, this demonstration and encouragement was given by a parent. Some will talk about watching their father or mother carefully set aside a portion of



Examples alone are not enough. We still have to decide to share our financial resources, and then take action.

the family’s income for the church each week before determining how the rest of the money would be used.

Some recall getting their first job and how this inspired conversations about how they needed to begin giving. Others recall deciding to be baptized or to join a church and the conversations that began about the importance of sharing their financial resources. I have been told about people dividing their allowance into Sharing, Saving, and Spending categories as their first experience with the concept

of sharing their financial resources with others.

Occasionally, MFC staff are invited to speak at baptismal and membership classes on the topic of finances and generosity. Following one such baptism class, a young adult reflected, “If I don’t decide to start being generous now, even though I am still a student, I will always find an excuse not to give.” Wise words. Examples alone are not enough. We still have to decide to share our financial resources, and then take action.

Our culture trumpets greed and scarcity. As people made in the image of God, we are invited to emulate God’s generosity by sharing what we have with open hands, much like the little boy offering his bread and fish.

If you would like to explore financial generosity or are curious about the many ways Canadians can support the causes they care about, MFC has resources and staff who can help. Find

out more by visiting our website at www.MennoFoundation.ca or by contacting the office nearest to you.

Sherri Grosz is a stewardship consultant at Mennonite Foundation of Canada, serving generous people in Ontario and the eastern provinces. For more information on generosity, stewardship education, and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit MennoFoundation.ca.

for parties that support abortion or do not allow their Members of Parliament to speak against it? Canada is the only western country with no legal restrictions on abortion.

We read with horror in the Old Testament how the heathen sacrificed their children to their gods, but we remain unmoved when unborn babies are sacrificed to the gods of our day—the career god, the wealth god, the convenience god, the not-quite-normal god. We can be sure the blood of these innocents will be held against the nation. And when God asks the the CCC what it was doing while this evil was being perpetrated I hope they will have a better answer than that they were talking about climate change.

SAM ENTZ, PLATTSVILLE, ONT.

✉ Why make homosexuality the greater sin?

THE SCRIPTURES TELL us no sin is greater than another. Then why all the uproar on homosexuality as a sin? Why do some people in our churches harp on this one? After all, if all the liars, gossips, thieves, coveters and adulterers were not allowed in our churches, there would be some pretty small congregations on any given Sunday morning. And more importantly, we have always been told we should strive to live our lives to be more like Jesus. The question has often been asked, “What would Jesus do?”

HILDA A. ELIAS, ALTONA, MAN.



Read the rest of this letter online at canadianmennonite.org.

✉ Change the Focus

RE: “**MORE STUDY** on the Bible and homosexuality sought” June 8, p. 14.

Winkler Bergthaler Church’s request for more study on the texts referring to homosexuality and marriage brings to mind Justin Lee’s book *Torn*. Lee was a Bible-believing evangelical Christian who was convinced of the sinfulness of homosexuality. Then in his teenage years he discovered that he was same-sex attracted. After many years of struggle, he finally put aside the biblical texts and other literature and studied Jesus’ message as a whole. There he found compassion, love and acceptance.

MARY FUNK, JUBILEE MENNONITE CHURCH, WINNIPEG



Read the rest of this letter online at canadianmennonite.org.

✉ Tired of the sexuality debate

I AM TIRED of reading and listening to the debate about the church’s concern with acceptance or rejection of homosexuals, transgender individuals, same-sex marriage and other sexual issues. I am unaware that Jesus ever mentioned homosexuality. He talked about sexual immorality, but He said nothing about homosexuality or same sex marriage. If homosexuality and transgender marriage are the most pressings issues for the Mennonite church, I would rather spend my time working at the local Food Bank.

PETER KROEGER, CALGARY



Read the rest of this letter online at canadianmennonite.org.

A moment from yesterday



A group of 18 young men and women travel in the back of a truck on their way a *Sängerfest* or song festival in the Didsbury, Alberta, area in 1934. No seatbelts used here! Song festivals were popular in Mennonite circles as a way of gathering to see old friends, enjoy singing four-part harmony music, and a way for young men and women to meet in controlled environments. These events often included people from different Mennonite denominations. Charismatic itinerant music directors, like Kornelius H. Neufeld, commonly led these groups, which could number over a hundred singers.

Photo: Mennonite Heritage Centre/Mennonite Archival Image Database

Text: Conrad Stoesz, Mennonite Heritage Centre



archives.mhsc.ca

LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Where you start matters

TROY WATSON

The fragrance of old books mingled with stale pipe tobacco washed over me like finely aged wisdom, fermented from years of deep contemplation. Every wall of the late history professor's study was concealed behind rows of shelves fully stocked with hardcover and paperback treasure.



in hell, just for existing. Ridiculous!”

I could tell Mary was as compassionate as she was direct. I got the sense she wasn't interested in debating me. She was trying to set me free. From what, I still wasn't sure.

“Does the Bible story start with the Fall?” she asked.

“Um...”

“Good heavens. I thought you studied theology. The Bible starts with creation, right? You've read Genesis haven't you?”

“Yes.”

“And what does God say about creation, about human beings?”

“That they are good?”

“Don't answer like you're asking a ques-

My sense of gratitude for the invitation to come “pillage” Robert's library morphed into unbridled excitement. I soon had three boxes full of literary gems that would profoundly alter the course of my spiritual journey.

“So you're studying theology?” Mary asked as I thanked her yet again. I'd never met Robert's widow Mary before, but she seemed pleasant. She was short and unassuming but her eyes revealed an enormous and fiery personality.

I commenced with the customary small talk and social niceties but she cut me off.

“Are your theology professors still teaching Augustine's “original sin” baloney?”

She spoke with a bluntness only elderly women can get away with. Her non-nonsense, “I don't give a snap!” attitude simmered with confidence, passion and humour. I pictured her donning a purple jumpsuit and giant red hat whenever she left the house.

“The doctrine of original sin is child abuse,” she continued. “The first identity we give our kids is shame. Terrible! It's the church that should be ashamed! Raising children to believe they're bad from birth, teaching them they're wicked, sinful creatures who deserve to burn

tion. Have some confidence boy. This is what I'm talking about. You kids walk around like you're unworthy and don't know anything because that's what the church taught you. They gave you shame instead of a blessing.”

“I see.”

“I'm not sure you do yet son. The Bible story starts with creation and tells us three things about human beings. First, we're made in the likeness of God, male AND female. Second, we're blessed by God. And third, we're very good. But our salvation theology doesn't start there. It begins with the fall, the belief that we're bad, sinful creatures who are cursed and deserve to burn in hell.”

“But the fall did happen.” I responded.

“But it's not where the story begins. When we start with the fall we're not telling God's story. Where we start matters.”

Mary elaborated on how our theology has practical implications. Humans are prone to self-fulfilling prophecies, she explained. We're wired to become what we believe we are. A child who is repeatedly told he's stupid will eventually believe this and not live up to his intellectual capacity. If a child is constantly reminded the Bible says he's innately bad and deceitful, his behaviour and desires will be inclined to reflect this negative identity. However, if he believes he's ultimately good and made in the image of God he'll grow into this positive identity more readily.

Starting with the fall puts us at odds with who we are. Starting with creation and God's pronouncement of our innate goodness invites us to be reconciled or renewed with our true identity—the image of God. Where we start makes a huge difference.

One morning I started typing an essay and gibberish appeared on my screen. I'm confident in my typing skills so I assumed my computer was messed up. It wouldn't be the first time my computer acted up, doing inexplicable things. It turned out it wasn't the computer or my typing. My hands were

If I start in the wrong place, my theology will be off, even if my line of reasoning is sound and my Bible study skills are exemplary.

in the wrong starting position on the keyboard. Although my computer and typing technique were fine, the result was utter nonsense because I'd started in the wrong place.

The same goes for my theology. If I start in the wrong place, my theology will be off, even if my line of reasoning is sound and my Bible study skills are exemplary. Most theological frameworks are reasonable if you accept the assumptions (presuppositions) they start with. It's where we start that makes the difference. ❧

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

The future of poverty

BY WILL BRAUN

SENIOR WRITER

In the year 2000, world leaders set themselves a deadline for dramatically decreasing global poverty. That deadline was 2015.

The global betterment plan was contained in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), which committed the international community to: eradicate extreme hunger and poverty; provide universal primary education; promote gender equality; reduce child mortality; “ensure environmental sustainability;” and other measures. The plan also inspired a number of “Make Poverty History” campaigns which sprang up in Canada and elsewhere in 2005.

The Make Poverty History slogan, which always stretched the tension between optimism and impossibility, has inevitably lost its punch. We haven’t made poverty history. But have we made progress as a human collective in caring for the least of these? And how does Canada compare to other countries?



particularly in countries experiencing conflict and with respect to environmental factors which significantly affect poverty. Global carbon dioxide emissions have increased by more than 50 percent since 1990 and 40 percent of humanity faces water scarcity, a number that is expected to rise.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reports that the official development assistance from its member countries—34 of the richest nations, excluding Russia, China, India and Brazil—has increased by 66 percent since 2000. That said, less than a third of the US\$135 billion spent last year went to the poorest countries. (These figures do not include contributions by individuals to aid organizations, only government funding.)

Another troubling stat is that only five OECD countries have met the target of foreign aid being 0.7 percent of Gross National

While the world has taken important steps to address poverty, income disparity is a growing concern among economists and thinkers.

The UN, which serves as the designated scorekeeper for MDG progress, said in its recently released final report that the goals have “produced the most successful anti-poverty movement in history.” According to the UN website, the number of people living in extreme poverty (less than \$1.25 a day) has declined by half, from about 1.7 billion in 2000 to an estimated 836 million now. Stated another way, nearly a billion people have been “lifted out of extreme poverty.”

The report also says there have been major gains in gender equity in schooling as well as in child and maternal mortality, both of which are reportedly about half of what they used to be.

The report acknowledges gaps,

Income, a goal first set by world leaders in 1970. The five are the U.K., Denmark, Norway, Luxemburg and Sweden.

Canada is not among them. Not even close. We sit at 0.24 percent, with spending down from US\$4.4 billion in 2013 to US\$4.2 billion last year. The OECD report flags Canada as one of the countries with the biggest proportional decrease in development assistance. On average, OECD countries gave 0.5 percent less in 2014 compared to the year before.

Of course, dollars, even if they were abundant, won’t solve everything. You can’t buy peace, accountable governance or cooler global temperatures.

While the world has taken important steps to address poverty, income

What do they give? To see how countries rate in foreign aid targets, see compareyourcountry.org/oda



disparity is a growing concern among economists and thinkers.

Last year, Forbes magazine reported that there are 1,645 billionaires in the world, collectively worth US\$6.4 trillion. The 2014 Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report, which looks at household wealth, estimated that 1 percent of the global population owns 44 percent of the world’s wealth. Eight percent of adults are worth more than US\$100,000 while an estimated 3.3 billion people—over 70 percent of adults worldwide—are worth less than \$10,000. The report says global household wealth doubled between 2000 and 2015.

The OECD which says income inequality threatens social cohesion, notes that in its member states, the richest 10 percent make almost 10 times that of the poorest 10 percent. That is an historic high and the trend is expected to continue. The economic growth of recent decades has essentially bypassed 40 percent of the population.

The rise in prominence of the notion of philanthropy has obscured the problem of income inequality by presenting the extremely wealthy as the saviours of the poor. Few ask whether the philanthropists obtained their wealth on the backs of the poor or whether a more equitable distribution of opportunity would be a more dignified and effective means to address poverty.

The current global trends are toward more overall wealth, greater inequality, fewer people in extreme poverty and continued increases in greenhouse gas emissions. The notion of endless economic growth continues to be the defining economic and political dogma worldwide.

While UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon recently said that “extreme poverty can be eradicated within one more generation,” humanity will have to do some soul searching in order to make that happen. ☼

To see the Canadian government’s response regarding foreign aid, go to canadianmennonite.org/the-future-of-poverty



VIEWPOINT

Alberta pastors call for action from TRC hearings

COMPILED BY CANADIAN MENNONITE STAFF

Moved by what they saw and heard in Ottawa last month at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings, pastors Ryan Dueck and Jim Shantz from Alberta feel compelled to issue a call to action regarding our indigenous neighbours.

For Dueck the experience was very personal. He sums up his impressions in an article entitled “Shared room,” written for *Intotemak* in which he picks up on a challenge by First Nations Chief Perry Bellegarde to “make room” for indigenous people. “For me, this has been quite literal by virtue of the makeup of our family. My wife and I are the parents of Ojibway/Metis twins. This is something that I quite literally could never have imagined growing up in an area where racism and anti-indigenous sentiment was and remains rampant.

“I’ve been asked a number of times this week how it feels for me, a father of indigenous kids, to be at an event like this, where I and those in analogous situations, are sometimes described as part of the problem.”

The truth is, he continues, “it’s not always easy. Every time I see a picture taken in a residential school, every time I see a collection of beautiful brown faces in those pictures, every time I hear about children wrenched away from families and communities, and the familiar identity-forming traditions and institutions that so many of us take for granted, I see my own beautiful brown kids.

“And I am not naïve. I know that there is a link between Canada’s history and the present-day realities that lead to indigenous kids being put up for adoption and entering child protective services at a wildly disproportionate rate to the rest of the population. And I know that I am ‘assimilating’ our kids into non-indigenous

ways of being in the world. So this making room, it comes with a cost. It’s a tricky thing to do well.”

“One thing I have learned over the years is that the best way to ‘make room’ for people, whatever their ethnicity, whatever their religion, whatever their politics, whatever their worldview, whatever their relationship to you—is to simply follow the teaching and example of Christ: To love as you would like to be loved.

Dueck suggests some ways of “making room”:

- Deciding that the person across from you is a creature of wonder, and that they stand before you ‘the way they are’ because of a complex set of causes and a unique story.
- Respecting and honouring the ‘other’ not as a means to an end, not as a part of some broader agenda, but simply because they are a fellow creation of God.
- Asking questions, exhibiting curiosity, demonstrating an interest in what the world looks like through another’s set of eyes and experiences.
- Being open to having your own views expanded and nuanced.
- Deciding not to make assumptions about why others think the way that they do that you would not appreciate being applied to you and your views.
- Being resolutely determined to never making sweeping generalizations about a group of people that you feel would be unfair if applied to the group (or groups) that you happen to belong to.”

For Shantz, the most vivid memory was the Walk of Reconciliation, a 4-km trek from Gatineau, Quebec to Ottawa City Hall. “While I may be overstating it,” he says, “it felt like a move of God! We walked with more than 6,000 people from all walks of life and places from

PHOTO BY JIM SHANTZ



A marcher on the Walk of Reconciliation commemorates her parents, taken away at seven years of age.

across the nation, in solidarity with Canada’s indigenous community and in memory of the 150,000 students of the Indian residential school system.

“The challenges of this seven-year process are many. The province of Alberta sits in the very heart of the TRC legacy, leading the way with 24 residential schools. Edmonton is home to approximately 100,000 persons of indigenous identity.”

In his report to his Mennonite Central Committees colleagues, Shantz suggested these action ideas:

- “Each person become a witness. I have a sermon called ‘The TRC and the Church’ which is my way of telling the story. But one need not have a pulpit to tell the story.
- Learn small gestures of respect. Treat the street person as you would any other human being.
- Show up and listen. Watch for public events in your area where you can go and learn. One of the most plaintive pleas I heard was, ‘Is there anyone out there who will hear my story?’
- Support public initiatives to address the educational, employment, mental health and child welfare initiatives at the municipal, provincial and national levels.
- Help dispel the myths surrounding the stereotypes and racism so ingrained in our personal and systemic fibre.”

Shantz continues, “It feels like a mammoth task. The effects of years of abuse and ignorance will take time. I am convinced that the church is well placed to have a significant part in the process of reconciliation.” ❧

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Bauman—James Edward Toews (b. June 6, 2015), to Jenn Toews and Scott Bauman, Breslau Mennonite, Ont.

Bowman—Hunter Philip (b. May 22, 2015), to Bridget and Corey Bowman, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Corner Jutzi—Emily Isabella Magdalena (b. June 7, 2015), to Karen Jutzi and Thom Corner, Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont.

Heinrichs—Bethany Marie (b. June 10, 2015), to Lisa and Robert Heinrichs, Langley Mennonite, B.C.

Kerfoot—Penelope (b. May 27, 2015), to Alyssa (Lichti) and Dave Kerfoot, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.

Koepke—Ryan Luke Micah (b. Feb. 25, 2015), to Michael and Daniela Koepke, Westhills Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Leis—Hudson Elmer (b. May 23, 2015), to Brendan and Sheryl Leis, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Lockett—Lahara Shareen (b. Nov. 19, 2014), to Dan and Sue Lockett, Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Maclaren—Magdalena Rose Albrecht (b. Dec. 30, 2014), to Pam Albrecht and David Maclaren, Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Martin—Naomi Elise (b. May 13, 2015), to Rachel Burkholder and Simon Martin, Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont.

Williams—Sierra (b. May 19, 2015), to Jennifer (Kropf) and Clyde Williams, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.

Baptisms

Jessa Braun, Josh Gingerich, Serena Gingerich, Joel Klassen, Jonathan Klassen—Breslau Mennonite, Ont., June 21, 2015.

Dathan Bender, Micaela Gray, Rachel Ropp, Lucas Swartzentruber, Katie Wagler—East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., June 14, 2015.

Jonathan Froese—Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg, June 21, 2015.

Sara Gossen, Anika Nelson, Alexander Schonwetter, Karannina Schonwetter, Maia Thomlinson—Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg, June 28, 2015.

Hannah Derksen, Shirley Ens—Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask., May 31, 2015.

Marriages

Cober/Mann—Nicholas Cober and Janessa Mann, Ottawa Mennonite, Ont., June 20, 2015.

Friesen/Schultz—Gary Friesen (Niagara United Mennonite) and Breanne Schultz (Our Saviour Lutheran, Dryden, Ont.) at Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., June 13, 2015.

Shiels-Preston/Thoman—Casey Lynn Shiels-Preston and Peter Andrew Thoman (Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.), at Kingsville Lakeside Park, Ont., June 20, 2015.

Deaths

Bender—Hilda, 91 (b. Jan. 7, 1924; d. May 22, 2015), East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Dettweiler—Beatrice, 86 (b. March 18, 1929; d. April 4, 2015), Breslau Mennonite, Ont.

Gerber—Dan, 70 (b. Oct. 30, 1944; d. June 3, 2015), Poole Mennonite, Ont.

Harder—Tina (nee Patkau), 91 (b. June 27, 1923; d. March 18, 2015), Pleasant Point Mennonite, Clavet, Sask.

Klassen—Dave, 87 (d. Feb. 13, 2015), Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask.

Knelsen-Peters—Helene (nee Kopeschny), 86 (b. March 30, 1929; d. June 25, 2015), St. Catharines Mennonite, Ont.

Neufeld—John, 86 (b. March 26, 1929; d. June 29, 2015), Winkler Berghaler Mennonite, Man.

Perrault—Mary (nee Jacobson), 78 (b. April 6, 1937; d. May 19, 2015), Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Peters—Agnes, 82 (b. Jan. 25, 1933; d. June 13, 2015), First Mennonite, Calgary.

Poettcker—Henry, 90 (b. March 27, 1925; d. May 24, 2015), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Poovong—Bouying, 74 (b. Sept. 25, 1940; d. June 23, 2015), Trinity Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Reesor—John Tilman, 87 (b. June 21, 1927; d. June 1, 2015), Wideman Mennonite, Markham, Ont.

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GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Community Mennonite celebrates 25 years

“Amalgamating churches like a new marriage . . .”

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
DRAYTON, ONT.

The roots ran deep in both the Berea and Moorefield Mennonite Churches, north of Kitchener-Waterloo. Berea, first known as the Parker Mission, was founded in 1941 and joined the Ontario Mennonite Conference in 1947. That same year a congregation was founded less than 10 miles away at Moorefield, using a disused Anglican church building.

In 1967 the two congregations started sharing a pastor. They also had a combined Mennonite Youth Fellowship, adult fellowship, Christmas and evening services, as well as sports teams.

By 1989 conversations had begun to amalgamate the two congregations. This was a difficult process, according to Vernon Cressman, because founding members had spent much time and energy building or renovating their respective buildings. But with only 30 members between two congregations, and many young adults having moved away, the conversation became more about where to locate the congregation—in one of the existing buildings or in an entirely new location.

Eventually they decided to relocate to Drayton, a village between their two churches, and to build something brand new. The old Berea building was purchased by an Old Colony Mennonite group and the Moorefield building was eventually converted into a dwelling.

Ruth Shantz, a former member of the Berea congregation, felt that for the first few years the new congregation was like a marriage, with the need for much give and take. They had many decisions to make, including which pulpit and communion table to use and how the annual picnic

would be organized.

To the delight of the congregation, some young families returned, enlivening the mood. Shantz feels that after 25 years the older identifications have slipped away, especially as new folk have joined.

Today about 50 people gather on Sundays to worship, with the largest demographic being youth/young adult and the next largest group being the parents of those youth. This gives the congregation great joy. They have few seniors and few school-age children. When the nearby Glen Allen Mennonite Church closed in 1999, some of its members began to attend at Community as well.

Janet Weber, the congregation’s administrative assistant, recently told the church council how much the building is

used, with many community groups on the list. Wellington County Public Health and the Upper Grand School Board run many programs for the growing Low German Mennonites in the area.

On the weekend of May 22 to 24 the congregation celebrated their 25th anniversary under the theme, “Give thanks to the Lord for He is good, His love endures forever” (Psalms 136:1). A community fair ran most of Saturday, including food and live music. Inside the building were quilts and historical displays. Sunday saw a worship service, in which previous pastors shared, followed by a potluck meal.

As the congregation looks forward, they hope to capitalize on their rich mission history to continue to reach out near and far. Members in the past have served in a variety of locations, and part of the celebration weekend included a fundraiser for a mission trip to the Dominican Republic.

Elder Darlene Wideman notes that the congregation hopes to continue to build relationships within the community so that people will see Christ through them, and will join their congregation. Even with seven other churches in Drayton there are folk without a church home in the community. She notes that it is a “challenge to always be listening and following the leading of the Holy Spirit.” The congregation is currently seeking a pastor. ❧

PHOTOS COURTESY OF COMMUNITY MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP (DRAYTON)



Mike Martin (second from right) and his siblings (from left), Steve, Ron, Willard, Gloria and Terry Martin sang at the 25th anniversary celebration for Community Mennonite Fellowship in Drayton, Ont., on May 23. Mike, who is the chair of church council, wrote a special song for the event.

Emotions run high at Mennonite Church USA convention

By PAUL SCHRAG

Mennonite World Review
KANSAS CITY, MO.

Pick a category of person at the Mennonite Church USA convention, and you could identify their pain. It might have been the pain of exclusion due to sexual orientation. Or of feeling the church has agreed to tolerate sin. It might have been the pain of sexual abuse. Or of concern for the future of a church sharply divided on how to relate to sexual minorities.

"I've never been at a convention with so many tears, and I've been to quite a few," said Dorothy Nickel Friesen of Newton, Kan., on July 4, the convention's last full day.

Friesen, a retired pastor and conference minister, wore an orange arm band that identified her as a "conversation coach" who could help people deal with difficult situations. She had seen people leaving the delegate hall in tears, "some mourning the move toward inclusion and some the lack of inclusion."

