

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

September 26, 2016

Volume 20 Number 19

## Waiting to return

More questions than answers for  
Fort McMurray recovery, pg. 13



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## EDITORIAL

# Farewell to a 'budding activist'

DICK BENNER  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

**W**e will miss her and her passion for justice as a young mother trying to make sense of the complexities of our world in the 21st century. Katie Doke Sawatzky wrote her last New Order Voice column in our September 12 issue as she embarks on full-time studies in journalism.

She brought an important voice to our readers, telling us of her struggles as a "budding activist" in many a protest against this or that injustice, applying her faith courageously in very specific ways, but always finding her anchor in her faith community. She honoured her elders while at the same time pushing the edges in her witness.

She always considered her congregation to be her baseline. "The church is a non-commercial space; it welcomes an unrestrained Spirit in worship and it draws inspiration from a Galilean who undermined empire. It's the perfect place for social-justice initiatives to be born," she wrote recently.

Her honesty and candor endeared her to us in many ways. She was not afraid to make herself vulnerable, to be self-effacing in bringing home a point, to call her friends and neighbours to action over words, all the while humbly acknowledging that she, herself, hasn't done all she

can to bring about the change for which she was calling.



She was "us" in so many ways. Her reflections on life sometimes made us uncomfortable, other times annoyed, but most often inspired—the duty of a columnist. They are asked to question our assumptions, challenge convention and lead us to deeper understandings. They are asked to stretch us.

Katie did that well and we thank her for it. It will be hard to replace her. We are taking some time for that process.

## **A new food column**

Meanwhile, we are taking up the suggestion of one of our readers, Marguerite Jack, of Calgary, who in a recent letter suggested a food column, a "place where we share the fruits of God's good creation from coast to coast." She was inspired by keynote speaker Safwat Marzouk at Assembly 2016 who told us how important food was to the "covenant."

This will be more than sharing of recipes. Goodness knows, we have a plethora of resources for creating good Mennonite cuisine, starting with the historic and best-selling *Mennonite Community Cookbook* by Mary Emma (Showalter) Eby. Add to that the wildly successful *Fix it and Forget it* by Phyllis Pellman Good, not to mention Doris Longacre's *More*

*with Less* and the subsequent *Extending the Table*. *Mennonite Girls can Cook* was not to be outdone by its counterpart *Mennonite Men Can Cook, Too*, by Willard Roth (2015 by Good Books).

Rather we need stories about food, forming a narrative of how food binds us together at a time when there is so much that can pull us apart. This is how Marzouk puts it: "Telling these stories not only preserves them, but also gives us a real opportunity to walk into each other's lives in a deep and meaningful way.

"Sharing meals is a significant aspect of the covenant. Moses and the 70 elders ate before God in Exodus 24 following the establishment of the covenant; Isaac and Abimelech ate together as part of their peace treaty; Jesus ate and drank with his disciples when he established the new covenant (Luke 22)." Sharing meals gives opportunity for deep encounters with one another—a foundational way to achieve a new "interculturalism."

Our goal, then, for this new column will be to make the food story central to the content—its history, its ecclesial context, the way in which the persons engaged found common cause and a deep sense of being "members of one another." The cause for the event will be as important as the particulars on your plate.

To that end we will feature the story in print and place the recipe online. This gives the food event context while providing opportunity for sharing what we have found to be tasty as well as healthy. We want to make clear that this is more about sharing food "stories" than about sharing recipes. Good photos will also be a part of this presentation—not only of the food on a plate but of the gathering around which the food was shared.

It's as Marzouk further asserts: "Food helps us navigate through our covenantal relations in the church."

## ABOUT THE COVER:

**Months after the fire, many residents have yet to return to Fort McMurray, Alta, some questioning whether they can go back. Read about one couple's perspective on the future and how Mennonite Disaster Service is hoping to help rebuild the city, on page 13.**

PHOTO: BETHANY DAMAN, MENNONITE DISASTER SERVICE

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## Guiding values:

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

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• Covenantal relationships and mutual accountability

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Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press





GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

# A misunderstood people

*Modernization and improved education stand in contrast to an unfair negative image of colonists in Mexico*

BY EDGAR STOESZ

*Mennonites were long known in Mexico for their cheese, but now large fields of corn and irrigated and netted apple orchards dominate the countryside.*

Many U.S. and Canadian Mennonites think of German-speaking Mennonites in Mexico as a backward people in a Wild West country. We read of Mennonites involved in drug trafficking and ask ourselves, “Can this be?”

Unfortunately, it can, and this negative image is reinforced by the conduct of fringe Mexican Mennonites who appear in Canada, some for seasonal employment.

But this image is neither accurate nor fair to the vast majority of German-speaking Mennonites in Mexico. In this article I describe life in Manitoba Colony as I experienced it during a one-week visit a while back.

Manitoba Colony, the first and largest of the Mexican Mennonite colonies, consists of 56 villages spread across an area 30 kilometres long and up to 10 kilometres wide. It is dissected by the 30-kilometre Corridor Comercial, populated by prospering Mennonite-owned businesses. These include furniture and farm-equipment manufacturing plants interspersed with stores and modern houses. A building and home-supply store is billed as a Mexican version of Home Depot, with 80 employees, most of them Latino. Hotels are being built to accommodate shoppers who come from a distance.

At the intersection of the Corridor and the growing



city of Cuauhtémoc is the modern headquarters of the Mennonite Credit Union, said to be Mexico's second-largest credit union.

In the middle of all this is the impressive Blumenau Mennoniten Konferenzgemeinde (Blumenau Mennonite Conference Church), with almost 500 members. The sermon in the service I attended was in German, the announcements in Low German, a reading in Spanish and a duet in English. Several benches of Spanish-speaking Mexicans were enjoying the mostly German service with the benefit of simultaneous translation. Women were wearing regular

dresses; some had earrings.

Pick-up trucks have replaced horse-drawn wagons among the fast-moving traffic on the Corridor Commercial. I did not see a single horse-drawn vehicle.

Mennonites were long known in Mexico for their cheese, but now large fields of corn and irrigated and netted apple orchards dominate the countryside. Land values have skyrocketed and now top \$25,000 a hectare. Brick houses are replacing adobe houses built by the pioneers almost 100 years ago.

### **School renaissance**

Villages still bear many traits of an earlier

era, although here, too, modernization is underway. This includes a renaissance of sorts in the school system. About 15 years ago, visionary leaders consolidated village schools, and the level of instruction has risen. Teaching is in German, with Spanish as a second language. Currently being disputed is the role of Low German.

Neighbour to the Blumenau church is the Blumenau school, with more than 350 students from kindergarten to high school. At the bustling Steinreich Bible School, 500 students from the more remote colonies and villages are enrolled in Bible courses. Many teachers come from Canada, some with support from Canadian Mennonite mission organizations.

PHOTOS BY SANDRA KIENITZ



*Worshippers leave Blumenau Mennoniten Konferenzgemeinde (Blumenau Mennonite Conference Church) in Cuauhtémoc, Mexico. Located in Manitoba Colony, the church grew out of mission work sponsored by the General Conference Mennonite Church. Sunday morning attendance commonly exceeds 500.*

### **Land and addictions**

The birth rate, while lower than it was, remains high. This strains the colony's ability to provide land for young families. As a result, emigration continues north to Canada and south to Paraguay and Bolivia. Currently, families are attracted to a large tract of land in Argentina. The colony people make these international moves and start over on the frontier without outside help.

This is not to deny the social

**(Continued on page 6)**

## To Mexico and beyond

- **MENNONITES BEGAN** moving to Mexico's northernmost state of Chihuahua from Manitoba and Saskatchewan in 1922 due to differences with the Canadian government over freedom to conduct their own schools in the German language.
- **THE INFUX** of families from Canada continued for some years, and their population grew to 150,000 by 1997. They established daughter colonies, first in

neighbouring Mexican states and later in Belize.

- **IN THE 1960S**, Mexican Mennonites began moving to Paraguay and a generation later to Bolivia. Reliable statistics are not available, but it is estimated there are 200,000 colony Mennonites living in Mexico, Belize, Paraguay and Bolivia.

- **THE MENNONITE** story in Mexico is complex. The Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online lists 2012 figures for 15 different groups of Mennonites in Mexico.

For more information see: <http://bit.ly/2c8jwJG>



*(Continued from page 5)*

pathologies that have sadly invaded these otherwise peaceful and resourceful communities. An alcohol and drug treatment centre has been established. Teenagers can be seen congregating at a rural intersection, leaving cigarette stubs and empty beer bottles behind. Christian entertainment for youth is lacking.

### Familiar questions

Having lived at the subsistence level for generations, progressive Mexican Mennonites, in contrast to those who still hold fast to Old Colony ways, are poised to prosper. They now have the resources

to expand their ministries both within and to the wider community, and they are doing so.

They also confront questions familiar to us in North America. Can they manage their wealth without becoming materialists? Will wealth separate them from their less prosperous neighbours? Can they interact more closely with their Latino neighbours while still holding fast to their Anabaptist values, for which they have sacrificed so much?

Like North American Mennonites, they are struggling to find their Christian calling while being reminded of the

Bible verse I saw chiselled into a gravestone: *"For here we have no abiding city, but we look for one that is to come"* (Hebrews 13:14). ☸

*Edgar Stoesz, former Mennonite Central Committee overseas director, was in Mexico to consult with Manitoba Colony leaders about starting a non-profit organization to expand education and medical services. Originally published by Mennonite World Review.*

*For a New York Times story about the future of Mennonites in Mexico, visit <http://nyti.ms/1HVUaDr>.*



EN.WIKIPEDIA.ORG PIC



*A Mennonite girl in Cuauhtémoc.*

### For discussion

1. Edgar Stoesz writes that, "Many U.S. and Canadian Mennonites think of German-speaking Mennonites in Mexico as a backward people in a Wild West country." Do you agree? What encounters have you had with Mennonites who moved from Mexico to Canada? Do Canadians tend to have a negative image of these German-speaking people?
2. Stoesz describes some of the improvements made by the Mennonites he visited in Mexico. What institutions are important to maintain a healthy community? What happens if a community is overly resistant to change? What happens when poverty overwhelms a community?
3. Stoesz writes that, "progressive Mennonites, in contrast to those who still hold fast to Old Colony ways, are poised to prosper." What do you think Stoesz means by this statement? Are modernization and prosperity always good? What values might keep some Mennonites from embracing modernization?
4. We can see and understand the diversity in our own communities, yet sometimes we have trouble seeing the diversity and nuances in other groups. How can we work at overcoming our inclination to use stereotypes? Who are the people in your community who are most apt to be seen as different or misunderstood?

—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](http://www.canadianmennonite.org). All letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines. Send them to [letters@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:letters@canadianmennonite.org) and include the author's contact information and mailing address. Preference is given to letters from MC Canada congregants.

✉ **Braun criticized for using 'the language of euthanasia proponents'**

RE: "THE RIGHT to die and the art of suffering," Aug. 15, page 20.

I deeply sympathize with author Will Braun in the loss of his friend to suicide, and I appreciate his recognition of the need to include community in addressing the euthanasia issue. However, his treatment of this topic, which follows mainstream media patterns, suggests that he supports autonomy more than community.

