

CANADIAN MENNONITE

February 15, 2016

Volume 20 Number 4



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EDITORIAL

Ten years later

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Third in a series on the FDTF

Come with us as we look into the future ten years from now (2026), if the recommendations of the Future Directions Task Force are followed in their present form. Regional clusters of congregations have been asked to pick up the functions of Mennonite Church Canada which was disbanded in 2018.

The clusters were handed the roles of global witness, faith formation and developing their own worship resources. An executive minister was appointed to assist and manage these roles.

There will likely be no co-ordinated global witness, with all present 24 Witness workers now located in Africa, Asia, Europe and South America called back to Canada and disappearing into congregations here. There will be a reversal of “witness.” We will likely have zealous, fast-growing churches like the one in Ethiopia sending missionaries to Canada to revive our congregations in their vision for a global ministry.

Persons doing short-term mission assignments, if indeed they are picked up by the clusters, will have no particular orientation or training in the many unique cultures around the globe. These volunteers will essentially be on their own to orient themselves in a very short time, raising questions by the particular “nationals” as to their purpose for being there.

There will be no national assembly

as such, where delegates from the area churches discuss current issues, where in a kind of grand family reunion fashion, we connect with each other in ways no other setting provides. Our vision and national purpose as a unique Anabaptist part of the 21st century church will inevitably suffer.



On the faith formation front, our Mennonite diaspora and eclectic manifestations of faith

will likely take no unified form of drawing on and developing a modern Anabaptist identity. They will likely devolve into an each-to-his-own character and expression. Unless they are trained at one of our seminaries, pastors will likely lead their congregations on a path that mostly reflects their own personal orientation and background.

Some will even struggle with the name “Mennonite,” thinking it too restrictive and mostly cultural, similar to what our cousins the Mennonite Brethren are struggling with. Some of their more progressive, more evangelical congregations are dropping the “Mennonite” name and going for something more generic, like “Community Church.”

As to developing their own worship resources, these clusters will likely, in the same manner as faith formation, go a hundred different ways, many of them individualized to the particular congregation. They will likely draw on many different theological streams, some to the

liberal left, others with a more evangelical flavour and purpose, others, more creative in nature, will strike a very local narrative.

The many musical resources and styles already practised in our congregations will only go more local, with a diminishing use of our own Mennonite hymnals and devotional resources. And as we noted in our last editorial, congregations, already challenged with shortfalls in budgets and expanding ministries and programs, are hardly in a position to develop serious resources, such as videos and Sunday school discussion guides.

In the broader communication field, unless the area churches, through these clusters pick up the \$110,000 financial support MC Canada makes to this magazine, there will likely be no *Canadian Mennonite* as a print and digital product. There will be no village square providing a forum to discuss ongoing issues facing the national church, no telling of the many stories from all the provinces, no centre for family news as published in *Milestones*—births, deaths, marriages, baptisms. There will be no calendar to draw attention to special events across the country.

We submit again that the driving force behind this disbanding of MC Canada is financial—a budget shortfall this year of \$300,000. That doesn’t seem to be the end of the world (or of a denominational centre), in a budget of more than \$3 million.

There is no doubt we have the wealth. What we lack is the will, the vision. One wealthy donor just made a multi-million contribution to a Mennonite project. A recent letter writer suggested that, if each of our 30,000 members would contribute \$10 each, we could easily close this gap.

Are we willing to give to save, not the structure, but the vision?

ABOUT THE COVER:

Cutting the ribbon to open the new Mennonite Heritage Museum are, from left: Richard Thiessen, executive director of the museum; Peter Redekop, president of the Mennonite Museum Society; and Christy Clark, premier of B.C. Mennonites in B.C. now have a central place to learn about and research the origins of their faith and family. See story on page 16.

PHOTO: AMY DUECKMAN

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Guiding values:

Hebrews 10:23-25 • Accuracy, fairness, balance • Editorial freedom •
Seeking and speaking the truth in love • Open hearts and minds in discerning God's will
• Covenantal relationships and mutual accountability

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Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press



GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH FEATURE

What is 'good' and 'acceptable'?

Marriage practice, biblical interpretation and the church's discernment

BY DARRIN W. SNYDER BELOUSEK



'The marriage at Cana' by Marten de Vos, c. 1596.

The redemptive movement throughout the biblical canon is always away from same-sex practices. Even were disputed texts concerning same-sex practices discounted, there would be no positive voice in the biblical canon that counters the male-female pattern of marital union.

In a time when western society is rapidly altering its image of marriage and government institutions have legally recognized same-sex marriage, the church is pressed to decide: Shall we follow suit?

The church is to discern between the fading form of this passing age and what is "good" and "acceptable" according to God's will (Romans 12:2). Historically, the church has relied upon scriptural revelation, doctrinal tradition, rational wisdom and communal experience to guide discernment. In Article 4, our *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* (1995) acknowledges Scripture as "authoritative source" for the church's discernment, the "standard" against which all other claims must be "tested and corrected."

Marriage and Scripture: Analogies to slaves and women

Some would argue that just as the church yesterday was wrong on slavery and women, so it is wrong on marriage today. The church today denying blessing to same-sex union for biblical reasons is akin to the church yesterday giving sanction to slavery and patriarchy for biblical reasons.

This argument requires careful scrutiny. Are the cases actually parallel? How should we evaluate the comparisons?

Concerning slaves and women, there are texts in the Old Testament that legalize and legitimate slavery or patriarchy, and even some texts in the New Testament that might be interpreted to reinforce oppressive or patriarchal practices. At the same time, there are textual strands running through the biblical canon that counter them, pointing the church toward overturning previous practices of oppression and patriarchy.

Regarding slaves, we can trace an arc of liberation from the Exodus narrative to Sabbath and Jubilee law (Leviticus 25; Deuteronomy 15), to prophetic critique (Isaiah 58; Jeremiah 34:8-22), to gospel proclamation (Luke 4:16-21), to apostolic teaching (1 Corinthians 7:21 and 12:13, Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:11 and 4:1, 1 Timothy 1:8-11; Philemon 15-17). Cumulatively, this canonical arc points toward abolition of slavery.

Regarding women, we can trace an arc of Old Testament texts that teach "male and female" as made in God's image and sharing

“dominion” over creation (Genesis 1:26-28), texts that honour women leaders in Israel (Miriam, Deborah, Huldah and Judith), and texts that portray women as exemplars of covenant righteousness (Ruth and Naomi). This arc continues through New Testament texts that highlight women’s roles in Israel’s history (Matthew 1:1-16), that honour women’s participation in Jesus’ ministry and leadership in the early church (Mary, Martha, Joanna, Tabitha, Lydia, Prisca, Junia, Phoebe), that affirm unity of “male and female” in Christ (Galatians 3:28), and that call for mutuality between husbands and wives (1 Corinthians 7:3-5 and 11:11-12; Ephesians 5:21-33). Cumulatively, this canonical arc points toward egalitarian practices.

In each case, there are voices for slavery and patriarchy and counter-voices for liberation and equality in the biblical canon. Comparing the counter-voices to their canonical contexts and cultural backgrounds, and connecting them into a canonical arc, reveals a Spirit-guided redemptive movement that can guide the church’s discernment. We ask: How does that redemptive movement bear upon our situation? How can we act faithfully along that arc’s direction?

Taking the same approach in the case of marriage, we find that marriage practice throughout the biblical canon is neither simple nor static. While there are voices and counter-voices for mono/polygamy, for/against intermarriage and hierarchy/mutuality, the intracanonically dynamic is constrained within the boundary of male-female union. The implicit norm across the biblical canon—evident in the origin narrative (Genesis 1:26-28 and 2:18-24); presumed in legal code (Leviticus 18), wisdom instruction (Proverbs 5-7) and pastoral counsel (1 Corinthians 7); apparent in poetic expression of erotic love (Song of Songs) and symbolic depiction of divine covenant (Isaiah 62:4-5; Hosea; Ephesians 5:22-32; Revelation 21-22)—is that marital union is predicated on the created difference and sexed correspondence of male-and-female.

Some today argue that the canonical pattern of male-female union is normal

The church today denying blessing to same-sex union for biblical reasons is akin to the church yesterday giving sanction to slavery and patriarchy for biblical reasons. This argument requires careful scrutiny.

but not restrictive of marriage practice in the church. Such arguments reinterpret key texts in Genesis. Some argue that the story of “male and female” becoming “one flesh” is descriptive of cultural custom, but not prescriptive for marital union. Jesus, however, read the Genesis story as having prescriptive import with respect to marriage practice. That “from the beginning of creation” God “made them male and female” and joined them in “one flesh” (Genesis 1:27 and 2:24), Jesus interpreted, indicates God’s intention for marriage, according to which Jesus judged the human practice of marriage (Mark 10:6-9; Matthew 19:4-6).

Others argue that the biblical emphasis in marital union is on similarity, not difference: the man’s becoming “one flesh” with the woman signifies the man’s union with a creature like in kind to himself, not a human different in sex from himself. The Genesis text, however, equally emphasizes similarity and difference. The paired lines of poetic lyric highlight both human kinship (“This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”) and sexed correspondence (“this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken”) in becoming “one flesh” (Genesis 2:23).

Concerning same-sex practices, moreover, the biblical canon speaks with a single voice. The redemptive movement throughout the biblical canon is always away from same-sex practices. Even were disputed texts concerning same-sex practices discounted, there would be no positive voice in the biblical canon that counters the male-female pattern of marital union. No law permits or counsel commends or story favours same-sex union, unless one twists the text to turn David and Jonathan or Ruth and Naomi into erotic lovers.

Still, some people appeal to God’s working the divine purpose through marriages in non-normal ways—Abraham

and Sarah or Mary and Joseph—as evidence that God would bless non-normative unions. Yet these instances themselves exhibit the normative pattern of male-female union.

Amidst diverse voices across the biblical canon, the marriage arc consistently evidences that marital union in the present age is predicated on the created order of male-and-female. Insofar as the church anticipates the coming age of renewed creation, the New Testament points beyond marrying-and-begetting toward celibacy, not same-sex union.

Therefore, the case of same-sex union is not analogous to the cases of slaves and women. While canonical arcs reveal redemptive movements pointing toward liberation of slaves and equality for women, no parallel arc points toward sanctioning same-sex union.

Marriage and membership: Analogy to gentiles

If the church is to discern an affirmation of same-sex union, then we must derive from the biblical canon a clear reason that compellingly warrants diverging from the canonical marriage arc. That reason must answer this question: Why should the church follow the counter directions of the liberationist and egalitarian arcs, but then diverge from the consistent direction of the marriage arc?

There are various texts throughout the biblical canon that augur for reception of Gentiles, Samaritans, eunuchs and others who were formerly considered “outsiders” to Israel as members-by-faith of God’s people. We can trace this canonical arc from the Exodus narrative (Exodus 12:38), to covenant code (Exodus 22:21 and 23:9), to holiness code (Leviticus 19:33-34), to festal law (Deuteronomy 16), to prophetic witness (Isaiah 56:3-8), to Jesus’ genealogy (Matthew 1:1-16), to Jesus’ ministry (Matthew 19:12; Luke

5:27-39 and 14:12-24; John 4:1-42), to early church (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8 and 8:4-40), to apostolic teaching (Galatians 3:27-28; Ephesians 2:11-22; Colossians 3:11; 1 Peter 2:9-10), to apocalyptic vision (Revelation 5:9-10). This inclusionary arc reveals a Spirit-guided redemptive movement that should shape a receptive posture in the church today toward various “outsiders,” including sexual minorities.

Some today invoke the inclusionary arc concerning marriage practice. Might “outsider” inclusion in membership be a precedent for same-sex inclusion in marriage? Might the church thus judge that the inclusionary arc supersedes the marriage arc? Some argue that the church today should redefine marriage as sex-undifferentiated to sanction same-sex union, in analogy to how the early church redefined membership as ethnicity-neutral to receive gentiles.

To redefine marriage in analogy to membership would blur the distinction between belonging (who is “in” and on what terms) and behaving (acting as befits belonging). That distinction in the church’s discernment is evidenced in a key text along the inclusionary arc.