As the movement of conservative

congregations leaving the denomination picks up speed, the prospect of a split over the place of gays and lesbians in the church raised the sense that the denomination's future hung in the balance.

Delegates passed two resolutions charting what some saw as a middle-of-the-road course for policies on same-sex relationships. One resolution reaffirms the denomination's Membership Guidelines, which uphold traditional marriage and forbid same-sex ceremonies. The other commits to forbear with those whose beliefs and practices on the inclusion of people with same-sex attraction differ from the denomination's official stance. The Membership Guidelines resolution got a 60 percent majority and the forbearance one 72 percent.

Some hoped the combination of freedom and accountability offered hope for holding the church together.

"Voting for both was, for me, a way of

trying to keep the broader perspectives that we so desperately need," said Tim Detweiler of Washington, Iowa. "To force unity one way or another is to create a more one-sided church."

Others saw an impasse that satisfied no one. "I think we are now officially stuck," said Larry Diener of Souderton, Pa. "We used to be just stuck."

Diener voted only for the Membership Guidelines resolution because he believes its stance on same-sex marriage is biblical.

Andrea Zuercher of Lawrence, Kan., who supports inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the church, voted only for forbearance.

"We need the time and space to listen to each other, and forbearance does that, but the Membership Guidelines would knock the meaning of that away," she said.

Delegates passed other resolutions, including ones against "endless war" and sexual abuse. They tabled a resolution that called for divesting from companies that profit from the Israeli occupation of Palestine.

Supporters of LGBT inclusion showed their pain and frustration openly. On July 2, about half a dozen supporters of the LGBT advocacy group Pink Menno took the stage in the delegate hall and attempted to perform a satirical drama. Several delegates shouted their opposition, and moderator Elizabeth Soto Albrecht repeatedly asked the activists to leave.

Two days later, family members of LGBT people were given five minutes to speak to delegates but were cut off when they exceeded the allotted time, prompting shouts asking that they be allowed to continue. Outside the delegate hall, Pink Menno led daily hymn sings, the last of which drew several hundred people.

Singing symbolized healing for a different kind of pain during "A Service of Lament and Hope for Sexual Abuse" July 3 at Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral. Hundreds of worshipers confessed the church's failures and declared solidarity with survivors of abuse.

Convention attendance was 4,680, matching Phoenix two years ago as the smallest of the seven MC USA conventions since 2003. The youth convention accounted for 2,371 of the participants. ❧

LEAMINGTON MENNONITE HOME PHOTO



Ron Myers (left), Irene Collard, Maureen Myers, Jim Wiebe and Ernie Neufeld barbecued burgers for the annual Leamington Mennonite Home celebration on Canada Day. Over 800 attended the event which featured the majestic brass quintet, door prizes and a tasty meal.

Fund established for survivors of abuse

Mennonite Church Canada
WINNIPEG

The Discernment Group working to care for victims of John Howard Yoder's sexual abuse and to advocate against sexual abuse in the Mennonite church has established a Care and Prevention Fund with Mennonite Church USA.

The purpose of the fund is threefold:

- Recompense, at least in some small measure, the material costs that people victimized by Yoder or another credentialed leader of Mennonite Church USA undertook on their road to healing.
- Provide tangible care for people who have experienced sexual abuse.
- Assist in the prevention of sexual abuse.

People who have been sexually abused by a credentialed leader (licensed or ordained) of MC USA and who have experienced significant financial cost as they sought healing are invited to submit their requests for reimbursement.

Canadian survivors should contact Linda Gehman Peachey at gehmanpeach@gmail.com or Regina Shands Stoltzfus at reginass@gooshen.edu.

All submission information will remain confidential. Requests from victims must be submitted by Aug. 31, 2015 to be considered.

Individuals with particular concern for victims and prevention of sexual abuse

are invited to contribute to this fund. Contributions to the Care and Prevention Fund will be divided between victims of sexual abuse and several ministries that provide care for victims or work to prevent abuse.

Depending on the number of survivor requests to the fund, the Discernment Group will determine what percentage of the total contributed funds will be given to victims of sexual abuse and what percentage will be given to related ministries. ❧

With files from MC USA



Anabaptist/Mennonites form abuse survivor chapter

BY BARBRA GRABER

HARRISONBURG, VA.

Twelve Mennonite-related survivors of sexual abuse and their advocates have joined other faith groups to create an Anabaptist/Mennonite chapter of the Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests (SNAP). Now in its 26th year, SNAP is an inclusive and independent advocacy group for victims of sexual abuse with the mission: "protect the vulnerable, heal the wounded, expose the truth." It has expanded around the world to serve

survivors of predators and pedophiles from within a variety of faith communities.

Convened by long-time victim-advocate Ruth E. Krall, with SNAP-trained survivor-advocates Cameron Altaras, Barbra Graber and advocate Jeff Altaras, SNAP-Menno provides a safe place, entirely independent of institutional structures, for Mennonite-related survivors to seek healing alongside other Anabaptist/Mennonites. Other founding chapter members are Rachel Halder (survivor-advocate), Stephanie Krehbiel (advocate), Keith Morris (survivor-advocate), Tim Nafziger (advocate), Hilary Scarsella (survivor-advocate), Lisa Schirch (advocate), Sylvia Shirk (survivor-advocate), and Jennifer Yoder (advocate).

SNAP's helpline (1-877-SNAP HEALS) offers a confidential listening ear to anyone who has seen, suspected or suffered sexual abuse within a faith community. SNAP's Survivor Support Groups provide a place where victims and their loved ones come to receive anonymous aid from other survivors. Many of these self-help groups are available across the continent for survivors and their loved ones.

SNAP-Menno leaders can be contacted at Mennonite@SNAPnetwork.org or by telephone: Cameron Altaras (Washington state): 206-930-7067 or Barbra Graber (Virginia): 540-214-8874. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Metzger new VP of Canadian Council of Churches

WINNIPEG—Willard Metzger is the first Mennonite to serve as vice president of the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) since it was founded in 1944. He has represented the national church on the governing board of the CCC since he began his role as executive director of Mennonite Church Canada in 2010. Metzger is one of three newly elected CCC VPs, including Bishop Ron Fabbro (Roman Catholic) and Rev. Stephen Kendall (Presbyterian). Together they support CCC President, Rev. Canon Dr. Alyson Barnett-Cowan, and General Secretary, Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton. Hamilton says that as a relatively new member of the CCC and one with a peace church tradition, MC Canada brings the Christian tradition of peace to all aspects of CCC's work, including a strong witness to social justice including the care of the vulnerable. The CCC represents more than 85 percent of the Christians in Canada, through 25 denominations. Metzger was elected to this new role at governing board meetings at Ottawa in May, 2015, and will serve for a three-year term. — Mennonite Church Canada



Metzger

Pastors and congregational leaders huddle together

ReLearning Community invites second cohort

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

ReLearning Community is focussed on building a discipling culture in congregations. Resourced by 3dm, an organization that began in the United Kingdom and has spread to many countries, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada invited a second cohort of leaders and congregations to take part in “a two-year spiritual journey.”

The vision of 3dm is to change the world by putting discipleship and mission back into the hands of ordinary people.” The first element of the journey is being a disciple and learning to disciple others. While the first cohort continued its weekend-long gathering on June 6 at Conrad Grebel University College, about 40 lay and paid leaders “tasted” what joining the ReLearning

program could look like for them.

A significant part of the day was focussed on the Huddle. Huddles are bi-weekly gatherings—either in person or electronically—led by someone who is already in a huddle of their own. This leader guides the group but does not take part in the story-telling about God’s presence in the participants’ lives. Their job is to help the participants to focus on: “Up”—questions about a person’s relationship with God; “In”—questions about a person’s self-care and personal relationships; and “Out”—questions about a person’s participation in the mission of God in the world.

While there were some complaints among participants of too much focus on the “lost” among “the last, the least and the

lost” the program does not specify what kind of participation in the mission of God a person or congregation will carry out.

Hanna Dalsgaard, a 3dm trainer from Denmark, told the story of her husband’s congregation’s involvement with women leading single-parent families in their small town, led by laypeople in the congregation. The leader in the huddle often asks participants what their goals are for the next two weeks and then checks back to see if the goals have been reached. A failure to do so is seen as a learning opportunity for the participant, but they are held accountable by the group. The huddle is based on an understanding of Jesus’ leadership of the twelve, and in particular his discipling of Peter, James and John.

A key difference to this discipling program from other programs that have been popular through the years is the focus on continued training/discipling of congregational leaders as they begin to do the same in their congregations. Previous programs often left leaders alone, trying to figure out how to apply the new ideas they had learned when they returned to their congregation. This program focusses on growing the leaders, supporting the leaders, and setting the leaders free to grow



Keith Regehr (left), Louise Miller, Rebecca Yoder Neufeld and Noé Gonzálía discuss the day’s learnings at Mennonite Church Eastern Canada’s ReLearning Community “taster workshop” on June 6 at Conrad Grebel University College.

and support leaders at home.

The first cohort was focussing on “multiplying missional leaders” in their second gathering. Further gatherings will include “launching missional communities,” and “leading kingdom movements.” Those in

the “taster workshop” were being invited to begin in November 2015. The day ended with an evening at The Adventurer’s Guild: Board Games Café and Tavern, focussing on self-care and relationship building, and creating room for unstructured sharing

among members of both the first cohort and those in the “taster” workshop.

While some costs are offset by MCEC’s Legacy Initiative Fund each participant and congregation has financial as well as time commitments. ☸

☸ Briefly noted

Study conference on homosexuality and the Bible planned

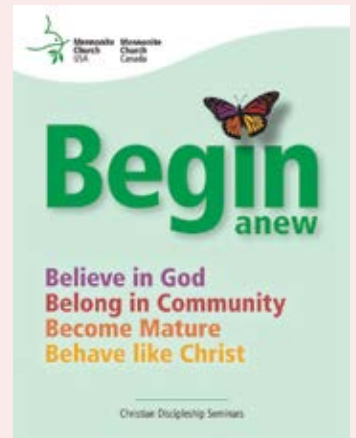
In response to a request by the Winkler (Man.) Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Mennonite Church Manitoba is organizing a one-day study conference on Sept. 26, 2015, at the Morden Mennonite Church. Titled “Seeking to be faithful together: the Bible and same-sex relationships,” the conference is intended to “inspire participants to read, understand and live by the Bible,” said Ken Warkentin, executive director of the area church. “We will look at passages regarding same-sex relationships and consider how Christians may disagree with each other and still remain in communion.” Warkentin said the conference will feed into the Being a Faithful Church process, and he hopes people from many churches will attend. Three speakers have been chosen to present on specific Scripture passages relating to sexuality and marriage: Dan Epp-Tiessen, a professor at Canadian Mennonite University; Michael Pahl, pastor of Morden Mennonite Church, and John H. Neufeld, past president of Canadian Mennonite Bible College. “We want to be very clear that this is not a delegate conference and it is not a decision-making conference,” said Warkentin. “Our purpose is to study the Bible together, not necessarily to come to an agreement.” Earlier this year Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church asked MC Manitoba and MC Canada for a clear statement of their position on same-sex marriage. The church has decided to withhold its financial support from the area church for 2015.

