

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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EDITORIAL

The past as prologue

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

“While Anabaptists affirm the inspiration and trustworthiness of Scripture, we are not strict literalists,” writes Palmer Becker in his just-released book, *Anabaptist Essentials*. This Canadian pastor, educator and missionary makes his point from no less than our *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, a document being held up as something of a Mennonite creed by some biblical literalists.



is having on our young people who just wish we could move past this issue and engage in the more pressing challenges of the 21st century.

Read *Young Voices* and catch the excitement as our young adults engage in improving indigenous relations, raising awareness of environmental degradation, using their creativity in music and the arts to enrich worship, and developing a global worldview through their experiences in Mennonite

Central Committee (MCC) programs in Third World countries.

Anabaptist Essentials can give us the anchor we need as things move rapidly toward a new structure for Mennonite Church Canada with a proposal before church representatives who make up an Interim Council. That proposal will be considered in a special delegate assembly in Winnipeg from Oct. 13 to 15.

Given the relatively short 17-year lifespan of MC Canada, and the much shorter time—five years—taken to consider Future Directions for the denomination, we are not sure the average person in the pew has a good grasp of the significance of this “happening,” nor has a keen interest in its outcomes.

While the goal of the Future Directions process is to “revitalize MC Canada,” it is unclear whether the “priesthood” has, or is, tuning in with any enthusiasm.

Part of it is a matter of semantics and the plethora of Mennonite acronyms. Let’s see: Is it MC Canada or MCC

Canada? Or, since the nomenclature went from conferences to area churches, and the soon-to-be “regional” churches, what differentiates MC Eastern Canada from MC B.C., for instance?

In a section on “discernment through teaching,” Becker asserts correctly that “there is currently considerable anxiety in many Mennonite circles about biblical literacy. More and more opportunities for study are emerging, however. These include seminars of various kinds, workshops at annual conferences, webinars launched by seminaries and a variety of online courses from different sources.”

He then urges the next logical step in discernment by calling for dialogue through small groups, which he says is essential for believers to be accountable: “Congregations that are experiencing renewal and growth inevitably have a strong emphasis on small groups.”

With this Anabaptist primer, Becker has given us a blueprint that will both anchor us and guide us through the next stages of the transition process. He calls forth in new and refreshing ways the biblical and spiritual principles and core values that have guided us as a people of God on a nearly 500-year journey since our beginnings.

His emphasis on “giving and receiving counsel” is a bulwark against an individualism that leads to division and an emphasis on “purity,” rather than growing in grace and reliance on the Holy Spirit to guide our thinking as we embark on the uncharted waters of the 21st century post-Christendom era.

Becker’s book is the foundation for a new *Begin Anew* series of studies being made available for congregations as they find their way through a time of political upheaval, a turning away from religion in general, global unrest, and a growing sense of nationalism and isolation worldwide.

ABOUT THE COVER:

‘All levels of belief—or lack of it—are present in our churches and the world on Easter morning, and they hear the proclamation, “He is risen indeed,”’ writes Donita Wiebe-Neufeld in our Easter feature, ‘Rolled away,’ on page 4.

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Guiding values:

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

Seeking and speaking the truth in love • Open hearts and minds in discerning God's will

• Covenantal relationships and mutual accountability

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In a sermon she preached last Easter, **DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD** of Edmonton First Mennonite Church asks, "[I]f Christians all around the world truly and deeply believe that when the stone was rolled away, Jesus is alive, wouldn't it change things? Well, wouldn't it?"

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ELSIE REMPEL, who didn't participate in organized provincial or national Mennonite women's groups in the past, is finding Mennonite Women Canada a helpful resource later in life.

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MC Canada and Christian Peacemaker Teams are preparing a Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights from Kitchener, Ont., to the nation's capital, where participants will advocate for Bill C-262 on Parliament Hill.



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Three young adults talk about their passion for agriculture in 'Field of Dreams,' and **KATRINA WOELK** takes part in a panel discussion on how churches relate to young adults and vice versa in 'Finding belonging,' both written by YV editor **AARON EPP**.

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NATASHA KRAHN



Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press



Printed in Canada

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH FEATURE

Rolled away

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

*Based on a sermon she preached on Easter Sunday,
March 27, 2016, at First Mennonite Church in Edmonton*

[I]f Christians all around the world truly and deeply believe that when that stone was rolled away, Jesus is alive, wouldn't it change things? Wouldn't there be a tremendous energy unleashed in us, a passion for loving each other that would overcome selfishness, a relief from the pain of loss, a lack of fear of death, an utter joy in the absolute knowledge that God is there always?

Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. I always love this joyful affirmation of life and hope on Easter morning. When it is still grey and cold outside, when the world news is so overwhelmingly negative, when many are dealing with losses and heartache, it is so amazing to be able to say: "Christ is risen. He is risen indeed."

This is the joyful centre of our faith, that God was, is, and is yet to come, and we are a part of this story that is not just a story. Even in—and maybe especially in—our dark places, God is. We have a faith identity that joyfully lives forward into each day, knowing that God is life anew. Hope instead of fear. Light instead of darkness. Love instead of hate. It is such a needed message for individuals and the world.

I wish we believed it.

I know that doesn't sound quite right because people come to church on Easter morning. Of course, we believe in the resurrection, don't we? We hear the story, we say the words, we try to follow Jesus' teachings, and we live in hope that someday there will be salvation, reconciliation, life after death, the lion with the lamb.

Like Mary, Peter and the beloved disciple, we bring our questions with us on Easter morning. But if Christians all around the world truly and deeply believe that when that stone was rolled away, Jesus is alive, wouldn't it change things? Wouldn't there be a tremendous energy unleashed in us, a passion for loving each other that would overcome selfishness, a relief from the pain of loss, a lack of fear of death, an utter joy in the absolute knowledge that God is there always?

So why, then, if we are believers, do we struggle with fear of death, wars, greed, petty theological arguments, brokenness, addictions and the darkness of the soul?

Christ is risen, he is risen indeed. Perhaps sometimes we aren't able to say this so enthusiastically. But that is part of the original story, too. The disciples, that first morning when confronted by an impossibly empty tomb, were not uniformly joyful.

Mary is the main character in John's story of the empty tomb. She is emotionally distraught, so she shows up alone, in the dark . . . and finds it open. This sounds awful, creepy even, like the set-up to a horror movie or a *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* episode. We wonder what might come out of that empty place.

Mary doesn't immediately celebrate either. She doesn't proclaim resurrection when she first sees the open tomb. She also doesn't panic but does the practical thing. She assumes there



All levels of belief—or lack of it—are present in our churches and the world on Easter morning, and they hear the proclamation, 'He is risen indeed.'

has been a robbery or that the Romans have taken the body. She doesn't go into the tomb; after all, if there are robbers, they might still be there. Plus, a tomb is a scary place; no one wants to be around a dead body, especially a few days old.

So she runs to tell the upsetting news to the disciples. Peter and the other disciple run back to the tomb, followed by Mary. Peter goes in first. He sees the grave clothes. The cloth that had covered Jesus' face was neatly folded and set to the side, which is strange. Grave robbers would not have bothered with making things neat; they were only interested in valuables and would have left the body. If Roman soldiers had taken Jesus, they would not have unwrapped him. Nothing here makes sense, and there is no indication from Peter that he believes Jesus has risen.

Because faith comes a bit slowly for Peter. He is emotionally wrung out, completely numb from the last week: the trial, his denials of Jesus, the crucifixion, the hiding. Peter needs time, he needs to see more and talk with the others.

For the other disciple mentioned in John 20, faith comes quickly. In verse 8 it says he *"went in; he saw and he believed."*

After they see the empty tomb, Peter and this other disciple return to their homes. That's it. The story is a let down here. Why aren't they running home? Why isn't Peter yelling about robbers or Romans, or something? Why isn't the disciple who believed shouting out "He is risen"? I think they are still confused, mystified, at a loss for what to do.

And Mary, she stays behind, alone again and weeping. Now, she is able to get close enough to the tomb to look for herself. She is overwhelmed with grief. Her reaction is so understandable for people who have lost a loved one. She is drawn to the tomb because she wants to be close to him, unable to go back to her home and try to live normally.

This time of grief is important. It is important for Mary not to jump too quickly to the joy she will eventually find. Many of us have felt this way right after the funeral of a loved one. It's hard to go home, to do regular things, to

move on. It's painful to hear people say things like "they are in a better place," as if we are somehow wrong to feel the grief and pain, and we should move on immediately.

In the March 2016 issue of *Christianity Today*, columnist Courtney Reissig writes: "Knowing the joy of the resurrection requires us to acknowledge the pain of death." She encourages people to not ignore their pain or to try to minimize their loss. She questions the trend toward happy funerals that minimize the loss of the deceased, saying, "a joyful focus on the resurrection—and the push to celebrate—can overshadow the truth about death. . . . [I]n order to know the good news of Easter, we have to endure Good Friday and Holy Saturday first. We know the truth, but still we feel the pain."

Mary feels the pain keenly. She is so distraught that angels do not frighten her; she just answers them with grief. Even when she looks right at Jesus—through tears she does not recognize him—she just goes on in her grief, asking if this "gardener" knows where the body is.

This is one of the most moving encounter stories I can think of. When Jesus tenderly calls Mary away from her tears to recognition, I am reminded of the assuring words from Isaiah 43: *“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.”*

The Christmas story is full of angels and fear nots, but now, at Easter, when we seem to need them most, we have none. Well, we have two angels, but they just ask an obvious question: “Why are you weeping?” Well, duh!

Reissig writes: “As Christians, the older we get the more we sense the need to hold this tension [between grief and joy] more fully. As we watch loved ones die, mourn with friends who lose beloved family members, and face the ever-present reality of aging in our own bodies, we know that this life is coming to a swift end day by day. We can grieve over this, while also recognizing the hope of a resurrected body for all of us who cling to the Jesus who perfectly did both. This same Jesus who wept over the reality of death sent blood rushing back through the cold veins of his dead friend [Lazarus]—and promises to give us new life too. Death is imminent, but Sunday is coming.”

Understanding is so hard. But this is the crux of the story. When you meet Jesus at the empty tomb through the story you’ve heard over so many Easters, how do you understand?

This year, in the huge overarching sense, I know that God is God, and that life is not confined to my limited and incomplete experience. It continues somehow, with God, in rich relationships after this world is finished. But here, today, resurrection means something else, too; it means something for how we keep on living, moving forward in the face of difficulty and death.

Those days when we feel wrung out, demeaned, depressed or destroyed, there is hope. In those soul-destroying times, sometimes we will hear Jesus softly speak our name. We may not go back to the way things were, but looking at an empty tomb on Easter morning starts hope growing. We draw hope that maybe our experiences of grief and loss are not

The Christmas story is full of angels and fear nots, but now, at Easter, when we seem to need them most, we have none. Well, we have two angels, but they just ask an obvious question: ‘Why are you weeping?’ Well, duh!

complete endings. There is a beginning of a new and great hope for life that will not end in grief but in joy.

All levels of belief—or lack of it—are present in our churches and the world on Easter morning, and they hear the proclamation, “He is risen indeed.”

Just like Peter, some need to hear more, experience more. May hope be unleashed by this story of the stone rolled away.

For those who joyfully and easily believe, may courage and proclamation be unleashed in you.

For those who, like Mary, are paralyzed by grief, may you hear your name spoken softly in words of love so that you may find comfort, so that you may move on reassured and looking forward to joy.

For the disciples who came to the tomb and found it empty, their witness to what

they experienced birthed the church, which spread like wildfire with wild hope in new life.