At the Jerusalem council, the apostles and elders discerned that the church should receive gentiles on the same terms as Jews. Peter testified: “in giving [gentiles] the Holy Spirit . . . and in cleansing their hearts by faith [God] has made no distinction between [gentiles] and [Jews]” (Acts 15:8-9 and 10:34-35, 44-47). Nonetheless, the council made a distinction between gentile members, who were received on faith by grace (15:11), and certain practices from which believers were required to abstain (15:19-21).

Intended to facilitate gentile-Jew fellowship, these “requirements” were likely derived from holiness laws pertaining to aliens residing within Israel. Those laws forbade idolatry, eating blood or carrion, and various forms of illicit sex, including same-sex acts (Leviticus 17:8-18:30). Or these “requirements” possibly reflected teaching transmitted through the synagogue, which selectively adapted Mosaic Law to articulate a common ethic for Jewish life in Hellenistic culture.

The Jerusalem council reinforced canonical norms concerning sexual practice at the same time that it received gentiles as members. Marriage, therefore, is not analogous to membership. The Jerusalem council, in redrawing membership boundaries to include gentiles, did not redraw moral boundaries in any way that deviated from the canonical arc concerning marital union and sexual practice.

Marriage practice and church discernment

The apostolic decision at the Jerusalem council, which “seemed good to the Holy Spirit,” set an enduring precedent for the church’s discernment of what is “acceptable” to God. The council’s discernment worked along the inclusionary arc, but without letting membership inclusion override moral norms or redefine marital union. Therefore, for the church today to honour the canonical precedent of the Jerusalem council, we must hold both arcs together in our discernment.

Two important implications follow. The inclusionary arc is not optional for church practice, contrary to the inclinations of some traditionalists. At the same time, the inclusionary arc cannot be pitted against—or privileged over—the marriage arc, contrary to the claims of

some innovationists.

This canonical-arc approach to biblical interpretation thus yields these questions to guide the church’s discernment:

- **HOW DO** the marriage and inclusionary arcs together bear on our situation with respect to membership inclusion, marriage practice and sexual minorities?
- **HOW MIGHT** the church act faithfully along both arcs?

Let us prayerfully seek the instruction and guidance of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26 and 16:13) as we forbear patiently with one another in love and “the unity of the Spirit” (Ephesians 4:2-3). ❧



Darrin W. Snyder Belousek is a lecturer in philosophy and religion at Ohio Northern University. He is the author of Atonement, Justice and Peace, published in 2011 by the William B.

Eerdmans Publishing Co. He is a member of Salem Mennonite Church in Elida, Ohio. Originally published in a longer version in the January 2016 issue of The Mennonite.

❧ For discussion

1. How much do our churches take their cues about what is right and wrong from the Bible and how much from the culture in which we live? Do we still give authority to the Bible in determining right and wrong?
2. Do you think biblical literacy and respect for the Bible is in decline in Mennonite churches? Why do we tend to question all authority more than earlier generations did? What do you say to those who believe the Christian church has completely lost its way?
3. Darrin Snyder Belousek describes an arc of biblical texts that deal with the liberation of slaves and the equality of women, but says there is no such arc for same-sex marriage. Do you find his argument persuasive? What would you like to say in response?
4. Snyder Belousek argues that the Jerusalem council was inclusionary but did not change the moral norms of the church. Do you agree? Where and how should the moral norms of the church be set today?

—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.

✉ Giving and receiving are complicated transactions

RE: "GOD LOVES a cheerful receiver;" Jan. 4, page 9.

When I receive a gift accompanied by a script dictating my response, I feel like returning that gift. I do not feel grateful; I feel controlled. That's how I felt when I read Arnie Friesen's "God, Money and Me" column.

Friesen tells us that reciprocity, saying "You shouldn't have," or paying for gas are forms of "pride," "legalism" or "ingratitude." I see them differently; these are just our social norms.

Giving and receiving are much more complicated than this column suggests. Gifts that control the receiver, or leave the recipient feeling indebted or dependent, are not about the "generous attitude of the giver." Such gifts take more than they give.

Not reciprocating quickly typecasts recipients as dependents, as "people who have enjoyed the gifts of others as a way of life."

(Continued on page 8)

NEW CANADIAN VOICE

Blessed in the journey

BY KHAMPHONG PHOMMASENG

In 1980, Grantham Mennonite Brethren Church in St. Catharines, Ont., sponsored me to come to Canada. I had been living in a refugee camp in Nongkhai, Thailand, for a year after fleeing Laos due to communism and civil war. When I arrived in Canada, the Mennonite Church warmly welcomed me, although I did not speak English very well. At that time I discovered that there was a small community of Laotian Christians at the St. Catharines Mennonite Church and my journey to Christ began with this congregation.



I built a strong foundation, and accepted the body of Christ into my life and was baptized in 1982 in St. Catharines. I was fully committed to love and learn more about God who gave me a chance to establish my life, and a chance to become a faithful Christian. I wanted to

become a leader and help other Laotians accept Christ into their lives, so I decided to continue studying the word of God.

In 1988 I attended a Theology Education by Extension (TEE) training course in Toronto, Ont., and obtained a Certificate in Theology in 1991. In 1995 I was installed by Mennonite Church Eastern Canada as a pastor of the first Lao Christian Fellowship Church in St. Catharines. I was very excited to see our congregation grow and was blessed with this position. In 1998 I was ordained by MCEC and continued to be the pastor at the Lao Christian Mennonite Church.

In 2014, I decided to return to Nongkhai, Thailand, where my story began, and I worked as a missionary at the Gennesaret Church, teaching and volunteering to help children and youth read the Bible.

In 2015, my wife and I returned to Canada, this time to Regina, Sask., to

live with my son. We joined Grace Mennonite Church, where I continue to serve God. I feel connected and welcome in this communion and also with the Laotian community in Saskatchewan. I was given the opportunity to preach in the Lao language once a month at Grace Mennonite, and I teach Sunday school in the Lao language once a week as well.

The Mennonite community in Canada has always helped and encouraged me to connect to other Christians. I have been blessed with many different roles in my journey with Mennonite Church Canada.

I believe it is important to stress commitment and continuous learning of the word of God and body of MC Canada. In order to build relationships and to grow as a church, this requires a strong foundation. My goal is to offer my knowledge and my experiences to build a strong foundation with the church, and to educate our youth to be leaders in the future. I hope that we can branch out to other families and preach the word of God.

Khamphong Phommaseng is a deacon, Sunday school teacher and worship leader at Grace Mennonite Church in Regina, Sask.

(Continued from page 7)

If we have always been only the giver, but rarely or never the typecast recipient who has had to relinquish choices, decision-making and reciprocity, how can we know what that rigid role does to a person? Ken McCluskey, dean of education at the University of Winnipeg, told CBC Winnipeg's Information Radio that always being the "helpee" and never the helper is subtly dehumanizing.

Decision-making encourages people to exercise

their ability to manage their lives. Winnipeg's Siloam Mission lets homeless people choose clothes from a rack of donated items. Winnipeg's Agape Table offers people an inexpensive breakfast with choices. Providing options offers opportunities to transition from helplessness to responsible living. It also offers these customers the "right to demand very specific products." They can expect their decisions to be honoured.

Reciprocity and decision-making are as vital to a

OUTSIDE THE BOX

What keeps you up at night?

PHIL WAGLER

What keeps you up at night? Your kids? Your bank account? Church problems? Your fears? Your enemies? Your self-justifications? Your habits? Your faults? Other people's faults? Your hopes and goals?

"In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves" (Psalm 127:2). So, does this mean God doesn't love me if I can't sleep? Now there's another reason to lie restlessly staring at the ceiling!

But Psalm 127 begins with a declaration: *"Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labour in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain."* The

point seems to be that a good sleep is directly related to who we know is in charge. As I lie in my bed, enveloped by the dark, the silence screaming, I am often in a war for control.

Who are those the Lord loves? Well, technically of course, God loves everyone. That's elementary Sunday school, my dear Watson. God spreads his love lavishly and indiscriminately. And yet, God is relational and not just theory. So, the

fullest experience of the love of God is not knowing or even Facebook-liking the idea of God as love, but living in fellowship, in friendship, in trusting dependence on him as our Heavenly Father. Love breeds trust and casts out fear. Hence, the sleep of Psalm 127 is entwined with this kind of love, and trust is the pillow I sink myself into.

So, back to that midnight war for control. The things that keep us up are often rooted in our unwillingness to relinquish control. Further, they are the result of our hesitancy to receive the love of God, trust his good hand and let him be the builder.

"If we are honest with ourselves,"



Perhaps the real question is: whom do you trust?

writes Scott Rodin, "we will be able to trace our stress, fear, anxiety and despair directly back to those things over which we pretend to play the owner and desire to have control." Do you need to be this honest?

Have you read that peculiar story where Jesus is asleep in the boat in a raging storm? The storm caused

seasoned fishermen to panic and wonder whether their Master had a caring bone in his body. The disciples wake him and Jesus calms the storm—essentially telling the waves to quiet down and get back to bed. This is often seen as the miracle. And it is. But it seems equally miraculous that Jesus was having a healthy, carefree snooze when his life was a constant target of spiritual darkness. How could it be? Though he is the son of God he is not anxious, fearful, or despairing. He seems, in fact, to be resting in Psalm 127. The Father who loved him was building something and he could rest.

This is evidenced throughout the gospels. Jesus walks through a crowd of opponents. Even the temptation of the Devil required a more opportune time. Jesus knew who was in control, and he lived in the loving trust of the Father, even when suffering eventually came. And, when post-resurrection he says to his disciples, *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me"* (Matt. 28:18), he is underlining his divinity and calling us to trust and obey the one who

owns it all and builds still.

So, what's keeping you up? Perhaps the real question is: whom do you trust?

Phil Wagler has had lots to keep him up at night as a father, ministry leader and Toronto Maple Leafs fan. He's learning to surrender and he's sleeping much better (phil_wagler@yahoo.ca).

person's physical, mental and spiritual health as gratitude. A hymn asks, "Will you let me be your servant?" ending the verse with, "Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too."

RUTH ENNS, WINNIPEG

✉ Remembrance Day and the poppy

RE: "EDITORIAL MISREPRESENTS Remembrance Day and the poppy," Jan. 4, 2016, page 10.

For most of us Remembrance Day evokes nostalgic

memories of soldiers who lost their lives in WWI and following wars. They were often celebrated as heroes who "laid down their lives for our freedom," even though no other country attempted to take away our freedom. Others remember this day for all the people who died in war including "enemies" and civilians.

Some of us veterans and soldiers have mixed memories of war. Many of us were drafted to fight in the war, with no alternatives. We were trained in the skill to kill and sent to the battlefield to apply it. We remember the horror of war, the killing or maiming of soldiers and often innocent civilians and the

FROM OUR LEADERS

We are not in control

RYAN SIEMENS

Summers in central Saskatchewan are short. Okay, they're too short. And so when the snow finally melts, the ice disappears and the risk of frost is nearly non-existent, we clear out of the cities (and the pews) and head into the wilderness.

Unfortunately, last year, summer was even shorter. From about mid-June to mid-July, a thick blanket of smoke hung over the sky as forest fires raged in the north. Several folks in my congregation were concerned as fires threatened their cabins. Many communities such as Montreal Lake, Weyakwin, and La Ronge were on high alert as the heat and flames made their way to the edge of town. And while a few



homes were lost, through the endless effort of firefighters, both local and from afar, many homes, businesses, cabins and communities were spared from the fire's wrath. But what is undeniably clear is that the landscape, the forest, has significantly changed.

Forest fires are a powerful force. It's really an illusion to say we "have it under control." Even though we go to great lengths to defend against them, to pour tremendous energy into saving homes and buildings, our efforts simply run up

short. We are at the mercy of the elements, and where there is destruction, we lament, and where there is salvation, we rejoice.