—BY J. NEUFELD

☸ Briefly noted

‘Begin Anew’ Christian discipleship resource now available

For 20 years, Palmer Becker nurtured dreams of an Anabaptist discipleship resource for small groups and congregations. That resource is now a reality and available online in English and Spanish. Jointly published by Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A., the 16-session series of studies is titled “Begin Anew: Christian discipleship seminars.” It’s based on Stuart Murray’s idea that Christianity is a combination of believing, belonging, becoming and behaving. “Begin Anew” is designed to help seekers make life-changing commitments to Christ, to the church, to spiritual disciplines and to a ministry in the church or mission in the world. According to Becker, of Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont., the resource is for anyone interested in growing in Christian faith from an Anabaptist perspective, regardless of his or her background or previous church experience. Ben Cassels, youth pastor at Waterloo North, says of Begin Anew, “These materials have far more questions than I can use, but I believe our youth will want to pick out questions that are of most interest.” Becker periodically takes on pastoral and leadership teaching assignments on behalf of MC Canada and Mennonite Mission Network. “Begin Anew” can be downloaded for free in English and Spanish at www.commonword.ca/go/89.
—MC Canada and MC U.S.A



☸ Briefly noted

Website launched for Quebec Mennonite history

La Société d’Histoire mennonite du Québec is pleased to announce the launch of its new website: <http://www.histoiremennonite.quebec>. A significant part of the society’s work has been writing articles for the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia online (GAMEO) gameo.org. The articles on Mennonite work in Québec include: «Église Chrétienne de Saint-Jérôme,» «Église Chrétienne de Saint-Laurent,» «Église Chrétienne Évangélique de Saint-Eustache,» «Église Chrétienne Évangélique de Saint-Thérèse,» «Wingender, Éric (1956-2011),» by Zacharie Leclair; «Église de la Persévérance,» «Shannon, Clyde A. (1912-2000)» by Zacharie Leclair and Richard Lougheed; «Église évangélique mennonite de Rouyn-Noranda» by Richard Lougheed; and «La Maison de l’Amitié» by Lucille Marr. Translation work is in process to fulfill the SHMQ goal of making all articles on Mennonites in Québec available in both English and French.

—La Société d’Histoire mennonite du Québec

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Faith, fasting and feasting

Interfaith symposium discusses fasting, world peace

STORY AND PHOTOS BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

An interfaith symposium on July 6 at Abbotsford's Garden Park Tower found Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs reflecting on fasting and peace and then eating together with a meal around formally set tables.

"Fasting: An Aid to World Peace" was organized by Rizwan Peerzada, president of the local Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama (AMJ), who wanted to promote community and a sharing of experiences among people of different faiths in the Abbotsford community. With the practice of fasting and an interest in peace common to several of the world's religions, Peerzada felt people of those faiths should explore some kind of relationship.

"We are delighted to welcome you," said Mohammad Aslam Shad, AMJ Canada regional president. "We affirm the value of interfaith interaction where we can create an environment of brotherhood and peace."

April Yamasaki, pastor of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, had been invited to speak on behalf of Christianity. "Jesus is the centre of our faith. We believe in fasting we are not earning God's favour but are opening ourselves," Yamasaki said. She read the account from Matthew 4 about Jesus fasting in the wilderness to clarify the purpose of his own ministry.

Yamasaki said fasting can be not only abstaining from food but can include fasting from other types of distractions as well, explaining, "Fasting is an aid to peace with God; it makes room for God in our lives."

Hindu representatives Premaya Chaitanya said that fasting can be for philosophical, spiritual and physical reasons and for "our whole body, soul and mind. If everyone fasted for one day, it would affect

the planet," he said. "Our mother planet is very important to us. A nine-day fast is a selfless service to the planet."

Fasting is particularly meaningful to Muslims during the month of Ramadan, this year between June 18 and July 17. Speaking on behalf of Islam, Maulana Balal Khokar said that currently he was feeling hungry and thirsty every day, but that it was helping him to learn to be kind, to live a simple life, and not to be boastful and proud. "How does it relate to other people? I can see how it feels to be hungry. As Muslims, when we fast, we try to feel the pain of others."

Following the speaker presentations, more than 100 people participated in silent prayer, then enjoyed a buffet dinner together, courtesy of the hosting Muslim



Those attending the "Fasting: An Aid to World Peace" interfaith event in Abbotsford enjoyed dinner together. The meal was not served until after sunset because it took place during Ramadan.

group. In keeping with the tradition of fasting until after sunset during Ramadan, the meal was not served until 9:15 p.m.

Reflecting on the experience later, Yamasaki wrote on her blog ("April Yamasaki: Writing and Other Acts of Faith"), "While it was an honour to speak on the topic of fasting and peace, for me the overall tone of the evening and the informal interactions were even more significant." ❧

/// Briefly noted

Ministry grows in Ethiopia

WINNIPEG— Mennonite Church Canada and MKC Link Canada have developed a formal partnership in support of ministry in Ethiopia through Meserete Kristos College. MKC College Link Canada is an active volunteer support team that for the past ten years has been working to build awareness and raise funds for the college and is devoted to seeing the ministry in Ethiopia thrive. The team's liaison, Darrell Jantzi of Floradale Mennonite Church, Ont., is pleased to partner with Mennonite Church Canada in strengthening ties with the global church.

—Mennonite Church Canada



Tim Froese, Executive Minister, Witness, Darrell Jantzi, Liaison, Meserete Kristos College, and Dan Dyck, Director, Church Engagement-Communications, will work together to support the college's ministry in Ethiopia.

Two months after Nepal earthquake

What's been done, what are the plans

BY MEGHAN MAST

Mennonite Central Committee Canada
WINNIPEG

As the monsoon season begins in Nepal, the main priority for people affected by the April 25 earthquake is shelter. At the same time, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is looking at the longer term by working with local partners in Nepal.

MCC has worked against time to deliver immediate humanitarian assistance to rural and remote areas. The window of opportunity, especially in isolated areas is rapidly closing; heavy rains often trigger landslides, making travel to these areas much more difficult.

In June, through its partner Shanti Nepal, MCC delivered metal sheeting to 459 families in the community of Darkha in Dhading district of central Nepal. These roofing materials are particularly useful because they can be used as temporary roofing and also repurposed for long-term housing.

The earthquake significantly damaged almost all the houses in the community of Darkha, and many people are using salvaged materials and tarps to build temporary shelters. Others are staying in sheds their animals once occupied.

The government of Nepal estimates over 505,000 houses were completely destroyed, with nearly 280,000 houses left partially damaged. MCC was able to respond quickly and effectively from the beginning because staff was on the ground when the disaster struck.

Mark Epp, the new program director for MCC Canada, recently visited Nepal to assess and plan for ongoing response. Ultimately the goal is to build earthquake-resistant housing and train local people on improved building techniques.

“We want to support rebuilding in a way that leaves people less vulnerable,” he says.

Epp oversaw the earthquake response in Haiti, where MCC also placed a significant emphasis on training local builders in improved techniques.

In addition to meeting urgent needs, MCC is planning a three-year response, working with local partner organizations and coordinating with government and other organizations responding to the earthquake. MCC is also working on a program to respond to the mental health and trauma issues in earthquake-affected areas.

“We’re trying to work as carefully as

MCC PHOTO BY LUKE REESOR-KELLER



Residents of Dharka VDC collect metal sheeting shelter materials distributed by MCC Nepal and its partner Shanti Nepal.

possible to use the resources wisely,” says Epp. “We ask for people’s continued support and prayers as MCC Nepal and partners continue their response.” ❧

Explore Your Mennonite Roots
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Top-notch storytellers—including John Ruth, John Sharp, Len Friesen, Edgar Stoesz, and David Friesen—connect you to your heritage in Europe, Russia/Ukraine, Central Asia, Mexico, South America, the U.S. and Canada.

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**ONLINE NOW!**at canadianmennonite.org**Bike to GROW tops \$100K entering Ontario**

Two women are on a four-month bike ride across Canada to raise \$150,000 for MEDA's GROW (Greater Rural Opportunities for Women) project in Ghana. They've reached Ontario.

canadianmennonite.org/bike-grow-ontario

**Canadian Christians call for action on climate change**

In early July, church-based groups joined an estimated 10,000 citizens from all walks of life to march through downtown Toronto, calling attention to the need for "a justice-based transition to a clean-energy economy in Canada."

canadianmennonite.org/action-climate-change

Trauma healing in Nigeria

As Nigerian survivors of Boko Haram attacks deal with past trauma, healing teams support them on the path to healing and forgiveness. Partners Mennonite Central Committee and Ekkesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria are sponsoring workshops where stories are told and facilitators are trained.

canadianmennonite.org/trauma-healing-Nigeria

**Lassana Kanneh is healing**

A former child soldier seeks peace for himself and his community in Liberia and gains new skills and inspiration at Eastern Mennonite University's Summer Peacebuilding Institute.

canadianmennonite.org/lassana-kanneh-healing

**CANADIAN
MENNONITE**Online
canadianmennonite.org

"I think it's really important to give back," Victoria Pelletier says. "One way to do that is to sit on boards."



Be faithful, love your neighbours,
seek justice, and make peace

canadianmennonite.org/stories/where-are-young-board-members
Join the conversation, check Canadian Mennonite Facebook daily.

LIKE TWEET EMAIL

Briefly noted**Pax volunteers honoured with community service award**

The Mahatma Gandhi Center for Global Nonviolence of James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Va., recently honoured men who volunteered in civilian public service through Pax with a community service award. A program of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), Pax was created in response to the reinstatement of the military draft in the United States after the start of the Korean War. Mennonites, Quakers, Brethren and other conscientious objectors could perform alternative service in Europe, and later in Africa and South America. Pax began in the 1950s and continued until 1975, three years after the U.S. draft ended. By the time the program closed, nearly 1,200 young Americans, and some Canadians, had served in 40 countries. "Pax serves as an example of service and peacemaking for all of us today," says Jerry Benson, the university's provost. The award was accepted by Cal Redekop, a co-founder of the organization. For the full story on *Canadian Mennonite's* website, visit <http://bit.ly/1RR3509>.

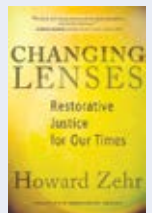
—Eastern Mennonite University

Classic restorative justice book re-issued

Howard Zehr's *Changing Lenses: Restorative Justice for Our Times* remains the go-to text in the restorative justice field even 25 years after it was first published. Herald Press recently launched an updated edition.

Uncovering widespread assumptions about crime, retributive justice, and the legal process, *Changing Lenses* offers proven alternatives for public policy and judicial reform. It has been widely used in courses on restorative justice, criminology, peacebuilding, and conflict transformation. For more information go to canadianmennonite.org/restorative-justice-book.

—MennoMedia




SUMMER 2015
 VOLUME 25 ISSUE 3

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AMBS window

READ THE BIBLE WITH US

Sara Wenger Shenk, President

I was studying at a seminary in California when in 1976 some U.S. evangelicals declared a “Battle for the Bible.” The lines were drawn, and heated arguments ensued. Battles about the Bible’s authority and relevance continue today. There is still widespread refutation and accusation around who is more or less biblical, faithful and righteous.

I am so happy to work in a learning community where, rather than feeling threatened or disheartened by the battles over the Bible in the wider church, we sink our roots deeply into its wellsprings of life. Like a tree planted by the streams, the AMBS community enjoys the sweet fruits of the wisdom of the Scriptures brought into places of hunger, despair, crisis and confusion.

The Anabaptists rediscovered the precious and revolutionary story of Jesus in the Scriptures. They experienced new birth. The Spirit lit within them an irrepressible joy and hope that led them to form communities of radical disciples who became courageous witnesses and agents of change.

AMBS invites everyone, no matter where we stand on disputed issues, to humbly and eagerly read the Bible with us—the Bible in conversation with good environmental science, social science, intercultural and conflict studies.



A world beleaguered by environmental travail is in need of skilled leaders committed to renew creation, God’s wondrous gift to us. In a world where many persons are violently displaced, or in desperation choose to migrate, we need inter-culturally adept community leaders who offer the Spirit’s pentecost hospitality. For a world where conflict and oppression rob many of God’s beloved children of their birthright, we need just and compassionate leaders like Jesus with a vision for God’s shalom.

This year’s graduates described “sweet fruits” they enjoyed at AMBS. One said: I’m a different person than a few years

ago. I’ve become more confident in my own voice. My profs pushed me not to stay on the fence, but to take a stand.