If we come to believe deeply and truly that Jesus is alive, what does this rolled-away stone unleash in us? What hope, what love, what change will be unleashed in us for this hurting world? ❧



❧ For discussion

1. What are the sources of joy in your life? What are some ways that Christ’s resurrection brings hope, light and love to the church? In light of the resurrection, how do you explain our continuing struggle with the “fear of death, wars, greed, petty theological arguments, brokenness, addictions and the darkness of the soul”?
2. Donita Wiebe-Neufeld writes that, like Mary and Peter, “we bring our questions with us on Easter morning.” What are your questions as you ponder the Easter message? What does it mean to hold together the tension between grief and joy?
3. Can you think of a difficult time when you heard Jesus softly speak your name? What are some ways that we can regularly remind ourselves of the hope and joy that comes with the Easter message? How important is it to set aside a regular time for worship?
4. Wiebe-Neufeld asks, “If we come to believe deeply and truly that Jesus is alive, what does this rolled-away stone unleash in us?” Can you think of some new ways for the church to pass on the resurrection message of hope to the world?

—BY BARB DRAPER

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VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

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✉ A holy challenge to become living bodies of Christ

RE: "A YEAR of re-visioning" editorial, Jan. 2, page 2.

Thank you for challenging Mennonite Church Canada to give priority to re-visioning over re-structuring. You may be correct in suggesting that we are in danger of perishing for lack of vision (Proverbs 29:18).

On the bright side, the Future Directions Task Force members did have a vision. The vision began by asking, "What is God's Spirit calling us to in the 21st century?" Their answer was that the "local congregation is the primary setting and focal centre for worship and mission." I believe the Task Force had a vision of more than 200 Canadian congregations each functioning as a living body of Christ in their communities and world. Can someone give fresh life and structure to that vision?

(Continued on page 8)

FROM OUR LEADERS

A leadership lens on I Corinthians 13

RICK NEUFELD

What would the Apostle Paul say to leaders today? This was the question posed to participants at the recent Values-based Leadership Program that I attended. I offer one perspective of what Paul might be saying:



it profits me nothing.

4. The road to successful leadership

When I was not a leader, I spoke as if I were not a leader; I understood as if I were not a leader; I thought as if I were not a leader.

1. If I have the gift of wisdom and the ability to shape my words in eloquent sentences, but have not love, my words are just that: words.

2. If I have the gift of leadership and can implement all six thinking hats, if I've mastered all five leadership practices or eliminated all dysfunction from my team, but have not love, I am nothing.

3. If I build trust through helpful and healthy transparency, and provide all knowledge to the team, but have not love,

is risky, but filled with patience. Love is humble and lifts others up. Love gives thoughtful responses and believes the best of others. Love seeks for all to be their best selves and rejoices in integrity.

5. Love can bear the weight. Love tells the truth and is the bedrock of trust. Love inspires a vision big enough to embrace us all but is focussed enough to pursue us to the very end.

6. When I was not a leader, I spoke as if I were not a leader, I understood as if

I were not a leader, I thought as if I were not a leader. I did what was best for me or I just assumed I could not be a leader at all.

7. But when I became a leader, I knew that I could do it—I knew that we could

do it. I put the team first and my own interests—and even doubts—second.

8. So now, accepting that leadership is always demanding, risky and complex, we move on in faith, humble in spirit and confident in our calling.

9. Still remain these foundations of leadership: trust—vision—love.

10. And the greatest of these is love!

Rick Neufeld is the director of Mennonite Church Manitoba's leadership ministries.

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It will be a holy challenge for the new regional churches and their appointed national staff members to help local congregations re-envision themselves as living bodies of Christ. What will it take for us to continue doing in our communities what Christ began to do in his?

A clear vision that sees a congregation as a living

body of Christ will bring joyful action to our deeply held understandings of the church as community, discipleship and peace. By its very nature, a living body of Christ is a community engaged in discipleship, working for peace and justice as Jesus did.

PALMER BECKER, KITCHENER, ONT.

KINGDOM YEARNINGS

What music rankles you?

RYAN JANTZI

Do you ever have a Sunday when the church music stinks? In your opinion, at least? Well, that's the way it should be from time to time.

Even though I love singing old hymns, there have been Sundays when I've prayed to God that the friend I invited will come next week instead. I'm afraid that if he comes on this particular Sunday, when we'll be singing out of the hymnal, he'll think we're stuck in 1952. I worry his suspicion will be confirmed that the church is out of touch with current reality. I know it's foolish, but that's how I feel at times.

However, I must also consider how my brothers and sisters in their 70s and 80s must feel. Perhaps they're concerned that if they invite their senior friends to worship, it might be that crew of youngsters wailing away on the electric guitars again. Perhaps they are concerned it will confirm to their friends that the church only values and listens to young people.

The reality is, there should be music that bores you stiff or drives you nuts. This is because we're a people of all sorts. We're young and old, rich and poor, urban and rural, classy and redneck, snazzy and down-to-earth. This is the church of Jesus Christ in all its glory.

In Ephesians 2, Paul talks about the formerly hostile Jews and gentiles being made into one new body by the blood of

Christ. Jesus destroyed the dividing wall of hostility. He fashioned the Jews and gentiles into fellow citizens, even becoming members of one household. That's close quarters!

When we consider the cultural challenges these two groups had to work together on, we often think of circumcision or food sacrificed to idols. Do you think that musical preference was also a challenge? I imagine so! Do you think that those who were formerly pagan Ephesians felt like their ears bled when hearing the lyre? Or perhaps the Jews could have done without the Roman tuba blaring away.

If they were anything like us today, I imagine that, as these cultures mashed together into the church of Jesus Christ, there were some real challenges, including musical preferences. However, Jesus was



The reality is, there should be music that bores you stiff or drives you nuts.

at the centre. He was their focus, their life and their king. And so they learned to love one another and became this "new body" together. I'm sure they learned to put up with—and maybe even love—the music that formerly drew their ire.

In light of this, I firmly believe that we should not have churches that stick only to the hymnal. What about the newer, pop-rocky, Top-40 type of music

that connects with the musical tastes of many—particularly the youth—in our churches? Can we make room for music that sounds more like One Republic but resonates with the heart language of some as they connect with Jesus?

I also firmly believe that we should not have churches that sing only contemporary worship songs. What about the tried, tested and true hymns that speak the heart language of many, particularly our seniors? What about these glorious old tunes full of robust theology that still remind so many of God's faithfulness stretching through the ages?

Going back to my fear about my buddy coming to worship for the first time on a Sunday full of hymns: If he thinks we're a little old school and out of touch, that's okay. What matters most in the church of Jesus Christ? Is it that we entertain or stroke each desire? Or are we inviting people into a church that is a community of many loved and valued people? I hope it's the latter. I'm not simply an individual. I am a member of one body, and one member among many.

Does some church music rankle you? It should.

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.

✉ MC Canada responds to funding questions

RE: "HOW MUCH have funding losses affected Future Directions?" letter, Feb. 13, page 7.

While funding is a very real aspect of the Future Directions process, it is not the only aspect of our national and area church needing revitalization. It

would be more accurate to say that funding declines are rooted in societal and cultural changes, as Future Directions reports have indicated.

All denominations and most congregations are experiencing societal and cultural shifts that are resulting in changing giving patterns. The matrix of cause and effect is a complex one that includes many factors. For

(Continued on page 10)

GATHERING AROUND THE TABLE

Sharing food with my two families

NATASHA KRAHN

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

One of the privileges of living and travelling overseas is that you get to become a part of many different families. I've been fortunate to spend significant amounts of time with families in Australia, the Netherlands and Germany, just to name a few. But one of the most special families I have had the honour of being "adopted" by is the Jaber family in Palestine-Israel.

I first met the Jabers when I participated in a Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) short-term delegation to Hebron in 1998. As part of the experience, Atta and Rodina Jaber hosted all of us for a special dinner known as *maqlubeh* (upside-down company platter). It's really unique, we were told.

We arrived at the Jaber house, where there was a plastic tablecloth spread on the floor with lots of comfortable pillows to sit on. We gathered around, and the food was poured out in abundance onto a huge platter. As we enjoyed the dish of chicken, vegetables and rice, eating from the communal platter with pieces of pita bread, we agreed that it was indeed a special and unique experience. We sat in Atta and Rodina's house with their three small children, shared food and laughter, and really enjoyed their hospitality. Six

PHOTO COURTESY OF NATASHA KRAHN



Natasha Krahn, right, is pictured with members of the Jaber family.

As part of the experience, Atta and Rodina Jaber hosted all of us for a special dinner known as maqlubeh.

days later, that house was demolished. After the demolition, another CPTer and I spent three days with Atta and Rodina as their community grieved with them and helped them begin the process of building a new house. I spent most of the time rocking their four-month-old son, playing with their young daughters and feeling helpless, remembering the enjoyable afternoon we had spent at their house just a week earlier.

The next year, I returned to Hebron

as a full-time CPTer. I spent many hours with Atta, Rodina and the extended Jaber family, and we enjoyed many more meals together, including on occasion *maqlubeh*. Eventually, they honoured me with an Arabic name.

So when my parents came to visit from Saskatchewan in 2000, one of the most important things I wanted to do with them was introduce my two families to each other. Mom, Dad and I walked up the path to Atta and Rodina's new house, and I was so excited to finally have my two families meet. When Atta invited us to stay for a meal, I just knew it was going to be *maqlubeh*.

Since *maqlubeh* is a meal that takes a while to prepare, especially if your first task is to kill the chicken, as it is in Hebron, we had a lot of time to visit with each other. And once the pot of delicious food was dumped upside down on the huge platter, we gathered around the tablecloth spread out on the floor, pieces of pita in hand, and enjoyed this festive

meal once again. Only this time I shared it with both of my families, an honour and a privilege I will never forget.

Natasha Krahn is the former administrative assistant of Canadian Mennonite and currently holds that position with L3 Consulting Group. She enjoys finding new meals to dump upside down and share communally with others. The recipe is available online at canadianmennonite.org/maqlubeh.



(Continued from page 9)

example, there has been a huge increase in the number of registered charities in Canada since the 1990s. People are not necessarily becoming less generous, but rather they are being generous differently than they have in the past. There is a plethora of good causes to support locally, nationally and internationally. Generous congregational and individual donors have more choices for their generosity than ever before.

As to the question of whether congregational or individual giving declines are at issue, the answer is “yes” because it depends on the year. Sometimes one or the other is more or less than anticipated. Leaders, however, are cautious about how to interpret giving declines; none want to be perceived as blaming either category of donor.

Mennonite Church Canada’s audited financial statements are freely available online in annual assembly report books, and are reported each year at an annual general meeting or a national assembly. These documents are also sent to each congregation, as are twice-annual appeals presenting opportunities for giving to national church ministry. We continue to encourage congregations to share this information with their members.

DAN DYCK, WINNIPEG

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

✉ Article brings back good memories of Ottawa Mennonite

RE: “NO LONGER alone,” Jan. 16, page 24.

This article by Dave Rogalsky on Ottawa Mennonite Church brought back many satisfying memories.

When I left southern Ontario to attend medical school in Ottawa, I had been warned by my home pastor to avoid the congregation because it was too “liberal.” But after several unsatisfactory visits to evangelical churches, I went to Ottawa Mennonite.

As the final bars of the closing hymn sounded, I was approached by Bill Janzen. When he heard I was planning to go back to the student residence for a solo lunch, he informed me this didn’t meet with the usual church practice. As you can surmise, this was the first of many, many faith community dinners.

