

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

February 13, 2017

Volume 21 Number 4

## Marching in the aftermath of inauguration

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## EDITORIAL

## Thank You!

DICK BENNER  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

It is with heartfelt gratitude that we thank and recognize the generosity of the 835 donors, including 45 new ones, to our 2016 spring and fall fundraising drives that brought a record \$119,403 into our coffers toward operating expenses and our endowment fund.

While every gift, small or large, is appreciated, we want to give special notice to several large donors, including the Friesen family, who, with their \$50,000 gift over five years, helped us establish the Ted Friesen Legacy Fund. This challenged several of you to increase your annual giving and others to give for the first time. The Friesen Printing Corp., in which the late Ted Friesen was a vital business partner, responded in kind with a \$25,000 gift over three years.

Other large donors who gave \$2,000 or more were Tim Sauer of Kitchener, Ont., and Bruce and Emily Burgetz of Toronto, with their \$5,000 gift. Together with tightening our belt on expenses, these gifts have helped us finish our year in the black, with a slight net income. It has put *Canadian Mennonite* in a strong financial position to carry on our mission in the years ahead.

As I take leave of my post as editor and publisher at the end of March, it gives me confidence that our national publication is in good form as it helps to give shape to a changing structure known as Mennonite Church Canada.

Let me remind our readers of the

importance of the Ted Friesen Legacy Fund and of the significance of *Canadian Mennonite* being both an anchor and a beacon as the national community of faith finds its way with new vision and structure in the days ahead, establishing its place in a post-Christendom era.



It was because of Ted Friesen's vision and initiative that the Mennonite world of the 1950s came together as a diverse body of German, Swiss and Russian

immigrants around an English-language publication. The magazine brought identity and purpose to differing cultural and religious expressions, but was able, through the persistent efforts of Friesen and editor Frank Epp, to focus on a shared spiritual Anabaptist heritage.

Are we again at that crossroad? There are strains on our unity. Differences over the resolutions on same-sex marriage and sanctions against Israel in Saskatoon last summer are forming some unfortunate dividing lines. Passions run deep. Congregants with differing views are making big demands of our leaders.

All of us—congregants and leaders—need a place to stand, a communication vehicle that gives voice to our many convictions, a “village square” where we can gather and talk to each other without rancour or animosity, and hopefully reason together about our differences.

It needs to be an independent platform, as it has been historically, so as to offer a safe place for the exchange of ideas that is

central to a fair and just communion.

*Canadian Mennonite* cannot be biased if it is to serve these ideals with integrity. Over time, this has not been an easy journey. Since 2008, the publication has been engaged in a partnership agreement that enjoys the financial support of MC Canada and the five area churches. We have attempted to be a responsible and responsive partner, while at the same time reserving the right to critique the establishment when we feel it is necessary.

We have performed our role in what we believe is the best tradition of the “priesthood of all believers,” in which all of us have a stake in the faith development of our local and national body. We look to our leaders for guidance and spiritual wisdom, but we take personal responsibility for what happens to us collectively.

While this sounds straightforward, it is not an easy road. It is difficult, at times, to be both partner and prophet. We risk the wrath of the leaders, on the one hand, when we engage in critique, and on the other, the disappointment, bordering at times on cynicism, by congregants if they sense we are a propaganda vehicle for the establishment. We can become the target from both sides.

My parting advice is that, despite the risks and sometimes rocky road, *Canadian Mennonite* maintains its independent stance so that all of us, leaders and congregants alike, have a place to gather and talk to each other.

And that's why your financial gifts are so important to keep us strong and vital during a time when institutional support is looking at an uncertain future. Thank you again, donors!

## ABOUT THE COVER:

With the U.S. Capitol building in the background, Washington marchers rest at the end of a full day. Estimations are that more than a half-million people participated in the Women's March on Washington, D.C., on Jan. 21. For story and photo spread, see pages 18-19.

PHOTO: DOREEN MARTENS, SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

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**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

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Award-winning  
member of the  
Canadian Church Press



Recipe:

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH FEATURE

# A new recipe for church

By Carol Penner

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE



*New recipes are springing up around the world. While here in North America church attendance is dwindling, in the Global South churches are bursting at the seams, experiencing exponential growth. What are they cooking up there?*

**W**hy do you go to church? One of the main reasons is that there is something there that feeds your soul. If there was nothing nourishing there, you would find other things to do with your time.

Jesus fed people. He fed them literally . . . and he fed them with stories. They had to chew on the stories for a long time, and they kept coming back for more. Jesus told Peter, “*Feed my flock.*” If the church, like the apostle, is called to feed people, what is it cooking up these days? What recipes for church are congregants using?

## **Recipes are slippery things**

For the longest time my favourite soup was Hearty Lentil-Sausage Soup from page 212 of the *More-with-Less Cookbook*, made with good Mennonite farmer’s sausage. It also happens to be the first soup I ever learned how to make when I lived with some girlfriends in the early 1980s. I made that go-to soup so often and so regularly that I no longer needed the cookbook because I knew the recipe by heart!

But over the years circumstances changed my favourite soup. One year my roommate’s mother gave us 100 baggies of frozen green beans, so we always used green beans instead of parsnips. One day I had no lentils, so I used pearl barley and liked it better, so I always made it with barley from then on. Somewhere along the way the main spice changed from marjoram to basil. But there was always sausage. I cooked Hearty Lentil-Sausage

FLICKR PHOTO BY SCOTT TERESI (CC BY-SA 2.0)



*One day I had no lentils, so I used pearl barley, and liked it better, so I always made it with barley from then on. Somewhere along the way the main spice changed from marjoram to basil. But there was always sausage. I cooked Hearty Lentil-Sausage Soup for 20 years.*

Soup for 20 years.

Then one day my friend served me Senegalese Curry Soup. It blew me away, it was so delicious. It instantly became my new favourite soup. It was totally different. It started with chicken, it had flavours of peanut butter and curry, and you even ate it with condiments like coconut, green onion and cilantro. I was wild for this soup. I started serving it every time we had company. And every time people would say, "I need to get this recipe!" It was a major soup reformation. I didn't give Hearty Lentil-Sausage Soup a second thought. That was yesterday's soup.

### **What is our recipe for church?**

What do we throw in the pot when we are cooking up something for hungry people? The nourishing beans of the gospel, the aroma of friendship, the flavour of singing? There's a certain stock order of worship that we appreciate.

Right now people who observe the

church say that a recipe revolution is going on. Some people think we are entering another Reformation. Back in the 1500s, people protested the recipe used for church and they started experimenting with new recipes. Is that what is happening today?

It's certain today that many are turning away from the meal the church is preparing. Vast numbers of people no longer come to church because they are looking for something more nourishing. The church can blame the leave-ers: "They don't know what's good for them!"

But what if the problem is not with the people walking away, but with the people preparing the meal? What if we are continually cooking noodles for the gluten intolerant or meat for vegetarians? What if they just can't digest what we're serving? Or what if there is something in our community that is just not appetizing?

A couple years ago I went to a church service that was held in a movie theatre.

It was a satellite congregation of a "mega-church." We sat in our theatre seats, drank coffee, ate snacks and listened to a live broadcast of the sermon on a big screen. There was no offering, no hymns, no bulletin and not that much interaction between the people there. But it had a flavour of church.

The thing was, the organizers didn't define what was happening on Sunday morning as "church." Church happened in a network of small groups meeting in people's homes, while Sunday morning was sort of like Sunday school, a learning or outreach opportunity. Community people who would never feel comfortable coming to a church building might feel more comfortable coming to a movie theatre to watch something. There they were invited to a different type of community.

I have to say that I went to that movie theatre with my mind made up. I was sure I hated that recipe for church. Like the first time my kids sat down and I served them Senegalese Curry Soup. "What is this stuff?" they cried as they crinkled up their noses. But as I sat in the service, I felt nourished, the aroma of the Holy Spirit was unmistakable. I left there shaking my head. "My goodness," I thought, "that was surprisingly tasty!"

New recipes are springing up around the world. While here in North America church attendance is dwindling, in the Global South churches are bursting at the seams, experiencing exponential growth. What are they cooking up there? I went to the Mennonite World Conference assembly and it was like walking down a street filled with food vendors, each creating their own intoxicating aromas. Was that lemon grass? Saffron? Sorrel?

### **A real hunger for something nourishing**

Churches in the past have gotten stuck on emphasizing right belief: You have to believe this and this and this doctrine. You are in or out depending on whether you can check these boxes or live up to our standards of right and wrong. Maybe the new recipe for church is more fluid, more experimental, more alive than something that is written down in straight lines and strict fundamental measurements. Maybe

it has more to do with a relationship with the Great Cook than adherence to a denominational cookbook.

New recipes can change people's lives, they can even save people's lives. Aid workers had a challenge feeding starving children because their malnourished bodies had a hard time digesting food. So they worked with dietitians to create a new type of food aid called Plumpy'nut. It's a peanut-based paste made of milk powder, oil and vitamins that is easy to digest and that has all the calories and nutrients that a severely malnourished child needs. It's easy to use and doesn't need to be refrigerated. Around the world, starving children have been saved because they are gaining weight with Plumpy'nut.

That's what we need now, a Plumpy'nut recipe for church. It might be that literally feeding people is the answer. Maybe that's the first step to feeding people's souls. Sometimes the literal answer is the answer.

But beyond that, we need to be more self-conscious about our recipes, their nutritional value and how they are received. We need to listen to a new generation of hungry people who live in our neighbourhoods. There will be some animated discussions as we talk about our favourite recipes, what works and what doesn't. Maybe there are some ancient recipes we need to dig up. We may have to go to other churches and try their soups, and come back and tell soup stories. We'll have to dream about new soups we haven't even tasted yet.

### **Gradual change or revolution?**

I wonder what your feelings were when you read the title, "A new recipe for church." I'm guessing that some readers had a grumpy face, at least on the inside. You were thinking, "I like this recipe for church just fine! Why do we have to change it?" This recipe may be working for the group of people we have in the church right now. If our mission is only to feed the people in the building, we might not have to change very much. But if we want to feed hungry people who aren't in the church, we need to think, "What are they hungry for?"

Sometimes a congregation changes its

soup recipe gradually, like my experience with the evolving Hearty Lentil-Sausage Soup. But sometimes, if the circumstances are right, there can be a soup revolution. In an ecclesial recipe reformation, a church goes whole hog into a new culinary adventure.

Sometimes change leads to conflict. Suppose one half of the church decides that we are using the Hearty Lentil-Sausage Soup recipe for church, and they come and put those ingredients into the congregational soup pot. Meanwhile, the other half of the church is determined to make Senegalese Curry Soup, and they put their ingredients in the same pot. What do you get? You get a terrible mishmash of flavours that no one wants to eat! Churches fall apart when we refuse to let go, saying, "I'll give up my favourite recipe when you pry it from my cold, dead hands!"

Whatever we cook, I think the secret to our success is remembering that it is not our soup. It's God's soup! It's not "What do we want to eat?" but "What is God cooking up for all the hungry people?" If God is the Great Cook, then we need to be humble ourselves and not hold onto

our recipes for dear life. We need to work with an open mind, receptive to direction from the Holy Spirit.