Another: Thank you for the hospitality, wisdom and formation I experienced while here. I’m a different person, in a good way.

Another: I didn’t want to come to seminary. I was scared, thinking this place is so intellectual that a normal person like me wouldn’t fit in. What I found is people who love God and love learning; normal, real people. This isn’t just a place that’s strong academically. It is also a strong community, a holistic community that knows how to laugh, play, eat and worship together.

And another said, with tears: I’ve identified what this yearning within me is about; it’s a yearning for God’s Shalom. Thank you for helping me to see that’s what I’ve been wanting for myself and others. ●

Photo above: At the commissioning service on May 22, graduates lit candles while the congregation sang a blessing for them.

2015 GRADUATES

Fifteen graduates honored

Fifteen graduates were honored at the AMBS commencement service on May 23, 2015. They received the following degrees and certificates.

MDiv Master of Divinity

MAPS Master of Arts: Peace Studies

MACF Master of Arts in Christian Formation

Certificate in Theological Studies

Jon Byler. *MDiv.* Will continue as associate pastor of Metamora (Ill.) Mennonite Church where he has been serving since 2005. He and Deborah, his wife, have two children and eight grandchildren.

Andrea Baker Dean. *MDiv.* Will enter a Clinical Pastoral Education

(CPE) internship in the fall at Loyola University Medical Center, Maywood, Ill. She is married to Danny Dean. She is an associate member of Chicago Community Mennonite Church and has been attending Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Taylor Dwyer-Zeman. *MAPS.*

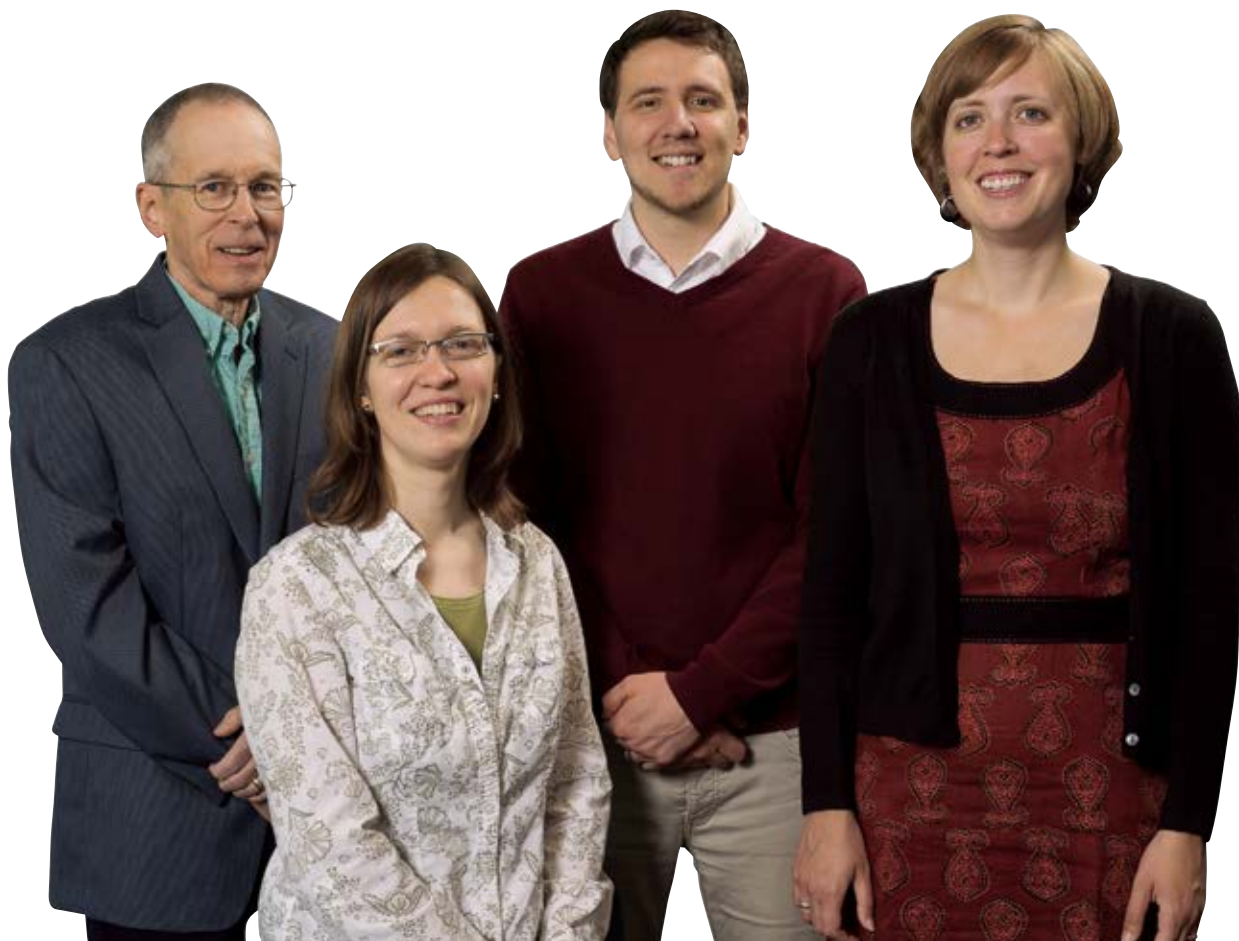
Exploring vocational options in conflict mediation, residential community leadership and social justice in Fort Wayne, Ind., where Katie, his wife, has accepted a director position at the University of St. Francis. He is a member of 509 Community in Huntington, Ind.

Austin Ellsworth. *Certificate in Theological Studies.* Working as a maintenance technician for a student

housing complex in East Lansing, Mich. He is married to Allison Ellsworth.

Katherine Goerzen. *MDiv.* Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment and currently serving part-time as coordinator of AMBS Kansas Center. She and Peter, her husband, also a 2015 graduate, are members of Tabor Mennonite Church, Goessel, Kan. They have two children.

Peter Goerzen. *MDiv.* Will continue as campus pastor and director of church relations at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan. He and Katherine, his wife, who is also a 2015 graduate, are members of Tabor Mennonite Church, Goessel, Kan. They have two children.



Jon Byler, Andrea Baker Dean, Taylor Dwyer-Zeman, Katherine Goerzen. Not pictured: Austin Ellsworth

Ryan Harker. *MDiv with a concentration in biblical studies.* Will serve as a sessional instructor at AMBS in fall, teaching Beginning Greek, and will apply to doctoral programs in New Testament. Ryan is married to Brenna Harker and during his studies has attended Hively Avenue Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Galen Penner. *MDiv.* Will continue as pastor of Rochester Mennonite Church, Rochester, Minn.

Debra Smith. *MDiv.* Will begin in July as pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church in Fort Wayne, Ind. She currently is a member of Covenant United Methodist Church, Fort Wayne.



Graduates respond to the charge they received from Academic Dean Rebecca Slough during the Commencement service.



Peter Goerzen, Ryan Harker, Galen Penner, Debra Smith

2015 GRADUATES

Michael Swartzendruber. *MDiv.* Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. He is a member of First Mennonite Church of Iowa City, Iowa. His parents are Larry and Connie Swartzendruber of Kalona.

Eugene Thieszen. *Certificate in Theological Studies.* Will continue as half-time pastor of Hanston Mennonite Church, Hanston, Kan.

Jennifer (Jenny) Weaver. *MDiv.* Senior pastor at Epworth Memorial United Methodist Church in South Bend, Ind. She is a member of the Indiana Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Eliza Wertenberger. *MDiv.* Pursuing hospital chaplaincy. She is a member of Columbus Mennonite Church, Columbus, Ohio.

Rhonda Yoder. *MACF.* Exploring pastoral ministry opportunities. She is married to Roger C. Yoder and is a member of East Goshen Mennonite Church.

Michael Yordy. *MDiv.* Pursuing church planting in the Goshen, Ind., area. He is a member of Waterford Mennonite Church. ●

VOCATIONS OF 2015 GRADS

Graduates are involved in or are pursuing these ministries:

Pastoral ministry (congregational and college)	10
Chaplaincy	2
Teaching/Doctoral studies	1
Community leadership for justice and conflict mediation	1
Other	1



Michael Swartzendruber, Jennifer Weaver, Rhonda Yoder, Michael Yordy. Not pictured: Eugene Thieszen, Eliza Wertenberger.

Graduates equipped for a harvest of justice

In her commencement address on May 23, the day before Pentecost, Nancy Bedford reminded graduates of AMBS that the Holy Spirit will be with them as they go into ministry.

Bedford, who is Georgia Harkness Professor of Applied Theology at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, Ill., drew on the third chapter of James to talk about wisdom that comes from God. She wove together metaphors of planting and harvesting and themes of peace and justice.

"You certainly have a lot of formal instruction under your belts," Bedford said. "And yet, as useful as all that is, it doesn't quite add up to wisdom. For all your acquired knowledge to be transmuted to a wisdom that builds up others and contributes to systemic change, it needs to be embedded in practices of peace, compassion, humility and honesty—all of which are only possible with the help and agency of God's spirit."

She cautioned, however, that these good gifts are often threatened by partiality, hypocrisy and self-conceit, which she called "invasive species coming into the garden, choking out the good wisdom we are trying to cultivate."

She told the graduates, "You are equipped to contribute to a harvest of



Nancy Bedford encouraged the graduates with the reminder that the Holy Spirit wants to do a new thing through them in the world. Dr. Bedford, who presented the commencement address, is a professor at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, with whom AMBS has a partnership to prepare United Methodist pastors.

justice because you have received the gift of the Holy Spirit who wants to do a new thing in this world."

Rebecca Slough, academic dean, presented the charge to the graduates. She reminded them of Jesus' command to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and your neighbor

as yourself. "These commandments of love form a holistic spirituality. Living the good news of God's reign requires your willingness to be swept up into this trinity of love for God and neighbor and self," she said. "I charge you to do this, and you will live." ●

Faculty present graduate awards

AMBS faculty present awards to selected graduates each year at the Dean's Breakfast the day before commencement. Awards include subscriptions to journals, gift certificates at the Mennonite Cooperative Bookstore and registration at future Church Leadership Center events. This year's recipients are:

Jon Byler, Gertrude Roten Award for excellence in Greek exegesis

Taylor Dwyer-Zeman, Award for excellence in peace studies

Andrea Baker Dean, Marlin E. Miller Award for excellence in theological studies

Katherine Goerzen, Marlin E. Miller Award for excellence in theological studies and Award for excellence in Christian formation

Peter Goerzen, Marlin E. Miller Award for excellence in theological studies and Award for excellence in preaching

Ryan Harker, Millard Lind Award for excellence in biblical interpretation and Heart of the Community Award ●



Graduate Peter Goerzen, accompanied by Nathan, his son, received the award for excellence in preaching from Allan Rudy-Froese, assistant professor of Christian proclamation.

Journey develops leaders centered in Jesus Christ



Several of the participants who are completing Journey this summer say that the ministry development program has given them a clearer sense of God's call. "The most important benefit I gained from Journey is now I am more confident and equipped to do the ministry work that God has placed me on," Ram (Amos) Shakya says.

Reneda Miller agrees: "I have a better understanding of what I believe and why, and I've discovered what God has gifted me for and what he is calling me to do."

Journey: A Conference-based Leadership Develop Program is administered by the AMBS Church Leadership Center in partnership with Indiana-Michigan and Central District Conferences. It is designed to develop Christ-centered leaders grounded in Anabaptist-Mennonite theology.

Since its beginning in 2003, 36 people have completed Journey's six units of undergraduate study. This summer, Illinois, Central District and Indiana-Michigan Conferences will recognize the seven who are completing the program in the 2014-15 year (see list at right).