He uses only one example of someone dealing with this issue personally: Rod Reynar. The other two perspectives are those with second-hand experiences. He fails to balance these views with the first-hand experiences of those who have faced coercion to accept a hastened death. The only opponents cited are

*(Continued on page 8)*

## FROM OUR LEADERS

## Discovering humility

STEVE HEINRICHS

It's Sunday night, I'm in a coffee shop, and I'm soaking wet. Thirty minutes earlier I was at home reading about the Doctrine of Discovery and found the content so painful that I headed out to grab a decaf. Then the rain hit. Thank God. The water dripping from my hair hides the tears running down my cheeks.

I wipe my eyes and fumble through blurry pages detailing the devious ways the Christian church, Christian nations, explorers, missionaries and lawyers "discovered" native lands and claimed possession in Jesus' name. It's hard to believe. Popes in the 15th century proclaimed that Christians could plunder the lands of infidels. European peoples rejoiced—and they've riffed on that belief ever since, tweaking it to suit their needs. And their damned wants.

My chest muscles tighten. I take a sip of coffee, walk to the bathroom muttering curses beneath my breath.



The Doctrine of Discovery is demonic. It proclaims that we Christians are the fully human, truly religious chosen, the civilized who bear rights and sovereignty. At the same time, it denounces "those Indians" as less than human, bereft of God, primitive and in need of paternalistic white rule.

Last year, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission summoned churches to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery. At Assembly 2016 in Saskatoon, delegates voted in favour of a resolution to do just that. What church with any conscience would do otherwise?

While Canada no longer bases its sovereignty over indigenous lands through appeals to Christian superiority, it still clutches that land by claiming rights of discovery. It's devilish logic and it needs to be addressed. By the church. Even our church.

Unfortunately, belief in Christian superiority still lurks in the church. For centuries, Christians have been taught to believe that our religion is better,

more civilized or advanced than our neighbours'. How can we reconcile such beliefs with the witness of Job? The most faithful person in the Hebrew Bible was a religious outsider. Or what of Christ's call to do unto others as we would have them do unto us? Can we celebrate or share our faith with integrity if we disrespect the spiritual paths of others?

We have an opportunity to change. Now that we've repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery, we can find ways to live out that commitment. One way to do this is to explore the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action No. 60: Partner with indigenous communities to learn about and respect indigenous spirituality. It won't be easy. It could be the most difficult journey our church has yet taken. Yet the Spirit of Jesus can give us the humility to venture forth into such new territories in a way that will honour host peoples.

As I finish my coffee, I peer through the shop window. Three folks are laughing, smoking and begging for money. All indigenous. They're battle-scarred. And I'm reminded how this Doctrine of Discovery conversation matters to real flesh and blood.

*Steve Heinrichs is Mennonite Church Canada's director of indigenous relations.*

(Continued from page 7)

Margaret Somerville and Jason Reimer Greig, quotes buried deep in the article. Prominent placements favour those either supporting euthanasia or claiming to reserve judgment.

He uses the language of euthanasia proponents: sanitizing euphemisms such as “medically assisted dying,” not “medically hastened death,” or Somerville’s

term, “medically inflicted death.” In my experience, Somerville’s term is closer to the truth. The word “suffering” appears throughout, even in the headline, but is not defined. In our society, this word is used indiscriminately to describe everything from severe pain to hair loss, and invariably to anyone with a disability.

Braun leaves the impression that pain—physical or mental—is the main reason people request a hastened

## FAMILY TIES

# Healthy leadership

MELISSA MILLER

As his seven-year-old daughter gambolled away, my nephew reflected on the negotiation that I had just witnessed, in which she asked repeatedly for something to which he had each time responded no.

“It’s frustrating when she or any of the kids keep asking,” he said. “At the same time, I don’t want to shut them down.

I want to listen to their reasons, and take them seriously. And . . . sometimes they’re right,” he concluded.



I was impressed with his insight and humility. He was demonstrating healthy leadership, authority that is firm, clear and flexible. He and his children both know he is in charge; eventually his daughter stopped repeating her request and continued on with her play. At the same time he had honoured her appeal and invited her to put reasoning behind it. With his final comment to me, he indicated he is willing to listen openly. Such mature parenting is a sign of a healthy family.

In this column, I continue a series on characteristics of a healthy family. Previous columns spoke of the value of cherishing diversity and being adaptive. Here I address qualities of leaders. Often that means parents, but as families evolve, it can refer to others, like siblings or adult children. It’s a changeable dynamic; there

is certainly no perfect response that fits all situations.

Some might quibble with my opening story, for example, thinking the parent is erring on the side of being too lenient, and permitting too much challenge from his child. Some leaders insist on a high level of obedience and compliance. In other situations, parents have abdi-

*Jesus cared more about people than rules and regulations . . .*

cated their authority, and do not set any boundaries to shape or guide their child.

Generally speaking, either of those extremes contributes to unhealthy family relationships. When chaos is the norm, the young and the vulnerable do not receive the support they need to grow and thrive. A family that has known extreme pain, such as those torn apart by war, abuse or addictions, can lose its centre. Little is provided in the way of authority and leadership. Food and shelter may be tenuous, and the members are not able to offer dependable emotional connection to each other.

A slightly more healthy family, with similar wounds in the past, may organize around a rigid and controlling authority figure. Usually a parent or an elder member of the family dominates with unbending rules; others must submit or are then

ostracized, in effect “killed.” Individuals are assigned roles of either perfect or monster. There is no ambiguity, only black and white, right and wrong. As in the chaotic family, intimate connection is sacrificed.

Always, we are encouraged to move towards health, as demonstrated by our leader Jesus. Even though we cannot expect to achieve his perfection, we are guided by his example. Ron Edmondson offers 12 leadership principles of Jesus. Two that seem particularly fitting here are that “Jesus cared more about people than rules and regulations . . . (and) Jesus practiced servant leadership better than anyone.”

Christian parents have chosen to exercise their familial authority as followers of the servant-king Jesus. The mission of nurturing the young is held within the larger mission of God’s vision for the world, a vision that is Jesus-shaped and Jesus-centered. Parents serve God’s mission, nurturing those in their care to grow into the likeness of their heavenly parent. By following Jesus’ example of non-domination leadership, they raise children who know they are loved and respected. Because of what they have received, such children are more likely to pass it on to others, and God’s kingdom is increased.

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



death. However, disability, feeling burdensome, seeing no purpose in continuing are much more likely to prompt such requests. The Supreme Court ruling leading to this new law explicitly singled out disability as a reason to support euthanasia. That leaves those of us with disabilities even more vulnerable than we already were. Instead of receiving psychological help if we become depressed, we can expect to be nudged

into a hastened death. Yet in this article, the “vulnerable”—those who don’t belong—are dismissed as being cared for under our new law. Braun doesn’t question that assumption.

**RUTH ENNS, WINNIPEG**

*Ruth Enns is a member of First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.*

## GOD, MONEY AND ME

# Consider the possibilities

DARREN PRIES-KLASSEN

In our transformation from Mennonite Foundation of Canada to Abundance Canada, we have received several responses from our clients and constituency. While most of the feedback has been positive, there have been others who have expressed opposition to our rebranding. The most common concern is that by changing our name we are changing our values.

Change is hard. Uncomfortable. Unsettling. Even the smallest alteration to our patterns and routines requires some rewiring. It takes energy and can affect our emotions. Likewise, changing the name of an established and trusted organization carries with it a sense of loss; something that was no longer exists.

While it is true that our name and logo are changing, requiring a little time for all of us to adjust, it would be a mistake to assume this also means that our values, and subsequently our integrity, are changing with it.

All organizations, whether for profit or not-for-profit, are guided by the values and objectives as determined by the board of directors and senior leadership. These values and objectives need

to be reflected in the daily activity and service of staff and volunteers. In time, a reputation is established. An organization’s name becomes associated with the service it provides and the contribution it makes. It is not the name of the organization itself that determines what an organization will do or what it will be. It is the other way round. To believe an organization’s name has the power to determine its values and integrity is giving the name too much credit.

There is some sadness in losing the word “Mennonite” from our name. It is



*A name change provides space to have the conversations we would otherwise not be able to have.*

a word we understand. It offers comfort and familiarity. In a recent conversation, a friend described it well by using a sailing metaphor. He said, and I paraphrase, “in becoming Abundance Canada, people are feeling unmoored from the harbour that is called Mennonite. You can still dock at the harbour, and many people know this as their port of call, but in rebranding to Abundance Canada, you are declaring your love for the wider sea of generosity and stewardship.”

We would have served the wider

church using the name “Mennonite Foundation of Canada,” but our research was clear. While most non-Mennonites think well of Mennonites, that does not translate into a willingness to work with an organization they perceive works only with one denominational stripe. The vast majority of people we surveyed hold the view that since “Mennonite” was in our name, then we must work exclusively with Mennonites. From a marketing and ministry standpoint, this is an enormous barrier to overcome. A name change provides space to have the conversations we would otherwise not be able to have.

Moving forward, we are building on 42 years of hard work, a solid reputation, and not least of all, God’s provision and blessing. Abundance Canada will continue to be a Christian faith-based organization that facilitates gifts for charity with an active ministry in teaching biblical stewardship. The board of directors and the staff are committed to this, just as we are committed to sharing our

services with a broader constituency.

Take a moment and consider the possibilities when the wider church in Canada embraces an abundant God and shares accordingly. It would be selfish to keep the message of generosity to ourselves.

*Darren Pries-Klassen is the executive director of Abundance Canada. For more information on impulsive generosity, stewardship education, and estate and charitable gift planning, visit [MennoFoundation.ca](http://MennoFoundation.ca).*

## ✉ MC Canada applauded for passing BDS resolution

**RE: BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT, Sanctions (BDS) resolution** referred to in “Decision roundup,” July 25, page 16.

I applaud Mennonite Church Canada’s passing of the BDS resolution. The stated goal of this Palestinian-led nonviolent movement is to end international support for Israel’s oppression of Palestinians, and to pressure Israel to comply with international law.

Mennonites have always stood beside and supported the oppressed, seeking justice for those who do not have a voice. And to be sure, Palestinians do not have a voice in North American media and politics.

BDS is an inclusive, anti-racist human rights movement that is opposed on principle to all forms of discrimination, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. Inspired by the South African anti-apartheid movement, the Palestinian BDS call urges nonviolent pressure on Israel until it complies with international law.

It is now up to us to get informed and to raise awareness about how Israel oppresses the Palestinian people, and how we can make a difference. My hope is that there can be peace in Palestine/Israel, and that the people can learn to live with each other. Without justice for both sides, this will never happen.

ALVIN THIESSEN, WINNIPEG

## ✉ Put not your trust in ‘princesses’

**IN THESE LAST**, long days of summer, buried behind earthquakes and the Rio Olympics, was the news that Jane Philpott, Liberal cabinet star and a member of Community Mennonite Church of Stouffville, Ont., found it necessary to spend \$3,700 to take a ride in a limousine owned by a Liberal political supporter to a place where important decisions were being made.