One of the stories of salvation comes from Ric and Theresa Driediger. Their story was shared in *Canadian Mennonite* last summer (Aug. 17, 2015, p. 29). Forest House is a beautiful, off-grid retreat centre deep in the wilderness, accessible only by canoe, float plane or snowmobile. As the fire approached, Ric accepted the fate of destruction. He removed the propane tanks, put them into the water,

What is happening in our culture, society and church is bigger than us.

went out into the water and waited. But then within hours of the fire's fury, a team of firefighters arrived by helicopter, set up sprinklers and dumped significant water on the structure, hoping it would not burn. When Ric returned the next day, to his surprise, Forest House did not perish; the forest was decimated, but the structure remained. Others were not as fortunate.

Yet as powerful and destructive as these forest fires are, they are essential to the health and well-being of the

forest. Within six weeks of the fire, Ric and Theresa hosted a pastors' retreat at their Canoe Outfitters, three hours north of Prince Albert. As we drove past the destroyed forest near Weyakwin, amidst the charred timber and new open spaces, the forest bottom was teeming with new life. A green carpet covered the earth. Fireweed was bursting through in violet beauty. The forest was born again!

While all metaphors have their limits, there is clearly a force at work changing the landscape of the church within North America. And while it is tempting to point blame or find fault as to why things are the way they are, the force at work cannot be stopped by a three-point strategy or by simply trying harder. What is happening in our culture, society and church is bigger than us. Does this mean we do nothing? No! We do what we can

but then we wait, and we trust. And even if the structure is gone in the morning, we thank God for what was, we lament over our loss, and begin preparations to rebuild.

Ryan Siemens is Area Church Minister, Congregational and Pastoral Relations for Mennonite Church Saskatchewan. He is also pastor of Grace Mennonite Church in Prince Albert, Sask.

destruction of their habitat.

Then and now we have to deal with our conscience. We were ordered to kill other human beings “created in the image of God,” because they wore a different uniform than we.

We live with that memory and don’t want to be celebrated for it, and therefore might have a reluctance to wear a poppy. I wish and pray that a time will come when we will live in peace with each other and will not need to wear a poppy or a peace button.

American General Sherman once said, “I am sick and tired of killing; war is hell.”

HELMUT LEMKE, VANCOUVER, B.C.

✉ Diversity a sign of health

WHEN I WAS a volunteer in 2011 with the Social Planning Council Kitchener-Waterloo we worked in collaboration with the University of Winnipeg Disability Studies at developing an alternative planning/evaluation tool focusing on respect and inclusion. To illustrate how social programs could be planned or evaluated, we used the metaphor of a prism through which white light enters, re-emerging

on the other side in a full spectrum of colours. Diversity was seen as the ideal when planning or evaluating a social project.

Can this experience speak to the feature article, “The challenge of diversity: A call for discernment and transformation,” in the Jan. 18 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*? In the Social Development Centre model, diversity is seen as an indicator of health. Could we witness to the diversity in the Mennonite church and re-imagine transformation on the meaning of unity?

Just as a rain forest supports a rich diversity of life, could a church that accepts congregations with a range of attributes be seen as whole and healthy? A vision of unity, because of diversity, would be worthy of discernment.

MYRON STEINMAN, KITCHENER, ONT.

✉ LGBTQ acceptance in Mennonite churches continues to grow

ABOUT THREE YEARS ago I remarked that it was inevitable that Mennonite congregations would all accept and welcome lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/queer (LGBTQ) people. The remark was based on what was happening in our congregations then and is continuing to happen now. Many, perhaps most, people 45 and under cannot really understand why some of their parents and churches do not want them to accept LGBTQ people in church.

JIM SUDERMAN, WINNIPEG



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

✉ Love more important than structures

I READ *CANADIAN MENNONITE* fairly regularly and appreciate the content and the efforts that go into presenting articles that represent our experience as Mennonites. But at the end of day we are really not different from Lutherans, Catholics, Muslims, Buddhists or atheists, in our desire to want to raise kind and compassionate children who see all life as worthwhile. The structures we impose on our beliefs are what trips us up.

I always envision Jesus and his Father looking down on us and thinking, “Why don’t they get it?” It’s so easy. John 15:12-17 includes the ultimate commandment to “love one another as I have loved you.” It is hard but it is necessary. No structure, format or committee required.

PAULETTE WEST, NEW HAMBURG, ONT.

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/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Dyck—Adley Paige (b. Sept. 13, 2015), to Matt and Kersti Dyck, Morden Mennonite, Man.

Falk—Kezleigh Grace (b. Sept. 3, 2015), to Gabriella Falk, Morden Mennonite, Man.

Lehr—Talia Laura Marie (b. Jan. 18, 2016), to Steve and Tami-Lyn Lehr, North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Liu—Elise Hoi-Ying (b. Jan. 14, 2016), to Leanne Buck and Justin Liu, Toronto United Mennonite, Ont.

McKinnell—Annie Jude (b. Sept. 11, 2015), to Matt and Teresa McKinnell, Osler Mennonite, Sask.

Peters—Isabelle Hailey (b. Oct. 25, 2015), to Kyle and Renee Peters, Morden Mennonite, Man.

Rachul—Hannah Taylor (b. July 14, 2015), to Devin and Amy Rachul, Morden Mennonite, Man.

Swartzentruber—Kurt Martin (b. Jan. 12, 2016), to Daniel and Kathleen Swartzentruber, Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Warkentin—Bryce Paul (b. May 17, 2015), to Curt and Cara Warkentin, Morden Mennonite, Man.

Baptisms

Joseph Entz, Samantha Entz, Brandon Jantzi, Nathan Jantzi, Amanda Lebold, Hannah Poole, Bradley Ropp, Austin Roth—Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., Jan. 24, 2016.

Ian Osmond—Osler Mennonite, Sask., Nov. 15, 2015.

Marriages

Buhler/Edwards—Chris Buhler and Kaytee Edwards, Osler Mennonite, Sask., Aug. 8, 2015.

Dyck/Pfeifer—Keith Dyck and Colleen Pfeifer, Osler Mennonite, Sask., Sept. 6, 2015.

Deaths

Bartel—Henry Earl, 88 (b. June 28, 1927; d. Jan. 12, 2016), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Bueckert—Helen, 96 (b. May 10, 1919; d. Jan. 13, 2016), Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Bueckert—John B., 100 (b. April 2, 1915; d. Dec. 18, 2015), Osler Mennonite, Sask.

Drudge—Mary Evelyn (nee Baker), 85 (b. Nov. 25, 1930; d. Jan. 13, 2016), Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont.

Dyck—Margareta, 71 (d. Nov. 25, 2015), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Enns—Ann, 92 (d. Sept. 22, 2015), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Giesbrecht—John, 84 (b. Oct. 29, 1931; d. Dec. 3, 2015), Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Hiebert—Levi, 17 (b. Aug. 8, 1998; d. Nov. 17, 2015), Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Hoepfner—Jacob, 79 (d. Oct. 22, 2015), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Hoepfner—Mary, 95 (d. June 11, 2015), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Penner—Helena, 98 (d. March 30, 2015), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Peters—Jacob, 82 (d. May 6, 2015), Morden Mennonite, Man.

A moment from yesterday



A camera captures the moment on July 19, 1924, when Mennonite immigrants from Russia met their “Swiss” Mennonite cousins in Ontario. The so-called Swiss Mennonites were the first Mennonites to immigrate to Canada, beginning in the late 1700s. They were followed by the Amish, who arrived directly from Europe, beginning in the 1820s. The Russian Mennonites who arrived in 1924 were the first from Russia to settle permanently in Ontario. These early groups were billeted briefly in Swiss Mennonite homes. Some of the Swiss and Russian families formed lasting friendships; others experienced a clash of cultures. In the ensuing decades, the groups would learn much from each other.

Text: Lauren Harder-Gissing, Mennonite Archives of Ontario

Photo: Herbert Enns/Mennonite Archives of Ontario

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Where the 'good news' is

PIETER NIEMEYER

Are you wondering where the good news is? It is in surprising and unexpected places.

Before we get to that, I need to give some information up front. I have been pastoring for more than 15 years and have been an active participant in the Being a Faithful Church (BFC) process since it began in 2009. Over the course of 2015, I began the process of sharing my story publicly about being gay in orientation. Within the loving support of our church community, my wife and I continue our journey of marriage, honouring one another for who we are. However, we recognize this is not necessarily sustainable, nor even recommended, for everyone who finds themselves in a mixed-orientation marriage.

But back to the issue of where the good news is. My point takes its lead from Sean East's Dec. 14, 2015, column, "Where is the 'good news'?" He raises an important question, and I am grateful to him for that. Regarding the disputable matter of same-sex marriage—and the larger concerns regarding lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/queer (LGBTQ) inclusion in the church, I assume—East says he is "most comfortable affirming our historical beliefs, although simultaneously uncomfortable with their articulation and practice."

I am glad to hear that he is uncomfortable regarding historical articulation and practice, but it is not clear what exactly that means. As a member of the LGBTQ community, I can share what such discomfort means to me. Even though this is not a significant point in his article, I believe that addressing what is behind "being uncomfortable" will significantly speak to the overall question he raises: Where is the 'good news'?

Members of the LGBTQ community

have experienced the "articulation and practice" of "historical beliefs" primarily as bad news, and, in fact, sometimes as life-threatening news. Such articulation and practice have taken on both intended and unintended forms of physical, spiritual, emotional and psychological abuse, and this, I assume, is what East is uncomfortable with.

God's good news is needed and always directly related to the bad news experienced by people who are marginalized. This is a primary focus of Luke's telling of the gospel—good news—right from the nativity through to the resurrection and sending. Luke underscores why the coming of Jesus is gospel for those who are marginalized and considered outsiders.

So, to understand where the good news is, we must understand what the bad news is, as experienced and articulated by those who have been marginalized, a point not lost on Luke!

A brief overview of the bad news

Over the course of many centuries, LGBTQ people have often experienced the "articulation and practice" of the church's teaching on human sexuality as violence. Attacks on our bodies, such as beatings, torture, castration, imprisonment, murder, and public executions and burnings have been commonplace throughout the western world.

Too often the church's teaching has undergirded structural violence. A current

example from 2015 was the vocal support of many North American evangelicals for Uganda's harsh anti-gay laws. The law had included the death penalty for gay people, but thankfully was reduced to a maximum sentence of 15 years imprisonment. Even in Canada, "gay bashing" is sadly a real-life experience.

Meetings that I co-facilitate for LGBTQ Christians are conducted semi-privately, for reasons of confidentiality and safety. Recently, a young woman told me that she feared for her life should her father find out that she is lesbian. Her family is very religious.

We have been legislated and discriminated against for centuries, as is still the case in the vast majority of countries. Even now in the United States, LGBTQ people can still be legally discriminated against in terms of employment, housing and services.

This is not experienced as good news.

Spiritually we have had to endure much abuse from our straight sisters and brothers. This past year a family member stated that I can either be a Christian or gay, but I cannot be a gay Christian! We have been damned, called abominations,

I can attest that, over the course of many centuries, LGBTQ people have often experienced the "articulation and practice" of the church's teaching on human sexuality as violence.

and declared by many heterosexuals within the church as unacceptable in the sight of God. For many traditionalists, this is the case even if we are not sexually active. Who we are is judged by many in the church as largely unacceptable.

Straight Christians have their relationships honoured and ritualized, whereas we are often pathologized, shamed and shunned. From childhood on (yes, we existed as LGBTQ children before we were adults) many of us lacked role models for relationships and ways of being that reflected the wholeness of who we are. Not only are our relationships and identities not celebrated, too many of us were subjected to "conversion therapy" and even exorcisms. None of this is

From childhood on (yes, we existed as LGBTQ children before we were adults) many of us lacked role models of relationships and ways of being that reflected the wholeness of who we are.

experienced as good news.

We have all too often been silenced, shamed and rendered invisible by family, church and the larger society. We are too often talked about but rarely engaged; our stories are largely unheard or ignored by the church. Decisions made about us that directly impact us are made without referencing us in any significant way. This is a form of violence and would be considered unacceptable in many other settings, let alone by entities that are committed to living and working within the peace of Christ, as bearers of good news.

This systemic discrimination, as articulated and practised by many within the church, has exacted a heavy price from the LGBTQ community. Rates of depression, suicide and addictions are high among the LGBTQ community, and for too many Christians it is intensified, not only by the lack of support, but by the ongoing hostility we encounter.