With support from conference leaders, the Journey program is open to people in any conference of Mennonite Church USA and area church of Mennonite Church Canada. For details, visit www.ams.edu/journey •

Journey participants Bill Newman, Melika Hershberger, Tyrone Taylor and Shawn Lange share reflections on ministry during a Journey Weekend Learning Experience.

Participants completing Journey this summer

Illinois Mennonite Conference

Ram (Amos) K. Shakya, Living Water Community Church.
Mentor: **Tim Peebles**

Central District Conference

Brian Miller, Oak Grove Mennonite Church. Mentor: **Doug Zehr**

Reneda Miller, Oak Grove Mennonite Church. Mentor: **Doug Zehr**

Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference

Shawn A Lange Sr., New Foundation United in Christ Mennonite Fellowship
Mentor: **Keith Kingsley**, Fellowship of Hope

Brian Martin, Kern Road Mennonite Church. Mentor: **Dave Sutter**

Bill Newman, True Vine Tabernacle
Mentor: **Nancy Rodriguez-Lora**

Tyrone Taylor, New Foundation United in Christ Mennonite Fellowship.
Mentor: **Keith Kingsley**, Fellowship of Hope

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ALUMNI NEWS

Charleen (Master of Divinity 2007) and **Kendall Jongejan Harder (Master of Divinity 2007)** were ordained at ValleyView Mennonite Church, London, Ont., Nov. 16, 2014.

SunJu Moon (Master of Divinity 2011) is the first credentialed Mennonite woman pastor in South Korea. Central District Conference and the Korean Anabaptist Fellowship shared in her credentialing.

David Kratz Mathies (Master of Arts: Theological Studies 1995), associate professor at Missouri Western State University, published his first

book, *Common Grounds without Foundations: A Pragmatic Approach to Ethical Disagreements across Cultural, Philosophical, and Religious Traditions*.

Eileen Saner (Master of Arts: Theological Studies 1995), director of library services, and **Daniel Schipani (Master of Arts in Religion 1974)**, professor of pastoral care and counseling, were honored for 30 years at AMBS.

Bob Yoder (Master of Divinity 2001) recently published *Helping Youth Grieve: The Good News of Biblical Lament with Wipf and Stock*. •

Serving the church 2014-15

Across the continent and in our neighborhoods



AMBS cohosts African-American Mennonite leaders

AMBS joined Mennonite Mission Network and the African American Mennonite Association to host a two-day African American Mennonite Pastors Gathering in April. About 30 participants worshiped together, shared stories of ministries and challenges, and learned about resources from denominational organizations.

Visit www.mennonitemission.net and search for “Black leaders” to read a news story about the gathering.

View a photo gallery of participants at AMBS: <http://on.fb.me/> ●

Tantra Taylor (right) from New Foundation United in Christ Mennonite Fellowship and a participant in Journey, talks with Rose Stutzman, staff member of MennoMedia,

Approval for Canadians to join MDiv Connect

AMBS received approval for students from Canada to enroll in Master of Divinity Connect, our distance program. Border-crossing issues for the one-week visits to campus have been resolved. Canadians now can complete most of their study at home, coming to campus for brief visits two or three times a year.

Canadians pay tuition costs on par. In addition, students at Conrad Grebel University College and Canadian Mennonite University receive a 50 percent tuition discount on master’s online courses. Read more details: www.ambs.edu/news/Approval-for-Canadians-to-join-MDiv-Connect.cfm ●

Hmong leaders join AMBS classes

Twelve pastors and leaders in Hmong congregations participated in an introductory online AMBS course during the fall 2014 semester. These students are members of Hmong Mennonite congregations in Minnesota, North Carolina and Wisconsin.

The course engaged students in theological study and reflection on their spiritual journeys, with David Boshart, conference minister for Central Plains Mennonite Conference, as the instructor. Eight of these students have applied to continue studies at AMBS, joining online and hybrid class offerings. ●



Speaker shares anti-racist education strategies

James Loewen, PhD, a leading educator on “sundown towns”—jurisdictions that excluded African Americans and other groups—met with faculty and students in March. Drawing on decades of teaching in the areas of sociology, history and race relations, Dr. Loewen shared strategies he has used to create fairer classroom spaces and to encourage cross-cultural engagement among students. His time to AMBS was one session in a two-day visit to Elkhart and Goshen cosponsored with other church and community organizations. ●

YOUR GIFTS AT WORK

The AMBS Library is filled with books—of course. Increasingly it also offers electronic resources for ministry and theological study. Students in Master of Divinity Connect, who study from their home contexts, and other online students have access to high-quality research materials because of the Library’s subscriptions to full-text journal articles and e-books. For alumni, AMBS provides ATLASerials, full-text articles useful for preparing sermons, Bible studies and other ministry needs.

Even more important for the growing number of distance learners is the library staff. **Eileen Saner**, director of library services (left), **Karl Stutzman**, assistant director of digital library services (center), and **Brandon Board**, library services technician (right), are adept at teaching students how to find and use electronic resources available from varied sources. Thank you for your gifts to support these essential ingredients of seminary learning. ●



AMBS PANORAMA

Rooted and Grounded

AMBS will host a second Rooted and Grounded conference on land and Christian discipleship, October 1–3. Featured speakers are Wilma Bailey, Sylvia Keesmaat and Ched Myers. Additional information is available at www.ambs.edu/rootedandgrounded

Advanced Spiritual Guidance Seminar

A seminar to foster maturity in spiritual direction will meet four times over ten months at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, starting fall 2015. It is open to directors who have training and have been offering direction for at least two years. For information, visit www.ambs.edu/churchleadershipcenter/Advanced-Spiritual-Guidance-Seminar.cfm

Library resources for ministry

Explore e-books and online journals available from the library at AMBS in a five-month, online seminar starting

in August. Benefit from the librarians' guidance, share learning with other participants and respond to their work. To register, visit www.ambs.edu/churchleadershipcenter/research-for-ministry.cfm

Pastors Week 2015

Pastors Week, January 25–28, 2016, will focus on bringing the Bible to life in the congregation. Watch for announcements on the Pastors Week web page: www.ambs.edu/pastorsweek

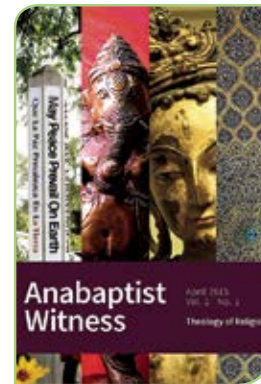
September 25 visit day

The first Seminary Preview Day set for fall semester will be Friday, September 25. Encourage someone with gifts for ministry to plan a campus visit. Learn more: www.ambs.edu/visitAMBS

Faculty publications

This year faculty and staff published seven books, four journal volumes, and a long list of essays, as well as presenting a variety of lectureships. Read the entire

list of faculty and staff scholarship online: www.ambs.edu/publishing/Faculty-scholarship.cfm



Anabaptist Witness: Second volume online

The second issue of *Anabaptist Witness* focuses on what interaction with people of other religious faiths might look like for Anabaptists.

Essays explore the field of the “theology of religions.” Read the issue online or learn how to purchase a copy: www.anabaptistwitness.org ●

ALUMNI RECOGNITION 2015



Obed Dashan, pastor and church leader in Nigeria, is receiving the 2015 Alumni Ministry and Service Recognition.

Obed earned a Master of Divinity from AMBS in 1990. He also completed Clinical Pastoral Education, studied at the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education (SCUPE) in Chicago,

and completed a Doctor of Ministry degree from McCormick Theological Seminary.

Obed's ministry includes teaching and administration at Gindiri Theological Seminary for 16 years and serving as a pastor with the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) (formerly Church of Christ in Nigeria). He was general secretary of the church from 2011 to May 2014 when he was elected vice president. Obed oversees 85 regional church councils in the church of two million members.

In the last several years, as the Boko Haram group has targeted Christian churches and institutions in northern Nigeria, Obed has drawn deeply on the peace theology he learned at AMBS. Much of his ministry is encouraging his people to live faithfully in the midst of persecution.

He says, “Ministry here is living each day at a time. When you go out and come back alive, you praise God. Here, I

include death in my daily budget. That helps me to live each day aware that I am a sojourner here and cannot hold on to the world as if it will not end.”

In the face of these challenges, Obed says it is God's word and the stories of Jesus and Paul that sustain him. “I anchor my life in my relationship with God and entrust my life into his life and ask for his daily presence and peace.”

Phena, Obed's wife, also earned an MDiv at AMBS, completing studies in 1991. Their two sons were young boys when the family came to AMBS; their daughter was born in their apartment on the campus.

When asked how others can pray for him and his ministry, Obed suggested we pray for faith to sustain him in the midst of great challenges; for courage to love those who are persecuting the church; for protection as he travels around the country; and for his ministry of raising up leaders and expanding evangelism efforts in other countries. ●

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GOD AT WORK IN US

Ester Neufeldt leaves MCEC after 27 years

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
KITCHENER, ONT.

Ester Neufeldt has been around Mennonite Church Eastern Canada longer than MCEC has existed. The area church came into being on Feb. 1, 1988, but Neufeldt began her job on Jan. 25. Besides learning the ropes from the outgoing accountant for Mennonite Church of Ontario and Quebec, one of her first jobs was to close the books of MCOQ, the Western Ontario Mennonite Conference, the United Mennonite Conference of Ontario, and the Inter-Mennonite Conference of Ontario, and then open one new set for MCEC.

A further job was to move the accounting system from paper to computer. She remembers that the denomination bought two computers—one for her and one for the two admin assistants to share. Neufeldt had experience on computers at her previous job at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, where she had worked from 1984 to 1988. Previously she had been mentored by Ruby Weber when she worked part-time at Conrad Grebel College 1976-1980. She spent four years at home as she and her husband Cecil (Cec) began their family.

Neufeldt's whole employment life was for church institutions but really it had begun at home where she had helped her father, Henry Koop (husband to Margaret), count the Sunday offerings for the Vineland United Mennonite Church.

Although Neufeldt began as an accountant, her job moved to being the operations minister for MCEC, and she took charge of a number of office moves, including the most recent one to 50 Kent Ave. in Kitchener. When the role change happened a number of years ago, she was moved by the many people who personally affirmed her as a minister.

Neufeldt saw MCEC also change through the years. A major one was the move from commissions managing the staff to councils that set policy and direction and let the staff carry out the work. She sees boards/councils having learned a more hands-off approach to the day-to-day work of the staff.

Another major change she has seen is that congregations are doing more on their own. This means more dollars are kept in the congregation while giving to area and national churches is not increasing or is actually

decreasing. Rather than doing more on its own, MCEC is moving to support ministries to which congregations feel called.

After 27-and-a-half years, Neufeldt carries reams of knowledge. She has fielded countless calls from pastors and congregations about salaries, disability, health, dental and life insurance, interpreting salary guidelines even though MCEC has been part of Mennonite Church Canada's plan for years. A congregation in the United States called asking how maternity leaves work. Another of her legacies is the annual church administrators' resourcing day, helping these employees of congregations to see how their work is ministry and helping them do their work in ways that keep churches in line with current tax law.

When she first announced she was leaving she was loath to call it retirement, but as the day approached she has looked forward to reading on her deck, visiting her brothers on their Florida vacations, playing more bridge, and spending time with Cec and her sons and their families.

While Neufeldt was fêted at the MCEC



Ester Neufeldt, outgoing operations minister of MCEC, sits in her office at 50 Kent, Kitchener. This is the third office move she oversaw in her 27-and-a-half years of working for the area church. To see Ester tell her faith story, go to www.mcec.ca/sharing-our-faith-led-talks#Neufeldt.

annual church gathering in April, a further party was held on June 14 at 50 Kent. There she won a game of “Who Wants to be a Conference Geek? Jeopardy” hands down against two former conference ministers and a pastor.

