

CANADIAN MENNONITE

January 30, 2017

Volume 21 Number 3

Remembering the Reformation

pg. 4

PM40063104 R09613

inside

Wisdom, where art thou (Pt. 4) 11

Your light is needed 12

A 'shower' challenge 13

EDITORIAL

The 'sin' of disunity

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

The tension in the room was palpable. High winds and blizzard conditions outside kept some from attending the Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship meeting in Winnipeg (see "Let him speak," page 18), but the stormy weather on Jan. 12 was not confined to the outdoors. Inside the winds of confrontation were brewing, too.

What was causing the "weather" disturbance? Severe winter weather is certainly not new to those living in southern Manitoba. What is new is a disturbance by some congregations across Canada—Manitoba and British Columbia, in particular—regarding the Being a Faithful Church (BFC) 7 resolution passed last summer in Saskatoon that "creates space" for those having a different interpretation of Article 19 in our *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* regarding marriage being "between one man and one woman."

Mennonite Church Manitoba was trying its best that night to find a way through this gathering storm by bringing together differing viewpoints on the issue. To do that, moderator Peter Rempel posed a number of questions, including: "How can we support mutual accountability between levels of leadership and congregations at variance on the issues throughout the process?"

Certainly a fair question to what has become a contentious issue. But instead of it bringing a calm and reasoned response, it triggered deeply held passions

on both sides that resulted in what one side considered insulting and condemning remarks about LGBTQ people, in contrast to the other side suggesting rhetorically that "Satan was using the gay community as his puppet in an attempt to totally tear apart Mennonite Church Canada." A confrontation ensued and the person making the "condemning gays" remarks left the meeting.



Is this the kind of "reasoning together" we are to expect across MC Canada: When the conversation becomes intense, we just walk away from each other?

In MC B.C., some 11 pastors are calling on the area church to leave MC Canada as a protest to BFC 7. At this writing, it is unknown how a meeting at Peace Mennonite Church turned out. In a way, is the call to leave the national body just a different form of "walking away"?

Divisions are not new to our community of faith. We have been here before—over issues of divorce and women in leadership. These were the big issues. We lived through them. There were plenty of smaller ones, some as petty as splitting over whether the clock should be at the back or front of the church.

This is hardly the peace that we profess to our neighbours as one of our core values.

We were struck by some of the follow-up thoughts of a young pastor, Moses Falco of Sterling Mennonite Fellowship in Winnipeg, who attended the Fort Garry

meeting. Basing his blog post on Psalm 133:1, "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity," he has a different take on "sin."

"In essence, we have decided that unity in the midst of disagreement is vitally important to us," he writes. "We already disagree on so many things, and to elevate this issue to the point of making it foundational to give us licence to break fellowship with one another, would be a sin."

Falco, who didn't grow up "Mennonite," is actually happy for meetings like this. He has laid out three points that inspire him to be a part of our fellowship:

- **THE PRIESTHOOD** of believers where "everyone is invited into the space and collectively we hear the voice of God";
- **DISAGREEMENT IS** okay, i.e., "choosing to love and respect each other, even when we disagree on the topic of same-sex marriage, is a powerful testament to our common faith in Jesus Christ"; and
- **"WE NEED** each other so that we can learn from one another. Dividing from people who are different from you also means you can no longer learn from them, or vice versa."

Falco admits this won't be easy. "Being the church is messy work," he concludes. "Just look back into our history and see how many times we split, not only churches but also each other. Literally. We killed people who disagreed with us. I am happy to be a part of a church body that puts on meetings that make me uncomfortable."

How refreshing! Why don't we inculcate Falco's attitude as we find our way through this storm? His different take on the "sin" of our disunity just might be the redeeming strategy we are seeking.

ABOUT THE COVER:

Statue of Martin Luther in Hannover, Germany. Our 'Remembering the Reformation' feature by Troy Osborne, a Conrad Grebel University College history and theological studies professor, begins on page 4.

PHOTO: ©ISTOCK.COM/VILLY_YOVCHEVA

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund for our publishing activities.

ISSN 1480-042X

Canada

CANADIAN MENNONITE

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40063104 REGISTRATION NO. 09613

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE ITEMS TO:

CANADIAN MENNONITE,
490 DUTTON DRIVE, UNIT C5,
WATERLOO, ON, N2L 6H7

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

Web site: canadianmennonite.org

Facebook.com/Canadian.Mennonite @CanMenno

Please send all material to be considered for publication to:

General submission address: submit@canadianmennonite.org

Readers Write: letters@canadianmennonite.org

Milestones announcements: milestones@canadianmennonite.org

Paid obituaries: obituaries@canadianmennonite.org

Calendar announcements: calendar@canadianmennonite.org

Material can also be sent "Attn: Submissions/Readers Write/Milestones/

Obituaries/Calendar" by postal mail or fax to our head office.

Reprint requests: reprints@canadianmennonite.org

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

Guiding values:

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

Area churches and MC Canada financially support 38 percent of *Canadian Mennonite's* annual budget.

Board of Directors (by appointing body):

MC Canada: **Doreen Martens, Henry Krause, Rod Wiens, Elmer Hildebrand;**

MC B.C.: **Linda Matties;** MC Alberta: **vacant;** MC Saskatchewan: **vacant;**

MC Manitoba: **Ken Reddig;** MC Eastern Canada: **Tim Reimer;**

CMPS: **Lois Epp, Ally Siebert, Bryce Miller**

Board Chair: **Henry Krause,** hakrause@telus.net, 604-888-3192

Head Office Staff:

Dick Benner, Editor/Publisher, editor@canadianmennonite.org

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

Barb Draper, Editorial Assistant, edassist@canadianmennonite.org

Dan Johnson, Graphic Designer, designer@canadianmennonite.org

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

Aaron Epp, Young Voices Editor, youngvoices@canadianmennonite.org

Virginia Hostetler, Web Editor, webeditor@canadianmennonite.org

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

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

Correspondents:

Will Braun, Senior Writer, seniorwriter@canadianmennonite.org

Amy Dueckman, B.C. Correspondent, bc@canadianmennonite.org

Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, Alberta Correspondent, ab@canadianmennonite.org

Donna Schulz, Saskatchewan Correspondent, sk@canadianmennonite.org

Beth Downey Sawatzky, Manitoba Correspondent, mb@canadianmennonite.org

Dave Rogalsky, Eastern Canada Correspondent, ec@canadianmennonite.org

One-Year Subscription Rates

Canada: \$46 + tax (depends on province where subscriber lives)

U.S.: \$68 **International (outside U.S.):** \$91.10

Subscriptions/address changes:

(e-mail) office@canadianmennonite.org

(web) canadianmennonite.org

(phone) 1-800-378-2524 ext. 221

contents

JANUARY 30, 2017 / VOL. 21, NO. 3



Remembering the Reformation 4

Conrad Grebel University College professor **TROY OSBORNE** provides a 'Mennonite take' on the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation sparked by Martin Luther posting his 95 theses on the door of the Schlosskirche of Wittenberg.

EVI listening tour roundup 14

Canadian Mennonite's five regional correspondents and a couple of freelancers attended all of the Emerging Voices Initiative's cross-Canada tour stops, getting the pulse of what's important for the denomination's Future Directions.

'Let him speak' 18

BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY reports on a Mennonite Church Manitoba meeting on what it means to 'create space' for discernment on same-sex marriage that turned confrontational, prompting moderator **PETER REMPEL** to call the incident 'sinful' and close discussion for the evening.

Focus on Education 20-26

Read stories about people and programs at Rosthern Junior College, Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary and Middle Schools, Conrad Grebel University College and Rockway Mennonite Collegiate.

Young Voices 27-29

'Carving a new path for peace' profiles TREE's **KATIE GINGERICH**. "'Sparky" music' introduces bluegrass band Sparky and the Plugs.

Regular features:

For discussion **6** Readers write **7** Milestones **10**

A moment from yesterday **10** Online NOW! **19**

Yellow Page **25** Calendar **30** Classifieds **30**

The 'sin' of disunity 2

DICK BENNER

Unexpected consequences 7

DAN DYCK

Healthy humility lightens the journey 8

MELISSA MILLER

Preventing prodigals 9

MIKE STRATHDEE



Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press



GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH FEATURE

Remembering the Reformation

BY TROY OSBORNE

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

The year 2017 marks the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. According to tradition, Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on Oct. 31, 1517, thereby starting the chain of events that gave birth to the Protestant churches and destroyed the unity of western Christianity.

The anniversary, no doubt, will be filled with celebration and mourning. Protestants can feel gratitude for the faith of those who proclaimed the good news of God's free and unfettered grace. At the same time, those who proclaim "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5) cannot fail to see the tragedy in the division of the body of Christ.

At the risk of making superficial comparisons with the past, there are some similarities between 2017 and 1517. Just like Luther and his followers, we also live in a time marked by economic and political uncertainty and unease exacerbated by new forms of media. Perhaps we can follow Pope Francis' lead in seeing the commemoration of the Reformation as an opportunity to reject division and despair when he marked the milestone with members of the Lutheran World Federation at Lund Cathedral in Sweden last year.

In a generous ecumenical spirit, Francis praised Luther for restoring Scripture to the centrality of the church and his reminder that we are saved "by God's grace alone." The pope also called on the year's coming commemorations of the Reformation of 1517 to be an opportunity for Lutherans and Catholics to work towards greater unity and cooperation. The ecumenical prayer service was the first time that a pope commemorated Reformation Sunday with a sermon "recognizing error and seeking forgiveness" for the divisions of the past.

The service at Lund was a symbolically momentous expression of ecumenical hope, building on decades of careful historical and theological reflections on the divisions between Lutherans and Catholics. Vatican II (1962-65) affirmed that elements of truth and sanctification can be found outside the Catholic Church. It also accentuated the traditional Protestant emphases of the importance of Scripture, the priesthood of all baptized believers, and the need for the church to continually purify and reform itself.

Following 50 years of ecumenical dialogue, Catholic and Lutheran theologians issued the "Joint Declaration on the Doctrine

At the risk of making superficial comparisons with the past, there are some similarities between 2017 and 1517. Just like Luther and his followers, we also live in a time marked by economic and political uncertainty and unease exacerbated by new forms of media.

SERVIZIO FOTOGRAFICO DE L'O.R.



In 2007, then MWC president Nancy Heisey presented a framed image of Anabaptist martyr Dirk Willems to Pope Benedict XVI. She told the story of Willems, who was captured, tried and convicted, but escaped from prison in 1569. Willems fled across the thin ice of a pond, but when the guard who pursued him broke through the ice, Willems turned back and rescued him. Willems was recaptured and soon burned at the stake.

Before the Reformation, the western church was neither as thoroughly fallen as Protestants described it, nor was it the idealized Christian society promoted by Catholics.

of Justification” in 1999, which outlined their shared convictions around how humans are saved. The recent publication, *From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation*, ends with the observation that “the struggle of the 16th century is over” and gives five imperatives for securing greater Christian unity.

At the conclusion of his homily in Lund, Francis challenged those gathered with these words: “We Christians will be credible witnesses of mercy to the extent that forgiveness, renewal and reconciliation are daily experienced in our midst. Together we can proclaim and manifest God’s mercy, concretely and joyfully, by upholding and promoting the dignity of every person. Without this service to the world and in the world, Christian faith is incomplete. As Lutherans and Catholics, we pray together in this cathedral, conscious that without God we can do nothing. We ask his help, so that we can be living members, abiding in him, ever in need of his grace, so that together we may bring his word to the world, which so greatly needs his tender love and mercy.”