A quick Google search led me to a Nov. 4, 2015, *Canadian Mennonite* online article that fairly gushed over the fact that the “partisan”—read “bad”—former Conservative MP had been defeated by Philpott, the new, value-laden Anabaptist who was going to change Canada for the better. Welcome to a Canadian version of neo-Yoderian Mennonite theology.

If *Canadian Mennonite* had upheld each politician to the same high standard, fair enough. But no. To uphold a socially constructed set of truths—held because one subscribes to a particular ideology—means that the Jane Philpotts of the *Canadian Mennonite* world get held to a different standard than anyone who *Canadian Mennonite* might not agree with. Is this what passes for journalistic best practices?

So here we are, in the last long days of summer, and I quote from Psalms 146: “*Put not your trust in princes [or princesses]. . .*” Might not be bad advice for *Canadian Mennonite* as a new season approaches.

WALTER BERGEN, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

## ✉ Dismissed employee now reports on ‘positive’ outcomes

**RE: “WHEN YOUR services are no longer required,”** Aug. 29, page 4.

It is interesting to read this article, which was researched while snow still lay on the ground, now that much healing has taken place.

Since then, I have been welcomed by the Mennonite partners I worked with, and by Mennonite Church Canada, to complete projects that remained incomplete when my employment was terminated. This included being a workshop presenter at Mennonite Church Canada’s Assembly 2016 in Saskatoon this summer.

I was also invited to a meeting to reconcile with those who gave me the sudden and sad news that my employment was over. I have been warmly welcomed back to office celebrations.

While this does not undo the pain of the sudden termination, the picture of what happened is fuller and more positive than the article indicates.

ELSIE REMPEL, ONLINE COMMENT

## ✉ Kudos on Aug. 15 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*

**THE “WE CAN** always afford to be generous” feature on page 4 was great. Thank you for the reminder to be thankful for many things. I believe we should give because we want to give. We have received so many blessings in our lives here in Canada. Show that we are thankful by sharing.

My husband Martin and I choose to go to the United Church. After I’ve read *Canadian Mennonite*, I like to share it with our minister. There are always so many good articles. Your magazine helps me keep in touch with my roots.

In reading the page 7 column, “Creating space,” in reference to the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, it struck me that this morning’s devotion in *Rejoice* was based on Psalm 103:1-10. Those who are so concerned about “sin,” note verse 10, where it says, “*He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.*” Why are we so concerned about someone else’s sexuality? Am I to be their judge? My Bible says we are to love.

MARY ANN GOERZEN, SALMON ARM, B.C.

## LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

## The pursuit of truth (Pt. 9)

TROY WATSON



Consider the possibility that truth is not a thing or group of things (e.g. ideas, facts, doctrines, etc.) but a Spirit. This seems to be the apostle John's understanding. For instance, he repeatedly calls the Holy Spirit the Spirit of truth (Jn. 14:17, Jn. 15:26, Jn. 16:13 1 Jn. 4:6) and in 1 Jn. 5:6 he says "*the Spirit is the truth.*"

I believe when Jesus said "I am the truth" he was referring to his Spirit being one with the Spirit of truth. According to the Gospels, Jesus was conceived by, begotten of, born of, anointed with, led by, filled with the power of, sent by and full of the Holy Spirit. The relationship between Jesus and God's Spirit is one of complete and total harmony. In fact, Paul and Peter imply a singularity between the Spirit of Christ and God's Spirit (Rom. 8:2, 8:9, Gal. 4:6, 1 Pet. 1:11).

If Jesus' connection with the truth is inseparable from his connection to the Spirit of truth, then our pursuit of truth as Christians must be rooted in our pursuit of God's Spirit. This also means that our call to understand the truth of Jesus, live the life of Jesus and follow the way of Jesus, is impossible to fulfill without entering into the same kind of relationship with the Spirit of truth that Jesus had.

To live in truth is not simply choosing to live a just and ethical life, nor is it living in certainty that our beliefs are correct. To live in truth is to live in a state of oneness with the Spirit of truth, resulting in a wellspring of divine love erupting within us, flowing through our lives into

the world. (Remember: God = love, Spirit = truth, God = Spirit, therefore, truth = love.) This is the movement Jesus inaugurated. This is the kind of truth that has the power to change the world.

Everything about Jesus is interconnected with divine Spirit. This means we cannot follow the way of Jesus in our

own strength and willpower. Like Jesus, we need to be born of, anointed with, led by, full of and in sync with the Spirit of truth in order to follow his way of life. Likewise, our capacity to understand divine truth is contingent upon our conscious

*The Spirit of truth is already within us. However, entering into a deeper, more intimate relationship with the Spirit of truth requires letting go of our co-dependence on externals (other people, things, causes, etc.).*

awareness of and co-operation with God's Spirit. As Paul says "*no one knows the things [thoughts, wisdom, truth] of God, except God's Spirit*" (1 Cor. 2:11).

This has changed my understanding of Christian faith.

I used to have a beliefs-based faith where the focus was on doctrines, ideas, the authority of the Bible and the church. Then I developed an actions-based faith that focused on social justice, peace-making, righting the wrongs of the world, advocating and caring for those in need.

The problem, I discovered, with both of these kinds of faith was that the external focus produced an ego-based arrogance

that was divisive and judgmental. In my experience, when we focus on externals we end up drawing sharp lines on who is in and who is out. The mindset is the same: we are right and they are wrong, whoever "they" might be.

I am now convinced we need a being-based faith where the focus is on an internal state of "at-one-ment" with divine Spirit. Our only hope of living the way of Jesus is living in the Spirit of Christ. The only way to know the truth is to know the Spirit of truth.

So how do we do this?

Jesus says, "*The Spirit of truth...You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.*" (Jn. 14:17)

The Spirit of truth is already within us. However, entering into a deeper, more intimate relationship with the Spirit of truth requires letting go of our co-dependence on externals (other people, things, causes, etc.). Learning to trust one's inner light or inner teacher is difficult but essential. Without question, we need spiritually attuned mentors to provide us with spiritual tools and training to help us discern the Spirit of truth from all the other spirits within us. However, it is important to remember that our mentors cannot teach us the truth. They can only

point the way. We must be in a state of conscious collaboration with divine Spirit ourselves to know truth.

*Troy Watson is pastor of Avon Mennonite Church in Stratford, Ontario.*

### Correction

It is Vineland United Mennonite Church—not The First Mennonite Church of Vineland, Ont.—that is pictured in the Aug. 29 "A moment from yesterday" posting on page 13. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error.

## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Boos**—Junia Marlow (b. June 7, 2016), to Mike and Kandace Boos, Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

**Chalmers**—Noah Anthony (b. Aug. 12, 2016), to Nathan and Jessica Chalmers, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

**Goulet**—Georgiana Millicent Dyck (b. May 13, 2016), to Sasha Dyck and Dora-Marie Goulet (Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal).

**Morwood**—Morgan Nathan (b. Aug. 15, 2016), to Teresa and Nathan Morwood, Listowel Mennonite, Ont.

**Schmucker**—Naomi Marie Braun (b. Aug. 29, 2016), to Damaris and David Schmucker, Toronto United Mennonite.

**Schwartzentruber**—Iris Elizabeth (b. July 5, 2016), to Graham and Kara Schwartzentruber, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

**Wise**—Penelope Leona (b. Aug. 22, 2016), to Angela (Dettweiler) and Steven Wise, Breslau Mennonite, Ont.

### Marriages

**Bauman/Gostnikov**—Cassandra Bauman and Eugene Gostnikov, Elmira Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 20, 2016.

**Kastner/Wilkinson**—Chevy Kastner and Serena Wilkinson, Wilmot Mennonite Church, Ont., at the bride's grandparents' farm, Aug. 20, 2016.

**Klassen/Schroeder**—Steve Klassen and Lyneda Schroeder, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Aug. 20, 2016.

**Kraljevski/Weber**—Elena Kraljevski and Tim Weber, Elmira Mennonite, Ont., July 30, 2016.

### Deaths

**Brubacher**—Helen Kathleen 90 (b. March 16, 1926; d. Aug. 6, 2016), Breslau Mennonite, Ont.

**Campbell**—Urta (nee Kerber), 91 (b. May 8, 1924; d. Feb. 16, 2016), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

**Lehn**—Albertina (Tena) (nee Rivard), 87 (b. Oct. 5, 1928; d. July 26, 2016), First Mennonite, Calgary.

**Penner**—Mary (nee Berg), 89 (b. April 30, 1926; d. April 2, 2016), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

**Ropp**—Mildred (nee Boshart), 92 (b. Dec. 30, 1923; d. Aug. 6, 2016), Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

**Roth**—Howard Peter, 82 (b. Feb. 5, 1934; d. Aug. 19, 2016), East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

**Roth**—Madeline (nee Bender), 98 (b. July 13, 1918; d. July 31, 2016), Valleyview Mennonite, London, Ont.

**Sabo**—Mike (Gabriel Michael), 82 (b. July 14, 1934; d. Aug. 9, 2016), Preston Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.

**Voth**—Marie (nee Friesen), 98 (b. Sept. 10, 1917; d. Aug. 26, 2016), Morden Mennonite, Man.

**Wieler**—Frank, 88 (b. April 1, 1928; d. April 12, 2016), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

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

## A moment from yesterday



The Fenian Invasions, in which Irish American Civil War veterans used raids into pre-Confederation Canada to further the cause of Irish independence, were launched in 1866. Christian Eby (pictured), grandson of Mennonite Bishop Benjamin Eby of Berlin (now Kitchener), Ont., was purported to be among the thousands of young men in Canada West (now Ontario) to answer the call to arms. In the largest of the raids, the Battle of Ridgeway, Canadians experienced industrial-era battle conditions for the first time. According to historian Hereward Senior, the raids allowed Canadians to experience “martial spirit and excitement” without the heavy cost of a true war. That heavy cost would be experienced by the next generation, in 1914.

*Text: Laureen Harder-Gissing / Mennonite Archives of Ontario*

*Photo: Mennonite Archives of Ontario*



[archives.mhsc.ca](http://archives.mhsc.ca)

## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

# Waiting to return

*More questions than answers for Fort McMurray recovery*

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent

The road ahead for the recovery of Fort McMurray, Alta.—devastated this spring by wildfires that forced the evacuation of 88,000 residents while consuming and scorching large swaths of residential areas—will be dictated somewhat by the reality of the local and provincial economy, but also by when and if people return to the city.

## **One couple's perspective**

Almost four months after the fire, Rachel and Patrick Drapeau are still unsure about when they will be able to move back into their house. Since then, the couple, who were featured in “Fleeing the Fort McMurray fire,” May 23, page 30, have lived with Rachel’s parents in Edmonton.

Patrick commutes by air to his work as a quality assurance inspector with Canadian Natural Resources Limited, and Rachel continued working as a materials engineer for Syncrude via computer until the Aug. 2 arrival of their first child, a son they named Ashton.

“Patrick has been back to the house a couple of times to remove the fridge and work with insurance adjusters,” Rachel says. “Many people in our neighbourhood are waiting to begin clean-up inside their homes until the fire debris is cleared.”