When we are all busy together cooking up something nourishing and extra tasty for the great banquet, that's exactly when Jesus calls with the message, "Guess who's coming to dinner?" ☞

*Carol Penner was hired last year by Conrad Grebel University College as an assistant professor of practical theology. She was initially called to ministry at the Welcome Inn, in Hamilton, Ont., then at The First Mennonite Church in Vineland, and most recently at Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church in Edmonton in 2014.*



*View the recipes and more online at [canadianmennonite.org/penner-soup-recipes](http://canadianmennonite.org/penner-soup-recipes).*



### ☞ For discussion

1. Carol Penner says it's important for church to feed our souls. What are some examples of nourishment that your church provides? What is the basic recipe your congregation uses for church? How often is there variety or an unexpected spice? Is the occasional change-up in the recipe appreciated or criticized?
2. Penner says that when it comes to the church, "a recipe revolution is going on." Do you agree? What are the innovative recipes for church that you've experienced or heard about? Which of these new ideas do you find appealing? Is it better to have a "soup revolution" or gradual change over time?
3. "If God is the Great Cook, then we need to humble ourselves and not hold onto our recipes for dear life," writes Penner. What are some of these beloved recipes for church that we would rather not lose? Do you agree that an open mind is what God desires?
4. What are our greatest fears regarding new recipes? When you cook, how do you balance exciting flavours and healthy nourishment? What is a new recipe that you would like to try in your congregation?

—BY BARB DRAPER

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## VIEWPOINTS

## /// Readers write

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

## ✉ How much have funding losses affected Future Directions?

WE HAVE HEARD that the Future Directions process came primarily due to funding issues. We have also heard that it was not about funding, but about renewing vision. And we have heard that people have been laid off due to budgetary constraints. Although the messages about Future Directions may have been so confusing, there must be funding issues.

I have heard, unofficially, that the funding losses were due primarily to congregational giving. At a different time I heard they were due primarily to individual gifts to Mennonite Church Canada. Which is it?

Why is MC Canada not more forthcoming about how severe the funding issues are, and where they are, or are not, coming from?

R. VICTOR KLASSEN, NEW DUNDEE, ONT.

## FROM OUR LEADERS

## Making the heart stronger

KIRSTEN HAMM-EPP

For once, I know what I'm giving up for Lent early this year: social media.

I'm writing this column the Monday morning following the annual Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization's senior-high retreat, at which, due to a new location, youth had cell service for the first time in the event's recent history. As the organizer, I was concerned about the impact this change would have on the retreat. Would free time be spent on their phones rather than playing games? Would we have to put a phone-collection basket at the entrance to the chapel before sessions? Would the retreat lose the "get-away" feeling I have come to love it for?

As it turns out, I needn't have worried. The youth committee that helps me plan and run the event made the decision to tell people to leave their phones in their rooms, and they led by example. And when phones were pulled out, it was to

take pictures of the ice climbing wall or add background music to a fun coffee-house act. Phones were used in ways that strengthened the weekend and made it better.

The recognition of needing a significant break from social media has been a long time coming for me, but it was heading home from the retreat that solidified my decision. Coming back from a beautiful weekend of inspiration and being the church, to a world of travel and refugee bans, to a world of a mosque shooting, to social media feeds full of outrage, grief, and reactions from around the world: It was too much. The tears flowed and there was nothing I could do to stop them. And that's when I knew it was time to take a break.

This is not to say that I place any blame on social media or its users for the events that tear at my heart strings. Having friends and family spread across the continent, I am often indebted to social media for keeping me informed and connected. I also don't want to simply

disconnect myself from what's going on in the world (I think). Now more than ever, the world needs disciples of peace and justice to come forward and offer another way.

But before I can log in and enter that world again, my heart needs a break. My heart needs to retreat and spend time in the palm of God's hand.

I believe that social media can be used in ways that bring peace and make the world better. That, like the use of cell phones at the retreat, it can strengthen the ways we are already active in the world. And I have seen it done. I have watched in awe as social media warriors take injustice and hate to task, and bring healing and hope to the world.

As we enter into this Lenten season, may we find ways to be strengthened, to show mercy, to hunger and thirst for righteousness, to welcome the stranger and to love our many neighbours.

Social media, I will see you again in April. I don't know if absence will make the heart grow fonder, but I pray it will make the heart stronger.

*Kirsten Hamm-Epp is the area church minister of youth programming and administration for Mennonite Church Saskatchewan.*



## ✉ Repentance is the 'best future direction for MC Canada'

RE: "UNDERSTANDING OPPONENTS of LGBTQ inclusion" and "Future Directions: Take Two," Dec. 12, pages 13 and 16, respectively.

In the opening paragraph of his page 16 article, Will Braun mentions a funding crisis, sliding attendance

and shifting cultural contexts as reasons for a restructuring of the national church. In his Viewpoint article on page 13, he states that only 322 delegates out of a possible 761 attended the session in Saskatoon.

I think we are reaping the fulfillment of Romans 1:18, 24. As Mennonite Church Canada has persisted in its pursuit to conform to Canadian societal norms, members who believe Romans 12:2 have withdrawn

## KINGDOM YEARNINGS

# Why aren't we telling these stories?

RYAN JANTZI

It has been my experience that the church of Jesus Christ is chock-full of glorious stories of the power and presence of our Lord. It's also my experience that many of these stories remain untold. The church is poorer for this silence. Why aren't we telling these stories?

Lend me a moment to share a few that I've been able to unearth:

- **A STORY** about a trucker who gave his life to Christ at a Flying J. He had driven in complete silence the past year due to the bitterness and anger that consumed his soul. This man speaks of a significant weight that came off his shoulders the moment he confessed and received the forgiveness of his Creator.

- **A STORY** about a young mom desperately praying to a God she barely knew, asking that he reveal himself. A short while

later, she met a young couple who'd been praying for God to cross their path with people to share Jesus with. This led to a journey of following Jesus and a baptism two years later. She speaks of her new-found peace, hope and community.

- **A STORY** about an agnostic Starbucks barista who found himself alongside co-workers who kept talking about hearing

from God. Sceptically, he went to one of their worship services as a "learning experience." That night, he wept as he encountered the power of the Holy Spirit for the first time. God would then lead him to prepare for ministry at a Bible college.

These are just a few of the stories I've been hearing and clinging to. And I wonder why we don't tell these stories more often. Why do they require some digging to get to?

The telling of stories has sustained God's people throughout their history. Every year at Passover, the Jews would tell of how God delivered them from captivity in Egypt. They had seen his

power and mercy. They told the stories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They told of the feats of the great prophets. These stories carried them through the highest of highs and the lowest of lows. They reminded themselves over and over again of the saving power of their God. They clung to these stories as they were led in shackles from Jerusalem to Babylon. They reminded their children time and again

as they persevered under Roman occupation. They propelled the early church as they went out as witnesses into all Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

And yet the telling of real-life, flesh-and-blood stories plays a minimal role in today's church.

The thing is, I need these stories. We need these stories. The Christian life is a rocky road. Taking up one's cross is not a walk in the park. I need these stories of hope when the friend I've been encouraging for two years returns to his meth addiction. I need these stories when a buddy scoffs when I finally muster up the courage to share the good news of Jesus with her. I need these stories as a family member continues down the long heart-wrenching path of terminal illness.

These stories remind me that God is bigger and more powerful than the sorrow and pain that life brings our way. These stories remind me that God can transform a life in an instant. These stories assure me that he is faithful, merciful and full of might.

Why aren't we telling these stories?

*I need these stories of hope when the friend I've been encouraging for two years returns to his meth addiction.*

The church of Jesus Christ needs to hear them.

*Following five years with the Kingsfield-Clinton church plant in southwestern Ontario, Ryan Jantzi now pastors the nearby Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite Church, where he's fascinated with exploring the interplay between traditional church and new expressions of mission.*





their financial support and have shunned the area and national churches.

In an editorial some months ago, Dick Benner mentioned an alliance of Mennonite evangelical churches. This alliance has grown out of churches that withdrew from MC U.S.A. They deliberately subscribe to the Bible, the Word of God, as inerrant and infallible in the original languages.

I suggest the best future direction for MC Canada is to repent of the sin of not taking God at his word, and of condoning and promoting lifestyles diametrically opposed to the explicit Word of God, and that we turn to faith and practices reflecting the kingdom of God here on Earth.

BONNIE FRIESEN, GRUNTHAL, MAN.

## NEW CANADIAN VOICE

# Sold on God

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

EASTERN CANADA CORRESPONDENT

**T**wenty-six years ago, Michel Monette was selling encyclopaedias door to door seven days a week. One of his fellow salesmen, a Mennonite Brethren, would take Sundays off to go to a local evangelical church, and would do the same Wednesday evenings for Bible study. On Halloween Eve in 1991 in Rouyn-Noranda, Que., Monette said to the man, “If you’re such a good salesman, sell me on your God.”

Over the next hour the man answered all of Monette’s questions from the Bible. That night Monette had a vision and knew that to prevent himself going to hell he needed to invite Jesus into his life. In the morning he called his wife, Lyne Renaud, and told her that he was “reading the book, the Bible.”

A few weeks later, they decided they would go to church the next Sunday. About 30 people were there when they arrived late, due to a snow storm. Feeling welcomed, they never stopped going.

In 1998, while reading Rick Warren’s *The Purpose Driven Church* with Mennonite Brethren leaders, they felt led to plant a church. But it would take six years to come to be. They settled in the low-income Hochelaga-Maisonneuve area of Montreal in 2004, where, for a few short years, the community was ground zero for a war between the Hells Angels and Rock Machine biker clubs.



Lyne Renaud, left, and Michel Monette

Settling into Roi des Rois (King of Kings), a Union Baptist building, they started to plant a new community called HochMa, a contraction of the hyphenated community name and the Hebrew word for “wisdom in action.” Their diverse congregation was non-traditional; they met Sunday afternoon and had no sermon and few regular attenders. Their numbers were also dropping. So they decided in 2008 to merge with the Roi des Rois congregation, which was meeting on Sunday mornings, but numbers were still dropping.

In 2009, Lyne had a vision for a church as café, a safe place to talk, where she and Michel could begin to walk with people, helping them to learn to know God. A year ago, they began to offer a free breakfast on Sunday mornings to anyone who would come. They felt like this was the last thing to try before giving up on the church.

Along the way the congregation decided to look for a denomination. When asked why it didn’t opt to join the MBs, Monette says that Mennonite Church Eastern Canada is closer philosophically and theologically to them both, who want to care for a person’s entire needs, not just the spiritual ones. They were looking for support, not financial aid, and their search led them to Brian Bauman, the area church’s mission minister. His persistence in following up their invitation impressed them.

Thinking about what God is about in MC Eastern Canada, Monette says that he himself is an Anabaptist, one who is willing to agree to disagree, and stay in relationships even when disagreeing.

Renaud appreciates that the area church accepts her call and gifts, unlike the evangelical denominations they see around them. She is paid eight hours per week by the congregation, while Monette operates his information technology business ITGS.