This is not experienced as good news.

For the larger LGBTQ community, they have simply moved on and rejected the church and its so-called good news as being bigoted and harmful. They view the church as out of touch with modern scientific and psycho-social understandings related to the LGBTQ community. That LGBTQ Christians continue in the church is often bewildering to the larger LGBTQ community. To be Christian and to be LGBTQ is looked upon with a certain degree of suspicion, just as it is within the church. We are caught between a rock and hard place.

This also is not experienced as good news.

Where the good news is

First, it is outside the church where God has been busy. Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church USA have focussed resources into missional identity. One of the core tenets of missional identity is the belief that God is

active in the ministry of reconciliation both inside and outside the church. The church is called to bear witness to, and live into, what God is doing. This is good news indeed!

The good news is that outside the institutional church, the Spirit of Christ has been preparing the ground needed for the eventual reconciliation between the church and the LGBTQ community. In the larger western culture, as well as in other parts of the world, attitudes have been moving toward a more fair and just approach regarding the LGBTQ community. I believe this is the work of the Spirit of Christ in culture.

As in other situations of injustice, it has been Christ in the larger culture calling the institutional church to embrace a ministry of reconciliation as it has pertained to marginalized peoples. For ex-

We offer forgiveness and persevere in our conviction that some day the larger body will see the error of its ways.

ample, ongoing gender justice regarding women. Justice issues concerning race, as in the experiences of First Nations peoples, Africans and the African diaspora, and other people groups affected by colonialism the world over.

A core conviction of the missional church is the belief that Christ is active and working in all cultures, in all places, and among all peoples, including LGBTQ people. The church's task is to align itself with what Christ is up to, but sometimes it takes the church a long, long time to see beyond itself to the work of Jesus. But the good news is there, even if the majority of the church does not see it.

This is good news!

Second, the good news is in the witness of the LGBTQ Christian community itself. The risen Christ is the anchor for many of God's LGBTQ children who experience exile. As I have gotten to know

the LGBTQ Christian community, I have met many people who rely heavily upon God. Their very being and survival relies upon faith in God holding them in the midst of so much turmoil.

Church, community and family structures have not been safe places for many. My own journey has been one of knowing deep within my being that I am the Lord's beloved as a gay man. There is no doubt that I struggle with sin and brokenness, as is common to all, but it is not because of my gay orientation. My being gay is part and parcel of God's good, diverse creation, and as his beloved I hear his words, "*You are my son and in you I am well pleased.*" LGBTQ Christians bear witness to the good news of Jesus in their midst.

This is good news!

Third, the good news is that in Jesus, many LGBTQ sisters and brothers continue to offer their spiritual gifts to the church regardless of their persecution. Jesus has taught us to love our enemy, even if the enemy has been within the very body meant to nurture and care for our physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual well-being. We offer for-

giveness and persevere in our conviction that some day the larger body will see the error of its ways. Reconciliation will be sought, and apologies offered for "articulation and practice" inconsistent with the good news of Jesus' peace, as seen by his articulation and practice of love.

We have not, nor will we, always agree when it comes to disputable matters. Romans 14 reminds us to love by carefully tending to each other's convictions of faith without intimidation, threats or domination.

Love offers generous space, and lastly, this too is where the good news is! ❧



Pieter Niemeyer is pastor of Rouge Valley Mennonite Church, Markham, Ont.

VIEWPOINT

Compelled to share

MARK TIESSEN-DICK



is the Messiah and that following Jesus is God's desire for human beings.

Anytime that people allow Jesus to be closer to the centre of their life, the kingdom of God is nearer and they become more fully the person God created them to be. This

is a claim about Jesus, not Christians. It does not mean that all people who claim to follow Jesus are better than all people of other faiths. It does mean, however, that it is good whenever someone who does not know Christ, meets Christ; when someone who admires Christ, decides to follow Christ; or when a follower of Christ becomes more like Christ. The invitation for someone to follow Jesus is not different in kind from the Christian's continual conversion; they are both part of God's Christ-centring mission.

If we are serious about following Jesus, we must repent of our sins. Christians who are the descendants of settlers ought to listen and learn from indigenous people while seeking reconciliation and decolonization. Christian mission must always be done with an awareness of history and the dynamics of privilege. In light of this, it is fair to question continued evangelism of indigenous people by settler Christians.

Also, if we are serious about following Jesus we must recognize his instruction to make disciples. Sharing our faith is not inherently oppressive or demeaning. The evangelistic revivals of the Second Great Awakening (a religious revival movement during the early 19th century in the United States) were instrumental in the abolition of slavery in that country. The gospel has empowered people in India oppressed by the caste system.

Many people experience hope and joy in deciding to walk with Jesus. Consider Mennonite World Conference. We would not have this wonderful multicultural

It is peculiar that when persuasion takes the form of Christian evangelism it is regarded as especially dangerous.

In her "Ready to listen and learn" column (Nov. 9, 2015, page 9), Katie Doke Sawatzky states, "I am not interested in converting anyone to Christianity. The time for 'harvesting' is over. It's now time for listening, and for helping with open hands and closed mouths."

Doke Sawatzky's argument is based on what I believe are incorrect assumptions:

- **FIRST, THAT** listening and helping are necessarily opposed to sharing. Seeing Christ in others and sharing Christ with others are not conflicting alternatives. People can share their faith while still being committed to learning and helping.
- **SECOND, THAT** because Christian evangelism has often produced negative results, it is inherently a bad idea. It is not fair to conclude that all bread must taste bad after only eating a stale slice.

More generally, the belief that evangelism is intrinsically insensitive is typically based on the assumption that people live entirely free and uninfluenced lives until Christians interrupt this state of bliss with their refusal to keep their faith to themselves. In truth, we are all highly influenced people. People try to persuade others constantly: of our stereotypes, the importance of social causes, what we need to buy to be beautiful. The list is endless. Some persuasion is good, and some is bad, depending on your moral commitments. It is peculiar that when persuasion takes the form of Christian evangelism it is regarded as especially dangerous.

At times in my life I have also felt that the church has relinquished its "right" to share its faith. However, I now believe that God continues to invite Christians to share the gospel with people and invite them to follow Jesus. I believe that Jesus

witness to the reign of God if people had not responded to Christ's call to evangelize. Mennonite missionaries have made many mistakes, but miraculously God has worked through this and made MWC what it is today.

Abandoning the hope of conversion will make our churches, our theology and our faith less compelling and less welcoming. We will assume that our way of being church is the right and only way. The sinful ways in which we have blended culture and faith will go unchallenged. Being the church with people from different cultures, or with people who did not grow up in the church, will expand our understanding of Christ and help us to be faithful.

Perhaps the metaphor of harvesting is difficult, but Jesus indicates that of primary concern is not whether there are people to respond to the gospel of Christ but whether there are labourers who will share it: "*The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest*" (Matthew 9:37-38, Luke 10:2).

Doke Sawatzky writes of her son, "But I don't want him to grow up thinking he needs to tell other people about Christ. I want him to see Christ in the people that he meets in his daily life, no matter what the race, religion or economic status, and welcome them." I also deeply desire that my child, myself and all Christians will see Christ in others, will be ready to listen and learn, and welcome people across religious, racial and economic divisions. I also hope that we will be passionate about God's good news and feel compelled to share it. ❧

Mark Tiessen-Dyck lives in Winnipeg, where he is associate pastor of Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church.

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Future Directions: Myths and message

FUTURE DIRECTIONS TASK FORCE
Mennonite Church Canada and Area Churches

Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves. . . Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer. —poet and novelist Rainer Maria Rilke

As a Future Directions Task Force working on behalf of the church, we've been trying to be patient with this question: "What is God's Spirit calling us to in the 21st century?" As we seek to live into it, here are some of the myths and the message that engage us.

Myth #1: Future Directions is a Mennonite Church Canada project.

The Task Force was formed by the five area churches across Canada along with the national church. So the Task Force is really Mennonite Church BC, Mennonite Church Alberta, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, Mennonite Church Manitoba, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, and Mennonite Church Canada together. It's about our nationwide church in microcosm acting together.

Myth #2: Future Directions is an evaluation of past and present work. As we look back, we are grateful for God's leading and for the good work and sacrificial ministry that has grown the church and impacted the world with the reconciling love and good news of Jesus. Our intention has not been to question decisions of the past or the work of the present. Instead, our focus has been to identify strengths that we can build on and directions for the future. Some things may fade away; some things we have not yet imagined may emerge. New times call for new responses.

Myth #3: The Future Directions final report is a "done deal." While the report has been approved in principle by leaders of our area and national church bodies, the document is meant to encourage



further conversation as congregations, area churches, and national church continue to discern how we will move into the future together. We hope for much more conversation and further clarification as conference bodies consider and act on the report, as well as thereafter.

Myth #4: Now we can focus on our own congregation and forget about the wider church. As a Task Force we understand the local congregation as foundational to the church, and our recommendation is to refocus the wider church more clearly on building and resourcing healthy congregations to embody God's mission. At the same time, a healthy congregation knows its own limitations and benefits from being part of and accountable to a larger body. As a local congregation, we can't sustain international witness on our own. We can't train all of our own pastors. We need other congregations to encourage us, to be examples to us, and other congregations need us too.

Myth #5: There will be no more international witness. While the Task Force report is a public document available online, it also is still an in-house document as congregations, area churches, and national body continue to discern how we

will move forward together. In the midst of that conversation, we have not yet been ready for the necessary international conversations, but those will need to happen. Our report recommends that our existing partnerships be given initial priority with the intention of (re-)confirming support for them. In future we envision continuing to work together with our international partners and their discernment of specific needs, grounding Witness more firmly in congregational support and likely with more shorter-term opportunities and unsalaried assignments.

Myth #6: It's all about money. The Future Directions Task Force was appointed in response to the growing reality that current programs were not financially or emotionally sustainable in the long run. In this, both national and area churches face similar challenges. But just as a fever is a symptom of something wrong in the body, the budget shortfalls have been a painful symptom. They signal that we need to take another look at what we're doing. What is our vision? What is our purpose?

Palmer Becker has summarized it this way: "Jesus is the centre of our faith. Community is the centre of our lives. Reconciliation is the centre of our work."

With this before us, may we be grounded in God's love, lean into hope and listen to one another. So may we enter into God's dreams for the future—to reshape and renew the work of the church across the street and around the world. Thanks be to God. ☩

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.—Colossians 1: 16-17

The ten members of the FDTF are Aldred Neufeldt, chair; Hilda Hildebrand, Willard Metzger, April Yamasaki, Chad Miller, Gerald Gerbrandt, Rebecca Steiner, Terry Keller, Ken Warkentin (Manitoba) and Gail Schellenberg.

Mennonite Heritage Museum opens in B.C.

Telling a legacy of hope and sacrifice

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

The dream of a heritage museum for B.C. Mennonites to tell their story became reality Jan. 22 when hundreds, including B.C. Premier Christy Clark, gathered for the grand opening of the Mennonite Heritage Museum (MHM) in Abbotsford.

The project fulfilled the long-time aspiration of Peter Redekop, president of the Mennonite Museum Society, who as a youngster immigrated to Canada with his family from Europe following World War II. Redekop had been inspired by Mennonite heritage centres he had visited elsewhere in Canada and the United States and hoped eventually to develop a similar museum to tell the Mennonite story in the Fraser Valley.

Plans for the museum began in 2011, but final approval from the Abbotsford City Council was not given until the spring of 2014, and ground was broken in September of that year. Specific focus is on the Mennonites who came to the area beginning in the 1920s via the Soviet Union and Poland/Prussia.

“We have a fantastic legacy and story,” said Redekop, who wanted the museum to be a collection of stories rather than a collection of objects. “As [future generations] get older, they’ll realize a people brought us here with hope and sacrifice.”

A permanent exhibit inside the museum tells the Anabaptist and Mennonite story over the past 500 years through display panels, audiovisuals, and interactive digital media. Temporary seasonal displays will also be featured.