My prejudices were never met with defensive responses, and I was “loved” into fellowship. For the first time, I studied with Mennonites of many traditions, and preached my first sermons there.

It began a lifetime (so far) of exploration of different faith traditions.

Thanks for the memories.

ART WIEBE, TIVERTON, ONT.

✉ Amicable division better than coerced unity

RE: “THE ‘SIN’ of disunity” and “Let him speak,” Jan. 30, pages 2 and 18, respectively.

Thank you for the reporting and commentary on the recent Mennonite Church Manitoba special meetings on implementing the Being a Faithful Church 7 resolution. As several statements about the sin of disunity and the “sinful incident” are attributed to me, allow me to clarify and expand on these.

In my opinion, we would be sinning if we would divide over the issue of “creating space” for congregations that want to accept same-sex marriage. All of us would be participants in this sin—whether we would be separating from our denomination or remaining within it—because we would have failed to live in the unity given to us by God.

From the same perspective, all of us involved in the incident labelled as “sinful”—myself as moderator included—failed to live up to the best norms for conducting conversations about controversial issues within our church. Describing the incident as “sinful” should not imply that only one or another participant sinned.

Subsequent to making the statement about dividing being a sin, it occurred to me that as grievous as that sin is, in Anabaptist-Mennonite theology and practice coercion of conscience is an even more grievous sin. Alas, we have too-often divided rather than maintained unity when we had differences in matters of conscience.

But let us agree that we will not coerce consciences in the matter before us, even as we strive and call for unity. I would rather accept division and work toward an amicable one, than require unity and disregard the conscience of any of my sisters and brothers in Christ. And I live and work with the hope and belief that God will eventually lead us back into unity and that we will again accept God’s gift of unity in the church.

PETER REMPEL (ONLINE COMMENT)

✉ Women marchers misappropriated church logo

RE: “MARCHING IN the aftermath of inauguration,” Feb. 13, page 18.

I was most dismayed by the recent news of Canadian and American women taking part in the women’s march on Washington. Not only did these women make a huge error in judgment by supporting a protest that represented many anti-Anabaptist values, but they apparently saw fit to use the official logo of Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A. to do so.

In light of this, I believe questions need to be raised around how exactly these women were able to produce such a banner. Were they given permission from the denominations to use the logo? If so, who would allow these women to speak on behalf of the denominations at this highly politicized and publicized protest?

From past experience working in public relations, I can assure you that unauthorized use of official company branding in the corporate world is highly inappropriate, and instantly opens one up to the threat of legal action. In the church context, such behaviour should be appropriately disciplined to that prescribed in the New Testament. For this reason, I call on Willard Metzger, executive director of MC Canada, to

investigate this issue and explain what transpired and what steps will be taken as a result to address it.

Despite what the participants in this march seem to believe, they do not represent Anabaptists, at least not a silent majority of those who are undoubtedly horrified at what eventually came out of this protest: women screaming vulgarities and obscenities, proudly speaking in support of abortion and homosexuality, and at least one celebrity speaker—Madonna—threatening to blow up the White House.

Clearly, a spirit of lawlessness has descended upon the land. Will history record that Mennonites proudly lent their name and logo to such things?

STEVE HOEPFNER, SHAWNIGAN LAKE, B.C.

/// Obituary

Susana Siemens (née Braun)

Jan. 28, 1929 – Dec. 31, 2016

Early on the last day of 2016, angels gently carried a beloved family matriarch to her heavenly home. As peacefully as she lived her life, this daughter of God left our midst at the age of 87 years and 11 months. Susana was born to Johann and Helena (Froese) Braun in Schoenwiese, the ninth of 13 children.

She received her elementary education in this southern Manitoba village and then attended Elim Bible Institute in Altona. Susana's exceptional homemaking skills were cultivated while she worked as a cook and nanny in Winnipeg. In June of 1948 she was baptised upon the confession of her faith. It was in southern Ontario that Susana met her future husband, Jacob P. Siemens. They were married on July 11, 1953, and enjoyed teacherages at Weidenfeld, Altberghthal and Hochstadt. It was exciting for them to build a house in Steinbach, and then their large, dream home on Kokomo Road, where they cared for several foster children/young adults. In their senior years, Susana and Jacob lived in Winnipeg and Niverville. The couple served as missionaries in places like Bolivia, Texas, Mexico and Ukraine. During 63 years of marriage they were able to travel extensively and foster many relationships. Susana was a powerful prayer warrior, interceding for each family member by name! Reading the Bible and writing in her journal were daily routines. She expressed her faith in church (Sunday School and ladies' fellowship groups) and community (Friendship Bible Coffee) involvement. Throughout her earthly existence, Susana was strengthened by an unwavering belief in her salvation, which includes eternal life. Hospitality was a special gift! Susana performed miracles in the kitchen, garden and at the sewing machine. This



gracious hostess knew the basics of cooking Mennonite meals that *schmecked* and was a very successful, resourceful family manager. When Parkinson's disease gradually stole her mobility, Susana remained positive. She relied on God and the wonderful caregivers at Bethesda Place Personal Care Home in Steinbach, where she resided since Sept. 21, 2012. Celebrating Susana's love and legacy are her husband Jacob and seven children: Karen and Willie Peters (Kristol Peters and Daniel Thomas with Gunner and Otis;

Kevin and Jennifer Peters with Myles and Jewel; Corey Peters and fiancé Alexandra Nohlgren); Daniel and Joyce Siemens (Jonathan and Nicole Siemens; Rachel Siemens; Timothy Siemens); Waldo Jac and Audrey Siemens (Brett and Natalie Siemens with Brody, Madison and Payton; Britta Siemens and partner Aaron Corris); Lois Siemens; Irma and Jordan Morgan (Evan Morgan; Jordan Morgan); Iris and Brian Kennedy (Noah Kennedy); Luella and Vernon Peters (Clinton and Larissa Kay. Peters; Larissa Susan Peters). Susana is survived by four sisters and one brother, as well as a host of extended family members and a large circle of friends. Meeting Susana in heaven are her parents, three brothers and four sisters, and grandsons Darcy Peters, Mitchell Morgan and Genesis Kennedy. Viewing and a devotional took place at Birchwood Funeral Chapel on Jan. 5, and the funeral service was held on Jan. 6 at Steinbach Mennonite Church. Susana was laid to rest in the Schoenwiese Cemetery, a family graveyard in The Municipality of Rhineland, Man. If you wish to honour Susana, perform an act of kindness for someone! Those who desire may make a donation in Susana's memory to Mennonite Central Committee (134 Plaza Drive, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3T 5K9) or The Gideons International In Canada (PO Box 3619, Guelph, Ontario, N1H 7A2).

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Brubacher—Nathaniel (b. Dec. 15, 2016), to Jonathan Brubacher and Kate Suffling, Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Pizarro—Madeleine Kate (b. Nov. 27, 2016), to Jaymie Schmidt and Felipe Pizarro, Foothills Mennonite, Calgary.

Wolfe—Ellie Rose (b. Oct. 19, 2016), to Jon and Amy Wolfe, Morden Mennonite, Man.

Baptisms

Kevin Thiessen—Morden Mennonite, Man, Nov. 6, 2016.

Marriages

Jamieson/Neufeld—Susan Elizabeth Jamieson and Brian Neufeld (Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.), at Faith Mennonite, Feb. 4, 2017.

Deaths

Epp—Lena (nee Nicholls), 87 (b. July 25, 1929; d. Jan. 31, 2017), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Friesen—Helen (nee Bergmann), 93 (b. July 2, 1923; d. Feb. 6, 2017), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Gingerich—Agnes Irene, 91 (b. Jan. 18, 1924; d. Dec. 28, 2016), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont./Pioneer Park Christian Fellowship, Kitchener, Ont.

Klassen—Isaac (Ike), 90 (b. Dec. 13, 1926; d. Jan. 18, 2017), Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Martin—Howard, 75 (b. Sept. 11, 1941; d. Jan. 20, 2017), Brussels Mennonite, Ont.

Neufeld—Elizabeth (Lasi), 85 (b. Feb. 24, 1931; d. Feb. 3, 2017), North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Roessner—Katharina (Tina), 81 (b. Dec. 9, 1935; d. Feb. 5, 2017), Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.

/// Corrections

• **NICHOLAUS BAUMAN** is a general surgeon. He was incorrectly identified as an orthopedic surgeon in the first paragraph of “Alumnus heads to Nepal,” Jan. 30, page 24. *Canadian Mennonite* and Rockway Mennonite Collegiate regret the error.

• **IN THE** “Thank you” editorial of Feb. 13, it should have read that the financial partnership agreement between *Canadian Mennonite* and Mennonite Church Canada and the five area churches goes back to the mid-1990s, according to Ron Rempel, former editor, rather than to just 2008. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error.

• **IN** “Is Future Directions a First-World problem?” Feb. 27, page 14-15, all quotes attributed to Tim Froese, MC Canada’s executive minister for Witness, should have been attributed to Dan Dyck, MC Canada’s director of church engagement-communications. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error.

A moment from yesterday



Staff outside the Bethesda Home in 1965 in Campden, Ont. Bethesda, the first Mennonite mental health facility in North America, was begun in the early 1930s by Henry and Maria Wiebe to serve the Russian Mennonite immigrant community. The Wiebes had gained their experience working at Bethania in Russia, the first Mennonite mental health hospital in the world. Mennonite immigrants to Canada in the 1920s were required to pay hospital costs or risk deportation. Mennonite Brethren Church leaders recognized the need for care, and approached the Wiebes to start Bethesda. In the late 1960s, it evolved into a home serving people with intellectual disabilities.

Text: Laureen Harder-Gissing / Mennonite Archives of Ontario
Photo: Penner Photo / Mennonite Archives of Ontario

WOMEN WALKING TOGETHER IN FAITH

A latecomer's discovery of MW Canada

BY ELSIE HANNAH RUTH REMPEL

For the many years I worked as an educator in several Mennonite institutions, I did not participate in, nor identify with, organized activities of Mennonite Women Manitoba or the national MW Canada.

As a young mother who needed the fellowship of other women, I found great meaning in a congregational women's fellowship group and appreciated the Bible study materials we received from our Mennonite women's organization. But that was long ago.

Since then, while I taught in a Mennonite school and then worked for the national church, both settings offered ample opportunities for Christian fellowship with women and men. I also connected regularly with friends and my three sisters. These rare blessings helped me live quite well without involvement in a Mennonite women's group. However, when I moved into retirement, access to Christian sisterhood was no longer built into my daily routines, and I knew that I needed to connect more with other women to transition well into meaningful retirement.

So one of the first things I did was join a group of women in my congregation who knit prayer shawls and gather monthly for Christian fellowship. This group doesn't identify officially with MW Manitoba or MW Canada, but it shares its goals of Christian fellowship and mission. And MW Canada, whose tag line is "a place to belong, a place to connect," would be happy to claim it as a member.

Last year, when I heard of the very real need for a secretary-treasurer for MW Canada, I said yes, even though serving as treasurer represented a stiff learning curve. I am now glad that I said yes, because I know how women empower each other in both church and society. We seem to be hardwired for relationships that get us through life's challenges. Therefore, our Mennonite women's groups matter. They can help us stay connected with each other as our denomination faces the challenges of restructuring and learning to agree and disagree in love.

Through my work on the MW Canada executive, I connect meaningfully with women across Canada and even the U.S. Also, my experience with editing Bible study materials has come in handy on the advisory group for the 2018 Bible Study Guide. Even my familiarity with MC Canada structures is helpful as MW Canada tries to find its organizational way within the "Future Directions."