Differences remain

There are still many differences in practice and doctrine between Anabaptists, Protestants and Catholics, such as the role of women in the church, Mary, communion, baptism and nonviolent discipleship. Nonetheless, Mennonites should seize this opportunity of historical reflection to share their gifts with other traditions and receive the gifts that they can offer in turn.

Representatives of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) have also met with their Lutheran and Catholic counterparts over the years to study their history and theological convictions for potential areas of greater inter-church cooperation.

In 2004, the Lutheran World Fellowship and MWC called for the “right remembering” of the Reformation after Lutherans issued an apology for the ways that Lutheran authorities persecuted Anabaptists in the past. They also re-evaluated the condemnations of Anabaptists in the 1530 Augsburg Confession.

In February, MWC will hold the first session of Renewal 2027, a 10-year series of events to commemorate the beginnings of the Anabaptist movement. The commemorations are scheduled to be held in Germany, Kenya, Latin America, Western Canada and at the 2027 MWC assembly, possibly in Switzerland.

Mennonite commemorations and dialogues, like those of the Catholics and Lutherans, call for a fresh reading of the history of the Reformation and stress the importance of healing the memory of those tumultuous events. It is striking that all of the organizers view the commemoration of the Reformation as an opportunity to take a self-critical view of the church and faithfulness in the past and the present. The need to re-examine the past arises from the fact that the identity of contemporary churches is often based on outdated or inaccurate memories of other churches.

At the same time, many of the events

that fractured the church in the 16th century are essentially unknown to many believers today, a fact that strikes me when I teach the history of the reformations to 18- to 21-year-olds. As *From Conflict to Communion* succinctly states, “The task is not to tell a different history, but to tell the history differently.” Nearly all of this year’s commemorations and ecumenical statements reject confessionally biased history writing for a view that integrates the current state of the historical field.

Luther in a different light

New research on the Middle Ages, for example, covers the period before Luther with far greater nuance. Before the Reformation, the western church was neither as thoroughly fallen as Protestants described it, nor was it the idealized Christian society promoted by Catholics. According to *From Conflict to Communion*, both Protestants and Catholics affirm Luther as an “earnest religious person and conscientious man of prayers.” Catholics praise Luther’s fundamental question, “How do I find a gracious God?”

Recent scholarship has portrayed Luther as a difficult hero; in addition to a theological visionary, he was a harsh polemicist and anti-Judaist. When he posted his theses in 1517, Luther, a monk at a backwater university, did not intend to start a Reformation nor divide the church. His criticism of the sale of indulgences tapped into a larger movement to reform those practices and tenets of the church that were based on human teachings.

Luther believed that the sale of indulgences and remissions of the punishment of sin damaged Christian spirituality. He wrote that the believer is saved by faith in God's promises alone, not by works. The individual had direct access to God and did not need the church to mediate salvation. Scripture, he later wrote, was the only authority for the church and Christian life. Luther's teachings provided the theological justification for the rising pressure on the church to reform itself, and he quickly became celebrated internationally for providing the intellectual justification for reforming corrupted practices. The papacy condemned Luther as a heretic and, in return, Luther burned the edict, also known as a papal bull.

The Wittenberg reformer's ideas spread in ways that even he could not have predicted or controlled. Luther's revolutionary ideas spread to Switzerland, France and the Netherlands. The movement begun by Luther later fragmented and divided over differences about whether the bread and wine of communion were the body and blood of Christ.

In 1525, German peasants revolting against unfair legal and economic practices saw in Luther's ideas support for their calls to reform society according to biblical principles. Rome eventually reasserted the authority of traditional church teachings and papal authority, and cleaned up much of the corruption in the church.

By the end of the 16th century, northern Europe was Protestant. For these churches, Christian faith was no longer about rituals, but it was about agreeing to a series of theological statements. Early on, Luther and other reformers turned to princes and magistrates to help oversee the establishment of the reforms and new church governance. After these authorities helped stabilize and protect the budding Protestant churches, the entanglement with political powers linked denominational identity with national allegiance.

'New challenges'

The sheer volume of scholarship on the Reformation illustrates how difficult it is to summarize the events of the 16th

century, which mean different things to different people. Some of the most heated debates will discuss the long-term effects of the reformations.

For example, Brad Gregory, the American Catholic historian, charges the Protestant Reformation with the creation of a "hyper-pluralistic" society and political polarity. By claiming the authority of Scripture alone, Protestants discovered that Christians could arrive at different conclusions from the same set of verses. The historian Carlos Eire claims that this fragmentation turned religion "into a private concern, rather than a public one," as western society turned increasingly materialistic and secular.

As *From Conflict to Communion* correctly states, our current context presents "new challenges" in commemorating the various Protestant, Anabaptist and Catholic reformations. Christianity is growing most quickly in the Global South, where believers do not always see the 16th-century conflicts as their own.

Furthermore, the growth of

Pentecostal and charismatic movements have provided new avenues for inter-church cooperation; their emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit make the old divisions seem archaic and irrelevant. In the secular West, many have already abandoned Christianity and forgotten about the issues that divided the church, or why questions of sin and salvation should matter today.

In these contexts, the fundamental question is not about which heir of the Reformation is the correct one, but whether the story of God as revealed in Scripture is fundamentally true. ❧

Troy Osborne teaches history and theological studies at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont. He is a member of Waterloo North Mennonite Church.



/// For discussion

1. What are the different Christian denominations in your community? How are they different from each other? What things do the churches do cooperatively? Do you see signs of greater Christian unity in the future?
2. The Protestant Reformation brought the idea that Scripture is authoritative, rather than the Pope. Some historians think this led to the idea that religion is a private, rather than public, matter. Do you agree? What are the benefits and disadvantages of regarding religion as private, rather than public? Does private religion play a role in materialism and secularism?
3. Troy Osborne writes about joint meetings of Catholic and Lutheran theologians, and how representatives of Mennonite World Conference have met with other world church leaders. What are the benefits of these meetings? How might the future of the Christian church be influenced by such cooperation?
4. What are the major issues facing the church today? Are the issues of the Reformation still relevant? Do you agree that the fundamental question today is "whether the story of God as revealed in Scripture is fundamentally true"? What has changed in 500 years to make that the prevalent question?

—BY BARB DRAPER

See additional resources at
www.commonword.ca/go/998

CommonWord
 Bookstore and Resource Centre

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.canadian-mennonite.org. All letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines. Send them to letters@canadianmennonite.org and include the author's contact information and mailing address. Preference is given to letters from MC Canada congregants.

✉ Reader lauds 'brilliant' Christmas feature

RE: "SPIRIT-HEAT TO thaw your freezing blood" feature, Dec. 12, 2016, page 4.

As my dental hygienist would say: "brilliant!" Thank you, Layton Friesen. May you enjoy a long and fruitful ministry.

WAYNE NAFZIGER, ALLISTON, ONT.

✉ Church goes nowhere when mired in talk of sexuality and abuse of power

I AM CONTINUALLY saddened and angered by the constant state of discontent by the populace of Mennonites across this nation. We seem to be mired in conversation about sexuality and abuse of power

(Continued on page 8)

FROM OUR LEADERS

Unexpected consequences

DAN DYCK

When we as a church agree to help those in need and place our trust in God, we should anticipate unexpected consequences. As we serve, we might make new friends, learn a new skill or enrich our spiritual lives.



God has unexpectedly blessed us by arranging us into congregations, area churches, a national church, schools, and organizations like Mennonite Central Committee and Abundance, among others, so that we can more effectively and efficiently use our resources to follow Jesus.

In one of the early iterations of Mennonite conferences in eastern Canada, records state, "In 1847, the conference authorized the holding of prayer meetings with the caution that the spirit of love and good-will be evident."

In 1903, Mennonites in western Canada formed the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, whose founding statement reads, "The union it promotes does not consist in agreeable forms and customs, but in unity of love, faith and hope, and in connection with this a common work in the kingdom of God."

In other words, we banded together to see the best in each other and to do good together. We pooled our resources to help others and strove toward shared goals despite some different convictions and certainties among us.

Have we lost sight of our historic aspirations? Are we poised to repeat the mistakes of our past?

In recent times, we have not all agreed on matters related to sexuality. We don't all understand the conflict in Palestine and Israel in the same way. In the past, we didn't agree on other matters, such as

divorce and remarriage.

Just as there are unexpected consequences of agreeing, there are unexpected consequences of disagreeing, especially when our certainties push us apart.

In his book *The Sin of Certainty*, author and theologian Peter Enns explains how Christians mistake "certainty" and "correct belief" for faith. What God really desires, he says, is our trust. Enns contends that an acceptance of mystery and paradox helps us become more mature disciples of Jesus who truly trust God.

Our disagreements break trust in each other and in God. They damage relationships. When disagreement means we stop entrusting our donations to organizations we formed, or even worse, we stop praying for them, we also hurt those to whom we have made commitments. We inadvertently withdraw support for those who most hunger for Jesus and hope beyond what the world offers.

Is agreement on all matters of faith essential to the good work we do together? Are our certainties blinding us? Might trust in God surprise and bless the church in new and unexpected ways? What do you think?

Dan Dyck is director of church engagement-communications at MC Canada.

(Continued from page 7)

issues, and we never seem to get anywhere.

The Apostle Paul said in his writings that all sin is outside the body, with the exception of sexual sin that is inside the body, which is the temple for the Holy Spirit. This includes heterosexual and homosexual sins that are both equal in being wrong. It is in my opinion that it will be God who judges this, so I don't have to.

We, as Mennonites, have tarnished our standing with the world and with each other because we all want to be heard and we have lost our collective voice. By not working together with true faith in the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, we will struggle to bring justice and restorative justice to those around us and our selves.

A *National Post* article recently stated that the fall

FAMILY TIES

Healthy humility lightens the journey

MELISSA MILLER

I am in my 60s, as are many of my friends. Our parents, if they are living, are in their 80s and 90s, with the accompanying challenges and rewards of that season of life. The experiences of the parents impact their children significantly. Now, when I gather with my peers, we often talk about our parents. The stories we tell may be distressing or inspiring, funny or heartbreaking. Mostly I am thankful for companions who listen and commiserate.

"How is your mother?" a friend will ask. Truly I am uncertain how to reply. "She's fine, she's doing well," could be one response. "She is spunky, she is spirited, she is keeping up the good fight," could be added. I could say that her sharp humour still seasons her interactions. Or I could say that she is struggling with physical and emotional losses, that she has a great deal of arthritic pain, that she is often at odds with the family members most involved in helping her. She tells me that it's hard growing old, and sometimes she feels discouraged or depressed.

Recently I had the opportunity to live near my mother for four months, which gave me a first-hand account of her daily

joys and struggles. As a result, I have more appreciation, gratitude and humility. I better see how she copes with pain and adversity; I admire her pluck and adaptability. Although her choices may worry me, I recognize the fierce life-force that lies behind them. More appreciation and gratitude helps to soften the tensions.

I am grateful for her long years and her faithful witness, for the bounty she showered upon her family, and continues to offer, especially favourite foods from her kitchen. I am grateful for the home she has provided, in my case for more than six decades! I am grateful that she has lived well as a widow for nearly 20 years. I am grateful that she includes family members in medical decisions and has her necessary



Humility, then, difficult as it may be to achieve, is organically connected to our humanness.

financial and legal papers in order.

And I am humbled. In spite of my best intentions, I am not the daughter I would like to be. I am not as patient, as understanding, as calm, as forgiving as I think I should be. Being physically closer meant that I did have more opportunities to help my mother; it also meant more opportunities for tangled communication.

At the end of one difficult interaction, my mother harrumphed, "I agree with your husband. You are as stubborn as your mother." We didn't laugh at the time—there was too much mother-daughter steam in the room. Humour, though, does help us to not take ourselves so seriously. Laughing at our foibles helps us grow in humility.