Also housed in the building is the Mennonite Historical Society of B.C., which collects and preserves stories and archival records relating to Mennonite history in the province and maintains a



Displays at B.C.'s new Mennonite Heritage Museum tell Mennonite history through various media.

library and databases for historical and genealogical research. Convenient computer stations are available for anyone interested in researching family history.

“The location of the MHSBC Archives at the Mennonite Heritage Museum enhances our ability to serve the research needs of those visiting the museum,” said Richard Thiessen, executive director of the museum.

With the building sitting on Agricultural Land Reserve property, an agriculture component is a prominent part of Mennonite heritage storytelling. Raspberries and blueberries have been planted on land adjacent to the museum, and plans include the planting of heritage varieties of berries used by Mennonite farmers who prospered through agriculture in the Fraser Valley, beginning in the 1930s. Plans are for the museum’s coffee shop and display kitchen to feature foods coming directly from the MHM farm.

The building is located at 1818 Clearbrook Road, just south of

/// Briefly noted

Trinity Western School of Law passes hurdle

Trinity Western University (TWU) of Langley, B.C., Canada’s largest evangelical Christian university, continues to battle in the courts over its proposed law school. In December the B.C. Supreme Court rebuked the Law Society of B.C. (LSBC) for its plans to deny accreditation to graduates of the proposed TWU School of Law who want to practise law in the province. TWU had received preliminary approval for the law school from the Canadian Federation of Law Societies and the B.C. government in December 2013. The LSBC had originally approved this proposal, but protests from members triggered a referendum causing the LSBC to reverse its decision and withdraw its approval. Law societies in other Canadian provinces have also threatened to deny accreditation for future TWU law graduates because of the university’s stance on traditional marriage. TWU’s requirement for staff and students to sign a “Community Covenant,” one section of which asks community members to pledge to maintain biblical ideals and reject sexual intimacy outside of traditional heterosexual marriage, has caused controversy as some fear that adherence to the covenant will cause TWU graduates to be prejudiced against homosexuals. In the decision, B.C. Supreme Court Chief Justice Christopher Hinkson rebuked the Law Society for breaching its duty of procedural fairness and neglecting to fully consider the school’s charter rights before issuing a decision. He added that the referendum “was made without proper consideration and balancing of the Charter rights at issue, and therefore cannot stand.”

—AMY DUECKMAN, B.C. CORRESPONDENT

Trans-Canada Highway 1. It is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday, with plans to expand operating hours in the spring. Admission is by donation. //



Glad for an opportunity to relax after a week of exams, Saskatchewan youth listen to Cory Funk's presentation at this year's SMYO senior high retreat.

Hearing stories dispels fear

Saskatchewan youth learn about building relationships with Muslims

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
WALDHEIM, SASK.

Retreats present opportunities for rebuilding relationships and hearing one another's stories. Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization's senior high retreat, held January 29 to 30 at Shekinah Retreat Centre, was just such a retreat.

Guest speaker Cory Funk addressed the theme "Sharing the well: faith and diversity in a time of fear and division." As a graduate student of religious studies at Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland, Funk is researching what it means to be Muslim in Canada and, in particular, how Canadian Muslims are using the Internet to express their faith. As part of his research, Funk has created videos of Muslims telling their stories.

One of his goals in speaking at the retreat was to allow youth to hear these stories and recognize that Muslims have much in common with Mennonites. "There are many similarities between Muslims and Mennonites in the way we practice our faith," he said. For instance, many Muslims share the Mennonite passion for social

justice issues.

"There has been lots of media attention on Islam," said Funk. But in order to understand the Islamic faith one must first understand Islamic identity. "You can't talk about religion without talking about identity," he said. He referred to a Muslim friend who says wearing the hijab is part of her identity. It is "both an expression and a reminder of what she believes in," said Funk.

To encourage the youth to think about the meaning of identity, Funk asked Krista Loewen, youth pastor at Wildwood Mennonite in Saskatoon, to talk about her identity as a Mennonite pastor. Loewen said that when people outside the church find out she is a pastor they often assume she is going to judge them. She said she is aware that "there is a lot of social censoring that happens" in her presence. In spite of that, Loewen said she appreciates her identity as a Mennonite pastor because it opens doors to conversations about faith. She also admitted, "My identity as a Christian is almost always in flux."

Another of Funk's goals for the weekend was to equip the youth to build their own relationships with Muslim friends and neighbours. "We don't have to agree but we do have to listen and understand," he said. "The more stories we hear the more we understand."

Through video, Funk presented the stories of Kobra and Joel, a young Muslim couple who shared their views on marriage and their involvement in social justice issues. He cautioned the youth not to make generalizations about Muslims or any group of people, but rather to listen to their individual stories.

"The more we listen to stories the more we can make Canada a place where everyone is accepted," he said.

Funk gave the youth some hands-on ideas for getting to know Muslims, suggesting they might ask to attend a service at a local mosque and then invite Muslim friends to attend one of their church services. They might also invite Muslim friends to share a meal with them or join them in a service project or social justice initiative. During the final session, members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community joined the youth to talk about ways they could build relationships with one another. "There were some really great and productive conversations," said Funk.

Marcus Kruger, a retreat participant and member of the SMYO committee, appreciated what Funk had to say and recognized that the wisdom in Funk's words can apply to any relationship. "Going into any relationship with an open mind and an open heart" is important, he said. Zachary Stefaniuk, another SMYO committee member, said he was surprised to learn just how much Mennonites and Muslims have in common.

Kirsten Hamm-Epp, area church minister, youth programming for Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, said that about 30 youth and 14 sponsors and adult supporters attended the retreat. She added that a number of them registered for the retreat specifically because of the chosen theme. ☘



To view a video of the event visit canadianmennonite.org/dispels-fear

Historical society reviews role of MCC in Canada

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent
CALGARY, ALTA.

Kim Thiessen's rendition of "Give Yourself to Love" opened the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta's 2015 fall conference on Nov. 21. Love underlies Thiessen's work as the associate director of Mennonite Central Committee Alberta. MCC AB is currently helping groups sponsor vulnerable Syrian refugees.

"This won't be ending any time soon. It is gratifying to be part of a community welcoming these people," Thiessen said.

After hearing MCC's present reality, keynote speaker, Esther Epp-Tiessen plunged the crowd back in time, leading with a story learned from Dr. Terry Leblanc, indigenous studies program director at Tyndale University College. In the

story, a young boy is terrified about getting lost. While walking with his grandfather, the grandfather regularly stopped to look back. When the boy asked why he did this, the grandfather said he was looking to see where they had come from so they would not lose their way. Epp-Tiessen views the study of history in a similar way.

In 2013, Epp-Tiessen's book, *Mennonite Central Committee in Canada: A History*, was published. A self-described MCC "insider," Epp-Tiessen grew up discussing MCC around the dinner table, studying it at University, serving in the Philippines, and working for MCC Ontario and MCC Canada. In the preface, Epp-Tiessen states: "... I have tried to use my experience as an



Esther Epp-Tiessen visits with Dave Neufeldt, chair of the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta, at the conference held at Trinity Mennonite Church in Calgary on Nov. 21, 2015.

"insider" to tell the story of some of the internal working of MCC Canada—the struggle for identity and purpose, the oftentimes turbulent relationship with constituents, the power struggles within the organization, and the contradictions and complexities of compassionate service to a hurting world."

Epp-Tiessen struggled with the volume of information to sort through, as well as trying to make sense of blurry boundaries between what was shared with MCC USA, and what was uniquely Canadian. Even in the Canadian context, provincial and national interests proved complicated to explain.

MCC Canada's roots began in the 1920s, when Canadian Mennonites gave aid to those suffering in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution. Back then, Epp-Tiessen noted: "Inter-Mennonite co-operation was not the case at all. Coming together to work was radical at the time. The urgency [in Russia] demanded a united effort."

In Canada the inter-Mennonite organization was formalized in 1963 at a Dec. 12 meeting in the Portage Avenue Mennonite Brethren Church in Winnipeg.

Most of Epp-Tiessen's address focused on part two of her book, the development of identity for MCC Canada. From its beginnings, relief work was paired with development so the needy were equipped to help themselves. As volunteers were placed in other countries, MCC became a "place of profound learning and Christian formation," said Epp-Tiessen. "MCC became a window on the world, interpreting

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the world to the people back home.”

Questions from the floor expressed appreciation for Epp-Tiessen’s forthright approach. “The book contained warts, but publically we don’t see those,” Dave Toews said.

An ongoing discussion is what combination of word and deed is appropriate in various countries. Marvin Baergen commented, “MCC tried not to plant churches or evangelize, it seems we lost an opportunity.”

It was clear in the discussion that MCC still works with the question of identity, including the reality that more

non-Mennonite churches are now involved. Epp-Tiessen referred to the “new wine-skins” discussions from 2007-2008. “It is interesting that MCC is more strongly tied to denominational churches than before... (and there are) new voices, this is wonderful but presents tensions too,” she said.

MCC’s work goes beyond simple provision of material relief. Victim services and restorative justice programs, handicapped concerns, indigenous relations, recycling, education, peace programs, and more, all attempt to work at root causes of injustice. Epp-Tiessen’s book and stories are to be celebrated.

“(MCC is) God’s miracle among us. Praise be to God,” she said.

The MHSA spring conference and AGM will be held on April 30, at Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton. The theme will be “Rethinking Mennonite History in Light of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.” Speakers will be: Dr. Roger Epp, professor of political science at the University of Alberta and author of *We Are All Treaty People*; Isaac Glick, retired community development specialist with First Nations in northern Alberta; and Chief Calvin Bruneau of the Papaschase First Nation. ❧

C. Henry Smith peace lecture explores racial awareness

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

Rebecca Janzen, the C. Henry Smith peace lecturer and scholar for 2016, addressed the topic “Mennonites and the Identification Documents of Foreigners in Mexico” at Conrad Grebel University College (CGUC) on Jan. 20. Assistant professor of Spanish at Bluffton University in Ohio, she is exploring the identity cards Mennonites from Canada living in Mexico

had to fill out from 1926 to 1951. All foreigners living there had to do this, including large groups of Mormons who moved to Mexico from the United States.

Examining photographs and descriptions of these Mennonites, she found that these very conservative people prepared themselves for the photos (one example had a woman using makeup), and the

clerk’s description often emphasized their European or white nature. During this time Mexico was in a project of trying to create a Mexican race out of the melting pot of European and indigenous citizens.

Janzen asked if it matters how others see us, how we want to be seen, and how we see others. Is there inherent racism in these various views? In her interviews in Mexico, as well as in reading the letters sections of various newspapers directed at both the folk in Mexico and their Canadian relatives, Janzen found such racism and difference identification. The failure of the Mennonites to integrate in Mexican culture has raised serious concerns in the Mexican government about their continued presence and the extraordinary rights they have, including exemption from military service and the running of their own schools. The latter is seen as a significant contributor to their continued otherness.

Janzen, the daughter of Bill Janzen, longtime Mennonite Central Committee representative in Ottawa, lived and studied at Grebel in the early 2000s and completed her PhD in Spanish at the University of Toronto. Her area of focus at the present is “Liminal Sovereignty: Mennonites and Mormons in Popular Culture.” She deals with the representation of Mennonites and Mormons in Mexican and borderlands film, photography, television and webcomics.

The C. Henry Smith lecture is supported by Bluffton University and Goshen College. The lecture is given at those two schools and at CGUC in Waterloo, Ontario. ❧



Abe Harms, who works with Mennonites who have moved to Ontario from Mexico, talks with Rebecca Janzen after her presentation on “Mennonites and the Identification Documents of Foreigners in Mexico,” at Conrad Grebel University College on Jan. 20.

Evangelical Anabaptist Network generates hope and frustration

Ontario congregations attend EVANA workshop

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WELLESLEY, ONT.

On January 22 to 23, Maple View Mennonite Church, with its pastor Brent Kipfer, sponsored the first Canadian workshop of the Evangelical Anabaptist Network (EVANA). Located west of Kitchener/Waterloo, Ont., the church is a member of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC).

EVANA arose in the United States as some evangelical congregations and conferences have grown increasingly frustrated with what they see as the lack of Mennonite Church USA leadership on a number of issues. Among other things, they are calling for the disciplining of congregations and conferences that include those in same-sex relationships.