Monette says he’s “fed up with the reputation of the neighbourhood. God’s kingdom is on earth and not only in heaven.” They want less violence, prostitution and drug addicts, but not by moving the problems elsewhere. They would like the community to improve, and the present residents to be able to stay and benefit from the improvements.

God is moving them to big steps in faith. One of the biggest is their building, which needs upwards of \$200,000 worth of renovations and improvements, but Monette is the only businessman in the congregation. He dreams of transforming the historical building into a meeting place in the community, a green building, an “embassy of reconciliation.”

## ✉ 'Grief' feature 'resonated' with reader

**RE:** "I SHOULD ask Dad" feature, Jan. 2, page 4. The article resonated with me, and I appreciated it. It was well-written, on a subject—grief—that can be difficult to articulate, but definitely worth discussing.

I have a copy of Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's book *Death: The Final Stage of Growth* that I bought in 1976, mostly because this was required reading for a course I took at D'Youville College in Buffalo, N.Y., as part of my nurse's training. She was the commencement speaker for my graduation from D'Youville in

1979. She spoke eloquently, encouraging us to not fear, but to have hope. I often think about her belief that there are five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance—I remember them as DABDA—and I tend to agree with her.

Every person deals with grief differently. Knowing our Saviour certainly helps the grieving process.

**LAURENE NICKEL,**  
**NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, ONT.**

*Laurene Nickel is a member of Niagara United Mennonite Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake.*

## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Jarosz**—Samantha Abigail (b. Oct. 26, 2016), to Emily and David Jarosz, Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Sportack**—Orion Liet Forest (b. May 15, 2016), to Diedre and Aaron Sportack, Peace Mennonite, Richmond, B.C.

### Deaths

**Berg**—Hugo, 84 (b. May 29, 1932; d. Jan. 5, 2017), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

**Derksen**—Allen Ronald, 53 (b. Aug. 25, 1963; d. Dec. 22, 2016), North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

**Friesen**—Jacob, 86 (b. April 1, 1930; d. Dec. 20, 2016), Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**Harms**—Ursula (nee Claassen), 79 (b. Dec. 20, 1936; d. Nov. 17, 2016), Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**Klassen**—John Peter, 90 (b. April 20, 1926; d. Nov. 15, 2016), First Mennonite, Calgary. (Correction of death notice in the

Jan. 2 issue, page 13.)

**Martens**—Tina, 92 (b. Feb. 2, 1924; d. Jan. 2, 2017), Bergthaler Mennonite, Altona, Man.

**Nickel**—Wally, 86 (b. May 3, 1930; d. Dec. 11, 2016), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

**Neufeld**—Agatha, 93 (b. Oct. 24, 1923; d. Jan. 10, 2017), Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

**Schellenberg**—Evelyn (nee Riekman), 86 (b. March 6, 1930; d. Dec. 26, 2016), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

**Schmidt**—Robert, 69 (b. Sept. 2, 1947; d. Dec. 27, 2016), North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

**Thiessen**—Agnes, 91 (b. June 5, 1925; d. Jan. 5, 2017), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

**Thiessen**—Ilse (nee Mueller), 90 (b. Jan. 14, 1926; d. Jan. 1, 2017), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

**Wieler**—Alfred, 82 (b. Sept. 1, 1934; d. Jan. 7, 2017), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

## A moment from yesterday



This photo tells the story of a congregation's diaspora. The last *ältester* (ordained elder) of the Chortitza Mennonite Church in Ukraine was Heinrich Winter. The church was the first Mennonite congregation organized in Imperial Russia, and thrived up until the Soviet era, when the government made religious activities extremely difficult. In 1943, most of the congregation fled to Germany. *Ältester* Johann Wichert took this photo of Winter with the church's last communion cup in 1948. The Winter family emigrated to Leamington, Ont., that same year. Where the cup is now is a mystery. Family lore says it was sent to a Mennonite congregation in South America.

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

*Photo: Johann Wichert / Mennonite Archives of Ontario*



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



PHOTO © ISTOCK.COM/NATIKKA

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

# The raspberry Bible

GORDON ALLABY

I love raspberries. They are wonderfully sweet, beautiful and slide nicely off their core when picked. Raspberries produce abundantly in most conditions; they contain antioxidants, vitamin C and other beneficial nutrients; yet the thorns can be a bit of a hazard. The one notable downside to growing them is that they aggressively spread, and thus can take up a lot of room if left unchecked. Still, the sweet delight of the fruit always surpasses the cost of pin pricks and corralling the advancing shoots.

Our home where my youngest daughter was born already had a large raspberry patch, with room to spread. By the time Katherine was 2, she had already learned to be my helper picking the ripe fruit. She bravely endured the thorns and the occasional sour picked-too-soon berry. She quickly became a good judge of ripeness. In season, picking berries was one of our daily activities, and we enjoyed sharing the surplus with our neighbours.

Just before Katherine turned 5, we moved to Saskatchewan. Of course, our new home had to have raspberries, so I secured some starts from a friend. By the second year, I was fighting to keep them contained in our small backyard. Nevertheless, they rewarded us with sweet fruit that Katherine and I joyfully picked and feasted on.

When Katherine was 10, we moved to a place in the country, only six miles

away. Since the acreage didn't have any raspberry plants, I again had to acquire some starts. The transplanted raspberries were free to spread at will, and by the third year they were producing bountifully.

Katherine had also grown in those three years, and she was developing many interests beyond our home's sphere. When she was between her social activities, I would remind her that there were lots of ripe raspberries to be picked. Yet she rarely, if ever, took the time to go pick them. I would end up picking most of them but would save some for her.

I became rather annoyed with her when I discovered they were never picked. That seemed such a waste, and I told her so. I still loved raspberries, but they had now become a source of friction between the two of us. Subsequently, I was surprised when Katherine again insisted we have raspberry plants at our new home in Waterloo, Ont., where we moved when she was 15.

Our new yard is small, and controlling the raspberries would be a burden. Regardless of my reluctance, Katherine again implored that we "just had to have raspberries." She stressed, "Our homes always had raspberries." Yet in spite of her insistence that we have raspberries, she never took the initiative to pick them, even when I frequently reminded her that they were ripe. Considering all the work

I did to provide them for her, I became quite irritated by her negligence.

One evening, as I was picking the ripe berries alone, with sadness I reflected how Katherine and I used to harvest them together and that we didn't do much of anything together anymore.

Suddenly, it hit me. It was never about the raspberries! The raspberries were not that important. I realized that Katherine insisted that we have raspberries because that was a joyful activity we shared together. So I tested my new insight. I quickly went into the house and called out, "Katherine, do you want to pick some raspberries with me?" Immediately, she responded, "Sure, I'll be right there."

For the first time in years, Katherine and I picked raspberries together, and it was wonderful. We both commented on how great the raspberries tasted as we reached through thorny branches for more. When we were finished, she carried the bowl of raspberries to be shared into the house and went on her way.

I sat down on the deck, thanking God to have learned this lesson while Katherine was still living with us. I love raspberries, but they are far better when shared, especially with someone you love. It turned out that the best benefit of raspberries is how they invite us to tenderly be together.

Perhaps, the Bible is like raspberries. The Bible is an amazing book full of spiritual nutrients and is loved by many. Yet I wonder when we squabble about whose interpretation is correct, are we missing a deeper truth? If the Bible is hurting loving relationships, then maybe our focus and our expectations are wrong. Maybe the importance of the Bible is how it can bring us to better and loving relationships with God, each other and creation. It shouldn't tear us apart.

I pray that we will discover God's living Spirit in the Bible that mends, heals and brings us together in spite of the thorns. Let us enjoy and share the fruit of the Spirit; it is very good indeed. ☿

*Gordon Allaby is lead minister of Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont.*

## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

# 'Departure conversations'

*MCC, MC Canada respond to dismissal concerns raised in 2016 feature 'When your services are no longer required'*

BY WILL BRAUN

Senior Writer

Henry Neufeld's feature last summer (Aug. 29, 2016, page 4) about the firing and layoff practices of some Mennonite organizations touched a nerve. Only one *Canadian Mennonite* story last year was viewed more times online, and numerous people responded with letters to the editor.

Some people shared their own stories of hurt resulting from termination experiences. Some expressed dismay. One person, former Mennonite Church Canada staff member Elsie Rempel, told of healing steps that had been taken by her former employer following a painful layoff due to downsizing.

Some of the examples in Neufeld's feature were layoffs as a result of budget shortfalls and others were individual dismissals for other reasons. The two are distinct, but both can be highly traumatic and often awkward. It is highly uncomfortable when, within our community of faith, someone is fired for a misdeed or job performance deemed inadequate. Feelings among friends, family, co-workers and fellow church members can be intense. Layoffs can likewise create turmoil.

In most cases, the organization firing or laying off cannot comment publicly for professional and legal reasons. Sometimes no one talks, except in hushed tones. It can get messy. It scars lives and tarnishes the reputation of organizations.

Removed from the constraints of discussing any single case, I asked Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and MC Canada to comment on what this discussion looks like from their perspective. They have faced serious allegations from numerous people, and MC Canada will soon face another round of layoffs.

Both organizations say they have learned

from past experience. Rempel's comments of healing attest to that in the case of MC Canada.

At MCC, Karen Grace Pankratz says, "MCC has certainly learned from these cases," referring to controversial dismissals. She notes that she was not personally involved in any of the cases raised by Neufeld or in subsequent letters, but says MCC has "really worked hard to use mediation before and after terminations." She also says the previous informal understanding that MCC would generally move people on after three three-year terms is

no longer the case, nor are the three-year terms themselves. Pankratz also says that practices around counselling for staff and their families during terminations are more generous than in the past.

Pankratz points to the recent Wineskins restructuring process during which numerous jobs were lost or moved. She says people affected were informed about 10 months in advance and were given generous severance packages. Of course, not all church organizations have the financial capacity to offer that.

She also says it can be frustrating at times that MCC cannot comment publicly on difficult personnel issues.

Dan Dyck, director of church engagement-communication for MC Canada, says that since releasing five staff due to funding shortfalls in 2015, the organization has increased frequency of all-staff

meetings to bring updates regarding the Future Directions process. Senior staff have also encouraged other employees to discuss concerns with supervisors. Dyck says leadership is trying to "be more sensitive to stressors staff may be experiencing," given the knowledge that more layoffs lie ahead, presumably some time after an expected October assembly to decide on a Future Directions proposal. (See "Save the date" story on page 16 for more information on the upcoming assembly.)

Staff can also use work time to access professional vocational counselling services through the MC Canada benefit plan.

Dyck says leadership has had "departure conversations" with staff since last September. "We want to give as much notice as possible" he says, noting that some would prefer working notice and an "opportunity to finish well," while others would prefer "immediate release and severance."

Dyck says he is "extremely proud" of each of his colleagues. "Their love of the church and their continued willingness to

*One person, former Mennonite Church Canada staff member Elsie Rempel, told of healing steps that had been taken by her former employer following a painful layoff due to downsizing.*

work in it in the midst of long-term uncertainty is exemplary," he says, adding that "they are putting others first, and are trusting that their own situations will work out."

