

CANADIAN MENNONITE

August 28, 2017

Volume 21 Number 16

A community with
a sense of 'we'

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EDITORIAL

Happy birthday, CM!

VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER

On my bookshelf sit 19 bound volumes of *Canadian Mennonite*. I'm looking at Vol. 1, No. 1, published on Sept. 15, 1997. Yes, that means that, come Sept. 15, we will celebrate 20 years of this magazine in its current form.

On page 2 editor Ron Rempel welcomed readers to the new format and name. The readership was identified as the people and churches of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada and its five related conferences. The masthead stated that the new magazine "aims to reflect and upbuild the life and work of the Mennonite church in Canada." That was the beginning of the dream to make the magazine available to every home of that Mennonite constituency.

The periodical's beginnings harkened back to 1953, when *The Canadian Mennonite* was launched, a vision of D.W. Friesen & Sons, with Frank H. Epp as the first editor. He was followed by Larry Kehler, who oversaw the difficult task of ending the publication in February 1971. In August of that same year *Canadian Mennonite Reporter* was launched. The following year the name was simplified to *Mennonite Reporter*, under the leadership of Dave Kroeker. In 1979 Ron Rempel took over the editor's role of *Mennonite Reporter* and served both that paper and the new *Canadian Mennonite* magazine. In 2003-04 Margaret Loewen Reimer served as interim editor, with Tim Miller Dyck following as editor/publisher later

in 2004 and Dick Benner in 2009.

It's interesting to reflect on what has transpired since that name and format change. (Here's a gentle rebuke to those readers who still call it *Mennonite Reporter*, 20 years later!) There was the founding of Mennonite Church Canada,



with its five area churches, in 2000. Since then, Canadian members of the former General Conference and (Old) Mennonite Church have walked together, along with newcomers who came with no previous Mennonite

background. We have tried to learn each other's foundational stories and sought to work together amid cultural differences and varying approaches to church life, supporting each other in faithfulness to Christ. *Canadian Mennonite* has attempted to reflect some of that reality.

Back in 1997 we couldn't have imagined all the changes that would happen in the church and the world around us. Our society has become increasingly secular, and loyalty to church institutions is waning. The changes in communications have meant that *Canadian Mennonite* now has a digital presence through its website and social media. Currently the CM team is discerning what will be the next steps, as we try to keep pace with the communication methods of our readers and the realities of the 21st-century church.

We acknowledge those who had the vision for our various "ancestor" publications and the people who have guided the vision in the past 20 years. Thank you to those who have served on the board of

Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service and to the past editors and staff. And where would we be without the many contributors across Canada—both of content and of our sustaining funds, including grants from the Government of Canada? We are grateful for the loyal readers who have accompanied us these 20 years and for those who joined us in recent times. You, our readers, have affirmed and challenged CM as we have sought to be a faithful voice in the church. Thank you.

Future Directions documents online
Church delegates will gather at a special assembly in Winnipeg from Oct. 13 to 15 to consider a re-organization proposal for Mennonite Church Canada and its regional churches. Discernment documents and reports from the working groups can be found online at futuresdirectionsmc.ca/documents.

A call for prayer and support

This past March we said farewell to editor/publisher Dick Benner, who began retirement near his family in Virginia. Dick was once again living close to his wife Marlene, who was settled in a long-term-care home there. Last year Dick had shared with readers the poignant story of their long-lasting partnership, her recent struggle with dementia and his journey into grief. On July 13, Marlene Reller Keller Benner passed away peacefully while in hospice care. A memorial service was held on Aug. 19.

At the end of June, Dick was diagnosed with cancer, for which he has been receiving treatment in Germany. Family and friends across Canada and the U.S. have rallied to offer prayers and financial support for his treatment and healing. We invite you to keep Dick and his family in your prayers during this difficult time.

ABOUT THE COVER:

Old Order men wait their turn at the Old Order Mennonite meetinghouse in Elmira, Ont., to pick up their womenfolk. Read Barb Draper's feature, 'A community with a sense of "we"' on page 4.