Humility is a Christian virtue. Jesus highlighted the humble—those poor in spirit and meek—in the Beatitudes. The Apostle Paul singled out this characteristic of Jesus, who "emptied [humbled] himself" to become human (Philippians 2:7-8). Richard Rohr, in his Jan. 12 online meditation, said, "[T]ransformation is found in one of God's favourite and most effective hiding places: humility."

Perhaps you are seeing connections between humility and humanity. The Latin root word *humus*, meaning "earth" or "soil," feeds into all these words. Humility, then, difficult as it may be to achieve, is organically connected to our humanness. Like the soil, we are created by God and composed of living matter. We are earthy, strong and fragile, gifted and broken. In

our relationships, especially when things aren't proceeding according to an idealized script, humility is a golden gift that lightens the journey.

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

of Aleppo, Syria, was a failure of humanity because we all stood by and watched it happen. I wonder if we, as Christians, can be held responsible for not coming together and restoring the church, so our young people can feel a positive energy and create an alternative to extremist realities.

ROB MARTIN, ELMIRA, ONT.

Clarification

The six eco-justice principles attributed to Gordon Zerbe in the 'Mennonites, land and the environment' article, Dec. 12, 2016, page 24, are those of the Earth Bible Project, and not his own. This was not made clear in the article. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets any confusion that may have been caused.

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Preventing prodigals

MIKE STRATHDEE

Many of us are familiar with the Parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15. There are great lessons in this story about grace and forgiveness, but I've never heard it used in the context of warning about giving children gifts before they are emotionally or spiritually mature enough to handle them properly.

We aren't told how old the prodigal was when he made his disrespectful, audacious demand of his father, but clearly he wasn't ready to handle money responsibly. When I heard that passage read some time ago, I couldn't help wondering if the story could have been different if the father knew what we now know about human brain development. What was the father thinking?

Could he have had any idea how poorly equipped his son was to handle the premature inheritance?



Science has taught us that even in well-adjusted people, it can take up to age 25 before the prefrontal cortex is fully developed. That's important because this part of the brain helps people appreciate the consequences of their actions. In her book *Payback: Debt and the Shadow Side of Wealth*, Margaret Atwood argues that, knowing what we now understand about brain development, giving people access to credit cards too soon could be considered a form of child abuse.

Similarly, parents should consider whether allowing their children to potentially inherit more money than they've ever had before, as soon as they attain the age of majority, would be a blessing or a bane.

About 15 years ago, I was trying to make this point in an end-of-life planning seminar at a church in a small town. I was shocked to see a young woman stand up in her pew and say that she agreed with me completely.

Later, I heard the sad family story. Her father died when she and her brother were 19. Their mother had passed away earlier. They each inherited \$60,000. It was way more money than either of them knew what to do with. Her brother chose

... knowing what we now understand about brain development, giving people access to credit cards too soon could be considered a form of child abuse.

particularly poorly, burning through all the cash and ringing up considerable debt in only 18 months. She is now determined to ensure that her children have a better understanding of money.

Another verse relevant to the topic of inheritances is Proverbs 13:22: "A good person leaves an inheritance for their children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous."

At first glance, this passage may seem to focus on skipping a generation and

leaving everything to the grandkids. But when taken in context with other advice in Proverbs, we see that wealth can only be successfully transferred between generations if a values transfer comes ahead of the money.

Part of me wonders if we might have fewer prodigal sons and daughters, and fewer prodigal grandsons and granddaughters for that matter, if we were more explicit in modelling generosity and explaining our beliefs and habits. We can transfer good values to our children by educating them about responsible spending, good habits and about giving throughout our lives. We can also model generosity in our estate plans by including charitable gifts as if they were an extra child in the list of beneficiaries. Let your kids know what values are important to you and how you hope they will continue them with their inheritance.

Abundance Canada can help you design and carry out a generosity plan. Ask us how. ☘

Mike Strathdee is a gift planning consultant at Abundance Canada serving generous people in Ontario and the eastern provinces. For more information on impulsive generosity, stewardship education, and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest Abundance Canada office or visit abundance.ca.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Coppola—Dylan Matteo (b. Dec. 29, 2016), to Mike and Kerri Coppola, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Nakoneshny—Lydia Noel (b. Jan. 2, 2017), to Daren and Caitlin (Jantz) Nakoneshny, North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Pecarski—Carter Nicholas (b. Nov. 20, 2016), to Kailey (Roth) and Nick Pecarski, Poole Mennonite, Ont.

Schumm—Liam Carl (b. Oct. 29, 2016), to Nick and Robin Schumm, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Marriages

Drury/Ropp—Sarah Drury and Nathan Ropp, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., Dec. 17, 2016.

Deaths

Brenneman—Vera, 91 (b. April 24, 1925; d. Dec. 16, 2016), Living Water Community, New Hamburg, Ont.

Dyck—Lena, 86 (b. March 19, 1930; d. Dec. 19, 2016), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Enns—Leonard, 86 (b. July 13, 1930; d. Dec. 29, 2016), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Gerber—Norm, 83 (b. April 27, 1933; d. Dec. 23, 2016), Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.

Klassen—Helen, 98 (b. Nov. 10, 1918; d. Dec. 5, 2016), Peace Mennonite, Richmond, B.C.

Kroeger—Jake, 89 (b. Jan. 30, 1927; d. Nov. 3, 2016), Trinity Mennonite, DeWinton, Alta.

Kropf—Esther, 91 (b. Oct. 3, 1925; d. Nov. 26, 2016), Poole Mennonite, Ont.

Lichty—Doris, 71 (b. Oct. 2, 1945; d. Dec. 28, 2016), Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.

Lobe—Betty (nee Coulter), 72 (b. Oct. 9, 1944; d. Oct. 21, 2016), Trinity Mennonite, DeWinton, Alta.

Martens—Margaret (Marg) (nee Enns), 62 (b. July 15, 1954; d. Dec. 12, 2016), Sterling Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Martin—Doreen, 76 (b. March 7, 1940; d. Dec. 22, 2016), St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

Martin—Keith, 57 (b. May 12, 1959; d. Nov. 21, 2016), Living Water Community, New Hamburg, Ont.

Neufeld—Mimi, 86 (b. June 29, 1930; d. Dec. 16, 2016), Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.

Rempel—Wilhelm, 62 (b. Feb. 20, 1954; d. Dec. 11, 2016), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Roth—Harvey, 89 (b. July 24, 1927; d. Nov. 23, 2016), East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Tiessen—William, 84 (b. April 29, 1932; d. Dec. 16, 2016), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

/// Correction

The Village International Mennonite Church is not planning on leaving Mennonite Church Canada or MC Eastern Canada. Incorrect information appeared in “No longer alone,” Jan. 16, page 24. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error.

A moment from yesterday



For much of Mennonite history, leaders were called from within the group to serve. This was in addition to working on their own farm or business to pay the bills. One of the longest-serving bishops of the Sommerfeld Mennonite Church, centred in Manitoba, was Peter A. Toews (1877-1961), pictured with his wife Maria Toews (1880-1970). He was elected minister in 1929 and served as bishop from 1931 to 1951. This non-salaried leadership model continues in the more traditional Mennonite groups. Will we see a return to the old ways with more non-salaried lay leaders or bi-vocational church leaders in the coming years?

Text: Conrad Stoesz / Mennonite Heritage Centre

Photo: Mennonite Heritage Centre



archives.mhsc.ca

LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Wisdom, where art thou? (Pt. 4)

TROY WATSON

How does one define wisdom? It's difficult to put into words.

Herman Hesse, in his classic novel, *Siddhartha*, writes: "Wisdom is not communicable. The wisdom which a wise man tries to communicate always sounds foolish.

... Knowledge can be communicated, but not wisdom. One can find it, live it, do wonders through it, but one cannot communicate and teach it."

The biblical wisdom tradition does a marvellous job of describing wisdom, rather than defining it. It portrays wisdom as essentially creative, life-giving and feminine. It consistently personifies wisdom as a woman. Everything that exists was made or birthed into reality by wisdom (aptly named *Sophia* in the Greek language).

The Bible says wisdom was present with God before the beginning of time. Like an ancient, all-seeing sage, she has observed history unfold. More than ancient, she is timeless. She is what has always been, and always will be, true, in every age, for every generation.

Divine wisdom is unbiased and impartial, transcending the superficiality and frailty of human divisiveness, tribalism and ego. She is everywhere, calling out and making herself available to all people regardless of their religion, gender, race, culture, socio-economic status or age.

She is joyful. She sings, she dances, she laughs. She delights in God, human beings and all of creation. Her desire is to help us make good decisions, so we can experience the highest quality of life possible.

Proverbs tell us that wisdom is our friend and our sister. She is powerful



but gentle, refusing to force herself or her ways on us. However, she will not save us from the consequences of our decisions. She is generous and long-suffering, but will not be mocked. In fact, if you ignore her long enough, she will mock you when trouble and calam-

ity come upon you. This attitude doesn't sound very Christian, but I'm not convinced it contradicts the Jesus portrayed in the gospels. Perhaps the problem is not that this aspect of wisdom is "un-Christian," but rather, some aspects of our "Christian" understanding are not wise.

Wisdom is not about academic ability or intellectual prowess. This explains why

Proverbs tell us that wisdom is our friend and our sister. . . . However, she will not save us from the consequences of our decisions.

many smart people are foolish, and many people with average or below-average IQs are wise. Wisdom enters through the heart. One might say that wisdom is more of a soul thing than a head thing, or, using contemporary jargon, we might say that wisdom is more connected to our EQ (emotional quotient) than our IQ. Yet even that is too clinical and categorical.

Wisdom is holistic and practical. She is concerned about the stuff of real life, things like managing and improving one's physical health, sleep patterns, family relationships, friendships, anxiety, fear, stress, work habits, budgeting skills, character development and our connection to the land.

One of the complexities of wisdom is that she is interconnected and

interdependent. Wisdom is, in a sense, the fruit of a symbiotic relationship between knowledge, understanding, discernment and insight. The simplified model of fire requiring heat, fuel and oxygen sheds some analogous light on wisdom's relationship with her essential ingredients.

In a spirit of reckless optimism, I will attempt the foolhardy task of doing what I've implied can't be done. That is, define wisdom. If for no other purpose, my working definitions of wisdom and her essential ingredients have been helpful in my own pursuit of wisdom:

- **KNOWLEDGE IS** comprehending information.
- **UNDERSTANDING IS** the ability to interpret meaning from information.
- **DISCERNMENT IS** the ability to separate, sift or distinguish truth from falsehood, or usefulness from futility, for example. It is the ability to rightly divide or separate the root issue from symptoms or red herrings, or to dissect a complex problem into its many parts to better understand the whole.
- **INSIGHT IS** "having sight into" something or someone. It is the intuitive ability to see into the depth or essence of a

thing, person or situation. It is the ability to see the bigger picture—inconspicuous patterns such as hidden causes and effects—of a specific context with clarity.

- **WISDOM IS** the capacity to do the right thing, the right way, at the right time, for the right reason.

Perhaps this pithy distinction by Christopher Reiss is more digestible than my definitions: "Knowledge is measuring that a desert path is 12.4 miles long. Wisdom is packing enough water for the hike. Insight is building a lemonade stand at Mile 6." ❧

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

VIEWPOINT

Your light is needed

HENK STENVERS

MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE

Like the chambers of a heart, the four Mennonite World Conference (MWC) commissions serve the global community of Anabaptist-related churches in the areas of deacons, peace, mission, and faith and life. In the following, the Deacons Commission shares a message from its ministry focus.

“If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it” (I Corinthians 12:26).