Mennonite
Women
Canada

My involvement with MW Canada has also introduced me to a network of Mennonite women who continue to meet in Manitoba after the regional chapter disbanded a few years ago. I've appreciated our enriching dialogue with MC Manitoba staffers Kathy Giesbrecht and Dorothy Fontaine about ways Mennonite women in

Manitoba can gather for spiritual retreats and seek to strengthen relationships by standing in solidarity with indigenous women.

Although we don't know whether the ways Mennonite women organized in the past will survive, we do know that these groups will continue to bless the church through the ways we relate to one another and engage in mission at congregational, regional and national levels.

The 2010 MW Canada Task Force Report states: "All women in MC Canada should feel included and belong to the national women's organization." That is the dream we continue to embrace. So whether women gather formally or informally, or as peer groups of pastors, teachers, stay-at-home moms, book clubs or service groups, MW Canada and its regional sub-groups would like to serve as their connecting umbrella.

But how can we help that happen? Can we remain a useful connector even as MC Canada's national assemblies shift to smaller, governance-focussed gatherings? How can we support and affirm the traditional women's groups that continue in many places and the growing number of women in ministry and other forms of leadership in our denomination?

Those are among the challenges we discussed at the MW Canada executive meetings in Winnipeg on March 9 and 10. So please look for the follow-up report online at women.mennonitechurch.ca. And help develop this wider understanding of what it means to be part of MW Canada by sharing your group's dreams, ideas and suggestions. ☼



Elsie Hannah Ruth Rempel is the new treasurer of Mennonite Women Canada. She is a member of Charleswood Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

MC B.C. wrestles with tough issues

BFC 7 sparks spirited discussion at annual general meeting

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Despite meeting under the theme of “Building healthy connections,” many delegates who gathered for Mennonite Church British Columbia’s annual general meeting on Feb. 25 wondered how the future might look for their connections as an area church family when the day was done.

The meeting at Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford was the third gathering in four months at which potentially divisive issues surrounding the Being a Faithful Church (BFC) 7 resolution were on the agenda, putting the future unity of MC B.C. in uncertainty.

In an opening statement, executive minister Garry Janzen said, “We have come to see the best in each other. We may hope to find one statement we can all say ‘yes’ to. Let us listen rather than talk over each other. We may come to hope that the church bigger than ourselves would thrive.

Real life happens in local congregations. There is a difference between ‘this is how I stand’ and ‘this is how I love.’”

Generating much discussion were two resolutions (*see sidebar below*), both dealing with the implications of BFC 7 for the area church.

Resolution 1 affirmed the MC B.C. covenant signed on May 27, 2007, and re-affirmed that, in accordance with the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, “pastors within MC B.C. will not officiate at same-sex weddings and that MC B.C. congregations will not appoint pastors who are in a same-sex relationship.”

An amendment presented from the floor merged the intent of Resolution 2 into Resolution 1, stating that the passing of BFC 7 conflicts with the MC B.C. covenant from 2007: “By the adoption of BFC 7, delegates voted to distance MC Canada from the



Discussing issues at the MC B.C. annual general meeting are, from left to right: Marion Braun of Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, and Rob and Tammy Wiebe of Church of the Way in Granisle.

intent and purpose of the MC B.C. covenant, resulting in a relationship of discord.”

Speaking in favour of the amendment, Frank Berto of Living Hope Christian Fellowship in Surrey said, “BFC 7 and the covenant would seem to be incompatible.” On the other side, George Goertzen of Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond said, “One of the things I find troubling is language. It feels like MC Canada is set up like a separate church entity. I thought it was ‘us.’”

Delegates chose to deal with each separately and defeated the amendment by a vote of 71-46. Discussion then turned to the original Resolution 1.

Alf Penner of Eden Mennonite Church in Chilliwack said, “I trust all of you to follow Jesus. I trust you are compelled by love

Resolutions

• **RESOLUTION 1.** The MC B.C. resolution for our way forward in response to Being a Faithful Church (BFC) 7: Whereas MC B.C., as a collective body, affirms the MC B.C. covenant, and holds to the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, which states that marriage is between one man and one woman for life: Be it resolved that: MC B.C. will continue the existing practice: that pastors within MC B.C. will not officiate at same-sex weddings; that MC B.C. congregations will not appoint pastors and those in leadership positions who are in a same-sex relationship. We, as MC B.C. congregations, encourage one another to continue to walk alongside and share the love of Jesus—as we are able and as our gifts allow—with all people, including those who are same-sex attracted and those who are in same-sex relationships. PASSED (105-52).

• **RESOLUTION 2.** Whereas MC B.C. congregations did solemnly enter into a relationship of covenant on May 27, 2007; and whereas MC Canada did on July 9, 2016, adopt BFC 7 at the bi-annual assembly in Saskatoon; and whereas these two events, covenant and resolution are incompatible: We do hereby resolve: To affirm again the primacy of the MC B.C. covenant and the *Confession of Faith* for MC B.C. congregations; and to recognize that by the adoption of BFC 7, delegates voted to distance MC Canada from the intent and purpose of the MC B.C. covenant, resulting in a relationship of discord. It is with regret that we do recognize that MC Canada has entered into an impaired relationship with MC B.C., and with the adoption of this resolution we recognize the discord MC Canada has invoked. DEFEATED (69-68).

of Christ to love everyone as Jesus loved us. Can we agree to trust one another that we are motivated by love of God? If one congregation disagrees with one another, that is okay?"

David Friesen of Emmanuel Mennonite proposed an amendment that the words "and those in leadership positions" be added to the phrase "will not appoint pastors who are in same-sex relationships." The amendment was accepted and the amended Resolution 1 passed by a vote of 105-52.

Later, the delegate body dealt with Resolution 2, presented by Artur Bergen, pastor of Eben-Ezer Mennonite. Phil Wheaton of Bethel Mennonite Church in Langley asked for clarity. "Can Article 19 [of the *Confession of Faith*, stating marriage is between one man and one woman for life] be interpreted by individual congregations and pastors? Is BFC 7 included in this motion?"

Garry Janzen responded: "It could be viewed in two ways: as a replacement of, or an implementation of, BFC 7. . . . Beyond that, it becomes a pastoral matter in a congregation's experience. I'm okay with both these understandings."

Walter Bergen of Emmanuel Mennonite, who drafted Resolution 2, explained: "We [those who drafted the resolution] wanted to create formal unity and invite out of that a conversation with MC Canada. We are in discord with MC B.C. and MC Canada.

We have not in this resolution made any suggestions on action. If you do not like this, recognize it is the very best we could do. If this resolution is not passed, it will be viewed by many of us as a repudiation of us seeking common ground."

Walter Paetkau of Langley Mennonite Fellowship wondered, "Is there a threat to leave MC B.C. depending on the vote?"

Replied Walter Bergen, "There is no threat implied. We were simply asking to address the fact that we are in discord."

After much discussion, Resolution 2 was defeated by the narrowest of margins: 69-68.

Also on the agenda

Delegates heard an update on the plans for the former Clearbrook Mennonite Church property and held roundtable discussions on the implementation of the Future Directions recommendations by MC Canada. They also approved motions to:

- **EXTEND THE** memo of understanding between MC B.C. and Brander McDonald, indigenous relations coordinator, to Feb. 28, 2018.
- **AUTHORIZE THE** sale of the property occupied by Vancouver Chinese Mennonite Church, at that church's request.
- **AUTHORIZE A** subsidy of \$30,000 to church plant Living Stones Mennonite Christian Church in Surrey, to make possible the move to a sustainable future. ❧

WEW wows Waterloo women

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
KITCHENER, ONT.

Exuding excitement and purpose, Nancy Mann, associate pastor of Floradale Mennonite Church, exclaimed "WEW!" for the newest chapter of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) Women Empowering Women organization. The kick-off event, at which 75 women were in attendance, was held on Feb. 2 at 50 Kent Avenue, the "Mennonite hub" in Kitchener.

Helen Loftin, MEDA's senior vice-president of marketing and communications, and Sarah French, coordinator of donor

relations, told stories of the Ghana Greater Rural Opportunities for Women (GROW) program, through which women grow soybeans for food and for sale, in some cases beginning businesses that further process the beans into products like soy milk.

Loftin told the gathering that empowering women means giving them access, ability and agency, including more control over finances and decision making, and gaining knowledge their wider communities can use and honour.

Mann and several others from Waterloo



Helen Loftin, senior vice-president of marketing and communications for Mennonite Economic Development Associates, tells the Waterloo chapter of Women Empowering Women on Feb. 2 that, by empowering women, whole families and communities benefit in ways that empowering men does not.

went to the fall 2016 MEDA conference in San Antonio, Tex., whose theme was "Business as a calling: Women changing the world," at which WEW was a topic of discussion.

The Waterloo steering committee sees the new group meeting quarterly to hear MEDA stories of women around the world being aided by MEDA to grow capacity in their families and communities through business ventures. Part of the hope of WEW is to have women each make a \$100 donation to the project highlighted at each meeting. In the case of GROW, Canadian government matching funds add another \$900 to each \$100 donation.

But WEW is not just about empowering women in other parts of the world. The planners hope that the women who come to the meetings will also be empowered in their lives, jobs, businesses and communities, to be forces for good.

The WEW concept had its roots in Pennsylvania last year, according to Ruth Leaman, a senior development officer for MEDA in Pennsylvania: "A group of women from Lancaster and Souderton who returned from a MEDA field experience in Ethiopia were inspired and felt compelled to do something with what they had learned and experienced. We worked together to create a vision for Women Empowering Women with MEDA, a global network for good. [WEW] is a growing movement of women who care about making our world more prosperous, sustainable and peaceful." ❧

ARTIST'S RENDERING COURTESY OF MENNONITE NURSING HOMES INC.



Construction will begin this spring on a 20-bed personal care home adjoining the existing Mennonite Nursing Homes facility. The architect's rendering shows the chapel on the left.

Personal-care home will fill gap in care for seniors

Mennonite Nursing Homes building project slated to begin this spring

BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
ROSTHERN, SASK.

Joan Lemauiel recalls her aging father needing more care than he received with assisted living, yet not qualifying for long-term care. “He was falling through the cracks,” she says.

As administrator of Mennonite Nursing Homes, Lemauiel knows that her father's experience is far from unique. “About eight to 10 years ago it became evident that people in assisted living who didn't qualify for long-term care were really living at risk,” she says. “We were able to keep them in assisted living with increased homecare.”

While homecare workers could help residents with medications and bathing, they weren't available around the clock, making the situation less than ideal. “We have been putting a Band-Aid on this for a long time,” she says.

But that situation is about to change. Earlier this year, the Mennonite Youth Farm Complex board of directors announced plans to build a personal-care home adjoining the existing facility. The new structure will contain 20 rooms,

several of which could accommodate couples. Each room will have its own bathroom, while a centrally located tub room will be available for residents requiring additional assistance. Common areas will include a kitchen and dining area, a recreation space and a living room, as well as two fenced courtyards, allowing residents to sit or walk outdoors.

The new facility will also feature a small chapel, which will seat up to 40.

Lemauiel says the dream of building a chapel was first voiced four years ago at a strategic planning session. “We are a faith-based organization,” she says, “and we have an auditorium, but we don't have a chapel.” The chapel will provide space for prayer and meditation for residents of all facilities, as well as for staff. Lemauiel envisions it being used for certain denominational services, for small funerals and for communion, while regular Sunday morning services will continue to be held in the auditorium.