When it comes to job uncertainty, Dyck notes that executive staff such as him "are in the same boat" as all staff. "We have to do staff releases," he says, "and then quite likely face release ourselves."

Dyck reflects on his own process. "Personally, I have been on a journey of entrusting to God the future of MC Canada, my colleagues and myself," he shares. "We have a fantastic and supportive staff community here. I will dearly miss colleagues and my work, should my work end. But God is much bigger than my work, my workplace community, or my personal vocational hopes and dreams." ❧

# Changing of the guard

*New publisher, executive editor named to lead Canadian Mennonite*

BY HENRY KRAUSE

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service

**T**obi Thiessen and Ginny Hostetler have been chosen by the board of Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (CMPS) Inc. to lead *Canadian Mennonite's* magazine and digital news services into the future, beginning March 20. The positions of publisher and executive editor, initially two-year appointments, will replace the former role of publisher/editor currently filled by Dick Benner, who will retire on March 31.

## **Publisher**

Tobi Thiessen, a member of Toronto United Mennonite Church, will serve as publisher, with primary responsibility for the sustainability of *Canadian Mennonite* (CM), including business, financial, advertising and fundraising aspects, as well as relationships with our funding partners: Mennonite Church Canada and the area churches.

As a former long-time chair of the CMPS board, Thiessen comes to this half-time role with a deep knowledge of both the national church and the mission and history of CM.

As a member of the CMPS board, she says, "I enjoyed the face-to-face interaction with my sisters and brothers in the church. We were united in our shared purpose in the magazine, and yet had differences in theological perspectives or local congregational worship styles. The differences enriched our discussions and even strengthened our ability to present a publication we can all share. As publisher, I will continue to promote CM as a place for Mennonites to meet each other, inspire one another and dialogue with each other on issues facing all of us in the Mennonite Church Canada constituency."

Thiessen holds a bachelor of commerce



**Tobi Thiessen**

degree from Queen's University and an international MBA from the Schulich School of Business. Recently, she adapted a resource for MC Eastern Canada called "Church Office in a Box," providing guidance on running a church well and in compliance with Canada Revenue Agency

*'As publisher, I will continue to promote CM as a place for Mennonites to meet each other, inspire one another and dialogue with each other on issues facing all of us in the Mennonite Church Canada constituency.'*  
(Tobi Thiessen)

requirements.

She has lived in Alberta and Saskatchewan, where she attended Rosthern Junior College, and has served as a long-time church treasurer, a member of the MC Eastern Canada Administrative and Financial Services Council and as a member of the CMPS board for nine years, including chair for six years. She currently sits on the board of the Toronto Mennonite Festival, a Mennonite Central Committee relief sale.

Thiessen is fluent in Japanese, and she and her husband Harold are parents of three nearly grown sons. A cellist, she enjoys organizing musical ensembles at church, as well as teaching preschool Sunday school, gardening and Sudoku.

## **Executive editor**

Virginia (Ginny) Hostetler, a member of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., will serve full-time as executive editor, expanding on the position she has held as web editor at CM since October 2013.

She will primarily be responsible for content of the magazine and



**Ginny Hostetler**

digital products, working together with the editorial team and correspondents across Canada to shape the news, features and reader interaction that have made CM a "village square" for Mennonites across the country. Her experience and ongoing effectiveness in drawing readers to CM's content through social media will help position the magazine well for an increasingly digital future and a rapidly changing church and societal landscape.

"The Mennonite church in Canada is discerning new ways to live out faithfulness to God's calling," she says. "In this changing reality, CM is committed to educating, inspiring, fostering dialogue and

building community among its readers. Let's encourage one another as we seek to share the good news of Jesus Christ from an Anabaptist perspective."

Hostetler grew up in Brazil as the daughter of Mennonite missionaries and graduated from Eastern Mennonite College (now EMU), where she worked on the student newspaper. She later did freelance writing and worked as an editor on various publications and curricula at Mennonite Publishing House.

She spent several years in Israel, working in communications at the (Christian) Nazareth Hospital and later Nazareth Village, a re-creation of life in Nazareth in Jesus' day.

A Canadian/U.S. dual citizen, she is fluent in Portuguese and speaks some French, Spanish, Arabic and Hebrew. A lover of books, travel, singing and movies, she leads worship, does biblical storytelling and especially enjoys conversations around issues of faith and culture. She is continuing her education in digital publishing at Ryerson University.

She and husband Michael have two grown children. ❧

*Henry Krause is chair of the CMPS board.*

# Making space for disagreement

*Second MC Manitoba meeting on 'creating space' for same-sex issues was much more congenial*

STORY AND PHOTO BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY

Manitoba Correspondent  
MORDEN, MAN.

After stormy weather prevented many rural members from attending a Mennonite Church Manitoba meeting in Winnipeg on Jan. 12 on how to implement the Being a Faithful Church (BFC) 7 resolution passed last summer in Saskatoon, Morden Mennonite Church hosted a second gathering late last month.

Even before any talking began, the physical format of the meeting set a very different tone from that of the previous gathering in Winnipeg: round tables well-suited to collaboration replaced the more-confining rows of pews.

Area church moderator Peter Rempel began by addressing the issue on everyone's mind. Naming the sad turn of events that had derailed debate in Winnipeg—wherein one speaker interrupted another due to concern about hurtful remarks and induced the latter to leave the building (“Let him speak,” Jan. 30, page 18)—Rempel made the following introductory remarks:

“At our last meeting in Winnipeg I said it would be a sin for us to split over this issue, but today I would like to amend those remarks by saying that coercion in a matter of conscience is a greater sin than permitting division. We do not want to be coercive institutionally, procedurally or verbally—neither amongst ourselves, or on the board, or in MC Canada leadership. I regret to apologize that I was not able to restrain the coercive tone of some of the remarks that were made at our last meeting.”

He went on to acknowledge that the presence of each member in attendance in Morden testified to their heartfelt concern over the issue at hand and the people impacted by the area church's conversations. He also clarified, verbally and in writing on



*Erwin Warkentin, a member of Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, one of only a couple of member congregations that have named themselves openly 'affirming,' explains that even having adopted this label as a congregation, between individual members 'disagreements on biblical interpretation are common, but we are still one church.'*

two large charts at the front of the room, the guidelines for conversation that would define the evening's discussion and any interventions on his part during the open mike:

- **RESPECT ONE** another's faith;
- **BE CONCISE**; and
- **FOCUS ON** the topic “creating space.”

He further clarified that the space for churches to continue in a more traditional understanding of, or approach to, this issue “is not under threat.”

The effectiveness of Rempel's opening remarks, and perhaps the flurry of online debate that followed Winnipeg's meeting,

showed through in the open-mike session. Speakers from many varying perspectives expressed their concerns and hopes relating to the proposed course of action, with no disruption at all.

Walter Dyck of Blumenort Mennonite Church in Gretna and Hilda Schultz of Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church in Winnipeg both confessed that they are “unable to conscience” the kind of space-making the area church and some congregations are proposing.

Del Epp of Glenlea Mennonite Church, hypothetically entertaining the idea that homosexuality may be sinful, asked rhetorically, “Do we cast people out over other sins?”

Similarly, John Sawatzky of Morden Mennonite expressed worry that the church, which he described as a “hospital,” is trying to “clean [sinners] up” before allowing them in to receive care.

Erwin Warkentin, a member of Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, one of only a couple of member congregations that have named themselves openly “affirming,” explained that even having adopted this label as a congregation, between individual members “disagreements on biblical interpretation are common, but we are still one church. Space is crucial. We talked for a while about having a vote, but we decided that would be too divisive, so we had no vote. Instead, we made space for disagreement.”

One feeling was shared all but universally among those gathered, and that was eagerness for an ongoing church discussion that recognizes the genuine convictions of all participants.

Pleading for all members of the area church to focus on what unites, Diane Hildebrandt of Morden Mennonite reminded those gathered that “Mennonites are doers. As Mennonites, we think we are the peacemakers. But it is Jesus who is the peacemaker.” ☞




**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.

# 'Moving forward together'

*Survey shows MC B.C. almost evenly split on BFC 7*

By AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent  
RICHMOND, B.C.

*Option A: Being a Faithful Church (BFC) 7 remains and Mennonite Church B.C. chooses to have congregations trust each other.*

*Option E: MC B.C. rejects BFC 7 and chooses to leave the national church. (The background to this option is the view that BFC 7 overturns the area church's re-covenanting process done in 2006 and 2007, as well as the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.)*

These two diametrically opposed options, among a total of six, received the most first-place votes in a survey presented to congregants of MB B.C. churches late last year by the area church's Leadership Board. The survey was designed to help the area church move forward in the wake of last summer's national church resolution that "created space" for congregations to differ on same-sex marriage.

Almost 30 percent of MC B.C. members completed the survey. Respondents were asked to rank all six options in order of preference (from 6 points for first place to 1 point for sixth place), with the resulting percentages showing approximate evenness among the six options (between 18 percent for Option A and 15 percent for Option E).

However, raw numbers showed the greatest number of first-place votes went to Option A (195), with Option E having the second most (165). But 30 surveys were turned in with Option E marked as the only choice, as some people felt that giving credibility to options they didn't like at all skewed the survey; those 30 were considered incomplete and were not counted in the official results. Had they been counted, Options A and E would have finished in a dead heat for first-place votes.

The other options were:

**B:** BFC 7 remains and MC B.C. chooses to have congregations covenant to not perform same-sex marriages and to not call pastors who are in a same-sex relationship. (17 percent, 51 first-place votes)

**C:** BFC 7 remains and MC B.C. chooses to

leave space for individual congregations to become area-church-only members if they are unable to accept BFC 7. (17 percent, 2 first-place votes)

**D:** MC B.C. rejects BFC 7 but still chooses to remain networked with the national church. (17 percent, 36 first-place votes)

**F:** MC B.C. rejects BFC 7 and chooses to leave the national church; however, individual congregations have the option to affiliate nationally. (16 percent, 18 first-place votes)

The results of the survey and other topics, including the Future Directions process, were addressed by almost 200 interested members of area church congregations gathered at Peace Mennonite Church on Jan. 21 for an open roundtable discussion. Participants were asked to respond to the questions: "What insight or wisdom did you hear at your table?" and, "How do you hear God's wisdom?"

Executive minister Garry Janzen encouraged the group by talking about relationships.

"I hope we believe that our relationships will still have integrity," he said. "Let's come as a people of God together. That would be a church that is bigger than ourselves, a beacon of hope in a changing world. ... [Let us] continue to be in dialogue with

those whom we disagree—even though it's hard, and we have a disagreement—and not only hunker down with those of the same mind. Love forgives again and again."

Some called for more time to process the issues.

"Not all of us here today are coming with the same background, length of time, congregational polity or conference polity," said Barry Lesser, pastor of Yarrow United Mennonite Church. "Wisdom for us is to take the time to process those shortcomings, not assuming we need to arrive at a decision today. I think we need to follow the leading of the Spirit! Let's take the time to talk to each other."