“This visit made me realize we are part of a large global family. Now we know that we are not alone!” This is what we heard when a delegation of the Deacons and Peace commissions visited with Mennonite Brethren churches in Panama. When you live with challenges that threaten your traditional way of living, what is more important than knowing that you are not alone? Knowing that brothers and sisters are praying—even if they don’t know you personally—can be

the difference between giving up or going on in hope, trusting the Lord.

“We do not ask you to solve our problems. All we ask from you is to tell our story and to pray for us.”

Being a deacon within MWC is not about giving financial aid or creating relief programs. The deacons walk with churches, listening, sharing and praying with those in distress or in joy. We feel so powerless to help sometimes, but we must not underestimate the power of walking together, listening and praying.

“The Deacons Commission must be the warm hand of the global church.” In 2009, Danisa Ndlovu, then-president of MWC,

spoke these words at the first meeting of the Commission in Paraguay. A hand on your shoulder to show that others care, and to feel the warmth of unity with others who share the same convictions. Even though we live in such different situations, express our faith in such different ways and have different histories, we know that we belong together in our faith. In our wish to follow Christ, we are part of one body of Christ.

The Global Church Sharing Fund can support churches in the Global South to do projects to advance the life and mission of the church. It can be so very important for a local church to have its own place for worship or to build a school. The significance of rebuilding after destruction from a disaster or violence is beyond imagination. It is all about being a community locally and globally.

And like Paul writes to the Corinthians, the parts of the body belong together, even if they are different. They are interdependent; if one is missing, you are not complete (I Corinthians 12:14-25).

The global community is like the church in Pimpimsu, Ghana. We visited the small African church in the evening, after it was already dark. One by one, people came to the church to welcome us. And everybody brought a light along. Every time someone came in, the church became better lit. When the church was full, it was bright because of all the little lamps.

That is what community is about. If you are not there, the church is a bit darker. Whether we are together in person at assemblies or in the spirit in prayer, we can be witnesses of the wonderful message of peace that Christ gave us. If you are not there, you are missed, because the light is less clear! ✎

The Deacons Commission wants to be a tool to support and strengthen that community. Join us in walking with our global Anabaptist family through the MWC Prayer Network by emailing prayers to prayers@mwc-cmm.org.



Henk Stenvers is secretary of the Mennonite World Conference Deacons Commission.

PHOTO BY HENK STENVERS



Vibrant worship takes place at the church in Pimpimsu, Ghana.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

A 'shower' challenge

DIANE SIMS

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

When I became a giddy and chippy 57-year-old bride-to-be last year, my equally chippy matron of honour insisted she host a bridal shower.

I resisted, she insisted, I resisted, if you get my drift, until we agreed on my idea of a "donation" shower. Instead of gifts, I wanted family and friends to donate the simple items for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) hygiene kits. As a member of Avon Mennonite Church in Stratford, Ont., I had helped fill MCC education kits for uprooted, refugee and school-less children in the past, and knew the value of such donations.

"I learned to go with the bride's wishes and also surprise her! And if you know Di, it's best to go along with her red-headed determined wishes," said Lori Linton of St. Marys, Ont. With each of the 39 shower invitations she sent out she included a list of hygiene kit items (with a spending limit of \$12 per kit):

- 1 ADULT-SIZE toothbrush
- 1 LARGE bar bath soap
- 1 FINGERNAIL clipper (good quality)
- 1 HAND towel (dark colour, approximately 38 cm x 64 cm)

As Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "[W]e can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we have received from God . . . so also through Christ our comfort overflows" (II Corinthians 1:4-5). And the hygiene kits provide essential cleansing comfort tools for children and adults, with the items tucked inside cloth, draw-string bags that are lovingly made by church members across the continent.

Around the time of my shower, the media was consumed with the ever-saddening and -worsening plights of refugees fleeing Iraq and Syria through Turkey, Greece and Germany. Social

media and satellite images of long lines of weary travellers leaving home and country were in real time, with many of them without even a knapsack on their back. I so hoped my shower's hygiene kits would offer an edge of comfort.

Then came the nail-biting time for Lori and me. Of the 39 invitations, my hope was that 20 would attend the lovely afternoon luncheon she had arranged. And I fervently prayed that we'd fill 25 bags, achieving my dream of a pyramid of colourful bags on the reception table.

Amy Kuefer, one of three women at Avon who sew approximately 100 bags a month for MCC, quickly became our go-to person as Lori received shower responses. We'd need more bags. Yippee! Amy would call her cohorts, and another couple of dozen bags would appear. She was the hostess at the shower's pyramid table, where we had a dozen bags set out, with extras stowed underneath, hoping friends would bring supplies for several bags.

The shower responses surpassed even

our prayers: 37 of 39 women invited attended, and we filled 147 bags that day, with a large wicker basket of overflow items to start many more!

My bridal shower idea was "wonderfully unique," said Wendy Cotter, manager of resources and production for MCC Ontario, who had never heard of this type of bridal shower event. She later told me that our bags were sent with the latest MCC shipment to Jordanian refugee camps.

"We are so thankful you used your bridal shower to support MCC through its kit packing, and encourage other brides—and grooms—to consider this alternative activity for their bridal shower," Sheryl Bruggeling, manager of events and communications for MCC Ontario, told me, adding, "It's a great way to help families around the world." More than 57,600 hygiene bags were shipped around the world by MCC last year to war-torn countries, suffering communities and aching souls.

"Your bridal shower was a blessing of generosity and giving," said Amy. "As women arrived, they were excited to choose a bag, fill it or add to one."

"It raised our awareness of what a little group of people can do," said Jean Hillen, one of my bridge game partners.

She's nailed it! I humbly ask another fiancée to pay it forward and build another pyramid of hygiene kits. ☺

PHOTO BY LORI LINTON



When Diane Sims of Avon Mennonite Church in Stratford, Ont., announced she was getting married last year, her friends insisted on throwing her a bridal shower, but she insisted that it not be an ordinary shower. In the end, 37 women filled 147 hygiene kits in her honour that were later shipped to a Jordanian refugee camp.

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



Clockwise from left: Sara Erb, Steph Chandler Burns, Kathy Janzen, Ed Janzen and Chris Brnjas consider the questions posed at the second Emerging Voices Initiative listening tour event on Nov. 11, 2016, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.

EVI listening tour roundup

Canadian Mennonite

Over the past three months, the Emerging Voices Initiative (EVI) conducted a cross-country listening tour, endeavouring to gauge the mood of Mennonite Church Canada congregants on what should happen next with the national church following the presentation of the Future Directions Task Force recommendations at last summer's assembly in Saskatoon and the creation of a transition process to redefine the area and national churches. Each of the events asked participants of all ages three questions:

- **WHAT'S AN** initiative that you would like to see emerge?
- **WHAT DO** we have to let go of to make room for new growth?
- **WHAT DO** you want the leaders of MC Canada to know?

According to EVI member Jonas Cornelsen, the group of young adults

intends to eventually "publish a report that highlights common themes across regions, and differences between regions." In the meantime, *Canadian Mennonite* presents a roundup of each of the meetings:

Toronto and Waterloo, Ont., Nov. 10 and 11, 2016, respectively

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

In Toronto, the four EVI leaders each told the gathered group a bit of why they were so passionate about MC Canada. Katrina Woelk of Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Winkler, Man., shared that, coming from a small city in a predominantly rural area, she is interested in the integration of urban and rural Mennonites across the country. Laura Carr-Pries of St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., talked about how important it is to her to highlight that peace and justice is at the centre of worship and work, and that

people are drawn to churches through focussing on action and thought together. Anneli Loepp Thiessen of the Gathering Church in Kitchener, Ont., sees an organization like MennoMedia connecting Mennonites not only across Canada, but across North America, and wants to see this work supported by a strong Canadian presence. Madeline Wichert of Toronto United Mennonite Church said that culture is "deeply felt" by all demographics in the church and is understood as a shared story. She wonders how "we create and share a story with young adults and newcomers" and how they "can taste a church's culture."

At both meetings, each attended by more than 50 people (mostly church leaders and pastors), many offered suggestions for listening more to each other's program changes, and expressed heartfelt concerns that the Being A Faithful Church 7 resolution that created space for churches to support people in same-sex relationships, while good, meant that some congregations would continue to be unwelcoming to the LGBTQ community in the church, and questioned what the future of MC Canada could hold.

Leamington, Ont., Nov. 12, 2016

BY RUTH BOEHM

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

It was a chilly evening when 18 people met at UMEI; almost half were leaders from EVI, MC Canada and MC Eastern Canada. The rest were pastors and invested congregational leaders. Excitement was evident at the presence of the young adults giving clear leadership. Sadness was expressed that more people were not there. Gratitude abounded for the inclusion of this geographical area in the round of conversations.

Two questions sparked conversation. The first was pointed: Where is the power? Since the organized church seems to have power primarily in matters of leadership credentialing and ordination, what really binds people together when they are part of a voluntary organization?

The conversation about power included comments about the role of authority providing safety and, at the same time, calling

people to set direction together. This was a fascinating discussion, given that one person identified that perhaps one of the reasons more people were not at the meeting may have to do with the history of the bishop system. The person suggested that there was a lingering subculture in one congregation resulting from 40 years ago, when the bishop would tell people what to think and believe. The impact was that some people were still finding it hard to ask questions.

A second question was raised about relationships between people: How can churches better foster relationships with one another across the country at grass-roots levels and person to person? The significant role that church schools are playing in this conversation was noted.

Saskatoon, Nov. 26, 2016

BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent

A tentative hopefulness characterized many of the views expressed during two workshops hosted by members of EVI in Saskatoon.

Just over 50 members of MC Saskatchewan congregations met at First

Mennonite Church following the area church's annual leadership assembly. The dreams participants shared varied, although they included some common threads.

John Bartel of North Star Mennonite in Drake said his discussion group dreams of a church that is "inclusive and attractive," both to minorities and to new generations of believers.

Jacquelyn Janzen of Grace Mennonite in Prince Albert said her group hopes for the church "to find ways to engage youth and to be relevant."

Craig Neufeld of Rosthern Mennonite noted that his group dreams of a church that "impacts the community and invites us to follow Jesus."

Dave Feick of Osler Mennonite said that he and his group "want to be known for [their] love."

Several groups expressed a desire for congregations and area churches to remain in contact with one another, with congregations that have left the denominational body, and with believers in the global church.

A similar but smaller gathering geared toward young adults took place later that day at the Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan offices. There, participants

dreamed of a church that would value faith over culture. They also imagined a church in which people would be respectful and accepting of one another regardless of viewpoints.

Most groups seemed reluctant to name specific programs or structures they would let go of in order to foster new growth. They preferred, instead, to identify attitudes in need of changing. Several identified a need to let go of pride and a "sense of entitlement." Others articulated a need to let go of fear, both of failure and of change.

The young adults also expressed frustration with the pace of change.

"I've run out of patience for the transition process," said Krista Loewen of Wildwood Mennonite. "Let's just get something going."

Graham MacDonald, also of Wildwood, shared Loewen's impatience but added, "Yeah, let's let it go, but we have to have something worthy to replace it with."

Cara Epp of Rosthern Mennonite countered the others' impatience. "I think we need to be really cautious and understanding of others," she said.

Some fearfulness emerged from the adult session in response to the third question.

Melanie Harms of Warman Mennonite said her group would like to tell leaders, "Sometimes we feel we don't fully understand" the changes that are coming, and that "we are losing our national identity." Members want church leaders to "ensure that we don't get lost in the shuffle."

By contrast, at the young adult gathering several participants used a forest fire metaphor to describe their hopefulness for new growth emerging from destruction.

"I'm going into this process with some confidence that we're doing a good thing," said David Epp, of Wildwood Mennonite in Saskatoon.

MacDonald agreed, saying, "I'm relieved that I don't have to make the decisions, but I do have faith in those who are making them."