Plans for the personal-care home were initially unveiled in 2016, but had to be

tabled when the contractor's price estimate came in much higher than that of the architect. Now, says Lemauiel, the market is more favourable, and “people are hungrier for work.”

Looking to trim expenses, the board hired a design company to rework the plans. While the building's appearance will remain the same, board chair Armin Krahn says the revised plan will mean “savings in mechanical, electrical and foundational [areas].”

As the project is expected to cost \$3.5 million, the delay also afforded much-needed time for fundraising. To date, says Krahn, \$1.2 million of the needed \$1.5 million in donations and pledges is in place. Since the board wanted construction to commence this spring, it decided to seek interim financing to cover the remainder, while continuing to raise funds. Additionally, the complex has applied for a \$1 million mortgage from Abundance Canada. The remaining \$1 million will come from the complex's reserves.

Significantly, no provincial government funding is available for either building or operating personal-care homes, even though there is funding for assisted-living and long-term care. Lemauiel believes the government has intentionally left this gap in funding in order to encourage the proliferation of private, for-profit facilities. But, she says, these private homes are typically expensive, and many individuals needing this level of care cannot afford the cost.

Mennonite Nursing Homes, located on the grounds of the Mennonite Youth Farm Complex near Rosthern, Sask., is owned and operated by Mennonite Church Saskatchewan. In addition to being home to the Youth Farm Bible Camp, the complex includes a range of housing and care facilities for seniors. Country Gardens consists of eight independent living suites. Pineview Manor is an assisted living facility with 24 single and eight double rooms, providing residents with meals, housekeeping and laundry services, but no nursing care. The 68-bed nursing home provides 24-hour care for individuals with medical and mobility needs.

The personal-care home will complete the range of care available in the community and will be affordable, says Lemauiel. ☺

Canadian church reno helps build church in Latin America

By KARLA BRAUN

Mennonite World Conference

When Toronto United Mennonite Church decided it was time to renovate and expand its building, the congregation wanted the project to reach beyond its usual sphere of influence. Located in Canada's largest multicultural city, the church has some 200 people from five continents speaking 10 mother tongues, with a particularly strong connection to Central America.

"We spoke with Arli Klassen about how to share our donation with Mennonite World Conference (MWC)," says building committee chair Richard Ratzlaff, and she directed the church to MWC's Global Church Sharing Fund Jubilee Account.

Grant requests must be approved by the national church office, and the recipient group must contribute to the cost of the project, according to Klassen, MWC's coordinator of regional representatives. The Global Church Sharing Fund's aim is to put into action the Apostle Paul's words on equality: "your surplus meets their need, but one day your need may be met from their surplus" (II Corinthians 8:13-14).

Two-thirds of the 1.8 million Anabaptist

believers reside in Africa, Asia and Latin America, but 95 percent of Anabaptist wealth resides in North America and Europe. The Jubilee Account provides a means to redistribute wealth in the biblical spirit of jubilee.

The Toronto congregation designated more than \$20,000 of its fundraising goal of \$900,000 to the Global Sharing Fund. Its project involved creative transformation of the existing building to make more space "to greet, meet and learn; offer hospitality and play," and the addition of wheelchair-accessible features and more office space for ministry partners.

There was no hesitation to share the funds with MWC, says Ratzlaff: "We're a very wealthy church, and we know it. If anything, there was a perception we were spending too much on ourselves and not enough on our brothers and sisters elsewhere."

Ironically, the percentage Toronto United Mennonite is donating to MWC may be capable of funding a larger portion of a building project elsewhere than the full amount does in Canada.

When the Toronto congregation

PHOTO COURTESY OF MWC



Luz y Vida (Light and Life) Mennonite Brethren Church in Cali, Colombia, applied to the Global Church Sharing Fund.

dedicated its expanded and refreshed building last November, the celebration service invoked II Corinthians 8:15: "The one who had much did not have too much, and the one who had little did not have too little."

"Several families in the congregation have roots in Colombia," says Ratzlaff, and the two partner congregations in the building are active in helping immigrants and refugees from Central America. "We're very happy to know that we can contribute to others in our global church." ❧

/// Briefly noted

Bethel Mennonite launches its very own Little Free Library

After a brief hiatus for some winter weatherproofing, the Little Free Library at Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg is finally open for good. Little Free Libraries operate as book-exchange forums more than lending libraries, but the accessibility and versatility this format provides is catching fire worldwide. Bethel Mennonite established its chapter for the first time early last fall. According to Mary Lou Driedger, Bethel's librarian, its Little Free Library is "just one of nearly 50 found all over Winnipeg and one of 50,000 that have sprung up in more than 70 countries" around businesses, charitable and religious organizations, hospitals, private homes, schools and elsewhere, since the movement began in Wisconsin back in 2010. "The mission of Little Free Libraries is to promote literacy and a love of reading, and to build a sense of community," she says, adding that, currently, "estimates are that some 200,000 books a day and more than 60 million books a year are exchanged through Little Free Libraries" worldwide.

—BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY



/// Staff change

Pastoral transition in Alberta

• **HEATHER KLASSEN** of Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary was licensed toward ordination by Mennonite Church Alberta on Feb. 26. Klassen's work as a celebrant, providing services such as weddings and



Heather Klassen

funerals, ministers predominantly to the non-church community. Klassen also plays a significant role in lay ministry: preaching, teaching and otherwise offering her gifts to the Foothills congregation. Doug Klassen, Foothills' pastor, says the licensing "formally acknowledges Heather's ministry in our congregation as well as in her profession." Area church minister Tim Wiebe-Neufeld officiated at the ceremony.

—BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

A way is made by walking

Support for Bill C-262 to be sought when pilgrims reach Ottawa

BY DAN DYCK

Mennonite Church Canada

Houses. Toilets. Schools. These are basic human rights to which Canadians feel entitled—and which many vulnerable and disenfranchised indigenous people do not have.

Indigenous leader Leah Gazan says the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) is really just the ground floor for human rights. The activist, policy analyst and educator at the University of Winnipeg says UNDRIP outlines “the minimum human rights to be healthy.”

After years of objector status to UNDRIP, the Canadian government finally accepted the Declaration in the spring of 2016 to a standing ovation at the UN, where Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett made the announcement. But words are one thing. Implementation is another. Currently in play is the proposed Bill C-262, an act that would ensure that the laws of Canada are in harmony with UNDRIP.

To keep the church focussed on this justice issue, Steve Heinrichs, Mennonite Church Canada’s director of indigenous

PILGRIMAGE FOR INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

relations; student intern Erin Froese; and Christian Peacemaker Teams’ Indigenous Peoples Solidarity team are organizing a Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights.

The 600-kilometre walk from Kitchener, Ont., to Ottawa, from April 23 to May 14, is an attempt to “engage churches in a series of conversations about UNDRIP, explore why it matters, the hope it offers and how we can live into it,” says Heinrichs.

Froese, 21, a third-year environmental studies student at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, is helping organize the pilgrimage as part of an independent studies project. Having spent recent summers as a staffer at Camps with Meaning, she was surprised to learn that one of its sites, Camp Koinonia, is situated on Crown land that is sacred to the Dakota peoples. Her work on the pilgrimage has special meaning for her, since Ike Froese, her late grandfather, was a predecessor to Heinrichs in MC Canada’s work with indigenous peoples.

Sue Klassen, 56, is already in training for pilgrimage, a term whose sacred nature she appreciates. The former math and computer science teacher now does trauma and resilience training. She says

her participation is a logical response, given her 17-year interest in restorative justice.

She is also in spiritual training for the journey. “I don’t want to say, ‘Those people back in history did these horrible things’” to indigenous people, she says, acknowledging the wrongs of residential schools and cultural genocide dating back generations. “Where would I have been at Jesus’ crucifixion? I don’t know. Would I have been yelling ‘Crucify him’? Would I have been calling residential school students savages?”

So far, participants committed to the intentionally ecumenical pilgrimage range in age from 12 to 85. A support vehicle will accompany walkers who need a rest or a water refill. Walkers will spend nights in church basements along the way, and local communities will be invited to attend conversation circles en route. The pilgrimage will conclude with a celebration feast in Ottawa, but not before walkers stop at Parliament Hill to advocate for Bill C-262.

Heinrichs is hoping for 30 to 50 core walkers committed to walking the entire distance. Casual walkers can join any leg of the trip and must supply their own food and drink. Those joining for more than one day need to register, so that accommodations can be planned and prepared. All participants are responsible for travelling to and from the start and end points. “It’s a commitment, for sure,” says Heinrichs, “but I’m confident it will make a tremendous impact.”

Gazan will be part of the group making the entire trek. Her commitment required serious juggling of her schedule and the cancellation of a previously planned speaking event. “We are living in a time where there is a lot of hope, but it can also go the other way,” she says. Quoting Chief Justice Murray Sinclair, she says she is joining the pilgrimage because “[t]his is not about us and them. This is about how we are going to work together to rediscover a better future together.” ☞

For more information about the Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights, visit pfor.ca.



Sue Klassen



Erin Froese

MC CANADA FILE PHOTO



Activist, policy analyst and educator Leah Gazan, right, engages a TV reporter at a 2015 event.



Signs of welcome in Ontario

MC Eastern Canada and Kitchener First Mennonite Church get out the message

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO REGION, ONT.

“No matter where you are from, we’re glad you’re our neighbour.”

Kitchener (Ont.) First Mennonite Church and Mennonite Church Eastern Canada are promoting “welcome signs” with this message in English, French and Arabic in the community and beyond.

Rebecca Yoder Neufeld of First Mennonite first saw the sign in Elkhart, Ind., last November. A trip to Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in January by a group from the church galvanized their desire to bring the signs to the area church.

The signs originated at Immanuel Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va., and have spread to many places in the United States. Immanuel has purposely not copyrighted the sign and has pdf files available on its website (immanuelmennonite.wordpress.com).

The sign has been changed to the Canadian spelling of “neighbour,” and the original Spanish was changed to French. The Canadian version of the sign is

especially poignant after the Jan. 29 shooting deaths of six Muslim men in Quebec City.

When First Mennonite and MC Eastern Canada looked for a printer, they approached Enviro Digital in UpTown Waterloo.

Zafar and Laila Ismaili have run the business since 2007. Married in Kuwait in 1985, the couple moved to Waterloo in 1996 from England. Immediately after arriving, their son Haroon (Aaron in English) became ill with an undiagnosed abdominal sickness. Over the next few years, many people helped them.

Haroon loved horses, and the Old Order Mennonite farmers from whom the Ismailis bought produce and milk allowed him to ride and be among their horses. A Mennonite nurse arranged that one day when Laila came home from Toronto with Haroon, someone was waiting in the driveway with food for them. For five years, they drove back and forth to Toronto, until



Rebecca Yoder Neufeld, left, and Pastor Nancy Brubaker stand with First Mennonite Kitchener’s welcome signs in Arabic, English, French, Spanish, Matu Chin, Hakha Chin, Tigrinya and Korean, all languages used by attendees at the church excepting for Arabic. The coloured sign at the bottom is the size of the signs Mennonite Church Eastern Canada is promoting.

Haroon died in 2001.

The couple continue to have friendships among Mennonites all these years later, even though they are Sunni Muslims, because they were made welcome in the community by their Mennonite neighbours.

The Ismailis donated 55 signs of the first 750 printed to the cause. As of press time, more than a thousand signs have gone out of the area church office, keeping Brent Charette, MC Eastern Canada’s operations and church engagement minister, hopping.