David Martin, the last executive minister under whom she served; Oderay Peters, a congregational treasurer whom she mentored; Muriel Bechtel, former area church minister, whom she supported in developing programs like the Transitioning into Ministry program for new pastors; and Jim Steckle, who was on the original hiring committee in 1988, all shared memories of Neufeldt and blessed her as she left. Bechtel in particular noted Neufeldt shared her faith through her work as she did it with professionalism and integrity.

Upon her leaving in late June, MCEC decided to divide her work into a half-time financial manager position held by Sean East (also pastor at Westhills Mennonite Fellowship) and expand the work of Church Engagement Minister Brent Charette to include operations. ❧

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ARTBEAT

BOOK REVIEW

Pastor brings compassion to same-sex debate

A letter to my congregation: An evangelical pastor's path to embracing people who are gay, lesbian and transgender into the company of Jesus.

By Ken Wilson. Read the Spirit Books, 2014.

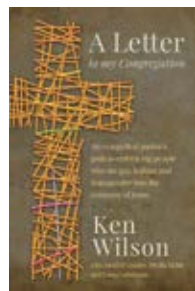
REVIEWED BY MELISSA MILLER

Into the fevered and polarizing debates about churches responding to those who are same-sex attracted comes a clear, compassionate and discerning voice, that of Ken Wilson's in *A letter to my congregation*. The subtitle, *an evangelical pastor's path to embracing people who are gay, lesbian and transgender into the company of Jesus*, lets us know where the path took him. Hopefully that will not dissuade readers from exploring his journey, for he offers his reflections with due diligence and humility.

Wilson is an evangelical pastor and founder of Vineyard Church in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where he had served for nearly forty years at the time of the book's writing. As a seasoned pastor, he draws on a number of disciplines to discern a Christian response to the increasing numbers of congregants he pastored who were coupled in same-sex relationships and eager to participate in the life of the church. These disciplines include careful Bible study, personal experience, prayer and other spiritual practices.

Framing his response in the form of a letter to his congregation provides a glimpse into the privilege, joy and agony of being a pastor. Pastors are in the thick of people's lives and asked to speak a (or the) word of God at such times.

Wilson writes, "My occupation as a pastor forces me to step into my calling as part of the royal priesthood (to speak of God's will) whether I want to or not, to wrestle with (such difficult questions." At points,



he offers useful comparisons between the current situation of responding to same-sex attracted couples and that of pastoral care to those who are divorced and seeking remarriage.

He opens the chapter on the Bible's "prohibitive texts" by declaring his commitment to the authority of scripture, adding, "I have invested too much of my life in seeking to be faithful to that witness to abandon it now." He also reminds us, "Jesus . . . had a way of reading Scripture that was surprising, unconventional, and paradoxical." The tensions of scriptural authority and Jesus-modeled openness frame his walk through this section. It is to his credit that he maintains his commitment to both.

His detailed walk through relevant scriptures includes careful, essential attention to their historical context, concurring with professor John Walton who says, that "the Bible was written for us . . . [b]ut it wasn't written to us." After twenty-some pages, Watson wryly notes, "This level of detail is difficult to fit into a thirty-five minute sermon. If you've made it through the dizzying array of details . . . you are a highly motivated reader. And your eyes are glazing over." The author concludes that same-sex attraction where two people live in a covenanted relationship of equals was unknown in biblical times.

In summary, in this disputed matter, Wilson invites Christians to give themselves over to the unity uniquely found in Jesus, grounding his conclusion on an extended discussion of Paul's counsel in Romans 14-15. The disputed matter

/// Briefly noted

Peace Sunday resources available

The Peace Commission of Mennonite World Conference encourages all MWC-related congregations to use its Peace Sunday worship resources on Sept. 20, 2015 or on an alternate Sunday. This year's material was prepared by Mennonites in Europe, who reflect on how God has sustained the Mennonite presence in Europe for nearly 500 years. The theme, "Boundaries and Borders," uses stories of desperate refugees arriving in Europe. Among the stories is that of a Swiss woman who enjoys knitting. While on vacation in Greece, she was knitting on the beach enjoying the sunset and saw something floating far out on the sea. The next day she learned a refugee, probably from Syria, drowned and was swept up on land. The experience touched her and she began knitting socks for Syrian refugees. The resource includes a responsive reading, sermon notes, as well as stories and pictures.

—Mennonite World Conference

there—differing views on faithful ethics—was as contentious and divisive as those we encounter. Wilson proclaims, "Paul is passionate about the unity of the church because Jesus demonstrates a powerful lordship as he holds a diverse community together without force. He does so by the power of the crucified messiah, received by the church and demonstrated in her life together, harbingering of the coming kingdom of God" (paraphrased).

Perhaps Wilson is not as successful at offering "a third way" through the polarizing debates on same-sex attraction as he attempts to be, but his extensive, thoughtful journey is one that sheds light on the path many of us are walking, and well worth the read. ///

Melissa Miller is a Manitoba pastor and regular columnist of Canadian Mennonite.

Singing a new song

Original music supports summer Bible curriculum at Camps with Meaning

AARON EPP

Young Voices Co-editor

When children arrive at Mennonite Church Manitoba's (MCM) three camps this summer, they will have a new tune to learn. "This Ground" is a simple, catchy, four-chord song—and it was written by current and former staff of MCM's camping ministry, Camps with Meaning (CWM).

Darryl Neustaedter Barg, associate director of communications at MCM, led a handful of musicians in creating the song during two writing sessions at Camp Assiniboia this past May. The song was inspired by CWM's 2015 theme and curriculum, "Knowing God," which is based on the Lord's Prayer.

It's the 16th year that CWM has written new music for its camps. The songwriting sessions arose out of conversations by CWM staff in the late '90s who were frustrated by the difficulty of finding music that supported the Bible teaching at camp.

In spring of 2000, the first group gathered at Camp Assiniboia with Bible curriculum notes, a Bible, some guitars and invited God to lead them.

"Our goal is not to write the next 'Now Thank We All Our God,'" Neustaedter Barg says. "The goal is for the song to work for the summer—that's it. If it serves the curriculum, that's good enough."

Gabrielle Wiebe, who worked as CWM staff for eight summers, sees great value in

PHOTO BY DIETER SCHÖNWETTER



Songs written by CWM staff are tested by campers. Not every song survives the summer.

having songs that directly connect to the Bible lessons.

"It gives everyone a different way to learn," says Wiebe, who studied at university to become a music teacher. "It engages you in a different way, because you're singing . . . instead of just taking [information] in."

Songwriting sessions typically begin with a discussion about what makes for a good camp song. Since children are only at camp for a week, it has to be something simple enough to learn within the first two or three worship sessions. At the same time, Wiebe says, the songs have to be musically interesting "so that it feels like something worth singing."

Tempo, feel and where the song might fit into a worship session are also considerations during the songwriting process. Making sure the lyrics reflect CWM's Anabaptist-Mennonite theology is key. ("These are real Mennonite songs," Neustaedter Barg says. "These are as Mennonite as songs get.")

Gerald Ens, a veteran CWM staffer who taught Bible at Camp Assiniboia for one summer, says having original songs creates cohesion between the worship sessions, fun activities and Bible lessons.

"It was a great teaching resource to have songs that both worked with the specific theme and more generally reflected what I was trying to say [in the lesson]," Ens says. He adds that when he was a camper, it was often original CWM songs that were the most meaningful to him. "Those songs spoke to me and really convicted me."

The songwriting process is communal and collaborative. As such, the songs are credited to CWM as opposed to

young
voices



PHOTO BY DIETER SCHÖNWETTER



Darryl Neustaedter Barg (right) prepares for worship with two camp staff at CWM's Camp Moose Lake.

PHOTO BY DARRYL NEUSTAEDTER BARG



Gerald Ens (plaid shirt) says the songs written by CWM staff are a great teaching resource.

PHOTO BY DARRYL NEUSTAEDTER BARG



Tempo, feel and where the song might fit into a worship session are some of the things CWM staff consider when writing songs each spring.

PHOTO BY DARRYL NEUSTAEDTER BARG



The songs that CWM staff write reflect Anabaptist-Mennonite theology. "These are real Mennonite songs," Darryl Neustaedter Barg says. "These are as Mennonite as songs get."

individual songwriters.

During the summer, original songs are tested when they are sung by campers. Songs that resonate with campers are collected on CWM's website, where anyone is welcome to download recordings of the songs, as well as lyric and chord charts. There are more than 35 songs on the site.

"The songs that are on the website are songs that survived the summer," Neustaedter Barg says. "They were good enough that people sang them all summer and didn't let them slide away....That's how it works. The community discerns."

Listen to CWM's songs by visiting www.tinyurl.com/CWMsongs. ☘

A ray of sunshine in the classroom

Student with disabilities teaches classmates about love and acceptance

BY MATTEA NICKEL

Special to Young Voices

VOICE
of the marginalized

PHOTO BY JACKIE NICKEL



Will Friesen (centre), a Grade 5/6 student with severe cognitive and physical disabilities, poses with some of his classmates at Rosenfeld Elementary School.

Wilhelm (Will) Friesen, a Grade 5/6 student, does not have a voice. Will was born with severe cognitive and physical disabilities which prevent him from performing basic tasks, including speaking. Born in a Mennonite colony in Bolivia in 2004, he moved with his parents and two sisters to Manitoba in 2007. The Old Order Mennonite family came to Rosenfeld, a small farming community 100 kilometres south of Winnipeg, in 2014.

Will has needed intensive care his whole life. "At one year, he was able to sit by himself," Will's mother, Katharina, says through a translator. "He has never crawled or walked." Will communicates with his expressions as well as arm and hand motions. He is highly relational and responds well to people playing with him.

Will is an active member of his class at Rosenfeld Elementary School. He loves connecting with his peers by gently touching them and making direct eye contact. He participates in activities such as class meetings, skits and listening to stories.

His classmates interact with him and enjoy making him laugh, thereby fulfilling his need for relationship and love.

"I met Will after spring break, when he came to Grade 4," says Keegan Friesen, one of 25 students in Will's class. "It makes him laugh and smile when we make noise and snap our fingers at him."

Will's homeroom teacher, Jackie Nickel,

has been intentional about teaching and modelling how to accept people who are differently-abled.

"He has very limited movement skills," Nickel says. "He can eat mashed food when spoon-fed, but his primary nutrition is provided by a tube straight to his stomach. We know that he will require constant assistance his entire life, so when we designed his education plan, we concentrated on what would provide pleasure. He loves people, so that's the plan."

Will gives the class an opportunity to be inclusive as they find of ways to add him to class activities. When conflicts regarding wheelchair accessibility on class field trips arise, the class chants their motto, "If Will can't go, we won't go!"

"I try to create a classroom community where everyone is valued, and if there is a problem, we work it out together," Nickel says. "They get that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect."

During recess, Will gets lifted onto the floor and smiles and laughs because he knows his classmates are coming to play with him. "He looks like a regular kid when he is out of his wheelchair," Nickel says. "He sits with his legs crossed and smiles and laughs, because he knows he will be hanging out with some of his favourite people."

"Will is a ray of sunshine in the building and my class is beautiful with him," Nickel adds. "Their interactions and inclusivity

often bring tears to my eyes. It makes me love my class more and it gives me faith in humanity. They inspire me.”

Will makes a difference in the class by creating an opportunity to care for and accept those who are different. It would seem the voice of God is speaking through a child who doesn't have a voice. ❧

Mattea Nickel, 19, recently finished her first year at CMU. She is the daughter of Jackie Nickel, Will's teacher. Mattea attends Seeds

of Life Community Church in Altona, Man.

This article is part of a series called Voice of the Marginalized. These articles were written by students in Canadian Mennonite University's Journalism: Principles and Practice course. Voice of the Marginalized connected writers with people on the margins of the community. Teacher Carl DeGurse is a member of Canadian Mennonite's board of directors and an assignment editor at the Winnipeg Free Press.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MATTEA NICKEL



Mattea Nickel.