Rachel and baby Ashton will remain in Edmonton until the debris clean-up is finished and they feel it is safe to return. They plan to set up their holiday trailer in the backyard while their house is cleaned.

Even for those with intact homes, like the Drapeaus, many problems remain. Questions about toxic dust from the debris; deciding whether to allow insurance companies to make all the cleaning decisions or whether to take a payout and do it themselves; being unsure of what amenities are still available; finding a doctor

when many have not returned to the city; and not knowing what has happened to neighbours, all weigh on returnees. Things like taking Ashton for a neighbourhood walk in the stroller or going to a nearby green space are out of the question for the foreseeable future.

“It will be different living in a community that is a fraction of what it used to be until the rebuilding gets underway . . . odd and very quiet,” Rachel muses.

Although going back will have difficulties, Rachel says, “We are still excited to go back home. We don’t want to be in ‘Limbo-Land’ forever.”

She is also hopeful that one outcome of the disaster might be positive. “I have seen a lot of social media interest in meeting neighbours and being more engaged with the local community,” Rachel says. “We’ve all shared this same experience.”

## **MDS waits to help**

Fort McMurray, as with much of Alberta, is an oil-based economy mired in recession. For that reason alone, it is uncertain who and how many people will return, and, if they do, whether they will have employment. It is hard to consider rebuilding if there are fewer job opportunities. And with winter only a few months away, employment opportunities lessened, the lack of housing and an exhausted regional government and community struggling with resettlement issues, there are more questions than answers.

A team of Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) representatives learned these hard realities last month, when they attended meetings in Fort McMurray with local recovery representatives, during which time they gained a sense of the recovery structure established by the regional government. They also saw a clear role for

PHOTO COURTESY OF PATRICK DRAPEAU



*Patrick, Rachel and Ashton Drapeau have been living with family in Edmonton since the fire in Fort McMurray.*

assisting local recovery efforts, but perhaps not right away.

“With the disaster evacuation, many people have decided or are deciding whether to return to this isolated city,” Ross Penner, MDS Director of Region V Operations, says of what he learned during the visit. “This has impacted municipal staff—some of whom don’t have housing themselves . . . Already we are hearing stories of those who will not rebuild. . . . No one knows what percentage of the city has actually returned, and the beginning of the school year will be the first opportunity to make an estimate on the percentage of residents returned.”

Still, there is a level of hope that comes with MDS and its partners. Together, they have formed a non-governmental organization working group to help support the local recovery efforts and eventually participate in the rebuilding. With winter around the bend, the rebuilding efforts may not begin in earnest until April 2017 at the earliest, according to Penner.

“No one said it was going to be easy and happen overnight,” he says. “But there is hope, and we will keep believing and placing our hope in God to rebuild this community.” ✎

*With files from Mennonite Disaster Service*

## /// Staff changes

### Pastoral transitions in Saskatchewan

• **Susanne Guenther Loewen** began as co-pastor of Nutana Park Mennonite Church in Saskatoon on Aug. 1, serving alongside Patrick Preheim. Guenther Loewen, who hails from Winnipeg, is a graduate of Canadian Mennonite University and Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., and recently completed work toward a doctorate in theology at the Toronto School of Theology. Although she has taught pastors, Guenther Loewen says this is her first pastorate. She sees pastoral ministry as a natural extension of her interest in theology. “Theology is not only an academic discipline,” she says. “It’s lived out in the church.” Guenther Loewen may be familiar to readers of her *Canadian Mennonite* blog.

• **Anita Retzlaff** stepped down as co-pastor at Nutana Park Mennonite at the end of June. Having served the congregation for 21 years, Retzlaff says she is “entering a time of discernment,” and has no immediate plans for the future. She and her husband, Ken Warkentin, who is moderator of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, plan to remain in Saskatoon.



## /// Briefly noted

### TREE receives Hallman grant over three years

WATERLOO, ONT.—The Ripple Effect Education (TREE), a peace education initiative based at the Frank and Helen Epp Peace Incubator in the Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement on the campus of Conrad Grebel University College, is the beneficiary of a \$150,000 grant from the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation over three years (2016-19).

“The Lyle S. Hallman Foundation believes that peace literacy and conflict resolution skills are important ingredients in a well-rounded education for all students,” says Laura Manning, the foundation’s executive director. “We are excited to see Conrad Grebel’s wealth of expertise in these areas brought directly into local classrooms.”

In 2014 and ’15, Katie Gingerich, TREE’s director, coordinated Grebel’s Peace Camp, a day camp and workshop program for youth. Last year, the camp facilitated conflict resolution and social justice workshops in 121 classrooms, working with more than 2,400 elementary students in the Waterloo Region public and Catholic school boards, a 100 percent increase from the year before.

—Conrad Grebel University College



*TREE director Katie Gingerich teaches peace education at Bridgeport Public School, Kitchener, Ont., in 2015.*

## /// Briefly noted

### Former Mennonite pastor the focus of Amnesty International appeal

Amnesty International has called for “urgent action” on behalf of a former Mennonite pastor who is on a hunger strike in a Vietnamese prison near Ho Chi Minh City. Nguyen Cong Chinh has been imprisoned since April 2011. In January 2012, he was sentenced to 11 years in prison for the crime of “undermining the national unity policy,” a charge unevenly applied by the courts to those who criticize government policies. Protesting abusive treatment and denial of rights by prison officials, Chinh has been on a hunger strike since Aug. 8. When visited by his wife, Nguyen Thi Hong, on Aug. 17, Chinh was weak and needed assistance to walk. In 2003, Chinh was related to the unregistered Vietnamese Evangelical Mennonite Church. However, in 2008 he withdrew from the Mennonite church and affiliated with the Vietnamese-American Lutheran Church Association. In a Sept. 5 release, Amnesty International called on people to appeal to authorities for his release and that he be given humane treatment.

—BY LUKE S. MARTIN



*Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh at a court hearing in Gia Lai, Vietnam, on March 26, 2012.*

## /// Staff changes

### Pastoral transitions in Ontario

• **Jim Brown** began as the intentional interim pastor at Tavistock Mennonite Church on Aug. 22. He has pastored in several congregations, including Harrow Mennonite and Riverdale Mennonite, and served as a stewardship consultant with the Mennonite Foundation of Canada in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Brown and his wife Sharon both taught Bible and theology at Lithuania Christian University College. Life-long learning has taken Brown from Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now Canadian Mennonite University) in Winnipeg and Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., to Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary for his master of divinity degree in pastoral ministry. Most recently, he completed his transitional ministry training through the Interim Ministry Network.



• **Craig Frere** began as lead pastor at Community Mennonite Fellowship, Drayton, Ont., on August 28, 2016. He studied at Wilfrid Laurier University (Waterloo) and Tyndale Seminary (Toronto). He has been a pastor for 22 years, most recently at Living Water Community Christian Fellowship in New Hamburg. He and his wife, Kim, and their children Geordi, Mairi, and Shona, moved to Drayton and look forward to serving in the church and in the community.



—BY DAVE ROGALSKY

## /// Briefly noted

### Bergthal, Chin congregations meet for joint worship service

Several members from the Bergthal Mennonite Church left their own place of worship in Didsbury, Alta., on Aug. 28 to join with their Chin brothers and sisters in worship at Calgary Chin Christian Church. Recognizing the coming shift in the structure of Mennonite Church Canada, the members of Bergthal felt that it was important to extend the hand of fellowship beyond their own community, to those congregations that are relatively new and finding their place within MC Alberta. Bergthal brought the sermon and shared a special song with the congregation in a joint service filled with great enthusiasm, joy, laughter and praise to God. Calgary Chin Christian Church was founded in January 2011. The 100 members of the young, growing congregation come from the Chin state in Myanmar. The Chin church's vision is to promote the gospel of Jesus Christ and to equip spiritual parents for the next generation. Evangelism and missions are a priority. Rev. Leng Nawn Thang explained that, after much research into various denominations, the group identified with Mennonites because of their history of persecution. Finding historical and theological compatibility with MC Alberta, the Chin chose to become members of the area church on March 22, 2013.

BY ANNA-LISA SALO

PHOTO BY BARB HEIDEBRECHT



*A small number of the joint Bergthal-Chin worship service on Aug. 28 in Calgary.*

## /// Briefly noted

### Pastoral transitions in B.C.

• **Winston Pratt** began as lead pastor at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond, B.C., on Aug. 22. He received his undergrad degree in Science from the University of Capetown in Johannesburg, South Africa. Most of his work experience has been in human resources in the corporate world. Knowing that God was calling him to ministry, he attended Regent College at the University of B.C. and graduated with a Master of Divinity degree in 2014.



• **Jon Tetzl** began at Peace Mennonite Church on Sept. 1 as pastor of children's and youth ministries. He graduated from Briercrest Bible College in Saskatchewan in April, 2016, with a BA in Biblical Studies. His previous work experience includes internships at several churches.



—Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond, B.C.

## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

## VIEWPOINT

# Is climate change real?

## Part 2

BY WILL BRAUN  
SENIOR WRITER

Last February I wrote an article that elicited more response than anything else I have written for this publication. The piece originated when a reader challenged my acceptance of the climate change narrative. I worked past my initial impulse—which was condescending and dismissive—and studied the sources he provided. In the resulting article, I didn't bash him or his sources; I tried to understand them.

I found much of the climate critique unconvincing. But a few arguments I could not dismiss outright. I wrote that I still believe in climate change but am less confident of the science, for reasons I stated. But climate was just a case study. My real point was that we not heed our initial impulses in relation to contentious issues.

The article drew heat from friends, people I respect, and others. I was called unhelpful, irresponsible and susceptible to "false prophets."

The article was part experiment. First, I wanted to see if I could take seriously the purveyors of an argument I had never even deemed worthy of consideration. Second, I wanted to see how people would respond, especially those who care about climate.

Most (not all) seemed defensive. Most who wrote letters to the editor also seemingly missed the point of the article. Only one person addressed, very partially, the specific points of doubt I raised about climate science. No one really picked up on the point of how to deal with the very real divisions that exist on important issues in our churches.

Interestingly, the person whose email prompted this whole thing liked the article, even though I didn't side with him.

What do I take from the responses? First, people care. That's great. Second, people freely defend the climate change narrative. That was not always so. Third, many people don't read carefully. Fourth, dealing with polarization is not a hot topic. Surprise.

Three people kindly suggested I consider the work of Katherine Hayhoe, a Canadian-born Christian who heads the

*I haven't flown since 2002. I didn't own a car until I was 39. The car I and my family now drive runs largely on used deep-fryer oil. We grow much of our food.*

Climate Science Center at Texas Tech University and was named on *TIME* magazine's 100 Most Influential People in 2014.

She pointed me to a study that says only seven percent of Americans are dismissive of climate change and actively oppose efforts to address it. Hayhoe does not devote her energies to this group because, she told me via email, "they will fabricate false and misleading information—such as the information that you have read—if they don't like the real science." Not quite my tack.

She also directed me to skeptical-science.com, which refutes climate skeptics. Unfortunately, it missed or obscured the key soft spots I identified in climate science, ignoring a fact that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change admits: that the 114 climate models it draws on cannot explain the fact that warming has slowed down since 1998 (look it up).