Funded by the
Government
of Canada

Canada

CANADIAN MENNONITE

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40063104 REGISTRATION NO. 09613

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE ITEMS TO:

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Please send all material to be considered for publication to:

General submission address: submit@canadianmennonite.org

Readers Write: letters@canadianmennonite.org

Milestones announcements: milestones@canadianmennonite.org

Paid obituaries: obituaries@canadianmennonite.org

Calendar announcements: calendar@canadianmennonite.org

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

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

Reprint requests: reprints@canadianmennonite.org

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

Guiding values:

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

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One-Year Subscription Rates

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

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

Subscriptions/address changes:

(e-mail) office@canadianmennonite.org

(web) canadianmennonite.org

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

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member of the
Canadian Church Press



GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH FEATURE

A community with a sense of 'we'

Our modern culture values independence to such a degree that we have trouble understanding how traditionalist Mennonites can willingly suppress their own desires for the good of the community

STORY AND PHOTOS BY BARB DRAPER
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT



The interior of Sarah's house is somewhat plain but very practical.

I was humbled and challenged when I spent the day with some of my Old Order Mennonite relations recently.

My cousin Sarah invited me to a quilting at her home near Mount Forest, Ont., saying that she was inviting all her female Frey cousins. The Frey family is large and the number of female cousins is around 30, far more than can fit around one quilt, but the family is aging and some have passed away. Sarah said not to worry if you don't quilt, many cousins were keen to come even though they can no longer thread a needle and there would be a circle of non-quilters. It felt a bit strange talking to Sarah on the telephone because during my growing-up years Old Order Mennonites did not use telephones.

It was fortunate that my sister and I were among the first to arrive. Although these women are all my first cousins, we move in different circles and I rarely see many of them. I paid close attention whenever there was a new arrival so that I could remember everyone's face and name. Of course, some of them I knew quite well.

Value of family and community

The importance of family is something that grows on you. When I was younger, my extended family was so large that I sometimes felt overwhelmed, but as the years passed I have come to realize that there is a special tie of kinship. My cousins also share this sense of the importance of family and are very welcoming and hospitable to me, even though we don't attend the same church.

At my church, when we are planning for a funeral, we know that if the deceased has Old Order Mennonite relatives, the funeral will be large. These traditional Mennonites value relationships and have a strong sense that supporting the family by attending the funeral is important. Families get together regularly until the crowd gets too big.

We sometimes make jokes about the "Mennonite game," which refers to finding a connection with a new acquaintance. For the Mennonite community I grew up in, this is not a game. You expect to know some connection; if you don't know their siblings or parents, surely you will know one of the grandparents! These



Sarah's new house accommodates four generations of Old Order Mennonites.

Mennonites have always done their history genealogically, and most families have books that go back 10 generations or more. There is no need for Ancestry.com; the information is readily available for those who are interested.

Community connections are valued, and it is expected that you will know everyone in your faith community. As traditionalist Mennonite groups have grown in size, this has become more of a challenge. Several groups now publish church directories and maps showing where their people live, to help keep everyone connected.

It was interesting to see Sarah's new house, which was designed with room for four generations. Two years ago, they tore down their old house and built a new one, large enough to accommodate Sarah and her husband, her parents, and their married son and his wife and family. While they lived in the old house, Sarah's parents lived in a trailer, but now they live with Sarah and her husband in the *doddyhouse* part of the house, sharing a kitchen and living area. My aunt and uncle are 90 and 92, the oldest living couple among the Old Order Mennonites in Ontario.

It was interesting to see that the house has a concrete ramp to the porch, making it fully accessible. Because Old Order Mennonites avoid using long-term-care homes, Sarah's family is anticipating a time when a wheelchair may be necessary. The expectation is that Sarah and

her husband will care for her parents until the end. If the load gets too heavy, the rest of the family will pitch in, and, if necessary, they will get help from friends and neighbours.

Families care about what is happening in each other's lives and they will help each other out. Just as friends and neighbours will gather to rebuild a destroyed barn, so there is the expectation that relatives and neighbours will respond, whatever the crisis or need. If necessary, the local deacon will step in to organize financial donations.