Saskatchewan Mennonites pedal for peace

BY RACHEL BERGEN

Young Voices Co-editor
SASKATOON, SASK.

Before they ate their fill of rollkuchen, watermelon, farmer's sausage and other traditional Mennonite food, a group of Saskatchewan Mennonites cycled 43 kilometres in solidarity with those who have to leave their homeland in search of peace.

The first-ever Pedal For Peace took place at the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Saskatchewan relief sale on June 13. The purpose was for participants to travel by bike the same distance many Syrian refugees travel to seek safety. Forty-three kilometres is the distance from the Syrian capital of Damascus to the border of Lebanon.

Rachel Regier, 30, who attends Nutana Park Mennonite Church in Saskatoon helped organize the event. She explains that the theme of the relief sale was refugees and displaced people, and both Pedal for Peace and the relief sale dedicated the money raised towards MCC's work in that area.

Regier says Pedal for Peace was a way for people who may not know much about refugees to reflect on the struggles people face.

“In Canada, the picture we have of refugees is people from the other side of the planet coming here where it's safe. Often they're only 43 kilometres from their home,” Regier says. “That distance is keeping them from the life they would live if they could just be back home.”

The ride was also a way for cyclists to understand just how enormous the issue

is. Globally, there hasn't been this number of refugees since World War Two.

Along with cycling 43 kilometres, participants visited information booths along the journey to learn more about Syrian refugees.

Showing Solidarity

For Regier, it was important to educate herself and others about refugees. But she also hopes it's a way to stand in solidarity with them.

“One of the stories I read from refugees was saying how simple things like receiving relief kits that MCC donates to people. It's more than just a towel and a bar of soap,” Regier says. “Even though you feel alone, you aren't alone.”

She says approximately 40 riders raised about \$1,000 to support MCC's work with refugees. Although it isn't enough to support the millions of refugees, Regier says it's a symbol of the group's commitment to pray for and support refugees.

“Even if you're just raising a small amount of money, it's a symbol that you're on the same team,” Regier says.

The MCC Saskatchewan relief sale raised more than \$110,000 over the weekend to support its work with displaced people and refugees. MCC's response to the Syrian conflict, which is still ongoing after five years, has surpassed its response to the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean. ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF MCC SASKATCHEWAN



Organizer Rachel Regier explains the goals of Pedal for Peace to about 40 participants.

Calendar

British Columbia

Sept. 18-19: MCC Festival for World Relief, Tradex in Abbotsford.

Sept. 26: Prince George Mennonite Fall Fair.

Oct. 5-7: Mennonite Church B.C. pastor/spouse retreat at Camp Squeah.

Oct. 16-18: MC B.C. ladies retreat at Camp Squeah, Hope.

Saskatchewan

Aug. 22: Sixth annual Spruce River Folk Festival, near Prince Albert, beginning at 11 a.m. Enjoy live music, food and fellowship while learning more about "landless bands" in Saskatchewan.

Proceeds to the Young Chippewayan Genealogical Project. Contact Grace Mennonite 306-945-4844 for more information.

Sept. 8-11: MC Sask fall Pastors' Gathering at Churchill River Canoe Outfitters. For more information contact youthminister@mcsask.ca or 306-249-4844.

Sept. 13: Rosthern Junior College opening program at 2:30 p.m.

Oct. 2-4: "Weekend Musical Workshop for the Congregational Voice" with Marilyn Houser Hamm at Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon. Call the church office at 306-374-2144 to register interest.

Manitoba

Aug. 10-14: Pioneer Day Camp at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, for children aged 9 to 12. For more information, visit www.MHV.ca.

Aug. 10-21: CMU Blazers summer sports camps. (10-14) grades 9 to 10 volleyball and basketball; (17-21) grades 5 to 8 soccer, grades 7 to 10 ultimate sports, and grades 6 to 8 volleyball and basketball. For more information, e-mail sportscamps@cmu.ca.

Aug. 25: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate 11th-annual golf tournament at Bridges Golf Club, Winnipeg. For more information, call 204-775-7111.

Sept. 7: Fall on the Farm at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach. Experience harvest work, hog butchering and pioneer demonstrations. For more information, visit www.MHV.ca.

Sept. 9: Mennonite Heritage Village's

Heritage Classic Golf Tournament. For more information, visit www.MHV.ca.

Sept. 26: 31st annual Brandon relief sale at Keystone Centre, Brandon (Manitoba room). More information at mccmanitoba.ca/events.

Ontario

Aug. 10-14: Peace Camp summer program at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo; for children 10 to 14. For more information, visit grebel.ca/peacecamp or e-mail peacecamp@uwaterloo.ca.

Aug. 22: The Detweiler Meetinghouse near Roseville hosts the "Central Ontario All-Day Sacred Harp Singing" event, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Aug. 23: Ontario Mennonite Music Camp event at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, at 10 a.m.

Aug. 28: Ontario Mennonite Music Camp final concert at Conrad Grebel University College, Great Hall at 7 p.m.

Sept. 11-13: Building Community retreat at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp—a retreat for individuals with disabilities, their family and friends. Speaker: Cheryl Weber Good. For information visit www.hiddenacres.ca or call 519-625-8602. Register by Aug. 28.

Sept. 19: The Detweiler Meetinghouse near Roseville is participating in the Waterloo Region's "Door Open" event, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sept. 19: Toronto Mennonite Festival in support of MCC at Black Creek Pioneer Village.

Quebec

Sept. 27: Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal potluck supper for young adults, ages 18-25. For more information and/or to register interest, contact pastor.mfm@gmail.com.

U.S.

Aug. 20-23: 14th annual Bridgefolk (Mennonite-Catholic) conference, at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. For more information, visit www.bridgefolk.net.

More Calendar listings online at canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar

Classifieds

Employment Opportunities

Senior Estate Planning and Insurance Specialist

Qtrade Financial Group has an exciting new, full-time opportunity for a **Senior Estate Planning and Insurance Specialist** reporting to the Director, Investment Services, based in Kitchener. In this role you will have the opportunity to meaningfully impact the lives of your members by creating estate plans and providing insurance planning services for them and their families. As a seasoned specialist, you will partner with your team as the estate planning and insurance resource, including providing peer training. Getting to know and understand what is important to our members (clients) is key to success in this role. You will serve members at all life stages and income levels, whose varied faith and values backgrounds inform their unique views on finances.

For a full description of this position please visit www.qtrade.ca.

Please send resume and cover letter to careers@qtrade.ca.



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**Mennonite
Central
Committee**

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
Director of Development and
Advancement

The Director of Development and Advancement is the chief marketing officer that provides leadership to donor relations, communications and the advancement of MCC BC toward its mission by collaboratively developing and implementing strategies that generate awareness, relationships, engagement, support and various types of donations from within our constituency and the broader public.

The Director of Development and Advancement ensures that activities are focused on approved strategic priorities and are in compliance with standard ethical requirements as well as MCC values, principles and policies.

This position is available on a salaried basis and reports to the Executive Director. Only those candidates who are legally eligible to work in Canada should apply. Please send resume and cover letter to the MCC BC HR Department by email to Marie Reimer at hrmanager@mccbc.ca or by fax 604-850-8734. Start date, Friday, October 30, 2015. For more information about this position please go to: <http://mcc.org/get-involved/serve/openings/director-development-advancement>

All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to: a personal Christian faith and discipleship; active church membership; and nonviolent peacemaking. MCC is an equal opportunity employer, committed to employment equity. MCC values diversity and invites all qualified candidates to apply.



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
Fund Development Specialist

The Bethania Group, a non-profit Mennonite organization, is recruiting for an experienced and highly motivated fund development professional responsible for the planning and implementation of its fundraising strategy and activities. The position is based at Bethania Mennonite Personal Care Home at 1045 Concordia Ave., Winnipeg, MB. This is a part-time .8 position (60 hours biweekly) – 3 year term (subject to annual reviews) with flexible work hours including occasional evenings and weekends.

Required qualifications include:

- Post-secondary degree or diploma with focus on fundraising and/or relevant education and experience
- Minimum 5 years of experience in building and managing high-level, strategic donor relationships
- Experience managing an organizational budget
- Proven ability to work independently; to plan, prioritize and organize own work
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills including strong written, verbal and presentation skills
- Strong computer skills including experience with fundraising systems
- Knowledge of the Mennonite culture

Assets include:

- CFRE designation or in progress
- Criminal Record (including Vulnerable Persons) and Adult Abuse Registry checks are required.

If you share Bethania Group's Mission to provide compassionate, outstanding long-term care and affordable housing for seniors, we encourage you to submit a resume with cover letter clearly demonstrating how you meet the required qualifications of the position. Please send your resume including salary expectations by August 24, 2015 to:

Kim Newbold, Director of HR
1045 Concordia Ave.
Winnipeg, MB R2K 3S7
Email: kim.fedorowich@bethania.ca
Fax: (204)669-5479



Conrad Grebel University College
at the University of Waterloo is hiring

Academic Admin Assistant: Dean's Office and Theological Studies
Responsible for managing the administrative processes of the Dean's and Theological Studies offices, including scheduling meetings, recording minutes, monitoring projects, drafting correspondence, analyzing academic data and statistics, coordinating special activities and events, and especially coordinating workflow.
Initial one-year contract for 24.5 hours/week.

Coordinator of the Anabaptist Learning Workshop
Provide leadership to a new joint venture with MCEC by developing, maintaining, evaluating, promoting, and helping to manage the ALW program. Responsibilities include identifying, recruiting, and training course instructors, student recruitment and retention, speaking and writing on behalf of the program, plus travel within MCEC.
Initial two-year contract for 21 hours/week.

Applications accepted until the position is filled, reviewed starting August 10, 2015. Read more at grebel.ca/positions

PEACE MENNONITE CHURCH 

www.peacemennonite.ca

Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, British Columbia is seeking an experienced

FULL-TIME INTERIM PASTOR

Applicants must have a strong commitment to Anabaptist beliefs centred on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.

The candidate will be expected to provide:

- Preaching.
- Leadership to the pastoral team.
- Leadership to the congregation as we search for a full-time Lead Pastor.

This position is available as early as September 2015. Please forward applications to pastoralsearch@peacemennonite.ca.



Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church

Employment Opportunity
ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba invites applications for the part time (0.4 EFT) position of Associate Pastor.

Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church is looking for an individual with a capacity to relate to all age groups, with an emphasis on youth. The Associate Pastor will work in a team environment and the responsibilities would take into account the gifts that this person brings. Please visit the church website at www.samc.ca for a more detailed job description under the employment tab.



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
Chaplain position

The Bethania Group is recruiting for an experienced Chaplain for a .5 one year term position (37.5 hours biweekly) at the Pembina Place Mennonite Personal Care Home at 285 Pembina Hwy. in Winnipeg, MB.

For more information, please contact Ferdinand Funk, Director of Spiritual Care/Chaplain at 204-654-5053 or email: funk@bethania.ca A detailed job advertisement is available upon request. Job posting closes August 21, 2015.

God at work in
the church

Snapshots



Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church celebrated its 90th anniversary on June 21. While Flora (Rempel) Mackinnon holds up two pictures, “A thankful congregation, about 1927” and “Church picnic at Dick’s farm, 1930s,” Vic Hiebert leads one of the interpretative stops on a church history tour. The congregation began worshipping in their building in 1927 and purchased it from the United Church of Canada in 1932. Its original name was Die Fluechlingsgemeinde in Ontario (The Mennonite Refugee Congregation in Ontario).

PHOTO BY RACHEL BRNJAS



Worship was an important part of the Global Youth Summit held at Messiah College in Mechanicsburg, Pa., from July 17-19, just before Mennonite World Conference Assembly. Here the African delegates are leading worship. For a video overview of the youth summit, go to vimeo.com/133926582.