Winnipeg, Nov. 27, 2016

BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY

Manitoba Correspondent

Key themes of the EVI Winnipeg

PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ



During the EVI meeting in Saskatoon on Nov. 26, 2016, Graham MacDonald, second from left, offers his views on the future of Mennonite Church Canada, while, from left to right, David Epp, Terri Lynn Friesen and EVI members Madeleine Wichert, Katrina Woelk and Kathleen Bergen listen attentively.

visit—that involved 50 people from seniors to post-secondary students—included longing for vision and healthy debate in the national church, unity on a global scale, and continued intimacy on the local/regional scales. And guests with connections in youth groups and Sunday school classes also spoke out on behalf of these youngest members, voicing their needs and concerns.

One prominent concern raised by the Winnipeg crowd was for the church's quality of internal debate on current hot-button issues such as LGBTQ inclusion and the restructuring of regional church governance/representation. Part and parcel with this came calls to relinquish fear throughout the evening, as participants exhorted one another and the national church to cling to Jesus Christ as the church's identity and its strong defining centre, and to surrender themselves to process, mystery and change without fear.

"We need to let go of egos," observed group-rep Raya Cornelsen, "and the notion that it takes a certain amount of money to do what we need to do as the church. We need to move beyond moneyed mentality."

With a voice full of eagerness and hope, but also a note of strain, Dori Zerbe

Cornelsen of Hope Mennonite Church encapsulated the mood of the evening when she asked the EVI team during question period to pass on Winnipeg's love and affection when they continued westward. "When you visit the church in Alberta and B.C. after this, please tell all of them there from us that we love them. We love them, and we want to stay connected to them," she said.

Edmonton, Dec. 3, 2016

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD
Alberta Correspondent

Anneli Loepp Thiessen of EVI began by encouraging table groups to "be specific in your descriptions and tangible in your suggestions," as more than 40 Edmonton participants at First Mennonite Church engaged questions surrounding the future ministry and organization of MC Canada.

Some main themes presented during an open-mike session dealt with a desire to maintain a common Anabaptist identity, a deep longing for connectedness with a national body that includes a variety of cultures and differing ideas, and recognition that church schools and missions require broad support.

Particular challenges named by the group included the need for MC Canada to rebuild trust in national leaders and the process of transition, and to articulate the relevance of the church to Canadian culture. It was noted that, as a small area church, Alberta feels particularly vulnerable if a national body is unable to undergird and support it.

Jan Wilhelm said, "I want to see a national church that helps maintain identity and supports congregations. Pastor support [from a national body] helps maintain this."

A few dreams, including a new structure that is more about relationships and worship than issues or business, a desire to more than symbolically empower the passion and vision of young leaders like those with EVI, and unity within diversity, surfaced repeatedly throughout the evening discussions.

It was noted by a number of participants that, while the church shares a vision of a diverse and united structure, it is notable that the transition team consists primarily of white, mostly middle-aged and older men, making it a strange contrast to the EVI discussion team that was made up of four young adult women.

Heather Bergen asked, "How do we move the transition of power? How do we let them make the decisions? If we don't like their decisions, how do we go with them anyway?"

Abbotsford, B.C., Dec. 4, 2016

BY AMY DUECKMAN
B.C. Correspondent

Using song, prayer, narrative and small group discussion, an enthusiastic group of young adults on the EVI workshop tour met with members of MC B.C. at Columbia Bible College. About two dozen interested area church members came to hear what EVI had to say about the changes happening in MC Canada as a result of the Future Directions Task Force decision at Assembly 2016, and to share their own opinions.

The five young adults, all students at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, explained how the idea for their listening tour had come about, resulting in

/// Staff change

Alberta names new area church pastor

• **TIM WIEBE-NEUFELD** has been hired as the new Mennonite Church Alberta area church pastor. Starting in February, he will combine this half-time position with a quarter-time role as Future Directions coordinator for the area church. As area church pastor, he will serve administrative roles relating to ordination and licensing, provide coaching and leadership support to pastors, and serve as a key link between the area church executive and congregations. He completed undergraduate degrees at Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg (theology) and the University of Waterloo, Ont. (sociology), and earned his master's degree in theology at Conrad Grebel College in Waterloo. He has actively pursued further studies at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., and Canadian Mennonite University. He has held a number of roles with MC Alberta, including several years as co-director of Camp Valaqua. He worked for a service agency in Edmonton prior to accepting a team-pastor position with his wife Donita at Edmonton First Mennonite Church, where they have served for the past 14 years.

—Mennonite Church Alberta



Tim Wiebe-Neufeld

the “crazy” idea to cross Canada and meet with people in the various area churches.

An intergenerational church is important, they acknowledged, with younger people able to sound their voices. “We’re all the church now,” said Laura Carr-Pries. “We can’t dream without knowing the dreams of those before us.”

The group said that in their cross-country meetings with the five area churches, they hoped to reduce barriers and walls, and hoped that “people would let go of judgment and the need to be right,” while expressing the hope that all activities would be “grounded in Scripture, with the Bible and Christ at the centre.”

Canadian Mennonite magazine was recognized as being “an important resource for feeling the national pulse.”

A question about what continues to inspire these young adults on their mission prompted a simple answer from Kathleen Bergen: “Our love for the church.”

Another question was about how the various area churches were processing various national issues: Were they similar? The EVI team responded that each area has different issues; for example, Being a Faithful Church 7 has generated questions elsewhere but seems to be more on the forefront in B.C.

MC B.C. executive minister Garry Janzen commented later: “I really appreciate this generation represented by the EVI folks coming alive in their commitment to the church. I particularly appreciated them spreading out to engage with discussion groups of older people.” He added that, while he appreciated the good number of middle-aged to older adults who made it a priority to attend, he was disappointed very few young adults attended, and the few who did came from his home church in Vancouver.

Said Gerry Grunau of Langley Mennonite Fellowship: “I was inspired by the hopefulness communicated by the EVI group. Their wishes to sustain the ongoing work of the church was readily apparent.” Grunau said he appreciated the informal feedback session that highlighted the integrity and thoughtfulness of the EVI presenters with “articulate responses to questions on inspiration, transition impacts and personal transformation.”

PHOTO BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY



Small groups put their heads together on Mennonite identity and purpose at the Jan. 13 EVI event in Winkler, Man.

Winkler, Man., Jan. 13

BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY

Manitoba Correspondent

Participants at Manitoba’s second EVI workshop surprised event leaders by asking them to share their personal visions for MC Canada.

Indeed, “vision” was the word of the night. Nearly every small-group representative brought forward a comment that affirmed public support for, and faith in, the current leadership, and a longing to move past what they said feels like a beleaguered preoccupation with discussion and information gathering.

Will Braun of Pembina Mennonite Fellowship addressed his group’s comments both to the MC Canada leadership present and to the EVI team members: “We are drowning in reports! Analyze what you’ve heard and share your vision. We don’t look at you as floundering twenty-somethings; we look at you as leaders. So give us some recommendations! Tell us what you think.”

This value for intergenerational exchange was also stated multiple times throughout the evening. Other key themes included members’ desire to establish deeper, more immediate connections with the global Anabaptist church; and for the local grassroots church to cultivate unity by learning to disagree well.

Many, including Michael Paul of Morden Mennonite Church, who spoke on behalf

of his small group, also asserted that the local church needs to re-evaluate its relationship with money. “How is it that we are the richest generation in history, but the church doesn’t have enough?” he asked.

Calgary, Jan. 15

BY TRACEY BROWN EWERT

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

A number of themes were touched on at the meeting at Foothills Mennonite Church:

- **MATURE CONVERSATIONS** need to continue. Conversations need to allow for disagreement without the threat of “picking up and going elsewhere.”
- **THE PROCESS** needs to be driven by a vision that is engaging and inviting, not one that is dictated by practicality.
- **CHURCH MAY** look different, but change isn’t always bad. Trust the process and the leaders.
- **PERSONAL AGENDAS** must be released, and the focus needs to be more on “church,” empowering members to connect with the current culture.
- **A CAUTION** was issued to not get trapped in North American evangelicalism. The church has a unique opportunity to give shape to becoming more faithful witnesses to the gospel.
- **THERE MUST** be an emphasis on the global church, both around the world and closer to home, and room for growth in building relationships must be created.
- **THE CHURCH** must continue finding ways of building relationships across the generations. EVI is a good example and a reminder that these church leaders are being developed at a university (Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg) that has received financial support under the old structure. Financial backing needs to continue.
- **A REMINDER** was given that everyone comes with preconceived notions regarding what church is, who a Christian is, and how worship is conducted. These need to be released, and churches need to commit to speaking theologically together, praying together, reading Scripture together and inviting the Holy Spirit to move people together. ☸

'Let him speak'

Manitoba area church meeting on what it means to 'create space' for discernment turns confrontational

BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY

Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG

A Mennonite Church Manitoba meeting at Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship took a confrontational turn on Jan. 12, opening the floodgates of debate on just what it means for local congregations to "create space" for one another based on the Being a Faithful Church 7 resolution passed at last summer's general assembly in Saskatoon.

To distinguish the conversation at hand from any previous theological debates on same-sex unions, moderator Peter Rempel outlined three core areas for discussion:

• **WHAT PRINCIPLES** and values will MC Manitoba use to define the "space" it is trying to make?

• **WHAT CONSTITUTES** "substantial agreement" with the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*?

• **HOW CAN** the area church support mutual accountability between levels of church leadership and between congregations at variance on the issues throughout the process?

Participants addressed these questions first in small groups, compiling notes for formal feedback through a paper survey. An open-mike session gave members a chance to further the conversation.

Generally, people affirmed the decision to preserve unity by making room for disagreement but also raised concerns.

Members reinforced the need for boundaries around the church's discernment, to keep it from becoming subject to the caprice of fashionable morality. Some questioned whether leadership is paying more attention to the alleged LGBTQ church exodus than to member-congregations leaving the area church.

Stephanie Wenger of Winnipeg's North Kildonan Mennonite Church remarked that "there is a lot of healing and reconciling relationships that needs to happen on both sides" of the controversy, before the resolution can proceed effectively.

Her case was made in point shortly thereafter, when a conflict derailed productive debate.

Towards the end of the open-mike session, Garry Fehr of Blumenort Mennonite Church took the floor and said, "I'm not sure why LGBTQ folks are leaving the church, I don't know what their reasons are."

To which an unidentified person called out "Ask us."

Without appearing to notice, Fehr continued: "Is it possible that members of the gay community, whether lesbian or homosexual, are being convicted that the lifestyle they are living is wrong, and that because they don't want to deal with it, they are choosing to walk away from the church instead? Even from a spiritual warfare perspective—"

At this point, David Driedger, associate minister of First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, interrupted Fehr, begging a point of order with the moderator on the grounds that "the discussion points for tonight have already been set."

Rempel attempted to return the floor to Fehr, who had continued speaking over the interruption, asking rhetorically whether "Satan [was] using the gay community as his puppet in an attempt to totally tear apart Mennonite Church Canada."

Adding to the commotion, several crowd members called out "Let him speak," but Driedger persisted. Before order could be restored, Fehr left the microphone and the building.

Rempel formally admonished the gathering, stated his regrets about the incident, which he described as "sinful," and closed discussion for the evening.

Colleen Edmund concluded the

*My 5-year-old
showed me the
power of giving*

He asked me about a homeless man he saw on our way to a hockey game. I thought I'd use the moment to teach him about generosity, but what he did next brought tears to my eyes.

To read the rest of the story, visit Abundance.ca

Abundance
CANADA

Because generosity changes everything
1.800.772.3257

gathering by leading a recitation of the Lord's Prayer.