Staying in touch with older relatives is considered important. It was obvious to me that my other cousins have been visiting my elderly aunts and uncles far more often than I have, and I felt regret that I've not been more supportive.

The strength of the community ties among Old Order Mennonites is difficult to describe. It goes well beyond families and neighbours helping each other out. Something about their socialization helps everyone to value being part of the group, to think as "we" rather than "I."

It is probably this ability to cherish their community that helps them accept the rules about dress and technology. Our modern culture values independence to such a degree that we have trouble understanding how traditionalist Mennonites can willingly suppress their own desires for the good of the community.

Simplicity and humility

From the outside, Sarah's house doesn't look much different from other houses, but inside it is fairly plain. The house has electric lights and appliances, but there is no radio, television, computer or other electronic gadgetry. The walls have no decoration except for a clock and calendar. While Old Orders now use landline telephones, they discourage the use of cell phones or smart phones, and expect their members to refrain from using the internet.

From my childhood, I remember that many Old Order relatives had limited indoor plumbing, so it was interesting to see that the *doddyhouse* part of Sarah's house has two three-piece bathrooms. This just shows that, like everyone else, Old Orders have become accustomed to bigger and better living conditions over the past 50 years.

Because most of us live almost an hour's drive from Sarah's house, no one arrived by horse and buggy. While several of my relatives do not own cars, they will ask for a ride if someone is going to the same location. There is no sense that a car is evil; it is rather that sticking to the old ways helps to keep them on the straight and narrow way. Refusing to adopt the latest fashion in dress or transportation keeps their lives simple and humble.

In their church services, they often hear the words of Paul, who said, "*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain*

conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Philippians 2:3-4).

In the traditionalist Mennonite community I grew up in, it is considered bad manners to draw attention to personal success, and no one is scorned more than a braggart.

Self-discipline and fun

The quilting was an interesting day, with lots of laughter around the quilt and the dinner table. While self-deprecating humour was probably most prevalent, many interesting and amusing anecdotes were shared. It was delightful to catch up on what was happening in others' lives, and what their children and grandchildren were up to. It was fascinating to discover that some of these relatives are among those moving to new communities in Northern Ontario or Prince Edward Island.

I also saw that having fun is not considered the most important part of life. The beauty of quilting is that you are doing something useful while you visit. Always thinking about others, part-way through the afternoon someone suggested that we sing for my uncle and aunt, and so we gathered in the *doddyhouse* kitchen. Although we had only one hymnal, it went very well since my cousins are experienced singers and we had lots of harmony, including my uncle's bass voice.

Old Order Mennonites appreciate jokes and humour as much as anyone else, but they approach life with an attitude of seriousness. They expect their children to learn to be self-disciplined at an early age. I'll never forget attending an aunt's funeral, sitting near a young father with two children who appeared to be under the age of six. Although they wiggled and squirmed occasionally, and climbed all over their patient father, the children were never noisy and were clearly accustomed to sitting through a two-hour service.

Work is approached with the same serious attitude. Although there is deep sympathy for those who are disabled,



There is no sense that a car is evil; it is rather that sticking to the old ways helps to keep them on the straight and narrow way. Refusing to adopt the latest fashion in dress or transportation keeps their lives simple and humble.

the ability to do physical work is highly valued and laziness is scorned. All work is considered honourable, and there is almost a sense that it is better to work in the field or the shop than in an office.

As I left for home after the quilting, I felt grateful for the reminder of how my cousins live. They are hardworking and self-disciplined, yet gentle and ready to give to others. Their faith is not ostentatious, but deep and real. These cousins

have much to teach me about being concerned for others.

The sense of community among Old Order Mennonite groups is built on bedrock. Although they struggle with the same conflicts and jealousies as anyone else, their sense of "we" gives them a strength that I can't help but admire. ❧

❧ For discussion

1. Do you consider your family of origin as small or large? What are the advantages and challenges of large families and of small families? How are the dynamics different between small and large extended families? Do you agree that we become more interested in extended family and ancestry as we age?
2. Can you imagine living in a house with four generations? What ground rules would you want to set? In what situations would you need to think of "we" rather than "I"?
3. Traditionalist Mennonites try to live simply and humbly with community norms that limit their way of living. How can such community "rules" be beneficial for discipleship and how might they be detrimental? What parts of the Old Order Mennonite way of life do you find attractive?
4. How much is compassion for others and willingness to spend time helping others something that comes naturally and how much is it learned? Have modern Mennonites lost the deep commitment that fosters a sense of "we"?