The website did correct me on one point. I had scoffed at the claim that 97

percent of scientists agree on climate change. That claim is not accurate but apparently 97 percent of published, peer-reviewed papers that address the existence and cause of climate change say that it is happening and is human-caused.

Did my article lend credence to dangerous views, as some suggested? I thought hard about that, concluding that if the alternative is blinkered neglect of views I don't like and the people who hold them, I will live dangerously. That is why I have written previously about the failings of specific First Nation governments, the quasi monopolization of "inclusion" by the LGBTQ movement, the value of understanding Trump supporters, and the fact that environmentalists are fossil fuel addicts, even though these points go against my general inclinations. (I could also write about the numerous ways in which Hayhoe's comment that Texas has enough wind and solar energy

potential to power the U.S. is misleading.)

Bottom line: we need real-world, complicated, adult discussions.

A Mennonite elder once told me to hold tightly to what I believe with one hand, and with the other to reach boldly beyond my comfort zone.

I believe in addressing climate change. I haven't flown since 2002. I didn't own a car until I was 39. The car I and my family now drive runs largely on used deep-fryer oil. We grow much of our food. We're thrifty. My life is still littered with compromise and my ecological footprint is no better than half my fellow humans, but I care about climate.

I also care about people who don't. I care about figuring out a way to be church together. What is ultimately more helpful: whopping people over the head with arguments, or listening?

I have many views that I share, but I also know that I have never regretted putting my knee-jerk reactions on hold long enough to understand someone with different views. ❧



# Zion Mennonite Fellowship lends a hand to its neighbours

Story and Photo by Dave Rogalsky

EASTERN CANADA CORRESPONDENT  
ELMIRA, ONT.

**F**or anyone who lives in Elmira and needs a ladder to clean out his eaves-troughs or get a Frisbee off her roof, call Bruce Weber.

Zion Mennonite Fellowship, in an effort to increase its visibility in the town of Elmira and improve the sense of community and neighbourliness in the community, came up with the idea of an object-lending program. Congregants have lots of items that they don't use every day, so it was decided to lend them out to others as a service to local residents.

After a year of planning, Zion launched its Neighbour to Neighbour program earlier this summer. Checks with the church's insurance company and a lawyer nixed ideas for lending power tools, but just about anything else—from coffee urns to hammers—is available.

A call to Weber, the program's coordinator—519-669-4172—puts him into action. If what's desired is on the list of offered items, he calls the person who has it, picks it up and delivers it. The congregation has even budgeted for repairs and replacements, should objects come back damaged. If the desired item isn't on the list, he puts the word out in the church.

Brochures went out to the community, and a lead article in the local newspaper has brought some attention already. One concern was that Zion would end up in competition with the local rental company, but Neighbour to Neighbour doesn't plan on offering large multiples of items like tables or chairs for a wedding.

While the idea came from members Kevin Regier and Allister Gough, Weber was in favour, remembering a bumper sticker that read "You are not entitled

to what I have earned." But he feels that a Christian attitude is one of sharing what God has provided. He and Marilyn Brubacher, Zion's Mission Committee chair, want the program to model community and to plant seeds of being more neighbourly in the Elmira community. ❧



Marilyn Brubacher and Bruce Weber display two of the many items available in Zion Mennonite Fellowship's Neighbour to Neighbour lending program in Elmira, Ont.

## 'Paws' for worship

*Erb Street Mennonite welcomes and socializes 'future guide dogs' fostered by church families*

BY LEONA DUECK PENNER

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
WATERLOO, ONT.

**E**rb Street Mennonite Church not only welcomes all people who enter its doors, but also extends that same welcome to "future guide dogs." These animals are being fostered and given basic training during puppyhood by two church families, before entering intensive training with the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides program. After that training they will serve as companions for people with various disabilities.

Cecilia Erb, a Grade 7 student at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener, and Andrew Scheifele, senior safety officer at the University of Waterloo, offer glimpses into what fostering involves, and what it is like to love and care for these dogs from puppyhood to almost a year old. Then they will say farewell to the dogs, who will go for further training. Erb's family has done this twice, first with Vonn, who left a year ago, and again with Wunder, to

PHOTO COURTESY OF CECILIA ERB



Cecilia Erb gives Wunder, a 'future guide dog' with the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides program, a big hug.

whom they said goodbye a few Sundays ago. Scheifele's family are presently fostering their first dog, Judo.

**'A ball of love, loyalty and help'**

From Erb's perspective, the future guide

dog fostering program is all about “helping disabled people by giving them a trained dog that is a ball of love, loyalty and help, all wrapped up in fur!” And despite the sadness of farewells, she feels good about having contributed to this by fostering Vonn and Wunder, especially after seeing Vonn again at his training graduation, where she met his hearing-impaired handler.

“He was so happy to see us, but also very happy to be with his new companion,” she says. “That made it much easier to let go.

from caring for and socializing them by taking them to public places such as malls, restaurants, grocery stores, libraries and churches. “Mostly we taught them the basics: ‘Sit, stay, down, heel, leave it,’” she says. “Our main job was to love them as they went through the puppy stage, since they’ll have lots of very intense training later.” In Wunder’s case, training will prepare the dog to assist an autistic person.

“The hardest thing about fostering dogs is that I always had it in the back of my

*‘Our main job was to love them as they went through the puppy stage, since they’ll have lots of very intense training later.’  
(Cecilia Erb)*

We all left happy and proud. Also, we got to see him at Christmas, and we’ll be seeing Wunder at Christmas this year too!”

Both dogs have experienced church. Indeed, Wunder came to Erb Street the day after he arrived in the Erb household that includes Cecilia’s parents David Erb and Leanne Baer and her brother Oliver. “So he’s always been pretty comfortable [at Erb Street] and attended 10 or 15 times,” she explains. “Mostly when he was a puppy, because when he got older he began to misbehave. . . . The kids at church loved him! He has a gentle nature, and doesn’t get riled up too easily. The adults have been great, too. They’ll come up and ask how he’s doing and ask before touching him, which is really helpful for his handler.”

Erb figures that there isn’t actually that much involved in fostering puppies, aside

mind that I better not get too attached, because they’d have to leave soon,” she says. “It’s really, really difficult for me to let them go. Having done this twice, my family is now looking into ‘keeping dogs.’”

As for what she’s learned from these experiences, Erb says, “Nothing lasts forever, so you’d better love it while you have it!”

### **‘A way of giving back to the community’**

Scheifele, his wife, Anna Marie Cipriani, and daughter, Kalena, began fostering freshly weaned Judo five months ago after their interest in fostering was piqued by Kalena’s friend who dog-sits for families in another program. “[We decided] it’s a way of giving back to the community, and having some fun doing so,” he says.

“Fostering a guide dog means exposing



*Cecilia Erb, left, and Andrew Scheifele are pictured with ‘future guide dogs’ Wunder and Judo, respectively, at Erb Street Mennonite Church in Waterloo, Ont.*

him/her to all aspects of your life,” he explains. “Judo goes to work with me, rides the bus, shops, ‘eats out,’ and, of course, goes to church with us—either to Erb Street, which has been wonderfully welcoming of Judo, or to Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, where my wife and daughter participate in the choir. He’s only joined in ‘singing’ with them once! Otherwise, he seems to enjoy the music in both churches.”

“Whether at church, work or in the community, Judo opens doors with people that would otherwise not open,” he says. “On campus, people know his name but not mine. People are very good at acknowledging his vest and understand what it means. “As his primary handler, I’ve had a lot of pleasure working with Judo, and look at him as a temporary gift to us that we get to polish and give to someone else.”

As for fostering again, Scheifele admits, “You go into the process knowing that it’s a short-term assignment, but you can’t help becoming attached. . . . So until we go through the experience of letting Judo go, we aren’t ready to decide.”

Like Erb, he believes that it’s important to “enjoy what life presents you while you have it.”



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# 'We've got your kids. Go have a nap.'

*Family retreat offers respite for families living with disability*

BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent  
SWIFT CURRENT, SASK.

**F**or families with children who have exceptional needs, taking a summer vacation may seem like nothing more than an elusive dream. But now a groundbreaking program offered by Christian Horizons is making that dream come true for some families.

The Ontario-based organization, which operates group homes for disabled adults, offers a two-week family retreat each summer at Elim Lodge in Lakehurst, Ont. This summer, following the July 1 amalgamation of Christian Horizons and Menno Homes of Saskatchewan Inc. (with the latter assuming the Christian Horizons name), the first-ever retreat for families with disabled children was held in Saskatchewan.

Camp Elim, owned and operated by Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, became the venue for this exciting new venture. The camp is situated on the northern shore of Lac Pelletier, some 48 kilometres south-east of Swift Current, Sask.

Five families from Saskatchewan and British Columbia participated in the four-day retreat. Each family was paired with at least one short-term missionary or STM. These volunteers, who arrived at the camp a day early for training and orientation, provided daytime care and companionship for disabled participants so their parents and siblings could enjoy much-needed rest and rejuvenation.

Jordan Varey, director of Saskatchewan Services for Christian Horizons, says that the retreat could not operate without the volunteers. "STMs provide servant leadership to children, youth and adults with exceptional needs and their families," he says. "The one-on-one support to a participant during retreat activities will allow parents and caregivers to receive restorative respite."

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTIAN HORIZONS



*Short-term missionary Jonathan Danyluk enjoys dressing up with William McVittie at Christian Horizons' family retreat held at Camp Elim in August.*

Volunteers are expected to raise the necessary funds to cover the cost of their attendance at the retreat. They are also asked to raise additional funds to help offset the cost for families wanting to attend.

No special training is needed to be a short-term missionary, but volunteers must be at least 16 years old. This year's volunteers came from across the country and included several members of MC Saskatchewan churches. Among them were Liz and Greg Baerwald, of Zoar Mennonite in Waldheim, Sask., who cooked for the retreat. "They really represented Jesus in their welcome," says Varey, adding that the Baerwalds put a lot of effort into "making sure everyone would have something amazing to eat regardless

of their dietary needs. Every meal felt like a little taste of the Lord's table where everyone has a place."

While participants enjoyed the usual summer camp activities, such as archery and boating on the lake, the retreat also included a spiritual component. Neil Cudney, Christian Horizons' director of organizational and spiritual life, provided leadership for chapel and prayer times.

Christina McVittie, of Saskatoon, attended the retreat with her husband, Jeff, nine-year-old son, William, five-year-old daughter, Ava, and William's autism service dog, Gibson. She says William has difficulty communicating and "has to have one-on-one attention all of the time to ensure his safety." He also doesn't sleep well at night, so his parents are frequently exhausted. "The short-term missionaries that volunteered with our family were so encouraging," says McVittie. "They came to us on the second day and said, 'We've got your kids. They are having fun and are safe. Go have a nap.' And we did! We were able to relax, eat dinner together and were confident in the care and experience that our children were having." McVittie also says she valued being able to spend time with each of her children, with her husband, and with God. She says she appreciated being at a retreat "where we could fully participate and be encouraged together as a family."