The Jan. 21 meeting was a followup to one on Oct. 22, 2016, that was a time of discussion and sharing of ideas following the passing of BFC 7 at last summer's MC Canada assembly. That decision had met with mixed reactions in MC B.C., and sparked the need for further discussion. At the October meeting, a group of 11 pastors

*'I think we need to follow the leading of the Spirit!  
Let's take the time to talk to each other.'*

*(Barry Lesser, Yarrow United Mennonite Church pastor)*

presented an option for MC B.C. to leave the national church body.

"The responses to the [Jan. 21] meeting affirmed that this was a good format for looking at this issue," said MC B.C. moderator Lee Dyck. "This meeting wasn't an isolated event, but part of moving forward together."

Janzen commented afterward: "Even though there were some challenging questions, we were able to put together reasonable responses in a team effort. I believe that it ended well, and there were a lot of affirming comments that came to us after it was over."

Following the Jan. 21 meeting, the Leadership Board's next step is to read through all the table responses and see if any amendments should be made to a proposal for the upcoming annual general meeting on Feb. 25 that will address MC B.C.'s relationship to, and interpretation of, Article 19 of the *Confession of Faith*. ❧

# Save the date

Special MC Canada assembly scheduled for Oct. 13 to 15

Mennonite Church Canada

The General Board of Mennonite Church Canada has set the date for a final review of Future Directions proposals to re-organize national and area church bodies. MC Canada delegates are invited to a special assembly from Oct. 13 to 15 in Winnipeg. The event will begin with a dinner on Oct. 13 and conclude with worship on Oct. 15. The venue, costs and other details are pending.

Church leadership and the Interim Council are currently presenting the Future Directions proposal at annual area

church events across the country, which will conclude in the spring. Feedback received will be processed and any necessary adjustments made to the plan for presentation at the special assembly.

To keep up to date with Interim Council news and proceedings, visit [futuredirectionsmc.ca](http://futuredirectionsmc.ca). Further



information about the October assembly will be published on that website and through [news.mennonitechurch.ca/releases](http://news.mennonitechurch.ca/releases) as it becomes available.



## Staff changes

### Pastoral transitions in Ontario

• **HANS PETERS** began as the minister of Milverton Mennonite Fellowship on Jan. 1. He spent the past seven years at Jane Finch Faith Community Church in Toronto as pastor. During that time he took Jane Finch from a “service ministry doing work in the community, to a church doing work in the community.” That church is now being led by three young adults from the congregation. His training includes a German *abitur* (a university prep school), some university, and courses at Emmanuel Bible College, Kitchener, Ont., as well as ongoing informal courses at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont. He graduated from the Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Transitioning into Ministry (TiM) program.



• **MARGARET NALLY** was licensed toward ordination at Erb St. Mennonite Church in Waterloo on Jan. 15. This licensing is for her work in the community, in particular at the Working Centre, a Catholic Worker-inspired complex of services, as well as for her work with women fleeing abuse at the YWCA’s women’s shelter, both in downtown Kitchener. She attended ongoing training as a spiritual director through Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. Training in the trauma program at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., also was formative in her capacity to be a responsive and compassionate spiritual caregiver at Mary’s Place and St. John’s Kitchen, both in Kitchener.



—BY DAVE ROGALSKY

## Briefly noted

### Taking the road less travelled as children of God

CHRISTOPHER LAKE, SASK.—“I am \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank).” This was how speaker Amy Peters began the 2017 Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization’s senior-high retreat at Camp Kadesh, held from Jan. 27 to 29. With journals handcrafted from recycled bulletin covers, Peters guided the 42 retreat participants through four sessions on the theme of “The road less travelled,” challenging them to think of themselves and everyone they see as children of God. She emphasized the importance of making intentional choices about how to view the world, choosing to see the good and God in every situation and person. Participants had a unique opportunity this year: an ice-climbing wall. This 12-metre wall required picks, crampon boots and a bit of determination to get to the top, but sponsors and youth alike were up for the challenge! Later, the Saturday night coffeehouse had sponsors and youth going head-to-head in a series of challenges prepared by Canadian Mennonite University admissions counsellors Catherine Richard and Alex Thiessen. The weekend wrapped up Sunday morning with a beautiful walk on Christopher Lake, foot washing, and retreat favourites from the Schellenberg worship band.

—STORY AND PHOTO BY KIRSTEN HAMM-EPP



Youth and sponsors rise to the challenge of an ice-climbing wall at the annual senior-high retreat.



## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

# Breakthrough for Shoal Lake 40's 'Freedom Road'

*Manitoba ally congregations call for renewed enthusiasm in the fight for justice*

BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY  
Manitoba Correspondent

The project that took Manitoba churches by the heartstrings nearly two years ago is finally making major gains. Early last month, the federal and provincial governments struck a financing deal with Chief Erwin Redsky of Shoal Lake 40 (SL40) First Nation that sealed the future of Freedom Road, an all-weather route that will link the community with the Trans-Canada Highway, enabling residents to access jobs, medical care and improved infrastructure.

Eileen Clarke, Manitoba's indigenous relations minister, says construction is imminent, but the work cannot start too soon to suit the locals of SL40, a man-made island straddling the Manitoba-Ontario border. When the ice is thin, the only way in or out is by a reserve-owned barge. Two days before the funding deal was settled, the barge broke down, leaving as many as 40 residents stranded on the mainland in the winter cold.

At the turn of the 20th century, SL40 was cut off from surrounding communities all but overnight when Winnipeg city planners built the aqueduct that has channelled in the Manitoba capital's fresh-water supply ever since. It is a fact that carries bitter irony, as the isolated first nation community has been under a boil-water advisory for nearly 20 years due to its own insufficient water-treatment infrastructure.

Across Manitoba, Mennonite congregations are celebrating the recent victory. Jeff Friesen, associate pastor of Charleswood Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, says that for member congregations of the Churches for Freedom Road Campaign, "this is good news," but there is still a long way to go.

"It is crucial that the momentum

gained during the Freedom Road campaign continue," Friesen says. "If we, as churches, desire to model a better way of relating to the people of SL40, we must begin to walk alongside them on their quests for justice. The story is not done with the creation of the road; much more is still needed. For example . . . it's imperative that the people of SL40 be properly consulted and included in the construction of the road. It has to be a job source for the community. If it becomes

clear that the province is moving forward with the creation of Freedom Road, but leaving the first nation out of the picture, my hope is that churches could then help augment the calls for justice."

Friesen adds that people looking to lend their support may find a resource in the group Friends of SL40, a Winnipeg gathering of local indigenous and settler artists and activists "who work at creating initiatives across the city that seek to keep the concerns of the people of SL40 in the public eye."

"A number of other people in our congregation have either already spent time at SL40 or are organizing ways to get out there in the future," Friesen says. "This gets me very excited! There is a desire among some of our members to continue working on this relationship, something that extends beyond the creation of Freedom Road." ❧

*'The story is not done with the creation of the road.'*  
(Jeff Friesen)

PHOTO BY JEFF FRIESEN



*Across Manitoba, Mennonite congregations are celebrating the recent victory for Shoal Lake 40. Jeff Friesen, associate pastor of Charleswood Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, says that for member congregations of the Churches for Freedom Road Campaign, 'this is good news,' but there is still a long way to go.*



Canadian Mennonites Marlys Neufeldt, third from right, and her daughters Siena Armstrong, second from right, and Thea Armstrong, right, take part in the Washington Women's March on Jan. 21, along with Mennonite marchers from the U.S.

## COVER STORY

# Marching in the aftermath of inauguration

Canadians join Women's March on Washington wearing their home-grown 'pussyhats'

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DOREEN MARTENS

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Canadian Mennonite women were among millions who peacefully made their voices heard for justice, equality and a host of other social causes at Women's Marches that took place across Canada and on every continent on Jan. 20, the day following Donald Trump's inauguration in Washington.

Some even made it all the way to Washington, D.C., where hundreds of Mennonites arrived by bus, plane, train and car to join in a massive, peaceful gathering estimated at more than a half-million people, far exceeding expectations and leading to human gridlock in the heart of the city.

Thea Armstrong, 15, who attends Breslau (Ont.) Mennonite Church, asked for the trip as a Christmas present and travelled by car with her mother, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate teacher Marlys Neufeldt, and sister Siena, 17. The group was invited to stay in the home of a member of the Mennonite-affiliated Washington Community Fellowship

Church, after connecting through a Facebook group called "Mennonites at the Women's March in Washington."

"It was important to me, as someone who's going to be affected [by social justice issues raised by the U.S. election] for the rest of my life, even living in Canada, because Canada is so close to the U.S.," Thea said after the march. "I found it to be really empowering to be surrounded by people who were all worried about the future and taking a stand and not being silenced."

Speakers included an "intersectional" diversity of voices not often heard in the mainstream, according to Siena. "There were some celebrities, but there were a lot of people who don't have such a mainstream voice," she said, noting that there were also lots of supportive men of all races sharing the message of working together for a more just, peaceful, loving and equitable society.

"I was really glad that my daughter encouraged me to go, not just to a closer city but the one that was at the nucleus of the

power change, and to use our power to confront the power in government and present an alternative message of peace and equity for all," said Marlys.

## Facebook group helped organize Mennonite marchers

Wendy Chapell-Dick of Bluffton, Ohio, who created the Mennonite women's Facebook group, was instrumental in helping participants communicate with each other and organize buses and accommodation, although, in the end, the hope of marching as one group was thwarted by the sheer size of the crowds and jammed cellphone signals.

Being Mennonite, it came naturally for some of the group to spend an hour at the gathering point singing songs like "The Journey is Long" and "Over My Head" together before going to the rally site, receiving appreciative response and participation from the crowds flowing around them.

Speaker after speaker on the four-hour



Mennonite messages abound along the Women's March in Washington, D.C.



*Siena Armstrong holds up a sign she and her sister Thea made for the Women's March on Washington. It quotes the lyrics from a Janelle Monáe song: 'Electric ladies, will you sleep or will you preach?' Monáe performed at the march with shout-outs to black women and the mothers of black women who have been previously shot by police.*

program reflected on the need to do more than just march, urging participants to go home to work for the good of their communities, to organize for better political solutions, and to overcome prejudice, injustice, misogyny and the oppression of marginalized people with loving action. One indication of the positive, affirming atmosphere among the enormous crowd was the fact that police didn't make a single arrest throughout the long day.

### **Taking seriously marginalized voices**

Melanie Penner of Toronto United Mennonite Church flew to Washington to attend the march and thought about how Mennonites need to take seriously the voices of marginalized people.

"The Mennonite in me was happy to affirm the value of nonviolent resistance," she said in a written reflection later. "Congratulations, you," I told myself. And then I returned home and returned to



*Pictured from left to right wearing their symbolic pink 'pussyhats': Siena Armstrong, Thea Armstrong, their mother Marlys Neufeldt, and Doreen Martens pause for a selfie during the Women's March on Washington, D.C., on Jan. 21. A friend made their hats and gave them extra ones, which they shared with people in Washington.*

social media. I read about how women of colour were treated at the march, being told they weren't being inclusive enough for reminding people that the majority of white women voted for the current president of the United States. . . .