Lutheran and United churches in the area have also been promoting the signs, which are springing up all over Waterloo Region.

In a letter to congregations, David Martin, the area church executive minister, wrote, “This is an initiative that strongly resonates with MC Eastern Canada’s focus on ReLearning Community and God’s call to reach out to share our faith and values with our neighbours.”

MC Eastern Canada has also invited the other area churches across Canada to join in this initiative. ❧



Laila and Zafar Ismaili stand in their print shop in UpTown Waterloo, Ont., printing a large sign to give as a gift to Mennonite Church Eastern Canada.

PHOTO BY JENNIFER DEGROOT



A fallen blanket on the U.S. side of a path taken by asylum seekers headed to Canada near Emerson, Man. The border lies just beyond the buildings barely visible in the background.

Trump reality spills over into Mennoland

BY WILL BRAUN
Senior Writer

The potent Trump phenomenon is rippling around the globe, and Mennonites in southern Manitoba are not immune.

Waves of mostly Somali asylum seekers, driven in part by fear of deportation under the Trump administration, cross covertly from the U.S. into a region of Manitoba heavily populated by Mennonites.

This year, more than 130 asylum seekers have walked across uncontrolled segments of the border into Manitoba. They come at night, braving the elements, often with kids. Mostly Muslim, they presumably fear Trump's continued talk of mass deportations. They cross in the vicinity of Emerson, near the largely Mennonite towns of Altona and Gretna.

The phenomenon is not new, although the numbers are high this year, and the Trump factor ratchets up the symbolic significance. Major news outlets from across Canada and the U.S. have visited Emerson.

In most cases, people get dropped off

near the border, walk across and then contact the RCMP, whose officers take them to the Emerson Customs station for processing, which can take many hours. They are then taken to Winnipeg by the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council.

According to law, they would be turned back if they attempted to cross by usual means but they are eligible to apply for refugee status if they end up inside Canada by other means.

Pastor Dan Kehler of Altona Mennonite Church says people in his congregation are watching the situation, but at present there is no obvious way to respond.

Two members of Pembina Mennonite Fellowship in Morden, an hour west of Emerson, met with the RCMP, the Emerson cafe owner and one of the leaders of the Somali community in Manitoba, to explore possible ways to assist.

Jennifer DeGroot, the author's wife, says her desire to respond is rooted in both a long-time concern for immigrants and

/// Staff change

Foodgrains bank appoints new development officer

• STEFAN EPP-KOOP has been appointed program development officer at the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. He brings several years of program and funding development experience, including both as program director and acting executive director of Food Matters Manitoba. He also coordinated a food security research grant at the University of Manitoba. He volunteered in Zambia for a year with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and has been a board member of MCC Manitoba since 2009. He holds history degrees from the University of Winnipeg and Queen's University. Epp-Koop, his wife and son attend Home Street Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

—Canadian Foodgrains Bank



Stefan Epp-Koop

a wish to counter the hostile sentiments Trump is fuelling. She and others in the area are looking into supplying care packages for asylum seekers. ///

Promotional Supplement

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Rockway graduate shares value of work at L'Arche

By Robyn Gossen


For the past two summers, I worked at L'Arche, an international organization for people with and without intellectual disabilities to share daily life in community. I worked at Ruah House, one of three L'Arche homes in Lethbridge, Alta, with four "core

members" (those with disabilities) and four "assistants" (those without).

My arrival was a celebration. I was warmly greeted at the door with the exclamation, "You're my new neighbour," and a card signed by everyone welcoming me to my new "home."

At birthday parties, residents share the intangible gifts that the celebrated person offers. The first L'Arche birthday party I attended was my own. After everyone had shared, they turned to me and said, "So, Robyn, what's your gift to yourself?" This was a challenge I had never encountered before.


(Continued on page 22)




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Promotional Supplement

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convention.mennoniteusa.org

Love is a verb

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Robyn Gossen, right, and a L'Arche core member.

(Continued from page 21)

During my time with L'Arche, I realized that the gift of openness can be found in a gesture as simple as meeting someone's gaze and letting them know I hear you and I'm here for you. But being open requires vulnerability.

Jean Vanier, founder of L'Arche, welcomed two men with disabilities into his home and heart when society was pushing

people with disabilities away. He found that risking being open to new experiences with new people is what makes people able to see the humanity in others and in ourselves. Joining L'Arche was a risk for me, but this was insignificant compared to the abundance of joy and insight I received.

Adapted from a Feb. 2 chapel service by Robyn Gossen, a Class of 2013 graduate.



ONLINE NOW!

at canadianmennonite.org

Good news by the numbers in Botswana

Shrubs, bio-toilets and Bible study—MC Canada Witness workers list some of the successes achieved through local partnerships.

canadianmennonite.org/numbers-botswana



Online theology education opens doors

Anabaptist educators collaborate to make biblical and theological education more accessible to speakers of Spanish and French.

canadianmennonite.org/online-theology



Famine 'a tragic reality' in South Sudan, according to UN

Approximately 40 percent of South Sudan's population is in urgent need of food, agriculture and nutrition assistance. Canadian Foodgrains Bank responds.

canadianmennonite.org/famine-south-sudan



From Myanmar to Canada with dreams, gratitude and hope

After 20 years in a refugee camp, a refugee family settles in Ontario, thanks to the help of four Mennonite congregations and Mennonite Central Committee.

canadianmennonite.org/myanmar-canada





Spring 2017
VOLUME 27 ISSUE 1

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- 4 AMBS Panorama

AMBS window

I See You Are (ICUR)

Building intercultural competence and undoing racism at AMBS

How can institutions work at increasing intercultural competence and undoing racism with tangible results? While Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) began to work at intentionally increasing intercultural competence as an institution in the 1990s, the seminary's approach to the priority has become more systematic in the last eight or nine years, said **Nekeisha Alayna Alexis**, who serves as Intercultural Competence and Undoing Racism (ICUR) coordinator in addition to her work as graphic designer and web specialist.

"It doesn't matter what ministry you're in; you can't go anywhere without needing to know how to work with similarities and differences, especially if you're going to be a leader," she said. "We think that we should know how to act, but it isn't enough to say 'yes' to Jesus to transform our relationships. We actually have to learn these skills and develop and practice them in order for them to be part of our Christian character."

Alexis is part of AMBS's eight-member **Intercultural Competence and Undoing Racism team**, which consists

of administrators, teaching faculty, staff and students. Two team members are qualified administrators of the **Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)**, a tool to aid the seminary in its strategic plan of building intercultural competence and undoing racism throughout the institution.

The team has adopted a three-fold approach to working for institutional change at the seminary and creating a learning community where all voices and experiences are valued: **structural** — addressing how the learning community is organized at the level of policy and practice; **educational** — examining what is taught and how it is taught at the curriculum level; and **relational** — coordinating experiences to deepen understanding and strengthen interactions with others around these issues.

"We see intercultural competence and undoing racism as working in concert together," Alexis said.

An example of a **structural** change is that the ICUR team recently rewrote the seminary's grievance policy, which had not adequately accounted for different

cultural values in relation to conflict, or issues of power imbalances. The new policy is more flexible, allowing grievants to enter the process at different levels, depending on the situation, instead of following a strictly linear approach. The team also called for the formation of a standing grievance team to assist with conflict as needed. Members represent different departments and have been trained in conflict mediation by the Center for Community Justice in Elkhart.

The ICUR team also participates in faculty and administrator search processes, and student employment practices have been changed to ensure greater fairness in hiring for campus jobs, Alexis said.

At the **curriculum** level, ICUR discussions now take place during the orientation courses that all incoming students take at the seminary, said **Andy Brubacher (continued on p. 2)**

Photo: Nekeisha Alayna Alexis (at right) and Andy Brubacher Kaethler lead an ICUR workshop at Pastors Week in January. Credit: Jason Bryant

(continued from p. 1) **Kaethler**, assistant professor of Christian formation and culture and a member of the ICUR team.

“As a teacher I’ve noticed that since we’ve been intentional about talking about intercultural competence and racism during orientation, the fruit of that work has come out in classes many times over,” he said. “We are better at listening to each other and being curious. Instead of jumping to conclusions, we are better at extending grace and considering others’ intentions. We are more aware that people have different styles of interaction and processing.”

“I see how this work affects our conversations immediately and in the long term as well,” he continued, adding that even though the contexts where students eventually serve may look different than AMBS’s context, they will still be able to apply their learnings and their “way of paying attention.” Since AMBS serves students from countries around the world in addition to the U.S., people from many different backgrounds benefit from the ICUR work.

Jen Shenk, a Master of Arts in Christian Formation student from Goshen, Indiana, said that she’s found many opportunities to grow in intercultural awareness since her orientation in June 2016.

“I don’t typically engage in political agenda on social media, but I felt compelled to do so in several instances as a matter of solidarity and integrity,” she said, noting that she posted on topics such as the Syrian refugee crisis and the Black Lives Matter movement. She also contacted government and law enforcement officials about their treatment of Dakota Access Pipeline protesters.

“I think my orientation class was a wonderful starting point, and had I not participated in the IDI, I’m not sure I would have been emboldened to take action,” she said. “Prior to this year, I had always felt those things were wrong, but I was overwhelmed and paralyzed, not knowing if anything I could do would make a difference.”

Shenk said she and her husband, Jeff, also began discussing issues of injustice, discrimination, white privilege and power with their children and praying together both for those in power and those who are marginalized and oppressed.

“Even though the needs still seem so massive and overwhelming, I feel like I am taking important small steps to go beyond awareness and take action within my realm of influence,” she said.

Relationally, the ICUR team organizes Martin Luther King, Jr. Day events every other year, with an increasing emphasis on making these events accessible to and relevant for people in the wider community. The team also hosts Race and Media Discussion Circles for the AMBS community to provide healthy spaces for dialogue around intercultural and race-related issues.

Alexis and Brubacher Kaethler noted the importance of being grounded in one’s ICUR work and not losing focus; finding people to collaborate with; setting short- and long-term goals; and celebrating all progress, even small steps.

“Growth in ICUR is do-able,” Alexis added. “It’s not mysterious to the point that we can’t make tangible and concrete changes to move forward.”

To learn more about AMBS’s ICUR team, see amsb.edu/about/icur. ●
— *Annette Brill Bergstresser, AMBS*

ALUMNI NEWS

Ken Reddig (MDiv 1974) was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award for more than 25 years of archival service for the Archives of Manitoba; the Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies in Winnipeg; and the Mennonite Heritage Centre for Mennonite Church Canada.

Mark Winslow (MDiv 1979) has served for 20 years as a prison chaplain for the Arizona Department of Corrections. In that role, he does spiritual healing counseling, leads weekly Bible studies and works with faith-based transitional living and discipleship training programs.

Steve Thomas (MDiv 1989) of Goshen, Indiana, has been named the new coordinator for Mennonite Men.

Bruce Yoder (MDiv 1999) defended his doctoral dissertation at Boston University School of Theology on the impact of Mennonite Mission Network’s approach of honoring the Christian expression of African initiated churches. Bruce and his wife, **Nancy Frey** (MDiv 1999), have served in West Africa since 2000.

Cyneatha Millsaps (MDiv 2008) has been named program director for Mennonite Central Committee Great Lakes. She is currently pastor of Community Mennonite Church in Markham, Illinois.

Ginny Martin (MACF 2010) began as ministry assistant at St. Mark’s United Methodist Church, Goshen, Indiana, doing pastoral care visits, substitute preaching and communications.