John Troyer, executive director of EVANA, emphasizes that neither he nor the network have a goal to divide Anabaptists into evangelical versus non-evangelical camps. He says no church need leave its denominational home in order to join EVANA or to utilize its tools and assistance.

Troyer was a pastor at the Clinton Frame Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., which removed its membership from the MC USA Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference in June 2014. One of the reasons the congregation left was that other local Mennonite

leaders took public stances that “affirm same-sex marriage and support the LGBTQ agenda,” which “runs counter to our witness and outreach,” Troyer explained.

EVANA has seen other congregations join for similar reasons, and the Lancaster Conference, which has recently voted to leave Mennonite Church USA, is suggesting its congregations could join EVANA.

According to Troyer and Wes Furlong, director of church development for EVANA, the purpose of the network “is a ministry community of pastors and churches with a heart to see lives transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ” whose “common vision is to live out Jesus’ great commission to make and grow disciples.” To this end, congregations and pastors can join EVANA and receive training and assistance in missional-oriented evangelism in their home community.

Another concern of the network is to maintain a conservative interpretation and adherence to the 1995 *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*.

Also, congregations with no denominational connection may join EVANA and have the network credential their pastor and congregation. According to its leaders, in credentialing “EVANA will have the



Left to right: Ryan Jantzi, pastor of the Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite Church, John Troyer of EVANA, Ron Weber from the Listowel Mennonite Church, and Dianne Roeder from Calvary Church, an MCEC congregation in Ayr, visit during a break at the EVANA workshop at Maple View Mennonite Church on Jan. 22.

primary responsibility in determining the candidate’s theological perspective, and the local congregation will have the primary responsibility for assessing the pastor’s spiritual maturity and character.”

EVANA assesses pastors like a denomination so they can operate within the legal framework for pastors in the country where the pastors serve. EVANA sees this as support for congregations and pastors, rather than trying to establish a separate denomination. With the credentialing of a leader, the expectation is that the congregation will contribute at least two to three percent of its annual budget to EVANA. Full partner congregations are expected to give five percent.

At the January event, Kipfer noted in a public statement the attendance of a number of MCEC and Mennonite Church Canada leaders, including David Martin, executive minister for MCEC and Willard Metzger, executive director of MC Canada. Kipfer expressed a deep appreciation and connectedness with the area and national churches.

In an interview with *Canadian Mennonite* Kipfer noted that Maple View’s leaders do not accept Recommendation #3 of Being a Faithful Church 7: “that we create space/leave room within our Body to test alternative understandings from that of the larger Body to see if they are a prophetic nudging of the Spirit of God.” That said, he is careful to note that Maple View wishes to be a “safe place for folk with same-sex attraction.”

Kipfer believes that EVANA might



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create a way in which Maple View and other congregations can “stay in MC Canada and MCEC with integrity.” But he is also clear that “this is not about who is in or out of the Kingdom of God,” and he does not want this to be divisive.

In sending out invitations to the event, Kipfer used the MC Canada mailing list, which is available to all pastors and congregations. This led some people to assume that the area or national churches were sponsoring the event, something MCEC disclaimed in emails to congregations on Jan. 16.

David Martin notes that while EVANA does not aim to be divisive, its presence has already been divisive in MCEC, as some congregations and pastors reacted to the workshop.

In an email interview Martin said he sees EVANA as offering missional leadership training similar to that which MCEC already offers and suggested, “If congregations are interested in joining EVANA because they want missional coaching, then MCEC invites those congregations to first explore what MCEC is already doing in this area. Further, MCEC is also concerned that a financial commitment to EVANA may place a greater strain on congregational resources.”

“Concern has also been expressed within MCEC congregations that EVANA’s presence might polarize the same-sex conversation in Mennonite Church Canada like it has in the US,” said Martin. “The Canadian approach to this conversation has leaned towards tolerance and forbearance and has been much less inclined to divide and polarize. We trust that congregations in MCEC will continue to be committed to this approach.”

Martin continued, “If a congregation chooses to articulate a particular position in same-sex conversation, then MCEC is committed to dialoguing with those congregations so that their theological understandings are understood and respected.”

The workshop was attended by 70 to 80 church members and leaders, including pastors from a number of new-Canadian congregations.

EVANA’s emphasis as a renewal movement within Anabaptism in the U.S., Canada, and beyond, is a hopeful sign for some and a frustration to others. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Communitas offers mental health worship resources

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.— In the spring of 2014, Communitas celebrated Mental Health Awareness Week by telling the stories of people who live with mental illness. Some of the important feedback received came from pastors, one of whom said, “We do not talk about this enough in our churches.” In response to that feedback, Communitas gathered together a group of people with lived experience who collaborated on a worship resource package for churches to use. “Our hope is that [‘God of all comfort’] will help us create a space where people can talk freely and safely about the challenges they face as people of faith living with mental health challenges,” says Angelika Dawson, communications manager for Communitas and the project coordinator. Developed over the course of a year, the packet includes a variety of tools that can be incorporated into the context of a worship service. A first draft of the material was used by four different churches, including Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, and First United Mennonite Church and Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship, both in Vancouver. “God of all comfort” includes a variety of elements that churches can incorporate into the context of their own service: prayers, readings, a reader’s theatre, song suggestions, sermon prompts and more. For more information, visit communitascare.com. —Communitas



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GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

VIEWPOINT

Reconciliation requires an end to guilty white inhibition

BY WILL BRAUN
SENIOR WRITER

The door to reconciliation is open further now than ever before in Canada. From Trudeau to church organizers I speak with, interest in improving relations between indigenous and non-indigenous people is far greater than even a few years ago. Yet most of the discussion leaves me feeling hollow.

If we are to seize this moment, which will likely start to fade in a few years, the discourse will need to be more practical, creative and nuanced than much of what I see.

I try to keep two perspectives in mind. First, that of people living in crappy conditions on reserves. Second, that of non-indigenous Canadians who care about reconciliation but don't know what exactly to do about it other than not laugh at their uncle's off-colour jokes.

Some of my more seasoned indigenous friends, having ridden many roller coasters of promise and disappointment, are far less enthusiastic about this moment than I. They worry that reconciliation will just be a cheap buzz for a society for which "meaning is the new luxury," as *Adbusters* magazine so perfectly put it.

Indeed, if reconciliation doesn't bring real change within a couple years to those who most need it, what's the point? Yes, reconciliation is about slow, essential shifts in the tectonic plates of culture, but this national moment must also bring tangible results for those with most at stake.

Non-indigenous folks need action too. The current energy must be harnessed in ways that go beyond sitting in meetings or "educating" ourselves. Action is the best way to sustain energy.

We need to think freely and boldly about how change happens and what our role is. What do we bring to the table

other than awkward hand-wringing? Our legacy is one of contributing in a self-congratulatory and condescending spirit. Now we need to learn to contribute in a spirit of humility, societal penance, collaboration and reconciliation. I see evidence of this shift.

Action could include assisting in the creation of social enterprise thrift stores on reserves, commissioning indigenous art, providing food security research assistance, returning land, facilitating the creation of multi-party discussions on resource use, or a thousand other things.

Some will say this sounds too much like the impositions of the past, but I believe reconciliation requires more of us than a listening ear. It's tricky, but essential. And of course, it needs to happen in a context of learning and relationship.

Partially underlying the tension around whether or how to contribute is the lingering narrative captured in the classic chart showing differences between Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian culture. I've seen many versions of this presented, either explicitly or subtly, at workshops and events. The gist is that the Aboriginal worldview is harmonious, complete and ethically pristine while the Euro-Canadian worldview is utterly depraved.

One of the reasons I have devoted much of my life to relating with indigenous people is that I have glimpsed a profoundly different way of being and thinking. I find that attractive. I also know that the old chart is grossly oversimplified. Indigenous cultures aren't all good and western culture isn't all bad. In fact the vast majority of Indigenous people have embraced a great many elements of white culture: Hollywood, hyper-connectivity, Baconian health care, guns, the western



Chief Ellis Ross of the Haisla Nation shows Rich Coleman, B.C. Minister of Natural Gas Development, the site for a liquefied natural gas terminal near Kitimat, B.C. Chief Ross favours this project but was strongly opposed to a Northern Gateway crude oil pipeline.

© "Minister Coleman Tours Northwest LNG Sites" by Province of British Columbia bit.ly/1nQa3sb Licensed under CC BY 2.0

concept of education, WalMart—you get the point. Important differences exist between Euro-Canadian and indigenous realities, but the old chart is unhelpful. It provides no path forward.

Often the central drift of such world-view comparisons is that indigenous peoples protect Mother Earth and white folks rape her. There is truth to that, but it is also true that Aboriginal companies have made billions in the oil sands, First Nations governments are partners in three multi-billion dollar hydropower projects, and many of the First Nations that opposed the Northern Gateway pipeline support multi-billion dollar liquefied natural gas projects. The mining industry is the largest private sector employer of Aboriginal people in Canada, unless you believe the petroleum sector's identical claim.

Our narratives need to include this sort of nuance. We all partake of a highly consumptive, beneficial, messy culture.

/// Briefly noted

'Freedom Road' to be built

WINNIPEG—After decades of struggle, a First Nations community cut off from the mainland 101 years ago, when Winnipeg built its water supply system, will finally get a link to freedom. Three levels of government announced in December their commitment to fund a \$30-million all-weather road that will connect the 200 residents of Shoal Lake 40 with the mainland. It's something this community has been requesting for years through public demonstrations and meetings with government officials. In recent months, Winnipeg churches lent their voices to the cause. A campaign spearheaded by singer-songwriter Steve Bell gathered support from more than 80 Manitoba churches from different denominations that agreed it was time for justice to be done. Previously, the City of Winnipeg and the province had each promised to fund a third of the project. In December, the Liberal government committed \$10 million as well. Construction of the road has already begun. (See background story at bit.ly/1Kkp66F.)

—BY J. NEUFELD

I suppose that is the bottom line: we're all in this together. We have to figure out how to live together in a good way here and now. We need to be honest, candid, realistic and gracious with each other and ourselves.

Bill Phipps—former head of the United Church of Canada and veteran organizer—recently told me he sees that the discourse around indigenous relations is shifting away from victimization, blame and guilt dynamics toward constructive, less inhibited interaction. This opens up a path.

A key question is this: what exactly does reconciliation look like? I'd like to see the church put bold, creative and practical suggestions on that table. Some of that is certainly happening. Much more could. ///



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What people want to know about Mennonites

The website Thirdway.com serves as a portal for people curious about Mennonite faith and practices. Here are some of the questions asked in 2015.

canadianmennonite.org/know-mennonites



Mennonites active in Ukraine

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canadianmennonite.org/active-ukraine



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Long-term consequences of war

During her sabbatical, Eastern Mennonite University English professor Marti Eads is studying how, in author Ron Rash's fiction, "the Civil War conflict reverberates in one Appalachian community even after most people there are no longer consciously aware of its relevance."

For Eads, this theme has resonated since her childhood in North Carolina. One grandfather fought for the Confederacy, spending time as a prisoner of war, and the other fought for the Union.

Eads' project also includes themes of slavery and historic harms and trauma, which



Marti Eads, English professor at EMU, is studying themes of slavery, trauma and historic harms.


she's integrated creatively into coursework, literary research and dialogue with formerly incarcerated men.

Eads, who has taught English at EMU since 2003, is drawn to teaching texts that focus on trauma and its effects, such as Toni Morrison's *Beloved*.

"EMU students seem to find these texts most meaningful," she said.

As preparation for this multidisciplinary project, Eads underwent unusual "training."

Post-Secondary



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First, she completed Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience (STAR) Level I training offered by EMU's Center for Justice and Peacebuilding (CJP). The curriculum—learning about cycles of violence, responses to trauma, and the effects of unhealed trauma—led to different perspectives on the literature she was studying. At Yale University she participated in a history seminar about

slave narratives.