"Like the march, our composition as Mennonites is largely white. Though our shared history is one of being outsiders and oppressed, those of us with white skin now enjoy the privilege that goes along with it. A look through the Beatitudes is a reminder of this. It is time to give the blessed ones—the mourning, the persecuted, the reviled—their time on the platform. If they do not have a platform, we must build it for them and lift them up to the microphone. If they tell us we are wrong, we must humbly repent. We will not back down; we will clear the way."

### **Final thoughts**

Being able to march behind a "Mennonites" banner with a group whose messages reflected an Anabaptist perspective was great, Thea said. "A lot of the signs [carried in the march] were kind of contradictory to the idea of fighting hatred with peace and love, and marching with Mennonites was very affirmative of being kind and taking a stance in a nonviolent way."



*The business card reads: 'What's new #Pussyhat? This hat was handknit in Kitchener, Ont., as part of the Pussyhat Project (pussyhatproject.com). Knit by Em H. (craftyvixenstudio.com).'*

"It was cool being with a group that shares your views on how to bring about change in a peaceful and loving way," Siena added. "And it was such a huge group of people united in this one cause. . . . Especially being in Washington, it felt more effective, maybe. To be in the place where the inauguration had just happened. We could see the 'aftermath' of it." ❧

## ARTBEAT

## TELEVISION REVIEW

# A not-so-pure depiction of Mennonites

*Pure.*

A Two East/Cineflix production. Created by Michael Amo. Directed by Ken Girotti. Aired on CBC, 2017.

REVIEWED BY VIC THIESSEN  
SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

CBC's new crime drama, *Pure*, which premiered on Jan. 9, has generated a lot of controversy in the Canadian Mennonite community, and for good reason.

The six-part TV serial concerns a "colony" of Old Order/Low German Mennonites in southern Ontario—no such ethnic group exists, let alone a colony—and its connection with a Mexican Mennonite drug-smuggling operation. Despite the extensive research that must have gone into the making of the show, the list of historical inaccuracies could fill this review.

But my first priority will be to analyze *Pure* on its own merits as a TV show before reflecting briefly on why—and why not—its misrepresentation of Mennonites is an important consideration.

The first episode of *Pure* begins with the execution of a Mexican Mennonite family that had sought refuge from the Mexican Mennonite mob led by Eli Voss (played by Peter Outerbridge) in Ontario. A boy escapes and is adopted by a local colony, which is led by Noah Funk, the new pastor (Ryan Robbins). But the colony's Epp family—good thing they

weren't Thiessens—is working with Voss, and threaten Noah's family if he doesn't deliver the boy to them. In the end, Noah is forced to work for Voss himself, which, from Noah's view, is an opportunity to be an informant and expose the evil in the Mennonite world. Meanwhile, Detective Bronco Novak (A.J. Buckley) is hot on the trail of all these Mennonite criminals, with the help—over the phone—of a detective in Texas (Rosie Perez).

*Pure's* production values are very high for a Canadian TV show. Indeed, the excellent cinematography that showcases the beauty of rural Nova Scotia, which stands in for rural Ontario, has been the highlight of the show. *Pure* has also attracted some of the finest Canadian actors, like Outerbridge, who do a more-than-adequate job, and Perez is a nice addition.

And while the research for *Pure* was clearly sloppy, the show does make an effort to reflect languages, customs and names used by Mennonites, and to say positive things about Mennonites. I was particularly impressed by the restraint in the show's use of violence. For a crime drama, the violence here is very tame—at least so far. *Pure* also features some strong writing and good dialogue.

However, the writing is the show's

## More should be expected from the CBC

BY ROYDEN LOEWEN

Many of you will have watched the first episode of CBC's mini-series *Pure* last night (Jan. 9). As a spectator, I was mildly entertained. As a Canadian who loves this culturally diverse country, I was troubled. As an historian who has written extensively about both the Old Order horse-and-buggy Mennonites of southern Ontario and the Low German Mennonite migrants from Mexico, I was deeply dismayed.

It is especially problematic that the show comes from the CBC, our publicly owned, national radio and TV company. It is, after all, charged with the responsibility to enhance respect and understanding among Canada's diverse ethnic and religious groups.

The show is based on a fundamental misunderstanding

of the horse-and-buggy community in southern Ontario, and creates an error-ridden depiction of a vulnerable and highly visible religious minority group within the wider Mennonite mosaic. The show seems sloppily researched and caricatures what it purports to be a real community. It gets many things wrong: the accents, the names, the dresses, the theology, the very buggy used, the church architecture, the very notion of the existence of a "colony."

Highly problematic, it conflates an actual story of a drug smuggling ring involving fringe elements—no longer linked to the church—within the Low German-speaking Old Colony Mexican Mennonite immigrant community with the horse-and-buggy, Pennsylvania

CBC IMAGE



most dubious quality. The first two episodes are neither very credible nor very compelling in their depiction of the male leads (Funk, Epp and Voss), the crimes committed and the investigation of those crimes. The only parts of the show that generated a real spark of interest for me were the family dynamics, especially in the story of Noah's daughter Tina (Jessica Clement), and her friendship with Novak's son Ben (Aaron Hale). It is doubtful whether these dynamics will sustain my interest in the long term.

What makes *Pure's* misrepresentation of Mennonites so problematic is that it feels exploitive, as if CBC is intentionally using the distinctiveness of Old Order Mennonites to attract an audience. Given that CBC is a public broadcaster, with a mandate to inform and reflect regional and cultural diversity, its reinforcement of misinformed stereotypes about Mennonites is inexcusable.

A key example is *Pure's* use of the word "Mennonites" to refer exclusively to Old Order Mennonites who use horses and buggies or paint their bumpers black, or to Low German Mexican Mennonites. Faith is shown as central to the Mennonites, but no distinction is made between Mennonite faith and ethnicity, ignoring the countless number

of Mennonites who do not share a Low German ethnicity.

As a Mennonite with Low German roots, I was distracted by the poor accents and the poor use of Low German in *Pure*, and I was disappointed with CBC for the countless inaccuracies about Mennonite life and for its desire to exploit the Mexican Mennonite drug story.

At the same time, I would caution restraint in our defence of how Mennonites are depicted in *Pure*. TV shows and films routinely exploit and misrepresent ethnic and religious groups; HBO's depiction of Mormons in its acclaimed series, *Big Love*, is an example.

And we know that Mennonites of all kinds, even the most faithful, have been guilty of a variety of sins. Instead of defending ourselves, let's use the popularity of *Pure* as a discussion-starter that allows us to share our story with others, and to reflect with them on the many ways mass entertainment has misrepresented—and continues to misrepresent—ethnic groups during the past century. %

*CBC's new crime drama, Pure, which premiered on Jan. 9, has generated a lot of controversy in the Canadian Mennonite community, and for good reason, says reviewer Vic Thiessen.*

*Dan Dyck of Mennonite Church Canada weighs in online with "Is our indignant response to Pure righteous?" at [canadianmennonite.org/pure-righteous](http://canadianmennonite.org/pure-righteous).*



Dutch-speaking Old Order Mennonites of Ontario.

In real life, the leaders from both groups talk easily about their struggle to maintain the biblically based, countercultural ways of their communities, to counter consumer culture and divisive individualism. However, the thought that one of their leaders would be overtly dishonest and engaged in illegalities in order to achieve communal purity is simply not plausible.

I am personally acquainted with the bishops and ministers—not pastors, by the way—of both the horse-and-buggy Old Order Mennonite and Old Colony immigrants from Mexico. I have repeatedly found among them qualities of honesty and integrity, and a profound respect for the law and for their non-Mennonite neighbours.

It would seem that CBC, for reasons of entertainment, has contravened its mandate to bring understanding

and respect to vulnerable groups within the Canadian multicultural mosaic. Instead of an artistic portrayal based on a serious inquiry into the nature of Canada's most traditionalist Mennonite communities—places that strive for communal wholeness, closeness to nature, simplicity and kindness—the CBC has engaged in misrepresentation, with a seemingly misguided aim to entertain and titillate.

With this show, CBC will be party to stereotyping rather than respecting, and disparaging diversity rather than promoting it. We must expect much more from our national, publicly owned media.

*Royden Loewen is the Chair in Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg. This was originally posted on the Journal of Mennonite Studies' Facebook page on Jan. 10.*

## PHOTO ESSAY

# 'Never again'?

*'Synagogues in Germany' exhibit strikes powerful chord in light of Quebec mosque shooting*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY

Manitoba Correspondent

WINNIPEG



*'Synagogues in Germany' exhibit lower level, taken from upper level of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery.*

U ntil March 4, the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery is hosting an important exhibit of new art entitled "Synagogues in Germany: A virtual reconstruction." First imagined by a group of German university students following



*Kenji Dyck, a student at Canadian Mennonite University, checks out the exhibit.*

the arson of a local synagogue in 1994, the project consists of digital reconstructions of dozens of the extraordinary synagogues that were lost to history in the 1938 *Reichspogromnacht*, in the year before the Second World War began.

The exhibit is an immersive, multi-media affair that includes projections of historical video clips, virtual tours of reconstructed synagogues, and towering text pieces (*bottom photo this page*) that narrate the timeline of political events preceding and following the *Reichspogromnacht*. Before any images can be seen, the text starts viewers out in 1933, as the newly appointed Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler passes the Law to Restore the Civil Service, which banned Jews. The grandeur of the word "restoration" immediately recalls Donald Trump's victory speech.

Further in, an info-video cuts between moving images of the reconstructions and information on their architectural history. One journalist, touring on a Monday while news of the Quebec mosque shooting was still breaking, explains that at the turn of the 20th century two styles were most popular for synagogues: neo-Romanesque and neo-Islamic.

Moving past more timeline reminders from 1938 to 1945, visitors arrive at a memorial corridor that lists the names of every synagogue lost in what came to be known among the people as "the night of broken glass" (*top photo page 23*). According to the exhibit guide, more than 1,400 synagogues and other Jewish places of worship were "destroyed or desecrated" during the pogrom.

One level up, touring stations and a documentary projection stand are provided for those who want to delve deeper





into this troubling period of history (*bottom left photo this page*).

Fighting tears, exhibit guest Jim Ludwig comments that, having grown up during the war in a Jewish family, he always knew about the figure “six million Jews,” but not about the synagogues. For him, it drives home afresh that genocide, as the exhibit manual states, is not the extermination of people, but of a people and their culture. “They tried to wipe the people out. . . . If you think about ‘never again,’ it doesn’t

exist. It’s happening all over the world, it’s happening over and over again!”

At an interfaith memorial prayer service for the Quebec shooting victims hosted by the congregation of Winnipeg’s Grand Mosque later that same night, hundreds of people, including more than a dozen local

dignitaries and government officials, turn out to demonstrate that, in Canada at least, Ludwig’s history will never be revisited upon anyone. After roughly a century, a few faint echoes of kinship with those lost synagogues still come through in the mosque’s design. ❧



*Collage of a synagogue burning during ‘the night of broken glass.’*

## BOOK REVIEW

# New ways of doing good

*An Army of Problem Solvers: Reconciliation and the Solutions Economy.*  
By Shaun Loney. Self-published, 2016, 160 pages.