Sarah Thompson (MDiv 2011) was the speaker for Goshen College’s Martin Luther King, Jr. Day observances. ●

AMBS Window Spring 2017 Volume 27 Issue 1

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YOUR GIFTS AT WORK

AMBS offers multicultural scholarships each year to students of any background who are intentionally preparing to minister in contexts with racial and ethnic diversity. The scholarships are of varying amounts and are given in addition to need-based grants.

“We’re trying to make theological education a priority for everyone, and in order to bring the good news to the widest range of people groups, we’re encouraging people to minister in cross-cultural contexts,” said Daniel Grimes, director of admissions and financial aid for AMBS.

The application deadline is **April 1**.
amsb.edu/admissions/scholarships



Benjamin Krauss, an MDiv student from Germany, received a multicultural scholarship for his work with Syrian refugees. Credit: Jason Bryant



Opportunities to engage cross-culturally

The Trail of Death: A Pilgrimage of Remembrance, Lament and Transformation

June 1–9, 2017

This nine-day pilgrimage traces the route of the 1838 forced removal of Potawatomi people by the U.S. military from their ancestral homeland in northern Indiana to present-day Osawatomie, Kansas. Pilgrims will remember the history of this expulsion through reading journals from the removal, prayerfully walking a few miles of the route each day and meeting with descendants of those who were deported. Pilgrims will examine what it means to inhabit lands from which others were expelled, what priorities and theologies fueled that expulsion and what it means to seek God's *shalom* in our moment and place in time.

Leaders: **Katerina Friesen** (above center), adjunct professor; **George Godfrey** (Citizen Potawatomi Nation), president of the Potawatomi Trail of Death Association; and **Rich Meyer**, historian and educator.

The course can be taken for credit or audit. ambs.edu/trailofdeath

Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations

June 12–30, 2017

Islam has become a major factor in public discourse, but the level of this discourse is often very superficial. As Christians live side by side with Muslims in today's global world, it has become imperative for Christians to wrestle seriously with the Islamic tradition in order to support and participate with both Muslim and Christian communities in their struggles with the meaning and import of Islam.

With an eye on challenges facing the Muslim community today, this two-credit-hour course examines foundational Islamic narratives and texts — including the Qur'an and the Prophetic Tradition — and how Muslims have interpreted these in law, doctrine and spirituality through the centuries. Students will also discuss gender issues; Muslim-Christian relations; and the emergence of contemporary Muslim movements, including ISIS; and will examine case studies from the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, North America and Western Europe. This will inform discussion of a way

forward in Christian witness and service among Muslims.

Instructor: Jacqueline Hoover (above) is a teaching affiliate in Islamic Studies and Muslim-Christian Relations at the University of Nottingham in the United Kingdom. She has also taught in Egypt, Lebanon, Nigeria, Sudan, Germany and the U.S., and she lived for almost 20 years in the Arab world. Originally from Switzerland, she is a minister in the Mennonite Church and currently lives in England.
ambs.edu/academics/islam-and-christian-muslim-relations •

Top left: Katerina Friesen (center) with Robert "Bob" Pearl and his daughter, Janet Pearl, from Cleveland, Ohio, during the 2015 Trail of Death course. Bob and Janet are descendants of Potawatomi who were on the Trail of Death.

Below: Participants in the 2015 course at the Sugar Creek Mission near Parker, Kansas. The crosses record the names and ages of 600 Potawatomi who died at the mission and are buried there.

Credit: Janeen Bertsche Johnson



AMBS PANORAMA



PRESIDENT'S WINDOW

SARA WENGER SHENK

From every tribe and nation

I liked belonging to a tribe. Admittedly, we never called it that. But in many respects, the Swiss-German Mennonite subculture I grew up in felt like a tribe to me. We knew who belonged by how we dressed, the food we ate and the songs we sang. We knew what our favorite Scriptures were, who our ordained leaders were and why we were different from “the world.” We knew who was in or out and who was allowed to participate in communion and foot washing, or not. I liked the way the tribe gave me an identity. It formed me daily in practices, language, songs and skills that serve me well to this day.

The odd thing is that, while I was born in Ethiopia, thousands of miles away from my tribe’s home base, I still felt like one of the tribe — with one major difference. I knew from the beginning that our tribe was one among many. Growing up in Ethiopia gave me a powerful sense of how spectacular it is to be one small tribe in a multitude of tribes “from every

nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb ...” (Rev. 7:9).

Yet even more revolutionary were the Bible stories my tribe taught me — stories that put me on notice that my tribe was also flawed, arrogant and selfish, particularly when it thought of itself as more special and pure than other tribes. Over the years, the evidence of the evil, dark side of our tribal self-righteousness piled up, undermining the gospel of Jesus Christ, whose ardent prayer was “that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me ...” (John 17:23).

I value tribes that form us in language and practices of faith but only when they also form the capacity to know in our bones that it is Christ who “is our peace ... and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us ... that he might create in himself one new humanity” (Ephesians 2:14-15), from every tribe and nation. ●

LOOKING FORWARD



Webinar: Intercultural Leadership in Diversity-Oriented Churches

Thursday, March 23
2–3:30 p.m. EDT

A. Brian Leander, Ph.D., a church planter, researcher and the assistant director for the Center for Nonprofit Leadership at Adelphi University in Garden City, New York, will introduce the concept of “cultural intelligence” and the Cultural Intelligence Scale. He’ll invite participants to consider how leadership makes a difference in valuing and cultivating diversity in congregational and organizational life. amsb.edu/webinars

Webinar series: Major Challenges Facing the Contemporary Church

Greg Boyd in conversation with AMBS faculty members

Thursdays, 2–3:30 p.m. EDT

March 16: Migration and Pentecost

April 20: Creation in Travail and Creation Renewed

May 25: Conflict, Oppression and *Shalom* amsb.edu/webinars

Pastors Week 2017 audio

Listen to sessions from Pastors Week. The January event focused on the topic, Cultivating Intercultural Leadership for Diversity-Oriented Churches.

soundcloud.com/followamsb

Anabaptist Short Course: Transforming Congregational Conflict and Communication

April 12 – May 23

Explore the possibilities and pitfalls of courageously engaging in differences within congregational life in this

online, six-week non-credit short course. Instructor: Betty Pries, CMed, MTS, Ph.D. candidate. CEUs available. amsb.edu/anabaptistshortcourses

Rooted and Grounded

A conference on land and Christian discipleship

April 20–22 at AMBS

Imagine and embody alternative ways of relating to the land that cultivate *shalom* between human beings, the rest of creation and God. Keynote speakers are Sarah Augustine, Dr. Stanley Saunders and Todd Wynward.

amsb.edu/rootedandgrounded

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Field of dreams

Three young adults talk about their passion for agriculture

BY AARON EPP

Young Voices Editor

What are the risks and rewards for people who choose a life on the farm? Young Voices spoke with three young Canadian Mennonites who work in agriculture to find out.

Jedidiah Morton, 23 **Didsbury, Alta.**

Jedidiah Morton isn't the first person in his family to work in the dairy industry. His great-grandfather, Abram Lowen, settled in the Beaverlodge area in northern Alberta in the late 1920s and shipped cream.

"I guess you could say I'm bringing dairy back to my family," Morton says.

Morton has worked on a farm east of Didsbury belonging to Duane and Denise Derksen, a couple he met at church, for the past eight-and-a-half years. When he began working on the farm at 15, something just clicked.

"It was a realization that I wanted to do it for the rest of my life," he says. "It was an overly enjoyable experience learning about the animals, how the program works and what goes into dairy."

Morton works alongside the Derksens and their daughter Brittany, to ensure that the 46 cows on the farm are milked three times a day. It's hard work and long hours, but he takes pride in the fact that he is helping provide milk and dairy products to the public.

"If you love what you do, you never work a day in your life," he says. "I don't feel I'm working. It's fun."

For Morton, who has been a part of the community at Bergthal Mennonite Church since 2004, working on a dairy farm also

connects to his faith. "God's put us as humans in charge; to watch over, care for and maintain his creation; to be stewards of the animals and land," he says. "I try to reflect that in every way I act around the farm."

Morton recently joined the Holstein Canada cattle association and is looking into buying his own cows to lease into the Derksen farm's program.

"I don't foresee myself leaving the dairy industry ever," he says. "I'm a dairyman, and that's never gonna change."

Nathan Klassen, 30 **Plattsville, Ont.**

Growing up near Rochester, N.Y., Nathan Klassen took every chance he could to be on a farm. He also started gardening at home as soon as he was old enough to hold a spade.

Owning Nith Valley Organics, a 30-hectare farm a half-hour away from Kitchener-Waterloo, is a dream come true for Klassen, who moved to southern Ontario about 10 years ago to be near family and to study organic agriculture at the University of Guelph.

Klassen uses between six to eight hectares of his property to grow a wide variety of vegetables that he sells primarily at four different markets during the summer, as well as through a small Community Shared Agriculture operation that he runs.

His father, a former computer programmer for Xerox, works with him to research and decide what gets planted. Klassen also employs up to 10 people each summer to help during the peak growing season.

"I love turning sunlight into things I can

(Continued on page 28)

PHOTO COURTESY OF JEDIDIAH MORTON



'I'm a dairyman, and that's never gonna change,' Jedidiah Morton says.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NATHAN KLASSEN



Owning a farm is a dream come true for Nathan Klassen.

(Continued from page 27)

sell,” Klassen says. “I love being outdoors and I like the diversity of the work. I think if I did exactly the same thing every day, I would be so bored. [Here], every day is a little bit different.”

For Klassen, who attends Hillcrest Mennonite Church in New Hamburg, the difficult times on the farm are often more meaningful than when everything runs smoothly.

“When things aren’t going as easily, I think it’s easier to see God’s hand in my life,” he says. “We might be able to do the work, but the increase we really owe to God. We don’t make the crops grow, we don’t cause the rain to fall at the right times, or the sun to shine. . . . When things don’t just work out according to my plan, it’s tough, but it has a lot of rich meaning.”

Kalynn Spain, 29 Winnipeg

“There’s a rawness to farming that’s so beautiful,” Kalynn Spain says. “Sometimes it’s a matter of life and death, and bearing witness to that, which is not something [everyone gets to] experience every day.”

Spain’s love for food led her to an interest in agriculture at a young age. Growing up in the city, however, limited her opportunities to experience farms and connect with how food is produced.

That changed drastically in 2013.

Shortly after graduating with a degree in conflict resolution from the University of Winnipeg’s Menno Simons College, Spain received a grant to create Small Farms Manitoba, an online directory of small farms in the province that sell directly to consumers. She visited 80 farms that summer and has visited an additional 50 farms since.

“It was . . . about getting out of the city and really meeting people face to face, and bringing their stories alive,” says Spain, a member of Winnipeg’s Hope Mennonite Church. “It was amazing to connect with so many different farmers. I was really changed by all the relationships I created along the way.”

Since the summer she spent establishing Small Farms Manitoba, which has since become a non-profit cooperative called Direct Farm Manitoba, Spain has worked on a farm growing vegetables. She has also worked as a farm inspector for a Winnipeg farmers market, and she spent a summer raising her own pigs at Camp Assiniboia, one of three camps that make up Camps with Meaning, a ministry of Mennonite Church Manitoba.

Today, Spain aspires to own some land of her own so that she can farm. “Farming can really connect to your spiritual life . . . because you are choosing to do something that can be countercultural,” she says. “It can be a really difficult way to live, but for me, I’ve felt closer to God [doing it].” ❧

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KALYNN SPAIN



PHOTO LEFT: Kalynn Spain spent a summer raising pigs at Camp Assiniboia. PHOTO ABOVE: Her interest in agriculture led her to visit 130 small farms throughout Manitoba.