Eads also took the “Transforming Historical Harms” workshop, offered by Coming to the Table, an affiliate program of CJP, focused on racial reconciliation, and shared short stories and discussion with residents of Gemeinschaft Home, a therapeutic, transitional home in Harrisonburg for individuals recently released or diverted from incarceration. ❧

MCC provides blankets and warm clothing in Nepal

Families hit by earthquake still in temporary shelter

By JULIE BELL

Mennonite Central Committee Canada
BHASBHASE, NEPAL

When an earthquake rocked his village in Nepal on April 25, 2015, Sudarshan Chepang and his family huddled inside their home as it collapsed around them. After the shaking subsided all that remained was rubble. They gathered what they could, mostly utensils, and fled outside.

Nine months later, Chepang, his wife and their two young children are still living in a temporary shelter made of salvaged materials, tarps and sheet metal. They have already endured the monsoon season, when moisture seeped in and spoiled food and bedding in some homes. Now that it's winter, he's worried about what comes next.

“We know it will be cold. But where else can we go?” Chepang says. “This is the only place that we have because we cannot build a new house yet.”

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is assisting families such as the Chepangs, as they await the construction of new homes. In December of 2015, blankets, mattresses, plastic sheeting, tarps and jackets were distributed to about 30 households in their village.

“This is very welcome, especially for our children,” says Chepang. “Now we have blankets and they will be warm.” The distribution was done through Sansthatag Bikas Sanjal (Sanjal), an MCC partner in Nepal that works with several local organizations.

More than 30 districts across Nepal are still struggling with the impact of the 7.8 magnitude earthquake, as well as a second quake a few weeks later. More than 8,200 people died and more than 488,000 homes were affected. Toilets and drinking water systems were heavily damaged. In Dhading District, 59 percent of homes were totally damaged and 25 percent were partially damaged.

While the government of Nepal is promising financial support for people whose

homes were destroyed, rebuilding efforts have been hampered by an ongoing political crisis and a critical fuel shortage.

Juliana Yonzon, MCC's program coordinator in Nepal, says thousands of people will spend several more months in temporary housing, sometimes with poor sanitation facilities.

“We are worried about the impact of this on hygiene, especially for children,” Yonzon says. “As their immune systems are weakened by the cold, they can be more susceptible to pneumonia.”

Since mid-December, MCC and its partners have provided about 1,280 households with materials such as blankets and winter jackets. Ultimately the goal is to have permanent housing ready or underway before the next monsoon season in May. Working alongside local partners, MCC plans to support the most vulnerable people by helping them access government rebuilding funds. MCC also hopes to support the training of masons and carpenters and build model homes as examples of how earthquake-resistant housing should be done.

Yonzon says as MCC works with partners in several communities, she's impressed with the resiliency of the Nepali people.

“I hope that we can help them as they work together to rebuild their lives,” she says. ❧

MCC PHOTO BY MATTHEW SAWATZKY



After receiving their winterization materials from an MCC partner, the people of Bhasbhasse village in Nepal, hike back up the mountain to their homes.

GOD AT WORK IN US

Young entrepreneur balances profit, community and faith

By J. NEUFELD

Manitoba Correspondent
STEINBACH, MAN.

Matthew Penner loves airports. Sometimes he rides his bicycle to the airport in Steinbach and simply sits next to the runway. “I would call it a sacred place for me to go and experience God’s closeness,” he says.

Penner, a pilot and a 29-year-old entrepreneur who founded his own marketing company called Three Six North, was recently among 20 young professionals honoured by the business-focused development organization Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA).

“What we’re looking for when we select the 20 under 35 award winners is a commitment to faith, service and entrepreneurial spirit,” says MEDA’s Ethan Eschbach. “We really believe that Matt exhibits all of those.”

Penner has been pursuing his passions—business and flying—ever since he set up his first lemonade stand as a child. He earned his pilot’s license when he was 15. The first time he flew solo his mother had to drop him off at the airport because he was too young to drive a car.

Penner studied commerce in university, graduating from the University of Manitoba’s Asper School of Business with honours. After that he worked for a few different companies before he decided to strike out on his own.

Airplanes played a role in his decision. At the time, he was working as a marketing manager for Price Industries in Winnipeg. One day he volunteered as a pilot with a non-profit organization called Women in Aviation for an event aimed at encouraging women to get into flying. All day Penner made short flights, taking women up in the air. It was so much fun, he decided then and there to quit his job and do his own thing.

The next morning he walked into his boss’s office and gave notice. “I wouldn’t say I’m spontaneous, I’m more of a planner, so it was uncharacteristic of me,” says Penner.

He named his company Three Six North after the point on a compass. Penner began taking on local clients, helping small businesses to sharpen their marketing plans and develop websites. Eventually he merged his business with his parents’ company, a print shop called Print Studio One. The marketing and printing businesses are now part of the same company, but each maintains its own brand.

Working with clients at Three Six North allows Penner to flex his creative muscles. And sometimes he gets to fly. Last year he

took a series of aerial photos for a company that builds barns.

Running his own company is also a way for Penner to give back to his community. He and his wife, Lindsey Banman, live in Steinbach and attend Steinbach Mennonite Church and Grace Mennonite Church. Penner’s company supports several charities and he sits on the boards of Steinbach Flying Club, Steinbach Family Resource Centre, Mission in Aviation Fellowship Canada and the Steinbach Chamber of Commerce.

“I see business as much more than making a profit,” says Penner. “Profit is like air, you need air to live, but you don’t live just to breathe air. We need to sustain ourselves and build a foundation, but it’s really about the community and giving back in different ways.”

Penner says he strives to balance the financial, social, environmental and spiritual aspects of his work. His company uses vegetable-based inks and recycled paper to reduce its environmental footprint. Recently one of Penner’s co-workers characterized the company as a family. “That was very touching—that we’d created more than just an organizational culture, we’d created a family that cares for each other in deeper ways,” he says. ☘

PHOTO COURTESY MATTHEW PENNER



Matthew Penner (right) meets with clients.

More than just punchlines

New documentary explores what Mennonite humour says about Mennonite culture

BY AARON EPP
Young Voices Editor

What makes Mennonites funny, and what does their sense of humour say about them?

Those are the questions at the heart of *That Mennonite Joke*, a new documentary from Prairie Boy Productions. Written and directed by Winnipeg filmmaker Orlando Braun, the documentary follows Niverville, Man., comedian Matt Falk as he traces the roots of Mennonite humour.

"I'm not trying to figure out what makes them funny so I can laugh at them," says Falk, 26. "I'm trying to figure out what we're already laughing at so I can bring other people in on the joke."

Falk, who placed second in the World Series of Comedy in Las Vegas in 2010, has dealt with his Mennonite upbringing in his material before. *That Mennonite Joke* shows him preparing to film a comedy special and wondering if there is enough fodder for humour in his Mennonite background to include more jokes about it in his act.

It's a funny documentary that includes interviews with: acclaimed writer Miriam Toews; Royden Loewen, history professor and chair in Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg; Corny Rempel, a radio host and Elvis tribute artist; and B.C.-based comedian Leland Klassen.

Braun, who co-owns Prairie Boy Productions with *That Mennonite Joke* producer Jorge Requena, created the film for MTS Stories from Home, a series available to MTS (Manitoba Telecom Services) subscribers in Manitoba, as part of its video on demand offerings.

Braun wanted to show viewers the lighter side of Mennonites. "I think you

can learn a lot about a culture by getting to know their sense of humour," the 34-year-old filmmaker says.

With a 20-minute running time, the documentary will no doubt leave viewers wanting more. Still, Braun manages to pack in a lot of insight about the things that make Mennonites funny.

"Mennonites often lived on the fringes, so when there's hardships, the humour just emerges as a survival mechanism," he says.

Falk adds that comedy has always been built on the viewpoints of people on the fringes of society. "It's people who are outside of the everyday [who] can look in at the everyday and make fun of [it]."

The Low German language also features prominently in the film, including an interview with Nathan Dueck, a poet who incorporated the language in his most recent collection, *He'll*, and 3molPlaut, a comedic musical trio from southern Manitoba who perform in *Plautdietsch*.

"It's such an extreme, unique language," Falk says. "It's hard to explain, but it facilitates comedy beautifully."

Braun and Falk premiered *That Mennonite Joke* at a free screening at the Keystone Cinema in Steinbach on Feb. 6. The documentary is now available in Manitoba through MTS and will air Canada-wide on the Bravo channel next year.

In the meantime, Braun is submitting the documentary to film festivals and setting up community screenings across North America. Anyone interested in seeing the documentary in their city can request a screening at MennoJoke.com.

The filmmakers have also released an

PHOTO COURTESY OF PRAIRIE BOY PRODUCTIONS



*Matt Falk takes a comedic walkabout through his heritage in *That Mennonite Joke*.*

PHOTO BY AARON EPP



Filmmaker Orlando Braun wants to show viewers the lighter side of Mennonites.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PRAIRIE BOY PRODUCTIONS



Falk talks with acclaimed novelist Miriam Toews about the humour in her work.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PRAIRIE BOY PRODUCTIONS



Kennert Giesbrecht, editor of Die Mennonitische Post (The Mennonite Post), tells Falk about his humour column.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PRAIRIE BOY PRODUCTIONS



Falk with his mentor, B.C.-based comedian Leland Klassen.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AMY MATYCHUK



Amy Matychuk worked hard to earn her undergraduate degree, but privilege played a part as well.

app available for free download on iTunes. Titled “That Mennonite Joke Book,” the app features Mennonite jokes the filmmakers crowdsourced through social media last summer.

Braun is excited to share the film with people and says its themes will resonate with Mennonites and non-Mennonites alike.

He recalls a conversation he had with his cinematographer, Charles Venzon, after filming one day. Venzon knew very little about Mennonite culture going into the film, and told Braun that working on the documentary made him want to talk to his grandmother about his Filipino heritage.

Braun was ecstatic. “That’s exactly what I want people to do—to connect with [their] past, no matter what that past is,” he says. “From life’s first breath until we die, it’s a part of who we are and we just need to embrace it.”

For Falk, working on the film has led to greater depth in his stand-up material about Mennonites. It’s also led to a greater appreciation for his heritage.

“In the beginning it was a punchline for me,” Falk says. “Now it’s something a whole lot more.”

He recalls visiting the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach, Man., while filming and discovering for the first time the story of Dirk Willems, the martyred Anabaptist who escaped from prison only

to turn back and rescue his pursuer who had fallen through thin ice.

How Willems and other early Anabaptists honoured God in the way they lived their lives inspired Falk. “Learning about that makes you so proud to be a part of this people that laid down their lives ahead of others,” he says. ☛

PHOTO COURTESY OF PRAIRIE BOY PRODUCTIONS



Steinbach radio DJ Corny Rempel mixes humour into his side job as an Elvis tribute act.

Set up to succeed

It is important use our privilege to help the powerless and marginalized

BY AMY MATYCHUK

Special to Young Voices

I paid for my undergraduate degree with scholarships and my own savings, and graduated without student debt. I am touchy about this. I tell anyone listening about how expensive it was, how I kept my grades high and earned scholarships, what weird part-time work I did and the imaginative ways I found to save money. I’m proud of myself, and I want other people to

recognize the hard work and sacrifice that went into this achievement.

However, it’s important for me to acknowledge that I was set up to succeed. My parents let me live at home while I worked for a year after high school. They enabled me to save almost everything I earned and provided transportation to jobs I was lucky to have. My grade school education took

place at home, where I studied what I loved and spent my time on things that interested me. I began university more prepared than most, thanks to a grade school education that taught me to be self-motivated, organized, and engaged.

By accidents of birth, I have a natural scholastic aptitude for earning high grades with less effort and time investment than some of my peers. I had a perfect on-campus job that employed me for three summers. I live in Alberta, a province where student funding is plentiful and where post-secondary education is heavily subsidized by the government. I have no restricting physical limitations. I do not suffer from debilitating mental illness. I did not encounter significant bias or prejudice based on my religion, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class or race.

In other words, *I didn't start at the bottom*. As I have considered what my faith means for the way I live, it has struck me that Jesus was concerned most about the people society views as being at the bottom. However proud I am of my accomplishments, I have never been there myself. Privilege enabled me to achieve what I did. My effort was just one of the variables that contributed to my success.