Varey, who also attends Zoar Mennonite in Waldheim, Sask., sees the retreat as a ministry not only to the families who attend, but also to the church as a whole. "The impact on the STMs is palpable," he says. They return home "determined to make their churches more welcoming and accessible." Varey also notes that churches that send short-term missionaries to help with the retreat will get back an individual who is trained to work with persons with disabilities. He sees the retreat as "an opportunity for churches to build their own disability supports."

Varey notes that families who don't have children with special needs are also welcome at the retreat. "It's not about building segregated programs," he says, "but about a full sense of belonging, where all the members of the body of Christ are valued and wholeheartedly welcomed into body life." ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF AFKAR SOCIETY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND RELIEF

*Displaced people in Iraq.*

## Honouring Alan Kurdi

*Refugee sponsorship surges at MCC Canada*

BY JULIE BELL

Mennonite Central Committee Canada

On Sept. 2, 2015, the heartbreaking picture of Alan Kurdi's body on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea was a wake-up call to the world.

The three-year-old's death was a tragic reminder of the desperate choices made daily by some Syrians as they flee conflict in their country. Like the Kurdi family, they risk piling into unsafe boats piloted by smugglers, in an attempt to find a safe haven.

Alan, his brother and mother, didn't make it to safety.

A year later, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada remembers the Kurdi family in our thoughts and prayers. We pray for all of the people who are forced from their homes and families by conflict or disaster. We grieve with these families as they mourn missing and lost loved ones.

Alan Kurdi's death evoked shock and sadness around the world. In Canada, it prompted an outpouring of support for displaced Syrians. Churches, groups of friends, entire communities all came together to sponsor Syrian refugees.

At MCC Canada, which has been involved in refugee resettlement for more than 35 years, the impact has been profound. In the nine months between

September of last year and the end of June, MCC assisted in the arrival of almost 1,100 refugees, about 850 of whom were Syrians. That's about 10 times higher than the annual average since 2010. %

*To read an interview with Brian Dyck, the migration and resettlement coordinator at MCC Canada, about the impact of Alan Kurdi on Canadian generosity, visit [canadianmennonite.org/brian-dyck-interview](http://canadianmennonite.org/brian-dyck-interview).*



PHOTO COURTESY OF ART HILDEBRAND



**Two Syrian families** came to tell their stories at Trinity Mennonite Church, Mather, Man., and to express their many thanks for helping them unite their families, some of whom they had not seen for 10 years. Later, they visited the farm of Jeremy, Lisa, Colin and Erica Hildebrand at Crystal City and were introduced to modern-day farming on the prairies.

# Displaced person reaches out

BY MARLA PIERSON LESTER  
Mennonite Central Committee

By the time Feryal arrived at a camp for displaced people in Iraq's northern Ninewa Governorate, she had little desire to leave the security of the tent.

"I didn't like to talk to anyone, just be silent," recalls the 22-year-old, whose last name is not used for security reasons.

The months before had been harrowing. Fleeing the Islamic State group, which killed her uncle, she and her family were among the thousands trapped on Sinjar Mountain without shelter two summers ago.

Her father Elyas, who has only one leg, weeps when asked about the ordeal. He walked on crutches for hours but could go no farther than the mountain. He stayed there as his family made the journey to safety via Syria and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Elyas was one of the lucky few who were airlifted to safety, and he needed hospital care to recover from his exhaustion.

This story is part of what she brings to other displaced families. Through a project of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Iraqi partner Azidi Solidarity and Fraternity League, Feryal and other young volunteers are being trained and empowered to meet with displaced people to share and document stories of both trauma and resilience.

Feryal wanted to go to college, but by the time she graduated from high school, extremist groups made it unsafe to send girls to Mosul to study. Now, she is exploring how to make the stories of displacement known.

That means entering into the pain of families. She listens as they open up about the horrors they've seen: Islamic State killing family members, children dying due to the harsh conditions and girls taken and not heard from again. She has talked with girls who were kidnapped by Islamic State,



*Feryal (far right), her parents Fatima and Elyas, and her sister Jandar live in a camp for displaced people in Iraq's northern Ninewa Governorate.*

witnessing executions and suffering horrors of rape and abuse before escaping.

It's changed the way she looks at her own situation and the displaced people around her. "This is my family," she says, sitting in the tent with her father as her mother and sister come and go. "And the community is my family."

"This is not the end of life," she says as she encourages other young people and their families. "We have to live our lives . . . and support the people." ❧

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**/// Briefly noted****Old Order leader gets 5.5 years for 'child torture'**

BRANDON, MAN.—The 57-year-old leader of an Old Order Mennonite community was recently sentenced to 5.5 years in prison after pleading guilty to sexual assault and confirming guilty pleas to six counts of assault with a weapon and one count of assault for the extended and repeated abuse of six children, four to 12 years at the time and one young man, aged 21 to 22 years, according to a Sept. 8 report in the *Winnipeg Free Press*. The child abuse was described as harsh discipline, the newspaper reported, but Justice John Menzies called it torture and an effort for the offender to strengthen his hold on the community. "I don't know how your community, how your church, came to be perverted in such a fashion to wage war on the children," Menzies said as he delivered the sentence. "Instead of being a place of comfort and refuge, your community became a place of dread and torture for so many of your children." A publication ban protects the identity of the victims and the community. The offender also cannot be named. The offender's crimes spanned 2010 to 2013 and involved Manitoba's Child and Family Services removing children from their homes after a number of adults were charged with assaulting them. Visiting the community back in 2013 were several resource persons from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), including Rick Cober Bauman, executive director of MCC Ontario, Ron Janzen, executive director of MCC Manitoba and Peter Rempel, former MCC Manitoba executive director, who assisted the community during this crisis. The Old Order group had moved from Ontario after experiencing strained relations with the Old Order community there.

—DICK BENNER

GOD AT WORK IN US

# Making room for God to work

*Willard Metzger faith story*

**DAVE ROGALSKY**  
Eastern Canada Correspondent

**W**illard Metzger's mother was the janitor at the Glen Allan Mennonite Church (now closed) northwest of Waterloo, Ont. Now executive director of Mennonite Church Canada, he remembers being in the parsonage with his mom and going into the pastor's study. Barely able to look over the edge of the desk where a beam of sunshine shone on its surface, he thought, "Someday I'm going to be a pastor."

But for Metzger the call was not only to pastor the local church. When he was ordained years later he made sure that his ordination promises included a sense that the "church" also included regional and national bodies. He "battled with this." As a "humble Mennonite," what right had he to think that his call was to the national church? Was he being proud? He actually asked God to purge him of this desire.

Fast forward a few years and Mennonite Church Eastern Canada was looking for a chair for its Missions Commission. Instead of putting himself forward, Metzger pushed the desire down. A year later the position was still open and he felt God again saying "This is for you." So he volunteered. That position put him onto the national mission board. When Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church amalgamated and Mennonite Church Canada was created, he became chair of the new Witness Council for nine years. "This," he says, "gave me visibility on the national scene and I think contributed to an eventual invitation to the executive director position."

During those years, Metzger left the pastorate at Community Mennonite Fellowship in Drayton and joined the team at World Vision Canada. It was while leading a team to partner in development work in Haiti that he landed in Port-au-Prince on January 12, 2010, just hours before

the 7.0 magnitude earthquake devastated the country, particularly Port-au-Prince. With no medical training he stayed with the team from Canada, feeling that his place was to keep them safe and grounded. Meanwhile his assistant was out helping through the night, and in the morning Metzger joined the team bandaging and splinting. But there was almost nothing they could do and he felt absolutely helpless in the face of the wounded and dying.

"What died for me in Haiti was my desire to be a hero," he says. In many ways it was preparation for a few months later, when he took his current position and MC Canada entered into both the Being a Faithful Church and Future Directions work.



*Willard Metzger (centre) with Ryan Siemens (l), Saskatchewan area church minister, and Calvin Quan, the new moderator of MC Canada, at the end of the MC Canada assembly in Saskatoon on July 9.*

Part of Metzger's call to ministry, including the national church, is to not strive for success. Success in the North American Church is measured in growth he says—growth in budgets, programs, membership and in the size of buildings. Such "success" is seen as a measure of God's blessing. Decrease, seen as failure, is seen as a sign of God's displeasure. But Metzger has come to believe that the more the church can give up its signs of success, the more room there will be for God to build something new and better.

*(Continued on page 24)*

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(Continued from page 23)

“There is nothing I can do which will kill the church” is a promise he has from God. But that does not mean that God will protect the church from suffering. “Maybe God wants a failure,” he mused. He believes that “it is amazing what you will see if you open yourself to not be constrained by a need to succeed or to self-protection—those limit

sight and openness to what God is doing.” “God wants us to become less encumbered; to go back to the wilderness,” he says. This is missional thinking at its extreme—getting rid of our plans and ideas and looking for where God is already at work in the world, to join God in that work. He actually sees it as a temptation to give people a vision at this point in time. Like the Jewish

exile, it could take years before it becomes clear what God is doing and we know how we are to join God. This is not expecting a specific future but trusting that God is with us now, whatever is happening.

This is what sustains him as he leads MC Canada in this time of unknown change: God is with us and has a future with hope for the church. ✎

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## ARTBEAT

# Seeking peace through post-war theatre

Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre company's new season to feature heavyweight playwrights Christie, Ionesco, and Millay

BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY  
Manitoba Correspondent

The Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre is a long-standing hidden gem of Manitoba's fine arts scene. The amateur company is just that—a group of honest-to-goodness theatre lovers, whose Mennonite faith convictions enliven their artwork with a spirit of community service and vivid, conscientious story-telling. They are one of the only theatre companies in Canada that still presents plays in German, and regularly features new plays by local writers, often on explicitly Mennonite themes.

Past productions include the works of canon playwrights Henrik Ibsen, Tom Stoppard, Carol Shields, Chekov and Shakespeare, and this year, Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre (WMT) will add three new luminaries to that list: Agatha Christie, Eugene Ionesco and Edna St. Vincent Millay.

At first glance, Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano*, and Millay's *Aria da Capo* might seem a strange couple on the WMT play-bill—one, a staple of French absurdism,

the other, a pacifist verse play. The first, famously disjunctive, the second, laced through with elevated aesthetic elements like harlequins, opera terminology and Greek character names. However, a little reflection reveals more kinship between the two than first expected. Both are classic modernist one-act wonders, born out of earth-shaking experiences the whole world shared: namely, a world war, or two. As a result, both plays ultimately ask very similar questions, though in different ways and naturally suggesting different conclusions.

*The Bald Soprano*, first performed in 1950, deals with issues of communication: is it possible at all between humans? How do the various alienating influences specific to the modern world frustrate our attempts at meaningful connection?

*Aria da Capo* demonstrates how human beings fabricate unnatural divisions among themselves, which erode the human consciousness, breeding suspicion, environmental abuse and violence. Both plays, at base, powerfully examine the subject of

(Continued on page 26)

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(Continued from page 25)  
human isolation.

Terry Zimmerly, director of *Aria da Capo* and pastor at Home Street Mennonite Church, says he chose the play because “It’s a classic; and as a peace play with a lot to say about how we treat the earth and each other, I thought it would be well suited for Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre, especially given the way political discourse is being used right now, in the United States and elsewhere. The other piece, *The Bald Soprano*, is all about language and *Aria da Capo* deals with that too—how language can be leveraged to create fear.”