Directly after the meeting, Driedger gave the following defence of his actions: "I interrupted those gentlemen from the floor because the statements being made transgressed the boundaries of our conversation. 'Creating space' must mean something. . . . Because the comments were not only out of line for the meeting, but continued longstanding and harmful church practices towards LGTBQ folk, it seemed important to interrupt."

Contacted later, Fehr made no change to his speech from the floor but did offer some clarifying comments: "My desire for God's church is that we would walk beside and with the gay community in their struggle with same sex attraction. . . . The gay community is not allowing the church to do this. They are requesting that we accept their way of life and nothing else. [People] cannot experience the love and acceptance of the church without also accepting. . . the rules of God according to Scripture."

A lesbian participant at the meeting also spoke to *Canadian Mennonite* afterwards. Solene Stockwell of Winnipeg, a regular church-goer along with her long-time partner, said: "In some ways, I see how the interruption is shutting down and shutting out the ones who are afraid of being unfaithful to God by changing their stance, who are afraid of welcoming sin into their churches.

"To the man speaking, [it] supports his view that, because of us, through our welcome into Mennonite churches, Mennonite churches are being pulled apart. At the same time, [he] was saying horrible things about me and about people that I love.

"I wasn't sure how much longer I could stand to be hated openly without knowledge of who I was, knowledge of where I come from, what my experience has been, why I've had a bumpy relationship with my home church.

"I don't think I had heard anything to that degree of fear and hate of the LGTBQ in person before. In some ways, I wish the interruption had been done with more kindness, more patience and more love." ❧

ONLINE NOW!

at canadianmennonite.org

Review: Show not so pure in its depiction of Mennonites

CBC's new crime drama, *Pure*, has generated a lot of controversy among Canadian Mennonites, and for good reason, says reviewer Vic Thiessen.

canadianmennonite.org/not-pure



Preparing for pastoral ministry

At Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Indiana, Canadian Lee Hiebert is immersing himself in a learning community as he prepares for pastoral ministry.

canadianmennonite.org/learning-community



Bethany College set to 'thrive'

Bethany College (Hepburn, Sask.) announced it will re-open with a new discipleship program called Thrive, to replace the previous academic-focused curricula.

canadianmennonite.org/bethany-thrive



Canadians join Women's March on Washington

Mennonites travelled from Canada to join the marchers making their voices heard for justice, equality and other social causes.

canadianmennonite.org/washington-march



Looking for an Exceptional Travel Experience?

Travel with a Mennonite Outstanding in His Field

Discover the World of Paul (May 19-June 1, 2017) with New Testament scholar Tom Yoder Neufeld
Discover Faith & Art in London, Berlin & Paris with AMBS professor Allan Rudy-Froese (July 14-27, 2017)

Explore Your Heritage:

- In Russia/Ukraine (May 6-18, 2017) with history prof. Len Friesen
- In Poland with history prof. John Sharp (June 19-29, 2017)
- In Europe with Anabaptist storyteller John Ruth (August 12-24, 2017)



See our other great tours with engaging storytellers

Book your life-changing journey today!
(800) 565-0451 | office@tourmagination.com
www.tourmagination.com



TourMagination
discovery+community

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

PERSONAL REFLECTION

An exciting first step

JILL WIENS

ROSTHERN JUNIOR COLLEGE

I live in one of the most beautiful places on the Prairies. The Shekinah Retreat Centre is situated in the North Saskatchewan River Valley.

Northeast of my house, a deep ravine funnels a beaver-filled creek into the wide river below. God's presence is ubiquitous here, a place that has been

PHOTO BY JASON HOSLER



The Shekinah Centre as seen from the top of the hill.

significant to my development since I attended summer camp at Shekinah when I was 7.

Although I'm now in my first year of teaching at Rosthern (Sask.) Junior College (RJC), I initially began working with children and youth at Shekinah as a camp counsellor. As a kid, camp was my home away from home. I had a place in God's magnificent river valley and in the community created there weekly. As I grew, I found that camp was a place where I felt capable: of building a fire, steering a canoe, navigating the trails and, eventually, sharing my faith.

At camp, experience was a powerful teaching tool, and as a counsellor I delighted in facilitating that kind of learning. I saw how important it was for kids to feel safe before meaningful relationship building and learning could occur. I saw that with security they could push themselves to overcome fears to climb walls, paddle the river, speak in front of their peers or even to sleep away from home for the first time. I also saw genuine inquiry into their surrounding environment and the God who made it.

I decided to pursue an education degree in the hopes of somehow replicating parts of this learning environment in a school setting. However, school is not camp. Grades, homework, deadlines and classrooms can make the process of learning thoroughly unenjoyable. The navigation of peer groups, and the expectation that one learns in the same way and at the same pace as the rest, can leave little enthusiasm for inquiry.

Christian education has a response to this. It is an approach in which people are children of God first, students in a classroom second. At RJC, community is more important than curriculum. I am privileged to work where a safe learning environment is as important as the learning that will occur there, and where conversation about a better approach to education is not just talk.

This year, a new Grade 10 program is integrating learning across disciplines and encouraging inquiry. It is an exciting first step towards a place where all can feel capable of genuine learning and discovery. ☞

You are invited!

OPEN HOUSE

Wednesday February 8 2017

Parents and students of all ages welcome!
Drop in anytime from 7:00-9:00 p.m.
Grade 6 Class Specific Info Hour 7:30-8:30

Location for this year only:
Chapman Elementary School
3707 Roblin Blvd., Winnipeg



204.775.7111
www.westgatemenonite.ca



Rooted in faith or academia

*One young woman
refuses to choose*

BY ALLISON COUREY
Canadian Mennonite University
WINNIPEG

When Justony Vasquez decided to be part of World Youth Day in Poland last summer, she had no idea that the venture would land her at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU). In her final year of high school, she'd already received acceptance and a scholarship to another university. She can only explain the last-minute change as something "Spirit-led."

A young leader at her home church, St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Parish, Vasquez's faith commitment has always played a central role in her life. Before graduating from high school, she attended a retreat to make plans with Winnipeg-area youth making the pilgrimage to Poland. It was at the retreat that she met a CMU alumna who encouraged her to think about her alma mater.

Vasquez has always placed a priority on her education. For high school, she travelled across Winnipeg every day to be part of an international baccalaureate program not available in her area. For her, education is about personal growth and doing her best, not just a passing grade.

She had never considered how her education might be enriched in a faith-based environment, so the possibility was compelling, and it wasn't long before she sent in her application to CMU.

The next several months were transformative for Vasquez, as she gathered with thousands of youth in Poland to worship, pray and learn how to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world. Although she grew up in a Christian home, she says the experience "made her faith real," a sort of coming-of-age event.

That period of growth continued the following month when she arrived at CMU. Much of her life has been spent explaining her faith to others in the classroom, she



PHOTO COURTESY OF JUSTONY VASQUEZ

Justony Vasquez of Winnipeg is pictured in Poland, where she attended World Youth Day last summer.

says, and now she is able to dig into it more deeply in an academic context. She makes the distinction between inter-religious dialogue and intra-religious dialogue, by which she is able to learn from others within her own faith tradition.

It is a new experience for Vasquez to be surrounded by such a variety of Christian expressions. "I didn't expect I would be so a part of [the community]," she says. "I didn't expect it to be so much a part of me."

One day, Vasquez hopes to use her education at CMU to help others, sharing Jesus through music. Contemplating a future in music therapy, she draws on the monastic teaching of "the practice of presence," which teaches that people can experience God through the quiet care of another human. She hopes that combining her faith with her passion for music will enable her to pursue a career that matches her vocation. ☿

There is a
World
of opportunity
in our classrooms.

**Register now for the
2017-18 school year.**



WINNIPEG
Mennonite
Elementary & Middle Schools
WMEMS.CA

Building a Foundation for SUCCESS

WMEMS.CA

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Engineering bright futures for students

Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary and Middle Schools
WINNIPEG

Before taking the STEM program, which incorporates science, technology, engineering and math, Mackenzie, a Grade 2 student at Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary and Middle Schools, wasn't exactly sure what she wanted to be when she grows up. After spending some time working on a team designing and building projects, she has made her decision: "I want to be a builder," she says, "just like my dad."

The program has been introduced by teacher Janice Penner, who says, "My friend who works at Google told me they are really trying to encourage kids—especially girls—to get involved in coding and design work."

Penner was inspired, and decided to

implement a monthly design centre, at which students team up to plan and conceptualize a design, and then bring their idea to fruition by building it.

"Sometimes it works right, and sometimes it's different," says Mackenzie, adding, "It's so much fun because we get to create everything we have in our mind."

Classmate Daniella agrees that being a creator is a lot of fun. "The easiest part is drawing, and the hardest part is putting it all together," she says.

Both girls agree that teamwork is one of the best parts of the program, and that they look forward to having fun.

While fun is an amazing byproduct of STEM, Penner says, "it's about teaching the students that using technology can be



WMEMS PHOTO

Grade 2 students Daniella, Makayla and Mackenzie display one of their STEM creations.

more than using an iPad. . . . It's also using a pencil. It changes the definition of technology into anything that helps them do a job."

Penner says one of the best parts of the program happens when things don't work out exactly the way the students thought they would. At the start of each project, students create a plan, and once they begin the building process they are encouraged to go back to the drawing board to revise their plan as needed. This process is helping the students see themselves as capable makers.

Students are given open-ended projects with a set of parameters and then they let their imaginations run wild. While most of the projects thus far have been focussed on design and building with tangible items, in one recent task students worked with the Kodeable app to code a robot mouse or bee. ☘

COLUMBIA BIBLE COLLEGE

EXPLORE YOUR CALLING

COLUMBIABC.EDU

1 COLUMBIA ONE	EMERGENCY RESCUE TECHNICIAN	QUEST	EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT
APPLIED LEADERSHIP	INTERCULTURAL STUDIES	GENERAL STUDIES	BIBLICAL STUDIES
OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP	CARE GIVING & COUNSELLING	YOUTH WORK	WORSHIP ARTS

COLUMBIABC.EDU/VISIT

Do you know of someone in your congregation not getting Canadian Mennonite?

Ask your church administrator to add them to the list. It is already paid for.

'Do not neglect to do good'

Grebel student refugee experiences drive social innovation

BY JENNIFER KONKLE

Conrad Grebel University College
WATERLOO, ONT.

Conrad Grebel University College students Mark Whyte, Mariak Achuoth, Jonathan Smith and Liban Farah accepted a challenge last fall: Build a social enterprise that restores the rights and dignities of refugees. The team participated in the Hult Prize Challenge, the world's largest student competition for social good, competing for \$1 million in start-up funding to launch a sustainable social venture.

Steeped in the University of Waterloo's entrepreneurial atmosphere that spans technology to social innovation, this Grebel team was especially unique because it did not approach the problem from a westerner's point of view. Farah and Achuoth are both students who came to Canada through the World University Service of Canada Student Refugee Program, and have their tuition and living expenses paid for by the University of Waterloo and Grebel students.

From their personal experiences, team members knew that there was little access to organized sports within Kenyan refugee camps. Their solution involved training referees in the camps, organizing tournaments to engage refugees, and giving them the ability to create their own sports equipment, to both play with and to sell for supplemental income.

The Hult Prize Challenge this year was particularly captivating to these students who are in different programs and years but were brought together by living in the Grebel residence.

Compelled by first-hand accounts of refugee life from his peers, Whyte wanted to take action. "Looking at problems faced by refugees, brainstorming solutions and sitting down with friends to really work hard at creating something useful to so



Jonathan Smith, Mariak Achuoth, Mark Whyte and Liban Farah participated in the Hult Prize competition at the University of Waterloo last November, aiming to restore the rights and dignities of refugees.

many people, was incredibly satisfying," he says. "I think that the Bible encourages us to be working hard to help others out. Hebrews 13:16 says, 'Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.' This verse inspires me to use all the resources I have been given as a university student to try to

help others as much as possible."