I'm still proud of what I achieved, because it was difficult. But trumpeting my own accomplishments doesn't make me a more encouraging, life-giving person. I must recognize the ways in which I was set up to succeed and look for ways to set others up to succeed. Had I been set adrift on my own at 18, grown up in the foster system, faced crippling tuition fees, struggled with a learning disability, dealt with a chronic illness, or been an immigrant who needed to learn English, my situation would look much different.

If I could brag to Jesus about my accomplishments, I'm not sure he would pat me on the back and praise me to the skies. Rather, I wonder if he would say, "Yes, these are gifts I gave you. These victories that you claim are victories I helped you earn. How will you help those who do not have the same gifts? How will you use what I have given you to reach down to those at the bottom and lift them up?"

I have come to believe that my faith ought to be evident not so much in *what*

I believe, but in *who* I stand behind. I suspect that my theology, my cognitive stance on atonement, hell, creation, resurrection, sin or grace is inconsequential if it does not impact the way I live. I used to think that my faith should be most evident by what I say and argue, by the ideas I support. Now I think, instead, that the primary expression of my faith should be the people I support.

When Jesus said to take care of the orphan and the widow, I think he meant: take care of the powerless, the marginalized, those who cannot create the same kind of life for themselves that I have created for myself. God has not given me intelligence or wealth or ambition or capability or physical and mental health or privilege so that I can crow about my good fortune. He has not given me faith communities who love and value me so that I can keep that support and security for myself.

The idea of privilege is not meant to undermine the value of what the fortunate have accomplished. Rather, it is meant to remind us that there are those who have to work back-breakingly hard to draw level with us at the place we began. It should inspire us to be grateful that the world caught us gently. ❧

Amy Matychuk, 24, has a BA in English literature from Ambrose University. She lives in Calgary, Alta., where she attends Foothills Mennonite Church and studies law at the University of Calgary.

PHOTO COURTESY OF AMY MATYCHUK



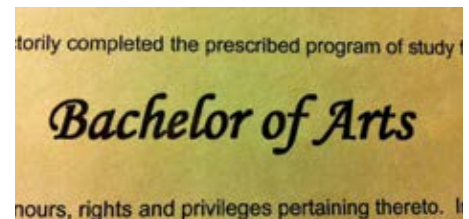
Amy Matychuk

PHOTO BY AARON EPP



'I began university more prepared than most.'

PHOTO BY AARON EPP



'Trumpeting my own accomplishments doesn't make me a more encouraging, life-giving person.'



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UpComing

Canadian Mennonite to provide 'Living Ink' reflections

This year's Lenten/Easter worship material developed for Canadian and American Mennonite congregations was prepared by a writing team from Mennonite Church British Columbia in the Fraser Valley. Using the theme of "Living Ink,"



the material helps worshippers recognize God as the author who invites people to be co-authors in the grand narrative of God's story, as they journey with Christ. Two team members—Chris Lenshyn of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, and Elsie Rempel, formerly of MC Canada—are writing reflections on some of this year's scripture texts from the Revised Common Lectionary for *Canadian Mennonite*. These will appear in our February 29 and March 14 issues. "These resources have played a major part in building our North American Anabaptist identity," says Rempel, who has been involved in developing the worship materials for the past 10 years. "Each writing team that offers their gifts to produce these worship resources is blessed with a broader understanding of, and a deeper love for, our North American Mennonite church family." Rempel has also written worship materials that families can use during the Lenten/Easter season, which can be downloaded from CommonWord at commonword.ca/go/35.

—*Canadian Mennonite*

Challenge and change to be discussed at Ministers Conference

Challenge and change occur in every organization including the church, but covenantal relationships call the church to fundamentally different approaches for managing them. That's the message that Susan Beaumont, a consultant, author, coach and spiritual director, is bringing to Mennonite Church Canada's Ministers Conference in Saskatoon on July 6. Beaumont, an ordained minister who worked for nine years as a senior consultant with the Alban Institute before opening her own consulting practice, says a desire to help church leaders has always been an intrinsic motivation for her: "The church has such a capacity to transform the world and we get side-tracked by organizational ineffectiveness." Beaumont says she hopes that pastors will come to understand there really doesn't need to be conflict between being a spiritual leader and being an organizational leader, and that it's not the church leader's job to make everyone happy. For further information and to register, visit bit.ly/ministers-conference.

—Mennonite Church Canada



**Susan
Beaumont**

Foodgrains Bank invites teachers, educators to Nicaragua

Canadian Foodgrains Bank is inviting applications for its educators learning tour to Nicaragua, for two weeks in August. Tour participants will visit Foodgrains Bank projects, engage with small-scale Nicaraguan farmers and learn about global hunger. The tour includes getting to know local communities through a homestay with Nicaraguan farmers, meeting government representatives and other actors in the area of hunger and nutrition, visits to local marketplaces and debriefing sessions. Before leaving, an orientation will help participants learn more about Canadian Foodgrains Bank and prepare for the cultural experience on which they are embarking. For more information and to apply e-mail Naomi Happychuk at nhappychuk@foodgrainsbank.ca or call her at 1-800-665-0377.

—Canadian Foodgrains Bank

Calendar

British Columbia

March 5: LifeBridge Ministries fundraising concert at Level Ground Mennonite Church, Abbotsford.

March 5-6: Lenten Vespers with Abendmusik Choir at 7:30 p.m. at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford (5), Knox United Church, Vancouver (6). Offerings to Menno Simons Centre.

March 17: Pastors and leaders conference, "Leadership lessons from David," with Mark Buchanan, at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

April 2: Early marriage seminar for the engaged or newly married, "Love for Life" led by Ken Esau and Claire Weiss at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Alberta

March 18-19: MC Alberta annual general assembly, Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary

Saskatchewan

Feb. 28: RJC/CMU concert, at RJC.

March 11: Youth Mega Menno Barn Dance. For more information, visit smy.ca.

March 11-12: Mennonite Church Saskatchewan annual delegate sessions, at Osler Mennonite Church.

April 10: RJC Guys and Pies events, featuring A Buncha Guys.

Manitoba

Until March 26: Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg, features "The Alchemy of Life" exhibition with works by painter Margruite Krahn and composer Andrew Balfour, and "Typoems" with works by printmaker Norman Schmidt.

March 10-12: Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna, presents the "Mary Poppins" musical; 7:30 p.m. each evening and a 2 p.m. matinee on the 12th. Tickets available at mcblues.net.

March 11: Open house at CMU. For more information, visit www.cmu.ca/campusvisit.

March 12: Open house at Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna, at 11:30 a.m.

March 13: Mennonite Community

Orchestra presents its spring concert at the CMU Chapel, at 3 p.m., featuring works by Glinka, Jacob and Brahms.

March 18: Learn about CMU's Outtatown Discipleship Program on campus. To sign up, call 204-487-3300.

March 30: Open house at CMU. For more information, visit www.cmu.ca/campusvisit.

April 8: Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives third annual spring dessert fundraiser at 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg.

Ontario

Until April 23: "As the women sew: Community quilts of Mampuján, Colombia," art exhibit at the Grebel Gallery, Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo (grebel.ca/events).

Until Dec. 26: New exhibit at the Mennonite Archives of Ontario at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo: "Conchies speak: Ontario Mennonites in Alternative Service."

Feb. 26-27: "Jingle Dress" film and story circle, part of MCC Ontario's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, at Bloomingdale Mennonite Church. For more info go to mcco.ca/events.

Feb. 27: Menno Singers present "Bach and his Contemporaries" with soloists and the Nota Bene Baroque Players, at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, at 7:30 p.m.

March 1: Sawatsky Lecture with Sir James MacMillan at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, at 7:30 p.m. (grebel.ca/Sawatsky).

March 4-6: "Winter camp for grown-ups," a partnership between Pastors in Exile and Silver Lake Mennonite Camp, at Silver Lake. For more information, call 519-422-3200 or visit slmc.ca/retreats.

March 6: "The Music of Sir James MacMillan" at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, at 3 p.m. For tickets go to grebel.ca/Sawatsky.

March 14 or 15: Grandparent and Grandchild Days at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg. Same activities each day. For more information, call 519-625-8602 or e-mail info@hiddenacres.ca.

March 19: Fundraising breakfast for MCC Elmira meat canning at Calvary United Church, St. Jacobs, at 8 a.m. Hear the story of Jacob Reimer's family

settling in northern Ontario.

March 30: "The Power of Partnership" dinner and evening with Stephen Lewis, sponsored by

Classifieds

Announcement

Connecting Families-East Retreat May 20-22 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center, near Mt. Pleasant, Pa. Hear Stephanie Krehbiel present "Cultivating Hope: Tools for Holy Inclusion." Stephanie recently completed her PhD studies at University of Kansas. Connecting Families welcomes LGBT people and their families and allies to a weekend of sharing common thoughts regarding sexual minority concerns as they affect families, friends, and churches. To register, email connectingfam@gmail.com.

Employment Opportunities

PROJECT DIRECTOR needed to oversee all aspects of **Shine: Living in God's Light**, a multicomponent Sunday school curriculum for ages 3 through grade 8. Must have strong vision, planning, and oversight skills. Responsibilities include editing and writing with theological depth, awareness of multicultural

MCC Ontario at St. George Banquet Hall, Waterloo, 6 p.m. More info at powerofpartnership2016.ca.

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diversity, and commitment to inquiry-based learning. Strong understanding of Christian education and curriculum is required. Full-time, salaried position for the duration of the curriculum, projected to be four to five years. Contact searchcommittee@mennomedia.org. Application review begins in March.



Vineland
United Mennonite Church

Employment Opportunity

Vineland United Mennonite Church invites applications for the half-time position of Associate Pastor of Family Ministries. We are located in a semi-rural community in the heart of Ontario's Niagara Peninsula.

We are seeking a person who is willing to develop effective programming and excels in building and maintaining relationships among the young adults, senior youth and junior youth within a multi-generational setting. The candidate will work alongside other leaders in the congregation as part of the ministries within the church. Start time is negotiable. More information at mcec.ca/content/job-and-volunteer-opportunities.

Applications to be submitted by March 31, 2016, through the office of:
 Henry Paetkau
 MCEC Area Church Minister
 50 Kent Ave.
 Kitchener, ON N2G 3R1



Or by email to pastoraltransitions@mcec.ca

Thanks to our members for your steadfast commitment to Mennonite Savings and Credit Union and for your continued trust in our Board and senior leadership. We humbly ask for your trust in our unanimous recommendation to rename our credit union, believing wholeheartedly that Kindred Credit Union is the right name for our future and that a “yes” vote will allow us to sustain a vibrant credit union for generations to come.

Why your **VOTE** matters >>>

Adopting the name Kindred Credit Union will help us realize our desire to be more expressly invitational to a broader audience and fulfill our purpose.

A **YES** vote ...

- Is not only an endorsement of the name Kindred Credit Union, it is also an affirmation of our vision for the future: to build a vibrant credit union for future generations, offering cooperative banking that connects values and faith with finances, inspiring peaceful, just, and prosperous communities.
- Will allow us to extend a welcoming and open hand to new members who are looking for a unique and compelling way to connect their values and faith with their finances. We're praying for the opportunity to let our light shine even brighter.
- Will allow us to increase our community impact as we reach a broader audience who is as excited about our unique offering as we are!

Research has made it evident that our current name is a significant barrier to reaching a broader audience, attracting more new members, and increasing our levels of growth.

A **NO** vote ...

- Means the barrier in our name will remain and we will not be able to fully address declining rates of growth in membership, assets, and capital.
- Could lead to our credit union either needing to merge or be acquired within 10 years, thereby not allowing us to maintain our unique approach to finances.
- Could lead us into a situation where we can no longer sustain the important work of our faith-inspired credit union over the long term. What we have all worked together to build over more than 50 years could disappear.

Make your voice heard! Cast your ballot **TODAY.** >>>

Join us in making the most important decision for our credit union's future—a members' resolution to embrace a new name, **Kindred Credit Union!**

We invite members to vote using your ballot which was mailed in January.

www.mscu.com/OurJourney

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