Zimmerly says that while the play was originally written in the wake of the first Great War, which now lies even farther from living memory than World War II, he “certainly considers it a contemporary in terms of how it speaks to us today. When she wrote the play, Edna St. Vincent Millay was disgusted by how the elites and socialites were reacting to the tragedies of World War I. The play really shows us how easy it can be not to pay attention—to first nations, to the Middle

East, to refugees, to what’s going on in the United States, what’s happening to the environment. We see the aftermath of all these things, in theory, but often we’re not moved by them. Our pleasures and comforts make it easy to turn a blind eye.”

Asked whether he believes audience members will fully absorb the present relevance of *Aria da Capo*, Zimmerly demonstrates incisiveness which is so necessary to good directing.

“I think one of the beautiful functions of art is that it helps some to see or hear who have not been able to see or hear before. The message can get across when it didn’t at other times, from other angles. In a play, meaning and message can surprise us—it’s like scripture that way, it’s a living word. And sometimes it can even speak beyond what the author originally intended or expected.”

Come February, Agatha Christie’s *And Then There Were None* will show as part of the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre’s Master Playwright’s Festival. But first—starting November 11 at le Cercle Molière—Eugene Ionesco and Edna St. Vincent Millay,

together with the Winnipeg Mennonite Theatre company, will teach Winnipeg the art of remembrance. ❧

### /// Briefly noted

#### Adult Bible Study announces new study cycle

This fall Adult Bible Study (ABS), begins a new six-year cycle of studying the whole Bible. The weekly lessons were developed by an ecumenical group of Christian educators and publishers with James E. Horsch, ABS editor emeritus, serving as chair for the 2016–22 study cycle. “ABS offers meaty, relevant, Anabaptist commentary,” says editor Sharon Williams. “ABS is great for congregations looking for Sunday school or Bible study curriculum that draws people into God’s Word and results in a closer walk with Jesus in the world.”

—MennoMedia

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# Mixed emotions at the end of the journey

*Waterloo, Ont., man finishes cross-Canada bike ride in support of mental health*

BY AARON EPP  
Young Voices Editor

Even though the journey was more than 7,500 kilometres, Martin Bauman almost wished it wouldn't end.

On Aug. 29, the Waterloo, Ont., resident entered St. John's, N.L., completing the cross-Canada bicycle trip he started on June 7 in Vancouver.

"It's a real mix of emotions," Bauman said by phone from St. John's two days after finishing his journey. "A lot of joy, a lot of relief. . . [During] my final day of biking, being so close to St. John's, I almost wanted the ride to keep going. Looking back on the memories, it's nothing but good."

The 24-year-old, who attends Hawkesville (Ont.) Mennonite Church, undertook the journey to raise awareness about mental health issues, while also raising funds for the Defeat Depression campaign.

Riding under the banner "Keep pushing: Martin's ride for mental health," Bauman raised \$12,236, exceeding his \$10,000 goal. The majority of the funds will be allocated to the Waterloo-Wellington-Dufferin branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association.

"I couldn't have expected that much support from people around the country," he said. "It's been phenomenal. I couldn't be more thankful."

Cycling 100 kilometres a day tested both his physical and psychological endurance, but Bauman said that seeing Canada's beauty firsthand, as well as the experiences he had meeting people along the way, more

than made up for the wind, rain, thunderstorms and hills he faced.

He was often hosted in the homes of people he had never met before. "It was particularly powerful when people would host me and then pray for me," he said. "To have someone who just met me pray for me and my well-being on the road really struck me."

He chose to raise awareness and funds for depression because of the various ways people in his life have struggled with mental health. When Bauman was 10 years old, his cousin committed suicide. Three years later, Bauman's father went to the hospital seeking treatment for a bout of depression. When Bauman was in high school, one of his friends revealed that he had been self-harming, and Bauman himself has struggled with seasonal affective disorder and anxiety.

He said his ride across Canada gave him many opportunities to talk with people about mental illness, including the people he stayed with. "That was really powerful," he said, adding that people often opened up about their own struggles with mental illness. "That was a bonding moment, realizing we're not too dissimilar. We're all in the same boat, so to speak."

Bauman's efforts were "impressive and inspiring," said Fred Wagner, executive director of the Canadian Mental Health Association's Waterloo-Wellington-Dufferin branch. "It's a very arduous trip to make, and to put forward mental health

PHOTOS BY BEVERLEY HISCOCK



*Martin Bauman exceeded his fundraising goal by more than \$2,000.*



*'Looking back on the memories, it's nothing but good,' Martin Bauman said of his journey.*

as the reason for his trip . . . is amazing,” Wagner said. “The more people that talk about mental health, the more we make that acceptable, the better.”

Bauman’s next adventure is five months of travel through Australia, New Zealand and southeast Asia. ❧

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

# Uncovering the truth

*Land is central to indigenous-settler reconciliation*

BY DEANNA ZANTINGH

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

PHOTO BY DEANNA ZANTINGH



*Boat rides with Destani Skunk (left), Jeff Loon (rear) and their son, Raeshaun, raised new questions for Deanna Zantingh about looking at land theologically.*

PHOTO BY DEANNA ZANTINGH



*This lake was only a small river prior to Manitoba Hydro flooding part of the community in the 1950s.*

I turned on the radio in time to hear CBC perfectly capture my past year’s journey in one sentence. “The thing about seeking reconciliation with indigenous peoples is that eventually you realize you also have to make reconciliation with the land,” said Caleb Behn, a Salish activist and lawyer.

I began studying theology as a way to explore the questions that my friendship with an indigenous community in northern Ontario had raised. After my first year, I was shocked at how central land had become, when reconciliation was my focus.

My thesis work has been no different. This past year I began a qualitative research project listening to people in Mishkeegogamang First Nation in northern Ontario reflect on land and identity. All of this has led me to a startling conclusion: I don’t want to talk about reconciliation anymore, unless we are prepared to put land in the middle of that conversation. Here’s why.

A few years back, a friend offered this summary of colonization: “There’s something that’s been covered over—that’s what colonization is.” In my thesis research, I’ve come to see the way land and people have been covered over or made invisible. The removal of people from land is the cornerstone of the colonial imagination, so understanding the connection of people to land is a necessary step toward a different imagination.

One of my favourite theologians, Willie

Jennings, puts it this way: land was once the signifier of identity. When colonization began to separate people from land, “skin was asked to speak for itself,” and land that once marked identity became reshaped into a commodity. What’s been covered over is the very thing that indigenous tribes like Standing Rock are still standing to protect. I’m convinced we call them protestors because we can no longer see what’s been covered over: a view of land that many have already been taught to forget.

But it is not just a view of land, it is a way of being—an intimate connection with the land. The elders in Mishkeegogamang had a word for this: Taashikaywin. “It’s everything, it’s the most important thing,” one elder told me. “Taashikaywin is where we intend to be originated from—that’s our identity. Taashikaywin is part of us, a part of our spiritual perspective. When I say part of us that means air, water, plants, animals, and spirituality. Taashikaywin is everything. It is who I am as you speak to me. I am Taashikaywin ya.”

From these stories I came to better understand what occurs in colonization. “Back when the Europeans got here, they were the ones that were living inside a box,” one man told me. “They made forts to surround where they were living. We were out. Now, that is reverse: we are the ones living on a reserve and they are the ones out. They are the ones keeping us in now.” Still others remarked, “this [reserve

life] is not Taashikaywin, this is colonization, you have to go out to Taashikaywin to learn.”

The displacement of people from land, and the subsequent re-ordering of “Indian” people onto “reserves,” while lands themselves became reshaped by government and private interest is not the only thing that is occurring here. An elder would also tell me that Taashikaywin is a sacred cycle. This is what is broken and in need of repair. It’s the reason there is so much confusion, and why people feel lost.

For me, it has become impossible to separate a desire to support indigenous youth within a suicide epidemic, alongside continued actions that colonize their land and peoplehood. If you want to respect the plight of indigenous youth, you have to respect indigenous land. If you want to seek reconciliation, it will lead you to reconci-land-ation.

The moment that really inspired a lot of this thesis work was a boat ride when friends in Mishkeegogamang took me out to Taashikaywin. This boat ride was my baptism into non-commodified space,

the place I learned to see what had been covered over.

Land is never just a commodity to be bought, sold, traded or consumed, often privately by the individual; nor is it empty space requiring labour and management for value to appear. Land is the foundation of a language system; held in common for the benefit and survival of all; a part of a broader complex and interconnected system that contributes to all of life; source of medicine, food, and gifts; and an inseparable part of what it means to be human both physically and spiritually.

Truthfully, what’s been covered over is the absurdity of a system that “holds land in trust” for the members of our society who have often demonstrated the greatest amount of trust in holding land. ✎

*Deanna Zantingh, 28, lives in Beausejour, Man. She will complete her Master of Theological Studies at Canadian Mennonite University this fall.*

PHOTO BY DEANNA ZANTINGH



*Land is never just a commodity to be bought, sold, traded or consumed.*

PHOTO COURTESY DEANNA ZANTINGH



*Deanna Zantingh*

## CM seeks reader suggestions for upcoming ‘10 under 30’ feature

**C**anadian Mennonite wants to know about the young adults who are making a difference in your church or community.

In a special feature we will publish in the new year, *Canadian Mennonite* will feature 10 young people from across Canada who care about and support the church—10 emerging Mennonite leaders who are working to make the world a better place.

If you know young people who make the church or community better, whether it’s through pastoral ministry, activism, community work, visual art, music, business, farming, politics, the world wide web, or in some other way, and meet the following criteria, we want to hear about them. Send an email to [youngvoices@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:youngvoices@canadianmennonite.org) by the end of the day on Nov. 4.

### **All nominees must:**

- **BE** 30 years old or younger.

- **BE ACTIVE** in a Mennonite Church Canada congregation.
- **HAVE A** gift or skill that benefits the church or community.
- **BE ABLE** to articulate their faith and how they have experienced God.
- **SHOW CARE** for others through acts of service or volunteering.
- **NOT HAVE** been profiled in *Canadian Mennonite* in the past three years.

When sending in your suggestion, include as much information about the person as you can, as well as the person’s contact information.

We won’t be able to feature everyone we hear about, but our hope is to expose readers to some bright young people they may not have heard about before.

We look forward to hearing from you.

## Calendar

### British Columbia

**Oct. 14-16:** Women's retreat, "Piecing together our identity," at Camp Squeah, Hope, with speaker Song Yang Her. Register at [mcbc.ca/womens-ministry](http://mcbc.ca/womens-ministry).

**Oct. 15:** M2/W2 50th-anniversary fundraising banquet, at Columbia Bible College, at 6 p.m. To register, call 604-859-3215.

**Oct. 22:** MC B.C. meeting of congregations, location to be determined.

**Oct. 30:** MC B.C. hymn sing fundraiser, at Level Ground Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, at 3 p.m.