REVIEWED BY WILL BRAUN  
SENIOR WRITER

I had to make my way past the sombre line-up of people waiting for welfare cheques at the band office. It was awful. I worked in the office of a northern first nation, and once a month I had to squeeze past the indignity, shame and hopelessness that silently clogged the front entrance.

That highlighted two things for me. First, welfare is not a solution; it is a dreadful lack of creativity. Never did I think “the solution is bigger cheques.” Second, people need jobs, with exceptions for those who are unable to work.

I viewed unemployment on remote first nations as hopeless. But Shaun Loney sees it completely differently. He sees through the problems to the opportunities. For all the government leaders who speak about creating jobs—almost as if their intentions will magically turn into sunnier employment stats—Loney knows how to do it.

For a decade, he has been a leading developer of social enterprises, largely among indigenous people. In his new book, *An Army of Problem Solvers: Reconciliation and the Solutions Economy* ([armyofproblemsolvers.com](http://armyofproblemsolvers.com)), Loney shares his intensely practical vision of economic reconciliation.

Reconciliation is a hot topic, and I confess that much of the reconciliation talk I hear leaves me feeling blank. Too often, it feels like a continual refinement of the articulation of problems. I hear some talk about solutions, but too often the solutions are symbolic (art projects), intangible (building relationships), or uncreative (more government money). All of these are unquestionably important and all of them leave me unsatisfied.

The vision in Loney’s book is different.



And that is why I was so grateful for the chance to help edit the project. The gist of *Problem Solvers* is well-suited to the Mennonite ethos. We are practical people; we care about doing good; we are community-oriented; we appreciate thrift and industriousness.

The book focusses largely on social enterprises, which it defines as “smaller-scale community businesses that use market forces to solve stubborn social or environmental challenges.” They combine business smarts with “community rootedness” and “basic human caring.”

I see two underlying social enterprise strategies. One is to identify waste and turn it into opportunity. A Mennonite Brethren Church in St. Catharines, Ont., is involved in a project that uses B-grade fruit from surrounding farms—fruit that would otherwise be discarded—to make jams and preserves. The project employs largely people who were previously homeless. It is not a charity. It is not a

government program. It is a community-oriented business. It turns waste into jobs. It also saves the government money, because people who used to be heavy users of social services become healthier and more self-sufficient.

Another category of social enterprise involves strategies to make better use of existing expenditures, whether government spending or the money that already circulates in poorer communities. When Loney saw the welfare line at the Garden Hill First Nation, he saw opportunity. People get their cheques, then go down to the bank to catch a water taxi to the Northern Store on a nearby island. The Northern Store, which operates as a monopoly in many remote communities, sells a wide range of food and other products. Its goal is profit.

Eventually, the people of Garden Hill set up a five-hectare farm and a local market to compete with the Northern Store, and they took over the canteen at the arena. The fact that their customers don’t have to pay the water taxi fee gives them an advantage. And they sell healthy food, which is critical in a diabetes-ravaged population. The money already spent on food in the community can be spent in ways that employ locals and promote health, instead of going to distant shareholders.

The kicker is that the federal government subsidizes a carrot that the Northern Store brings in, but not one grown locally. The subsidy only applies to food that is shipped by air. Existing government spending could be directed in ways that would be far more effective, reducing welfare and health costs, instead of buying aviation fuel.

The federal health minister’s interest was clearly piqued when I asked her about this in an interview. The minister of indigenous affairs has since visited the farm at Garden Hill.

*Problem Solvers* is full of other real-life examples of reversing colonialism and bringing tangible reconciliation.

Mennonites belong on the forefront of doing good. That should include a deep dive into the realm of social enterprise, gently offering start-up capital, ideas, business savvy, connections and caring companionship. ☞



**Briefly noted**

**New hymnal funding reaches the halfway mark**

MennoMedia is halfway to its fundraising goal for its new hymnal collection project. As of January, the organization has received \$303,000 in gifts and faith promises, or 50 percent of the fundraising goal of \$606,000. While donors can give a gift of any amount, gifts or faith promises of \$500 or more will be honoured in the printed hymnal. Giving levels have been designated with musical terms for volume, from piano (p) to fortissimo (ff). Mennonite Church Canada has given \$10,000 to support this project through an offering at last summer's assembly in Saskatoon and through its denominational budget under Faith Formation. MennoMedia is accepting donations for the new hymnal collection online at [HymnalProject606.com](http://HymnalProject606.com).

—MennoMedia



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

**How it feels to give a house away**

*Life of Pi* author Yann Martel owned a house his family wasn't using. He put it to good use, in cooperation with MCC.

[canadianmennonite.org/give-house](http://canadianmennonite.org/give-house)



**Hope was not on the ballot**

Two friends travelled from Ontario to Washington, D.C., and witnessed the U.S. election and its aftermath. They put together a video about their experience.

[canadianmennonite.org/hope-ballot](http://canadianmennonite.org/hope-ballot)



**'Befriending death' at the 'death café'**

Mennonite pastors, chaplains and congregational leaders spent a day considering end-of-life issues and opportunities for ministry.

[canadianmennonite.org/death-cafe](http://canadianmennonite.org/death-cafe)



**Caring for those who couldn't escape**

Mary Raber reports on the dire situation in Ukraine's militarized zones. Some Christians have made the decision to remain in the region to serve those in need.

[canadianmennonite.org/caring-ukraine](http://canadianmennonite.org/caring-ukraine)



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Prof fosters learning and discovery

Conrad Grebel University College

“To me, theological studies is endlessly interesting because it touches on every area of learning and discovery,” Professor Jeremy Bergen, the director of theological studies at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., says.


Much of Bergen’s theological dialogue takes place with undergraduate and graduate

students through courses in contemporary Christian theology, war and peace, and ethics, as well as in a student advisory role.

Students from all six faculties at the University of Waterloo take undergraduate theology courses, resulting in a diverse blend of student perspectives. Leading the theological studies department at Grebel, Bergen appreciates the frequent interactions with graduate students from backgrounds in areas spanning biology, art, philosophy and math, along with students who have worked as teachers, engineers, pastors and many other professions.

Recently, Bergen taught a course called “Holy Spirit,” in which he and 14 theological



*(Continued on page 30)*



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# Bringing courage and hope to Burundi

*Former child refugee is making a big difference in his homeland*

BY AARON EPP

Young Voices Editor

**J**ackson Nahayo knows a thing or two about turning tragedy into triumph.

Left for dead as a child in the jungles of his native Burundi by the rebel soldiers who kidnapped him, he eventually made his way to Canada. After receiving his education, he returned to the East African country from which he hails to start a community hospital.

“When I came back [to Burundi] . . . I asked myself, ‘How can I help with issues like malaria? How can I bring courage and hope?’ Because no one was doing anything,” he says.

The 31-year-old shared his story during a presentation at Canadian Mennonite

would experience God’s justice.

Eventually, the rebels left Nahayo for dead. But he survived. Separated from his sister, and believing the rest of his family to be dead, he fled to Congo and then to Zambia.

In Zambia, he met Rob Neufeld and Lois Coleman Neufeld, two Winnipeggers who were working for Mennonite Central Committee. He moved in with them and began going to high school. When the couple moved back to Winnipeg, Nahayo joined them.

After he graduated from high school in 2005, a friend of his found out that his family members, including his sister, were

*‘I started to realize God does things, God works beyond our little brains, our little understanding of how things work in our little world.’  
(Jackson Nahayo)*

University in Winnipeg last month. It was part of a three-month visit to Canada, during which he travelled around the country telling church groups and a variety of other Christian organizations about his story and the work he is now doing.

Nahayo was just 6 when war broke out in Gasenyi, the village in Burundi in which he lived with his family. A rebel group kidnapped him, his sister and a number of other children, and took them to their camp in the jungle. Raised in a Christian home, he told his captors repeatedly over the next six months that what they were doing was wrong and that some day they

still alive. He travelled to visit them. While the reunion was joyful, the poverty and lack of resources in Burundi troubled him.

He returned to Canada, dreaming of building a clinic in Gasenyi. He worked as a tree-planter in the summer and on oil rigs in the winter so that he could make as much money as possible to send home. Eventually, he earned a nursing degree through the University of Manitoba and Red River College so that he could gain the skills he needed to help people in his village.

At the same time, he started a  
*(Continued on page 28)*

PHOTO BY AARON EPP



*Jackson Nahayo started a clinic in the East African country of Burundi that helps thousands of people.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF JACKSON NAHAYO



*The Ubuntu Medical Clinic is a 32-bed hospital that also includes supporting agriculture projects.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF JACKSON NAHAYO



*The staff at the clinic includes three medical doctors, one midwife, two lab technicians and 13 registered nurses.*

*(Continued from page 27)*

non-governmental organization called Canadians Enabling the Education and Development of African Youth (CEEDAY), which raised funds to build a resource centre that helps orphans.

In December 2012, Nahayo returned to Burundi with a 12-metre shipping container full of medical equipment and built the Ubuntu Medical Clinic. He has lived and worked there ever since.

Today, the clinic provides healthcare to thousands of people in the area who have been affected by constant civil war and serious violence. The 32-bed hospital, which also includes supporting agricultural projects, has a staff of 22.

Although he has always kept a positive, upbeat attitude in public, Nahayo admits that he was angry with God before he discovered that his family was still alive. He describes the day he was reunited with his family as the day his heart started to heal.

“I really was always frustrated and I’d talk to God and say, ‘Why me? I [never] had the chance to grow up as a kid,’” he

says. “Then, as the heart started to heal, I started to face the reality. I started to look at the good things, and with that I started to see dots in my path. Why didn’t I get killed? Why didn’t I die? I started to see in those dots God’s grace, and from there . . . I started to realize God does things, God works beyond our little brains, our little understanding of how things work in our little world.”

Many educated young people in Nahayo’s position might decide to turn their backs on their home and live more comfortably. For him, though, that’s not an option. He wants to see his fellow Burundians prosper. It is his home, after all. As he says, “[Burundi is] where my umbilical cord is buried.” ❧

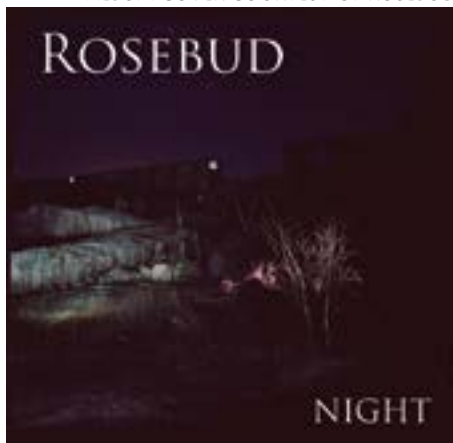
*The DeFehr Foundation in Winnipeg is accepting donations for the Ubuntu Medical Clinic. One donor has pledged to match all 2017 donations, dollar for dollar. Learn more at [ubuntuclinique.com](http://ubuntuclinique.com).*



## Songs about growing up, climate change and empowerment

*Rosebud, Teen Daze and Begonia are three music acts worth listening to*

ALBUM COVER COURTESY OF ROSEBUD



*Zach Rempel wrote the 11 songs on Night after travelling abroad for a year.*

**BY AARON EPP**  
Young Voices Editor

*In the last issue of Canadian Mennonite, we introduced you to Sparky and the Plugs, a bluegrass quartet from the Saskatoon area that got its start playing music in church. Read about three more music acts with Mennonite roots who have new albums out.*

### **Rosebud**

You guessed it. Winnipeg music duo Rosebud takes its name from the sled belonging to the titular character in Orson Welles’ classic 1941 film, *Citizen Kane*.