Of the 50 teams participating at UWaterloo, this Grebel team placed in the Top 10. Team members were very appreciative of advice from the Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement, as they learned how to create a social entrepreneurial enterprise. ☘



RJC is excited about its future!

- New Programming
- New Learning Spaces
- New Staff

and more to come...

RJC invites you become involved!

Consider RJC for grades 10-12.

For more information or to book a tour contact Valerie White, admissions@rjc.sk.ca

Find out more about RJC's **DO MORE. BE MORE.** capital campaign.

Contact Jim Epp, Principal jimepp@rosthernjuniorcollege.ca



JOIN US!

Rooted in Faith Growing the Future

Check out our website at rosthernjuniorcollege.ca

PHOTO BY DARIN WHITE

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

Alumnus heads to Nepal to serve as general surgeon

By CHRISTINE M. RIER

Rockway Mennonite Collegiate
KITCHENER, ONT.

Nicholaus “Nick” Bauman (nee Erb), a Rockway Mennonite Collegiate graduate (Class of ’97) and orthopedic surgeon, and his spouse, Becky Bauman, are heading to Kathmandu, Nepal, the largest Himalayan state in Asia. For the next two years, Nick will serve as a general surgeon at Tansen Hospital, teaching post-graduate students.

The hospital is partnered with the United Mission to Nepal, which is the “accepting organization” for Nick’s service. The Mission is a Christian international non-governmental organization that aims “to minister to the needs of the people of Nepal in the name and Spirit of Christ, and to make Christ known by word and life,

thereby strengthening the universal church in its total ministry.”

The Presbyterian Church of Canada is helping Nick and Becky with logistics and providing pastoral, prayer and financial support. “It’s been a great partnership,” Nick reports.

Laura Moolenbeek (Class of ’16) will be joining Nick and Becky for six weeks to help care for their three young children while the couple receive orientation and language training.

Once the family is settled, Becky hopes to take



Frieda, Becky, Silas, Nick and Salema Bauman will spend the next two years in Nepal, where Nick will serve as a general surgeon at Tansen Hospital in Kathmandu.



Laura Moolenbeek

up work as an occupational therapist.

Like many Rockway alumni, Nick is ready and willing to build bridges with people near and far as a means to a more-peaceful world. Join with our prayers for Nick and his family during their journey, and let us give thanks for their important mission work. ☸



NURTURING

FAITH

CREATING

COMMUNITY

BRIGHTENING THE

FUTURE

All that’s missing is you.

Enjoy the intimacy and comfort of a small community with the prestige of studying at the world-class University of Waterloo. Book your tour today.

grebel.ca/visit

/// Briefly noted

2016 Thiessen Lectures probe theology of lament

J. Richard Middleton, PhD, gave the 38th annual J.J. Thiessen Lecture series at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg last fall. The series, now available on YouTube, probes Old Testament lament theology as exemplified in the Psalms, Genesis and Job. In the first lecture, Middleton made a compelling case

for the sanctity of lament and its importance for individual Christian flourishing. In the second, he delved into “The binding of Isaac,” attending particularly to its nuanced treatment of trust and trauma, and interrogating Abraham’s silence in the episode, as compared to other Genesis stories where he figures prominently. In the third lecture, Middleton presented challenging research on Job, making a case for the piece as a treatise on the value of lament—and, more specifically, as a carefully crafted

response to the troubling questions raised and, according to Middleton, never adequately answered, in “The binding of Isaac.” Faculty reactions to Middleton’s arguments were mixed, but audience participation during question periods was both decorous and eager. This may have been due to Middleton’s distinguished mastery of clear language, which enabled him to convey complex research and findings effectively without oversimplifying his message.

—BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY

Yellow Page Directory

Financial Services



Abundance
CANADA

Because generosity changes everything

We connect you with the charities you wish to support. We'll help you with gifts over time, gifts in a will, gifts of securities, and gifts to multiple charities.

1.800.772.3257
abundance.ca



EBY FINANCIAL GROUP INC.
Listen. Understand. Plan.

Duane Eby MBA, CFP, CIU, Financial Advisor
deby@ebyfinancial.com

Ben Eby MBA, CPA, CMA, CFP, CIU, Financial Advisor
ben@ebyfinancial.com

410 Conestogo Road, Unit 208
Waterloo, Ontario N2L 4E2
tel 519.725.2006 www.ebyfinancial.com

Will your retirement savings last?
If you are retired and unsure where you stand financially, I can help. **The time to call is now.**



Wesley Dueck BTh, BA, CFP, Division Director
Investors Group Financial Services Inc.
Tel: (204) 222-1700
Wesley.Dueck@investorsgroup.com

Insurance products and services distributed through I.G. Insurance Services Inc. Insurance license sponsored by The Great-West Life Assurance Company.



Insurance

Honesty, Integrity and Good Judgement

Dennis Roth, Ed Nowak and their experienced team are committed to providing you with the personalized, quality service that you need and deserve.

Roth Nowak
INSURANCE BROKERS
AUTO | PROPERTY | BUSINESS

novex

Contact us for a quote:
519-746-1151
service@rothnowak.com
rothnowak.com

119 University Ave. E., Waterloo, ON N2J 2W1

SERVING ONTARIO SINCE 1983

Legal Services



Russel Snyder-Penner
B.A., LL.B., M.A. Trademark Agent
Corporate/Commercial Law
Charities/Non-profits
Wills/Trusts, Real Estate

SUTHERLAND MARK FLEMMING SNYDER-PENNER
PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION
BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS

675 Queen St. S. Suite 100
Kitchener, ON N2M 1A1
519.725.2500
www.sutherlandmark.com
russ@sutherlandmark.com

Retreat/Accommodations



house of friendship
www.residencema.ca
experience@maisondelamitie.ca

Student residence and summer guestrooms

120, rue Duluth est
Montréal, QC
(514) 843-4356

Service Opportunities



Responding
Rebuilding
Restoring

Ways to volunteer with MDS:
Short-term (1-3 weeks): 800-241-8111
Long-term (1 month+): 866-261-1274
RV Program volunteers
Youth volunteers

Volunteers needed Fall 2016
Detroit, Michigan
Lake County, California
Calaveras County, California

<http://mds.mennonite.net>



“Connect allows me to stay home and experience AMBS.”
Ian Funk, pastor at Langley Mennonite Fellowship, British Columbia

GET CONNECTED

MDIV CONNECT

The **MASTER OF DIVINITY CONNECT** program at **Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary** allows you to access the best of our learning community from a distance.



GROW YOUR GIFTS: Focus on majors like Christian faith formation, Christian leadership, pastoral care and counseling, and theological studies.

HOW IT WORKS: Take **12–14 credit hours per year** in **fully online and hybrid** formats to complete the 80-hour program in **5 1/2 years**.

WHAT IT COSTS: Get the **full amount of need-based tuition aid** by taking **at least 12 credit hours** per academic year. **Plus:** Canadian students pay tuition at par and qualify for special scholarships.

For more information, visit ams.ca/MDivConnect



A seminary of
Mennonite Church USA and
Mennonite Church Canada

Rooted in the Word, Growing in Christ

Carving a new peace path

Katie Gingerich is leading an initiative to teach peace skills to elementary students

BY AARON EPP
Young Voices Editor

A young woman in Waterloo, Ont., is using her passion for peace to positively impact students.

Katie Gingerich, 24, is director of The Ripple Effect Education (TREE), a peace-education initiative that integrates conflict resolution and social-justice concepts into social studies curriculum in elementary school classrooms.

During the course of six lessons that take place over six consecutive weeks, TREE facilitators teach students how to recognize conflict and resolve it peacefully. Facilitators use discussion, brainstorming sessions and hands-on activities, with the goal of having youth leave their classrooms with demonstrable conflict-resolution skills and an awareness of justice issues locally and globally.

TREE is a participant in the Frank and Helen Epp Peace Incubator in the Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. It grew out of Gingerich's work in 2014-15 as coordinator of Grebel's Peace Camp, a week-long summer program for children to learn about peace and how it takes shape in their everyday lives.

She began visiting schools in the Waterloo area to help market the camp. During her first year, she made 60 presentations in two months. The following year, she made 120 presentations.

"[During] this experience, I was seeing that peace education or conflict resolution done well in the classroom is really exciting to teachers," she says. "It's something they want to integrate into their classroom but don't always have the time

or resources to do so."

Gingerich saw benefits to offering peace workshops in elementary schools year-round. TREE began taking shape in the spring of 2016 after receiving a grant from the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation worth \$150,000 over three years.

As its director, Gingerich plans and promotes TREE, connecting with teachers and scheduling workshops. The workshops themselves are facilitated predominantly by a team of undergraduate students from Grebel and nearby Wilfrid Laurier University, although Gingerich does some in-class work as well.

This past fall, she and her team led six-week workshops in 10 different Grade 6 classrooms, for a total of 60 presentations.

A graduate of Grebel's peace and conflict studies program, she says she never learned about conflict resolution during her grade-school education. "In university, it really struck me that . . . probably we should be learning about these things before we get to university," she says, adding that she enjoys working with students: "I love getting to see those light-bulb moments. . . . I love getting to work with them and journeying with them as we figure out how to best solve problems that directly relate to them."

One highlight from her work occurred in a classroom this past November during the week of the U.S. presidential election. Gingerich and her co-facilitator ended up disregarding most of that day's lesson because the students wanted to better understand the election and talk about their thoughts and feelings about it.

(Continued on page 28)

CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE PHOTOS



Katie Gingerich is director of The Ripple Effect Education (TREE), an elementary-school peace-education initiative.



Teachers want to integrate peace education into their classrooms but don't always have the time or resources to do so, Katie Gingerich says.



TREE facilitators like Perri Termine led six-week workshops in 10 different Grade 6 classrooms last fall.

(Continued from page 27)

The incident showed her that, although conversations like that can be difficult, they are necessary and can be rewarding. “Kids are out there, they’re hearing things, and they want to know [more] and they want to process,” she says. “Helping them really embrace what justice means, and making it real and applying it to real life, [is important.]”

Paul Heidebrecht, director of the Centre for Peace Advancement, praises Gingerich’s work. “She’s passionate about trying to make a difference in her community, but, moreover, she’s thorough and hardworking, and creative in figuring out how to achieve that vision, which is often the unglamorous part of working for peace,” he says.

He calls Gingerich a “peace entrepreneur,” whose example shows that, for people interested in making a difference in the world, there are more options these days than studying international development or volunteering with Mennonite Central Committee. “With support, with dedicated effort, there are now opportunities for people to carve entirely new

kinds of paths, entirely untraditional paths, and I think Katie is a great example of that,” he says. “To be honest, it feels like [TREE is] just the tip of the iceberg.”

Gingerich has been passionate about helping others ever since she was a child growing up in St. Agatha, Ont., something she attributes to her parents. “My parents are really selfless people, really caring people, and go out of their way to help others,” she says. “That was an important part of my upbringing.”

Her passion for social justice grew when she was in high school. “It was important for me to care about things bigger than myself; not to be focussed on trivial things in my own life, [but] to recognize that I am privileged and to recognize that I have power,” she says.

Today, she is looking forward to building TREE’s reputation as a peace organization. The goal right now is to expand into grades 4 and 5 starting in September.

“I’m looking forward to . . . being able to work in more classrooms with more grades, and to build up and equip students with conflict resolution skills,” she says. ❧

‘Sparky’ music

Saskatoon bluegrass quartet Sparky and the Plugs got their start playing in church

BY AARON EPP
Young Voices Editor

PHOTO COURTESY OF ZAC SCHELLENBERG



Jill Wiens, left, Curtis Wiens, Zac Schellenberg and Clay Buhler have been friends since they were teenagers.