—BY BARB DRAPER

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VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

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

✉ National church needs to continue leading the way to reconciliation

The following letter was originally written to Mennonite Church Canada's Interim Council and is reprinted at the authors' request.

AS WALKERS ON the Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights, we write to share our gratitude for the leadership and vision offered through MC Canada that made this walk possible. However, we also express our hope and concern for the future as the church continues to work towards reconciliation and just relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

We walked hundreds of kilometres supporting Bill C-262 and Canada's full adoption and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Reconciliation with indigenous

(Continued on page 8)

FROM OUR LEADERS

Relational trust

RYAN SIEMENS

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight" (Proverbs 3:5). "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1).

When all three of my boys were beginning to stand on their own and show some interest in taking their first steps, I played the following game with them: I would pick them up, sit on the ground, stretch my legs out wide, stand them up between my knees and let them go, saying, "Walk to daddy." At first, they were hesitant. Then I would put out one hand and they would grab it and take a few steps and tumble into my arms full of tickles and laughter.



We would do this over and over until they would take a step without me holding their hand. As they became more confident, I would put them a little further than my knees, slowly moving them to the distance of my feet. These were certainly enjoyable times.

And as I reflect upon Isaiah's, Elliott's

and Bennett's first steps, trust was vital to the whole activity.

When we think about the trust of a child, we often call it "blind" trust; they trust simply because they do. I'm not sure that is entirely accurate. This playful activity worked not because of blind trust, but because of relational trust. They trusted me because of our relationship. They trusted because I was near. As a result, they were able to take a step or two. I believe this also to be true in our relationship with God and one another.

In *The Sin of Certainty: Why God Desires Our Trust More Than Our "Correct" Beliefs*, Peter Enns suggests that when Jesus says to his disciples, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me," he was not first and foremost seeking out sound, theological doctrine.

Instead, Jesus was saying to his

disciples, "trust me." The days ahead will be confusing and won't make sense. Jesus just told them he will be betrayed, denied and killed . . . and yet somehow in these events God's redemptive work will be revealed. And the night before this all happens, Jesus is asking them to trust him. Again, this is not blind trust, but relational trust; trust born of time spent together in prayer, fellowship and ministry.

As we consider the changes that are taking place both in society and the church—changes that can be overwhelming and confusing—we are being invited once again to trust in God. This is not blind trust, but relational trust, trust that is developed as we spend time together in prayer, fellowship and ministry. Even though we don't fully understand the changes to come, we can trust that God's redemptive will be made known.

Ryan Siemens is Mennonite Church Saskatchewan's area church minister of congregational and pastoral relations. This column is the third in a series of letters to MC Saskatchewan congregations.

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peoples—where we are the transgressors—is vital work that the church body needs to continue pursuing if we are serious about living out the “the ministry of reconciliation” given to us by Christ and outlined in Article 22 of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*.

We appreciate the vision and leadership MC Canada

has offered, especially its involvement in the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) process and the statements of lament and commitments made on our behalf. The national church has led the way, calling us to live into those commitments and the “94 Calls to Action” issued to the church by the TRC.

We are at a critical point in Canada’s history. How will the church respond to God’s call at this moment in

FAMILY TIES

God’s heartbreak

MELISSA MILLER

While training as a family therapist, I learned the term “emotional cut-off.” It was not a dynamic I was personally familiar with; my particular family tends to be on the opposite side of the spectrum. We are often so closely entwined in each other’s lives that a little more breathing space would be desirable, healthy even. As it suggests, emotional cut-off refers to ruptures in families. Relationships become so heated and painful that one or more persons cut off contact with others. A realistic metaphor is that of amputation.

Cut-offs create more pain. The body of an amputee heals in its own way over time; still, the phantom presence of the lost limb continues to impact the person. Similarly, individuals and families can know measures of health and resiliency when there are broken relationships. Yet the presence of the missing person impinges on the whole body’s wellness.