“[Rosebud] has kind of youth and winter and snowy connotations, so I liked it,” says Zach Rempel, 23, who is joined in the band by Nathaniel De Avila, 28.

The duo released their debut album, *Night*, as a pay-what-you-want download on Bandcamp last month. Rempel wrote the 11 songs on the album after studying and travelling in Iceland and Europe for a year.

Working on the material that would become *Night* was a way for Rempel to both reacquaint himself with his instruments

once he got home, as well as give himself a fun project to work on while he finished a degree in linguistics at the University of Manitoba.

It's an introspective collection of mid-tempo alternative folk that explores themes of growing up and figuring out one's way in life.

Rempel sings and plays guitar, bass and cello on the album. He enlisted De Avila to play drums and do the recording. Some of the material was recorded in the basement of their church, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, in Winnipeg.

The six-month recording process was rewarding, De Avila says. "There were probably three or four days where I [got frustrated and] thought, okay, this record just needs to get done, but that's not bad, considering we spent hours and hours and hours on it," he says.

### Teen Daze

When electronic musician Jamison Isaak (aka Teen Daze) first spoke with *Canadian Mennonite* in 2011, he was about to release *A Silent Planet*, an EP inspired by the C.S. Lewis novel *Out of the Silent Planet*. The story centres around Dr. Ransom and the mystical, celestial journey that he takes to a new land.

For his new album, Isaak found inspiration back on Planet Earth. "Much of my work is inspired by nature, and it's scary to think that future generations may not have that same relationship," he says in a news release accompanying his new LP, *Themes for Dying Earth*.

"The album starts with 'Cycle,' a song about my personal experience dealing with anxiety and depression, and it slowly zooms out to cover some of the external forces, like climate change, that are affecting those experiences. After touring last fall, I came home so cynical and worn-out, I decided to take all the nervous energy I had about the world and filter it through more optimistic, positive sounds."

Isaak grew up in the Fraser Valley of B.C., and studied music at Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford, where the name "Teen Daze" first emerged.

Released on Feb. 10, the new album is the followup to 2015's *Morning World*. That record consisted of vibrant indie-pop

and influenced Isaak's return to ambient electronic music on *Themes for Dying Earth*.

"I learned so much from the experience making *Morning World*, it would be a step backwards if I didn't apply it," he says.

### Begonia

Known for her work in the Juno Award-winning band Chic Gamine, Winnipeg musician Alexa Dirks announced Begonia, her solo project, last year. She released her debut EP, *Lady in Mind*, on Feb. 10. It's made up of four songs Dirks co-wrote with long-time friend Matt Schellenberg—known for his work in acclaimed experimental pop sextet Royal Canoe—and one she wrote on her own.

The 29-year-old's powerful voice has always recalled the golden age of soul music. Mixed with her musical upbringing in '90s rhythm and blues, '70s folk and Fiona Apple, and coupled with the forward-thinking pop production of Schellenberg and his Royal Canoe bandmate Matt Peters, it all makes for a unique, engaging collection of songs.

"Mostly, these songs are about love in different forms," Dirks says in a news release. "Some of them stem from a pretty important and bad breakup, but they're not all about my relationships with men. They are about my relationship to myself as a woman and the others around me while I try to understand the joy, anger and restlessness that fits into my life."

In 2015, Dirks told *Canadian Mennonite* that, for her, performing is about "communicating with people, unifying people through music and also just contributing to something beautiful in the world."

She hopes that *Lady in Mind* inspires listeners. "I want people to listen to this music and feel empowered," she says in the release. "I especially want women who feel a little awkward and lost in their day-to-day life to feel like they are not alone." ❧

To learn more about these artists, visit [rosebudmusic.bandcamp.com](http://rosebudmusic.bandcamp.com), [teen-daze.com](http://teen-daze.com) and [helloworldbegonia.com](http://helloworldbegonia.com).



ALBUM COVER COURTESY OF FORCE FIELD PR



**Themes for Dying Earth marks Teen Daze's return to ambient electronic music.**

ALBUM COVER COURTESY OF ALEXA DIRKS



**Alexa Dirks co-produced Lady in Mind with two members of acclaimed experimental pop sextet Royal Canoe.**

## Promotional Supplement

*(Continued from page 26)*

studies students pondered and discussed the ambivalence many have about this subject. "Sometimes we think about the Spirit as preserving traditions, and sometimes as overturning them. Can it be both? And how to tell?" he asks. Engaging a wide range of voices, experiences and viewpoints, the class reflected on topics such as contemplative prayer, Spirit and science, and Pentecostal perspectives on the Spirit as love.

In his research, Bergen explores how Christians understand the significance of a shared past. "My study of churches apologizing for historical wrongs examines the 'tools' the church uses to wrestle with horrible things done



Jeremy Bergen

in the name of the church," he says. Bergen is also studying how the stories churches tell about specific martyrs are motivated by present concerns.

## /// 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@xplornet.com](mailto:valaqua@xplornet.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. 25:** CMU presents "A transformative moment: Seeking God in the transitions of young adulthood," a workshop for pastors and lay leaders working with young adults. For more information, visit [cmu.ca/transformative](http://cmu.ca/transformative).

**March 18:** Camps with Meaning's "Raise the roof" song-a-thon, at CMU's Great Hall, Winnipeg, from 1 to 9 p.m.

**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,

## /// UpComing

**Choirs invited to help end hunger through concert series**

Choirs across Canada are invited to sing, celebrate and raise funds to help put an end to global hunger as part of Common Vision, a new free do-it-yourself concert package from Canadian Foodgrains Bank. Common Vision builds on the success of last year's Spring into Song concert package, which involved 41 community and church choirs from B.C. to P.E.I., raising almost \$80,000 to help fund training programs for small-scale farm families in East Africa. Funds raised from this year's concerts will go to support people affected by conflict and natural disaster in places like Syria and Haiti. When choirs sign up to put on a Common Vision concert, they are sent a customizable package that includes all music, rehearsal recordings, publicity materials and detailed task descriptions, as well as one-on-one support through the Foodgrains Bank office. All music used in Common Vision are original compositions by well-known Canadian composer Ron Klusmeier and are customizable according to choir size and ability. For more information on Common Vision, or to register, visit [bit.ly/cfgb-common-vision](http://bit.ly/cfgb-common-vision), or call Tami Duff, the Foodgrains Bank's resource coordinator, toll-free at 1-800-665-0377.

—Canadian Foodgrains Bank

## /// OnGoing

**Tesatawiyat: Come in**

WATERLOO, ONT.—*Tesatawiyat* means "come in" in the Mohawk language. In that spirit, the Grebel Gallery invites the public to come in to enjoy a community art project featuring 19 photographs of first nation families in their homes. The exhibit, fittingly named *Tesatawiyat*, is a partnership between the Grebel Gallery, artists Bryce Kanbara and Mina Ao, and the Waterloo Aboriginal Education Centre at St. Paul's University College. The exhibition also features the painting "Travelling Through" by well-known Mohawk artist Shelley Niro, taken from her Indian Summer series. The exhibit is already attracting the attention of a variety of departments at the University of Waterloo; professors are using *Tesatawiyat* as an opportunity to enrich student learning by bringing students into the space for teaching and reflection. The exhibition opened on Jan. 25 and will be on display until April 13. Exhibit hours each week are 8:30 a.m. to 10 p.m., Monday to Thursday; 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., Friday; and 1 to 5 p.m., Saturday.

—Conrad Grebel University College



Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

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

**April 29,30:** Faith and Life Choirs concerts: (29) Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.; (30) Morden Mennonite Church, at 3 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. 28:** Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, presents "Building a global low-carbon economy piece by piece" at 4:30 p.m. Speaker: Scott Morton Ninomiya.

**March 3:** Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, presents the 2017 Rodney and Lorna Sawatsky Visiting Scholar Lecture. Speaker: Mary Jo Leddy. Topic: "Room enough for hope: Canada's response to the refugee 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](mailto: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 door or at Grebel's main office.

**April 22:** Women of MC Eastern Canada Enrichment Day, at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Topic: "Body and soul." Speaker: Carol Penner.

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



## Classifieds

### Announcement

Connecting Families-East Retreat May 19-21 at Laurelville Mennonite Church Center. Hear Amy Yoder McGloughlin present "Healing Along The Way: Church At Its Best." Amy pastors Germantown Mennonite Church. Connecting Families welcomes LGBT people and their families and allies to a weekend of sharing common thoughts regarding sexual minority concerns as they affect families, friends, and churches. Request registration at [connectingfam@gmail.com](mailto:connectingfam@gmail.com).

### Employment Opportunities



**Employment Opportunity  
Youth & Young Adult Minister**

Douglas Mennonite Church, a thriving mid-sized congregation in suburban Winnipeg, is seeking a Youth & Young Adult Minister. This is a full-time position commencing summer 2017. Applicants are invited to submit their confidential expressions of interest to, or request further information from, Darryl Neustaedter Barg (Search Committee Chair, Douglas Mennonite Church) at [dnbarg@yahoo.ca](mailto:dnbarg@yahoo.ca) or Rick Neufeld (Director of Leadership Ministries, Mennonite Church Manitoba) at [rneufeld@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:rneufeld@mennochurch.mb.ca). Deadline for applications is March 6, 2017.

[www.douglasmc.ca](http://www.douglasmc.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](http://thevillagecasketmaker.com).



**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](http://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](mailto:mwedler@shaw.ca) for further information or to submit a resume. A Congregational Information Form is also available from Mennonite Church Canada website.

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

PHOTO COURTESY OF MENNONITE DISASTER SERVICE



*Howard Martin, Joshua Horst and Eric Frey of the Markham-Waterloo Conference church, Elmira, Ont., take a break from rebuilding one of six homes in the Windsor-Essex region of southwestern Ontario following flooding last September that dumped 200 millimetres of rain in a 24-hour period. They and about 50 other volunteers from St. Jacobs, Elmira and Niagara areas worked under the auspices of the Ontario unit of Mennonite Disaster Services, with assistance provided by Windsor Mennonite Fellowship and Leamington United Mennonite Church.*

## God at Work in the World Snapshots

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



*Myeengun Henry, right, an indigenous elder and traditional counsellor from the Chippewa of the Thames First Nation, near London, Ont., tells a post-flood re-creation story during the children's time at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., on Jan. 30, and also the story of his own learning from vision quests and his elders about the land being there for everyone, including settlers. His presentation was the second of four in a series on indigenous relations at Stirling. Other speakers included Derek Suderman, associate professor of religious and theological studies at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.; Henriette Thompson, the Anglican Church of Canada's director of public witness for social and ecological justice; and Lowell Ewert, director of the peace and conflict studies program at Grebel. Looking on is Josie Winterfeld, Stirling's missions, peace and justice and outreach worker.*