They might perform at cafes, bars and festivals throughout the Saskatoon area these days, but bluegrass quartet Sparky and the Plugs got their start playing music in church.

Guitarist Zac Schellenberg says that doing special music and accompanying hymns at Mount Royal Mennonite Church gave the group a safe place to get their feet wet.

“That was really important for us,” Schellenberg says. “It’s such a supportive audience. No matter how you did, someone would come up and say thank you. . . . That was a great part of getting into [music] there. You didn’t have to perform, it wasn’t a big to-do, but you’re gaining some of those skills.”

Soon after the four began participating in worship at Mount Royal, Sparky and the Plugs—which includes Clay Buhler on bass, Curtis Wiens on banjo, and Jill Wiens on mandolin—were being asked to perform at a variety of functions in the wider Mennonite community, including at Mennonite Central Committee and Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization events.

The band broke into the wider music scene in 2015, when they were invited to perform at the Northern Lights Bluegrass and Old Tyme Music Festival near Big River, Sask., located two-and-a-half hours north of Saskatoon.

“That ‘sparked’ something in us,” Schellenberg says, adding that he and his

band mates were blown away by the other musicians at the festival. “You go and see some world-class acts playing the same style of music and you realize there’s some work to be done. There’s a different level you can reach. [It was] a little shocking, but overall, a really cool experience.”

They returned to perform at the Big River festival this past August. That same month, they recorded their self-titled debut album at Saskatoon’s Seashell Sound Productions with recording engineer Darrell Bueckert. They recorded the bulk of the material live off the floor in two days. The goal of recording the album live, as opposed to tracking each instrument and vocal part separately, was to capture the feel the four members have when they perform as a single unit.

“Darrell thought, you know, part of the whole rootsy bluegrass sound is that everyone has sort of an energy together, so that’s something he wanted to bring out of us,” Schellenberg says. “I really enjoyed that.”

The album comprises 10 original songs. Schellenberg says that, while none of the lyrics are explicitly faith-based, their music is influenced by the fact that they belong to the Mennonite church.

“A lot of bluegrass is about whisky and

wild women, [but] that’s something we feel we don’t need in our music,” Schellenberg says. “We write about things that have affected our lives.”

For Schellenberg, part of the appeal of playing in the group is that its members are, first and foremost, friends. That makes it easier to present new material to the group. “You just kind of have this sense of freedom to share what you want to share, because sometimes our songs mean quite a bit to us and sometimes there’s a lot of emotion behind it,” he says. “Being with a group of friends who you know are going to accept you [makes it] pretty healthy to be able to share in that way.”

Sparky and the Plugs released their album at the end of November with a show at Saskatoon’s Underground Café, and are looking forward to more opportunities to share their music.

“I think as new songs come up, we’ll try them out together and see what happens,” Schellenberg says. “We’re not quite sure [what’s next], but we do want to keep making music.”

For more information about the band and its music, visit reverbNation.com/sparkyandtheplugs.

ALBUM ART COURTESY OF ZAC SCHELLENBERG



Sparky and the Plugs recorded their debut album live off the floor in two days last August.



PHOTO BY ALETA SCHELLENBERG

Jill Wiens, left, Curtis Wiens, Zac Schellenberg and Clay Buhler are Sparky and the Plugs.

Calendar

British Columbia

Feb. 24: LEAD conference, at Langley Mennonite Fellowship.

Feb. 25: MC B.C. annual gathering, at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford.

Alberta

Feb. 24-26: Senior-high snow camp, at Camp Valaqua, Water Valley. For more information, call 403-637-2510 or email valaqua@explornet.com.

March 17-18: MC Alberta annual general meeting and assembly, at Trinity Mennonite Church, DeWinton.

Saskatchewan

March 10-11: MC Saskatchewan annual delegate sessions, "Extending

the table: Enough for all"; at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

Manitoba

Until March 4: "Synagogues in Germany: A virtual reconstruction" exhibit at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg, features recreations of synagogues destroyed in Nazi Germany in the years prior to the Second World War.

Feb. 15: Verna Mae Janzen Music Competition, at CMU Laudamus Auditorium, Winnipeg, at 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 25: "A transformative moment: Seeking God in the transitions of young adulthood," at CMU, Winnipeg. For more information, visit cmu.ca/transformative.

April 5: CMU spring fundraising event, in the evening.

April 9: Mennonite Community Orchestra presents its spring concert at

the CMU chapel in Winnipeg. Works include Bach's "Brandenburg Concerto No. 5" and Beethoven's "Pastoral Symphony."

April 22: Spring choral concert, at CMU's Loewen Athletic Centre, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

April 27-29: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Winnipeg, presents its senior-high musical.

May 8: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate bursary banquet, at the Canad Inns Polo Park, Winnipeg.

May 17: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate work day, Winnipeg.

May 31: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate presents its Grade 7-9 spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

June 1: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate presents its Grade 10-12 spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

Ontario

Until April 13: "Tesatawiyat (Come in)" photography exhibit at the Grebel Gallery at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. The community photography project features indigenous people near Hamilton, Ont., sharing their stories in their homes.

Until April 21: Exhibit at the Mennonite Archives of Ontario at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo: "Conchies speak: Ontario Mennonites in Alternative Service."

Feb. 17: Ontario Mennonite Relief Heifer Sale, at Dave Carson Farms and Auction Services, Listowel, at 11 a.m. To donate or sponsor a heifer, call the MCCC Ontario office at 519-745-8458.

March 3: Mary Jo Leddy, this year's Rodney and Lorna Sawatsky Visiting Scholar at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, presents a public lecture entitled "Room enough for hope? Canada's response to the refugee

Briefly noted

Worship and song submissions, recommendations sought for new hymnal

What songs connect you to God and your community, and empower you to serve? What songs do you turn to in joyful or difficult times? What are your heart songs? These are questions the Mennonite Worship and Song Committee is asking through an online survey at bit.ly/heart-song-survey as it embarks on a listening and study phase towards developing a new hymnal collection, to be released in 2020. The new worship and song collection is being designed to succeed *Hymnal: A Worship Book* (1992), and its *Sing the Journey* (2005) and *Sing the Story* (2007) supplements. This new collection, which will take into account the breadth of the Mennonite church and the diverse ways Mennonites sing and worship, will be available in bound and digital formats, along with an accompaniment volume. Another important element is a call for new and original content. Authors, songwriters, composers and artists can submit their original work online at bit.ly/new-hymnal-submissions. This online submissions portal will be active throughout 2017. The committee hopes the portal will draw a diversity of material that creatively serves a broad spectrum of worshippers. Artists are invited to submit visual elements, too, as the committee considers ways various media enhance worship. The new worship and song collection will be published by Herald Press, the book imprint of MennoMedia, which is the denominational publisher for Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A.

—MennoMedia

Classifieds

Employment Opportunities



Mennonite Collegiate Institute, located in Gretna, Manitoba, is searching for a **principal** to start in August 2017.

Our mission is to educate young people in an Anabaptist-Christian context, seeking to develop each student's God-given potential, providing a practice ground for maturing faith in Jesus Christ, in thought, love and action.

Our principal must be passionate about our mission, provide effective leadership, promote a vision for Christian education and build community—both within the school and its supporting constituency. We are seeking a person with a strong calling to serve within this dynamic context.

MCI continues to build upon a strong heritage of Christian education which began in 1889. Our school includes students from Grades 9-12. Approximately one-half live on campus in the school's residence.

To find out more about this exciting position or to submit a resume, please contact the search committee at searchteam@mciblues.net.

Applications close March 31, 2017.

www.mciblues.net

crisis."

March 14-18: Explore a new way to be church at "TOOLS Urban Intensive 2017," at Danforth Mennonite Church, Toronto. For more information, or to register, email peteolsen@mcco.ca.

March 25: Menno Singers present Bach's "St. John Passion," with orchestra and soloists, at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener.

March 24-25: Conrad Grebel Student Council presents "The Music Man," at the Conrad Centre for the Performing Arts, Kitchener; (24) 6 p.m.; (25) 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. Tickets available at the Grebel Main Office, Waterloo, in February.

April 29,30: Pax Christi Chorale presents Elgar's "The Apostles," at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto;

(29) 7:30 p.m.; (30) 3 p.m.

May 13: Menno Singers present Honegger's "King David," and a world premiere of a new work by Colin Labadie, at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener.

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. For more Calendar listings online, visit canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar.



Employment opportunity EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BETHANY MANOR

The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of a 291-unit seniors housing complex. Bethany Manor is owned and operated by Saskatoon Mennonite Care Services Inc. The board of directors, which provides guidance and support for the executive director, consists of representatives from 12 Mennonite Churches in Saskatoon and surrounding area.

Qualifications: Strong leadership, proven management skills, strong communication skills, experience working with government agencies, post-secondary education, supportive of the Anabaptist faith.

Please submit cover letter, resume and salary expectations to Bethany Manor, Attn: Selection Committee, 110 La Ronge Rd. Saskatoon SK S7K 7H8.

Competition closes February 28, 2017

www.bethany55plusliving.ca



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

First Mennonite Church Edmonton is a multi-generational, urban church, of approximately 180. God has called us to be an inclusive, affirming, Christian community. This congregation is seeking an **Intentional Interim Pastor** for a term of approximately one year to commence spring/summer of 2017.

We are looking for someone with the following qualifications:

- Anabaptist/Mennonite training
- experience in the field of interim ministry
- pulpit speaking skills
- pastoral care skills
- capacity to assist a congregation in visioning
- ability to effectively build relationships
- ability to assess the congregation's needs in looking for a new permanent pastor

Please contact Adela Wedler, Chair Pastoral Search Committee, at mwedler@shaw.ca for further information or to submit a resume. A Congregation Information form is also available from Mennonite Church Canada.

<https://sites.google.com/site/edmontonfirstmennonite/>



Employment Opportunity Ministry Team Position

As the Wellesley Mennonite congregation discerns God's calling, we are exploring new direction and possibilities for a music/worship and Christian education position - .5 FTE.

Starting Date: Applications accepted starting January 4 until position is filled. Start date is negotiable with the hope of filling the position before June 2017.

Term: One-year commitment with potential of becoming a permanent half-time position.

Ministry Responsibilities

- 1. Music/worship ministry** – Provide leadership for a vibrant music/worship ministry. Oversee creative intergenerational participation in music and worship by nurturing and collaborating with congregational gifts.
- 2. Christian education** – Provide leadership for and assist with the Christian Education ministry (children, youth, adult).
- 3. Youth & children's programs** – Provide oversight and resourcing for senior and junior youth programs, young adults and Kids for Christ (KFC) program.

Qualities

- Passion and gifting for intergenerational church music and worship
- Strong relational and administrative skills
- Collaborative work style

Requirements

- Attend worship twice monthly
- Anabaptist faith perspective
- Proven leadership abilities
- Training and/or experience in music and worship coordination

Contact Robert Veitch, Transition Team Chair, at bgveitch@hotmail.com to submit resume or for more information.

www.wellesleymennonite.ca

For Sale

The Village Casketmaker
Funeral caskets and urns sold directly to public. Sensible and eco-friendly. Made in Winnipeg. Urns ship easily across Canada. Learn more: thevillagecasketmaker.com.

Advertising Information

Contact
D. Michael Hostetler
1-800-378-2524 x.224
advert@
canadianmennonite.org



Arts Mentorship **Academics**
Explore Faith **Sciences** **Excellence**
Music Rooted **Business**
Think Dialogue
Discover



Apply now:

cmu.ca