**Nov. 18-20:** MC B.C. "Impact" youth retreat, at Camp Squeah, Hope.

### Saskatchewan

**Oct. 14-15:** Women's retreat, A Faith Journey: Exploring our journey of faith through song, story and action at Shekinah Retreat Centre. Contact MC Sask for information.

**Oct. 20-23:** Bryan Moyer Suderman will give three concerts and participate

in the fall Pastors Gathering and Equipping Day. Contact MC Sask for information.

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

**Oct. 22:** Equipping Day, Living the Good News with Jesus, at Mount Royal Mennonite Church.

**Oct. 28:** MDS awareness and fundraising event, at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon; supper at 6:30 p.m. For reservations, call 306-342-4344.

**Oct. 28:** Mega Menno Halloween event for youth grades 6-12 at Wildwood Mennonite Church, 7-9 p.m.

**Oct. 28-29:** RJC alumni volleyball tournament.

**Nov. 15:** RJC kielke and sausage supper, at Bethany Manor, Saskatoon.

**Nov. 18:** Advent of Consumption, Mega Menno youth event at Osler Mennonite Church.

**Nov. 26:** MC Sask Fall Leadership Assembly.

### Manitoba

**Oct. 21:** CMU open house for

prospective students. For more information, visit [cmu.ca/campusvisit](http://cmu.ca/campusvisit).

**Oct. 25-26:** CMU's J.J. Thiessen Lecture Series: "The silence of Abraham, the passion of Job: Explorations in the theology of lament," with J. Richard Middleton, Ph.D.

**Oct. 28-29:** "Mennonites, land and the environment: A global history conference," at the University of Winnipeg. More information at <http://mennonitestudies.uwinnipeg.ca/events/>.

**Oct. 29,30:** MC Manitoba's Camps with Meaning celebration banquets at 5:30 p.m.; (29) Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Winkler; (30) Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg. For more information, email [camps@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:camps@mennochurch.mb.ca).

**Oct. 30:** "Along the road to freedom" exhibition opening celebration at the Manitoba Legislative Building, Winnipeg, at 2:30 p.m.

**Nov. 2:** CMU Face2Face Conversation Series: "Why beauty matters: Radical amazement, spirituality and the climate crisis," with Tim Rogalsky, Ph.D.

**Nov. 4,5:** Canadian Foodgrains Bank fundraising concerts with the Mennonite Collegiate Choir and the Steinbach Regional Secondary Choir: (4) at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Winkler, at 7 p.m.; (5) Springfield Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

**Nov. 4,25:** CMU campus visit day. For more information, visit [cmu.ca/campusvisit](http://cmu.ca/campusvisit).

**Nov. 15:** "Evening at the arts" at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Winnipeg.

**Nov. 17:** CMU School of Music open house. For more information, visit [cmu.ca/campusvisit](http://cmu.ca/campusvisit).

**Nov. 23:** CMU Outtatown Discipleship School for a day. For more information, visit [cmu.ca/campusvisit](http://cmu.ca/campusvisit).

## UpComing

### Fundraising for new hymnal begins

A dedicated fundraising website for the new hymnal for Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A. has been launched at [HymnalProject606.com](http://HymnalProject606.com). The fundraising phase is called Project 606, so dubbed from the anthem version of

"Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow," affectionately known as "606" from its designation in the red 1969 Mennonite Hymnal. The fundraising goal is \$606,000; the funds are needed to help with the song collection's development costs ahead of its sales years. MennoMedia is the agency taking leadership for the new hymnal, and also anticipates a digital version of much of the music. To date, more than \$235,000 has been given or promised, representing nearly 40 percent of the goal. [HymnalProject606.com](http://HymnalProject606.com) accepts credit cards; those who give \$500 or more over the next three years can be named or honour a loved one with a line in the back of the hymnal. In addition to donations at the website, people can recommend favourite songs. A separate song and worship resources collection website will be launched this fall, where writers, composers and song writers will find submission guidelines.

—MennoMedia



**CANADIAN MENNONITE**

The church and social justice

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[canadianmennonite.org](http://canadianmennonite.org)

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**Nov. 19:** Megan Krause and Dale Boldt exhibition at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg, at 7:30 p.m. Until Jan. 21, 2017.

**Nov. 26:** Christmas at CMU. Celebrate the start of Advent enjoying music, festive décor, cookies and hot apple cider.

**Nov. 28:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate annual general meeting, at 7 p.m.

**Dec. 5:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Christmas concert, at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

## Ontario

**Until Dec. 5:** "Together: When we are engaged" photo exhibit that celebrates everyday acts that deepen our sense of community, at the Conrad Grebel University College gallery, Waterloo.

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

**Oct. 16:** Detweiler Meetinghouse hosts its fifth-annual "Male Chorus Sing," at 2:30 p.m., with song leader Bob Shantz. For more information, visit [Detweilermeetinghouse.ca](http://Detweilermeetinghouse.ca).

**Oct. 20:** Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, hosts the launch of "Out of Place: Social Exclusion and Mennonite Migrants in Canada" by author Luann Good Gingrich, at 7 p.m. The evening will include remarks by the author, a book signing and panel discussion.

**Oct. 20-22:** Ten Thousand Villages festival sale at Hamilton Mennonite Church: (20,21) from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; (22) from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Homemade soup and desserts available in the Villages Café.

**Oct. 30:** Menno Singers present "Romantic Rarities," featuring Widor's "Mass for Two Choirs and Two Organs," at Church of St. John the Evangelist, Kitchener, at 3 p.m.

**Nov. 3:** The Benjamin Eby Lecture, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, at 7:30 p.m. Speaker: Jeremy Bergen. Topic: "Christians killing Christians: Martyrdom and the disunity of the church."

**Nov. 5,6:** Pax Christi Chorale, with the Bicycle Opera Project, presents Mendelssohn's "Elijah," at Grace

Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto; (5) 7:30 p.m.; (6) 3 p.m.

**Nov. 11-13:** Marriage Encounter weekend for couples at Monastery of Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre, Niagara Falls. For information, go to [marriageencounterec.com](http://marriageencounterec.com) or call 519-669-8667.

**Nov. 19,20:** Soli Deo Gloria Singers present their fall concert, "Christ alone, Scripture alone": (19) at UMEI, Leamington, at 7:30 p.m.; (20) at Leamington United Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m. For tickets, call UMEI at 519-326-7448.

**Nov. 26:** Rescue Junction concert and MennoHomes AGM at Woodside Church, Elmira, at 7 p.m. Everyone welcome. For information call 226-476-2535 or visit [mennohomes.com](http://mennohomes.com).

**Dec. 10:** Mennonite Mass Choir with the KW Symphony and soloists perform Handel's "Messiah," at Centre in the Square, Kitchener.

**Dec. 10,11:** Pax Christi Chorale, with Shannon Mercer and the Aslan Boys Choir, presents, "Ode on the Nativity" by C.H.H. Parry, at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto; (10) 7:30 p.m.; (11) 3 p.m.

## U.S.A.

**Oct. 6-8:** "Deep faith" conference exploring "Anabaptist faith formation for all ages," at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. To register, visit [mennoniteusa.org/deepfaith/](http://mennoniteusa.org/deepfaith/).

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

## Classifieds

### Announcement

**The Village Casketmaker** Funeral caskets and urns sold directly to public. Sensible and eco-friendly. Made in Winnipeg. Shipping beyond Manitoba available. Learn more: [thevillagecasketmaker.com](http://thevillagecasketmaker.com)


## Employment Opportunities



Employment opportunity

**Children's Ministry Leader/Pastor** – Douglas Mennonite Church ([www.douglasmc.ca](http://www.douglasmc.ca)), a thriving mid-sized congregation in suburban Winnipeg, is seeking a Children's Ministry Leader/Pastor. This is a half-time position commencing in late-2016 or early January 2017.

Applicants are invited to submit their confidential expressions of interest to, or request further information from, Fred Loewen (Search Committee Chair, Douglas Mennonite Church) or Rick Neufeld (Director of Leadership Ministries, Mennonite Church Manitoba) at [floewen@waterfordglobal.com](mailto:floewen@waterfordglobal.com) or [rneufeld@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:rneufeld@mennochurch.mb.ca) Deadline for applications is September 30th.



## Conrad Grebel University College

### Faculty Position in Music Theory

Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo invites applications for a full-time regular faculty position in Music Theory in the Department of Music, to begin **July 1, 2017**. This is a regular, full-time, tenure-track position that involves undergraduate teaching, scholarship, service, and community education. The core teaching area is Music Theory which includes direction and oversight of the music theory program and courses in music theory. In addition, teaching may include composition, music and technology, or other courses such as psychology of music, popular music, jazz, worship and music, music and film, and world music as appropriate to the faculty member's interests and expertise.

*Review of applications will begin **November 1, 2016**.*

Conrad Grebel University College is committed to employment equity and welcomes applications from all qualified persons. Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority. See the full position description for specific duties, qualifications, reporting structure, and materials needed by applicants for submission at [grebel.ca/positions](http://grebel.ca/positions)

# Summer camps promote peace and music

Conrad Grebel University College  
WATERLOO, ONT.

## Ontario Mennonite Music Camp

Thirty-three years ago, Marie Penner worked with Conrad Grebel College to establish Ontario Mennonite Music Camp. Fittingly, Penner was invited to direct congregational singing at the camp's 2016 final concert on Aug. 25.

Since its inception, the music camp, which is supported by Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, has welcomed 12- to 16-year-olds who love music, pairing musical instruction with traditional camp activities for two weeks each summer. This year, 25 campers worked diligently to pull together and perform the musical *Godspell*, directed by Anneli Loepp Thiessen. The music campers also presented music for worship at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener one Sunday morning.

## Peace Camp

Throughout the week of Aug. 8 to 12, 31 youth aged 11 to 14 from across Waterloo Region gathered for the Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement's Peace Camp at Grebel. The fifth-annual day camp was once again packed with activities with a peace and social-justice spin, to encourage them to inspire lives, strengthen ties and make peace happen in the region.

This year's theme, "Peace in action," was chosen with the intent of empowering campers to apply their skills and passions for peace. The goal was to combat the idea that peace is abstract and lofty, and to communicate to them in practical ways that peace can often be within their own power to promote.

Said one camper of the experiences: "This week I learned that there are a lot of people trying to create peace, like people at [Mennonite Central Committee] who inspired me to volunteer somewhere next year."

"Creating an environment in which we can open our minds to learn from each other, to build peace and to work for justice is incredibly important," observed Rebekah DeJong, this year's Peace Camp director. "How lucky we are to have the youth of today valuing, partaking in and creating that environment . . . which builds better communities and creates more peaceful citizens."

With the support of a five-year grant from the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation and ongoing sponsorship from Kindred, Josslin Insurance and the Kitchener-Waterloo Community Fund, Peace Camp was able to provide 14 campers with subsidized registration. ☼

CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE PHOTOS



*Ontario Mennonite Music Camp founder Marie Penner, centre, was invited to direct congregational singing at the camp's 2016 final concert at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., on Aug. 25.*



*Liberal MP Bardish Chagger, standing back left, the current leader of the government in the House of Commons and the small business and tourism minister, speaks to this year's Peace Camp, held at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont.*