Finding belonging

Panel discussion explores how churches relate to young adults and vice versa

BY AARON EPP

Young Voices Editor

Finding a new church to belong to can be difficult. Just ask Katrina Woelk.

Woelk grew up at Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Winkler, Man., but now lives in Winnipeg, where she is studying social work at the University of Manitoba. After four years of commuting home for weekends, the 22-year-old is ready to deepen her roots in Winnipeg, and that includes finding a church home in the city.

“I tend to commit fairly easily to things, but for some reason with the church I’m having a really hard time with that,” Woelk said during a panel discussion at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) last month.

The discussion, entitled “Searching and finding: Stories of young adults and churches searching for and finding one another,” was held on Feb. 25 as part of A Transformative Moment, a one-day conference for pastors and lay leaders working with young adults.

Woelk described what it’s like to be a young adult looking for a new church home, as well as what she appreciates about how different churches reach out to young adults. Talking to young adults about how they want to be a part of the community, what the church can do for them and what gifts the young adults have that they can offer the church is important, she said.

At the same time, there are many variables that she and people in her situation are considering. It takes time to explore different churches, and it takes vulnerability, too. “I can’t just go to a church on a Sunday morning or Sunday evening or whatever, and expect that I’m going to belong right away,” Woelk said. “[And] yet, that’s what [I] kind of hope for.”

The panel also included three Winnipeg pastors who spoke about their experiences working with young adults.

Hilde Marsch, the young adult ministry director at the Meeting Place, a Mennonite

Brethren congregation, said that things like keeping track of who’s attending events for young adults helps. That way, she and her colleagues can send people who were absent an email or give them a call to let them know they were missed.

Janessa Giesbrecht, the pastor responsible for youth and young adults at Fort Garry Mennonite Brethren Church, said her strategy includes developing strong leadership teams so that she is not the only person in charge, and trying to connect with each person who comes to an event. Focussing on relationships and having honest conversations are also key.

“My goal for ministry [is] that when people come to . . . our [young adult] group, we want them to be able to connect in community, develop meaningful relationships, and be stretched in their faith and in their relationship to God,” she said.

For Jamie Howison, an Anglican priest and founding pastor at St. Benedict’s Table, a key lesson has been that it’s not possible for a church to do everything for everyone, nor does a church have to.

Located in downtown Winnipeg, St. Benedict’s meets for worship on Sunday evenings and attracts many CMU students. They do not necessarily come to other church events, but that’s okay, he said, because they are plugged into community life at CMU.

“What they’re really looking for is the opportunity for worship and prayer together, and that’s Sunday [evenings],” he said.

Woelk concluded by saying that what young adults are looking for isn’t so different from what everyone is looking for. “We all long for belonging,” she said. “Finding belonging in community is for everyone, and that’s something we should all be thinking about in our churches.” ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF KATRINA WOELK



Katrina Woelk is looking for a new church home in Winnipeg.

Calendar

British Columbia

- March 25:** Lifebridge Ministries fundraiser, featuring Brian Doerksen, at Level Ground Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, at 7 p.m.
- March 31, April 1:** MC B.C. fundraiser, featuring Panic Squad improv comedy; (31) at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, at 7 p.m.; (1) at Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, Vancouver, at 7 p.m.
- April 8-9:** Camp Squeah paddle-a-thon.
- May 5-7:** Junior Impact retreat, at Camp Squeah.
- May 6:** Women's Inspirational Day; speaker: Marlene Kropf; theme: "Who am I now? Trusting God in life's transitions"; at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- Alberta**
- May 26-27:** MCC Alberta Summerfest and Relief Auction, in Sherwood

Park. For more information, visit mccreliefsale.com.

Saskatchewan

- April 2:** "Guys and pies" event with A Buncha Guys, at RJC, Rosthern, at 7 p.m.
- April 22:** Parkland Restorative Justice holds its "Spring banquet in the woods" fundraising event at the Prince Albert Wildlife Federation.
- April 28-30:** A Buncha Guys 20-year reunion, in Saskatoon.
- April 30:** A Buncha Guys spring concert, featuring the 20-year reunion choir, at Knox United Church, Saskatoon, at 2:30 p.m.

Manitoba

- Until April 29:** The Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg, presents the works of three local artists: Timothy Joel Dyck, Seth Woodyard and Frank Livingston.
- 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 Brahms' "Four Serious Songs," Bach's "Brandenburg Concerto No. 5" and Beethoven's "Pastoral Symphony."
- April 14:** "Good Friday through the senses," a half-day contemplative retreat through taste, sound, smell, sight and touch, in Winnipeg, from 1 to 5 p.m. For more information, visit butterflyjourneys.webs.com.
- April 14:** Winnipeg's Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church Adult Choir presents Stainer's "The Crucifixion," at 11 a.m., at the church.
- April 14:** Winnipeg First Mennonite Church, with orchestra, presents Mozart's "Requiem," at 7 p.m., at the church.
- April 22:** Spring choral concert, at CMU's Loewen Athletic Centre, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.
- April 27-29:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Winnipeg, presents its senior-high musical.
- 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."
- March 22-April 4:** MC Eastern Canada cluster meetings to review "A proposal for revitalizing MC Canada": (22) Danforth Mennonite Church, Toronto, at 7:30 p.m.; (29) Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, at 7 p.m.; (30) Vineland United Mennonite Church, at 7 p.m.; (4) Wellesley Mennonite Church, at 7 p.m.
- 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 1:** Dedication/reception for the launch of Lawrence Burkholder's book "The Leviathan Factor," at Wideman Mennonite Church, Markham, at 2:30 p.m.
- 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.
- April 23-May 14:** National Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights, a 600-kilometre walk from Kitchener to Ottawa, stopping at 21 churches along the way and engaging in teach-ins, all in support of Canada's implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. For more information, visit pfr.ca.
- April 29,30:** Pax Christi Chorale presents Elgar's "The Apostles," at



Classifieds

Travel

COME AND SEE: Tour to Israel/Palestine—May 9-22, 2017. Visit Christian, Jewish and Muslim religious sites; hear Palestinian and Israeli voices working for a just peace for all; find ways to work for peace after you return. Led by seasoned tour leaders with decades of experience in the Middle East. For more information contact: **Kathy Bergen** (bergenkathy@gmail.com) and **Joy Lapp** (lappj@earthlink.net).

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Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto; (29) at 7:30 p.m.; (30) at 3 p.m.

May 1,2: Seniors spring retreat at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg. Theme: "Dancing in the wind: The vocation of the church in society." Speakers: Jack

and Irene Suderman. Same program each day. For more information, call 519-625-8602.

To ensure timely publication of upcoming events, please send Calendar announcements eight

weeks in advance of the event date by e-mail to calendar@canadianmennonite.org. For more

Calendar listings online, visit canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar.



Employment

Full-Time Administrative Assistant

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Abundance Canada, a donor-advised charitable foundation committed to helping others live generously, is seeking a full-time Administrative Assistant in its Winnipeg, Manitoba office.

This person will be responsible for providing general administrative support for the Winnipeg office and assisting Gift Planning Consultants with client services. A flexible attitude, team-centered focus, strong organizational skills, exceptional computer skills, superb verbal and written communications skills, and professionalism are essential competencies.

Abundance Canada offers a competitive salary and benefits package. A complete job description is available at www.abundance.ca/careers. Applications will be reviewed upon receipt. Only those selected for an interview will be contacted. Please submit resume to:

Shelly Wilcoxson, Administrative Coordinator

Abundance Canada
12-1325 Markham Road
Winnipeg, MB R3T 4J6
Telephone: (204) 488-1985
Fax: (204) 488-1986
Email: swilcoxson@abundance.ca

Abundance
CANADA

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**Mennonite
Central
Committee**

Executive Director – MCC Canada

The MCC Canada Board is searching for a new Executive Director to start in September 2017. This position provides overall leadership to the work of MCC Canada. The Executive Director bears responsibility for upholding and implementing the vision, purpose, and values of MCC as well as the overall leadership of the relief, development and peace building work of the service agency of the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in Canada.

Interested candidates should apply by April 7, 2017 at: <https://mcccanada.ca/get-involved/serve/openings>.

Inquiries can be addressed to Karen Grace-Pankratz at karengracepankratz@mcccanada.ca or 204-261-6381.

MCC requires all workers to have a personal Christian faith, be active members of a Christian church, and be committed to non-violent biblical peacemaking. MCC is an equal-opportunity employer. MCC values diversity and invites all qualified candidates to apply.



Artist in Residence opportunity

Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, strongly supports the continual development and strengthening of the arts in our faith community. Therefore last year it implemented an initial three-year program for an Artist in Residence at Bethel.

Our aim is to embody Bethel's Vision Statement with creative expressions of faith. In different years we anticipate that alternative artistic genres will be explored. Suggested areas to be covered include poetry, music, drama/liturgy, visual arts, food artistry; other areas of creativity will also be considered. (The first Artist in Residence, 2016-17, focused on storytelling.) If you have gifts in any of these areas and you are interested, please send your resume and a one-page proposal to office@bethelmennonite.ca. The proposal should identify how you anticipate contributing to the life of the church using the artistic and creative gifts you wish to explore. Please check our web site at <http://www.bethelmennonite.ca> and click on "About" and "Volunteering & Employment" for further information and requirements.

Annual term of service (fall to spring): September to May/June. Remuneration: Bethel will provide an honorarium of \$1000/annum or \$100/month, and pay any pre-approved expenses for the project(s).

Applications for the term beginning in September, 2017 are invited until March 31, 2017. If you would like to discuss your proposal before you submit it, please feel free to talk to a member of the Worship Committee. Call the Church Office at 204-453-2199 for contact information.

PHOTO BY REBECCA DYCK



Ray Funk of Saskatchewan, standing, spoke to the Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal on Feb. 12 on the topic of indigenous relations, as part of the church's study of Steve Heinrich's compilation Wrongs to Rights. Funk has devoted much of his life to fostering reconciliation, as a federal NDP MP, as a Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan board member, and as a consultant on economic development to various indigenous groups. He presented the documentary Reserve 107 about the reconciliation process between the indigenous owners of the land around Laird, Sask., and the Mennonite and Lutheran settlers to whom the government gave it. He preached about biblical examples of honouring covenants and on the danger of casting groups of people as 'the other' who can subsequently be oppressed.

MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA PHOTO BY DEBORAH FROESE



Conrad Stoesz, archivist at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, has won a \$2,500 studies project grant from the Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission. The project will explore how Mennonite identity in Western Canada is affected by historical societies, archives and memoirs related to Second World War conscientious objectors (COs). 'The CO theme is important to me because I think if we want to move the world towards a more peaceful existence, we need to have examples of people who made the hard choice to live peacefully,' Stoesz says. 'We need peace heroes. The COs are one such example.' He says the project will bridge the world of archives and history, which are related but separate disciplines. Stoesz was also the driving force behind The Last Objectors, which was named best documentary at the Winnipeg Real to Reel Film Festival last month, one of many awards it has garnered since its release.

God at work in the world Snapshots

PHOTO COURTESY OF RAY FRIESEN



Following the murders of six Muslim worshippers in a mosque in Quebec City in February, members of Emmaus Mennonite Church in Wymark, Sask., including Ray Friesen, decided to speak out by using a store-top sign that declares: 'Let's agree, whatever our faith, we are family.' Also included was an email address—joinhands@sasktel.net—so people could join in an online conversation about peace.