Some of the hardest conversations I’ve had are about family estrangement. Sons disinherited by fathers. Daughters who will not speak to their parents. Grandchildren prohibited from seeing their elders. Siblings who sit in the same church yet maintain a hard wall of hurt and hostility. I ache as I hear these stories and see the family members’ bewildered, bruised hearts. I want to plead with the ones who are maintaining

the cut-off, “Please, lay down your weapons. Make peace with your family members.”

Sometimes it is impossible. Sometimes the ones who could make a difference are unable to change, for whatever mix of woundedness, insecurity or power-brokering they carry. There is paralyzing mistrust and hopelessness. There are addiction and mental health factors. There has been abuse that has irrevocably altered the path to reconciliation, at least on this side of Jordan.

What are we to do? What can we do? For starters, we prayerfully and thoughtfully make every effort we can to “live peaceably with all . . . if it is possible . . . so far as it depends on you” (reworking of Romans 12:18). As Christians, we have a special and holy calling to release hurts and offences, and pursue peace and reconciliation. This is not easy work to do,



[Such] ruptures remind us of God’s ongoing heartbreak with humanity.

even though we have been graced with Jesus’ model and his ongoing empowering presence.

Perhaps these ruptures remind us of God’s ongoing heartbreak with humanity. I glimpsed this once when I was struggling with a broken relationship. I dearly wanted to attain peace and reconcile with the other person, a hope that went

unsatisfied. I then realized this was a small measure of God’s yearning for, and frustration with, wayward humanity. In the same moment, I recognized the barriers I put up between God and myself. That insight made me more aware of God’s steadfast love and more patient in relationship conflicts.

So we do what we can. We pray. We hope. We reach out. We send a note or make a phone call. We look for chinks in the wall; we gently press on such openings. We are faithful in our desire for loving relationships and reconciliation.

We let go of what we cannot do. We cannot change the past. We cannot change other people. We cannot force them to follow our rules. We cannot make them like us or love us, or even talk to us. We weep and lament what is broken, even if such tears are shared only with God.

Then we do what inspiring paraplegics and amputees do. We live life as fully as we can with grace, joy and hope. We

build loving, sustaining relationships. We climb mountains, dance with abandon and leap out of airplanes (figuratively, if not literally).

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

time? As we look to the future direction of our church, how do we provide the needed national leadership and vision for walking alongside our indigenous kin? We pray for continued MC Canada leadership in walking the talk of indigenous-settler reconciliation together.

JOSIE WINTERFELD, SARA BRUBACHER,
SUE KLASSEN, KITCHENER, ONT.

The three signatories are affiliated with Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener.

✉ Kudos for 'prayer' editorial

RE: "BROADENING OUR prayers," June 19, page 2.

(Continued on page 10)

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Contagious generosity

KEVIN DAVIDSON

For many years my wife and I raised our family in an older community with many beautiful boulevard trees but very few young families. Despite our best efforts, our neighbours were aloof and at times confrontational, but we loved our little home and the family we were building there.

Last summer, we made the big decision to move. Although it's a short distance away from the old house, our new neighbourhood is completely different. The week we moved in, neighbours came out of their houses to welcome us to the community. People passing by stopped to chat. We found ourselves surrounded by families with children eager to welcome new kids into their games. It wasn't just a surface friendliness that wore off once we got settled; over the past year, we have been blown away by the kindness and generosity of our neighbours.



This football season, my son ran home from a playdate excited that our neighbours had offered us two tickets to the CFL game that evening. We love sports and the game was starting right away. My wife and I quickly discussed the logistics and sent my son back out to let the family know he and I would love to join them. Unfortunately, we had taken a bit too long and they were already driving away. My son broke into tears of disappointment. Reaching for my cell, I called them

and they assured us the tickets were ours if we could get to the game.

Meanwhile, the retired couple from across the street had noticed the commotion of us trying to flag down the departing vehicle and offered to drive us to the stadium so we wouldn't have to worry about parking. I was amazed! What a gift! My son and I enjoyed the game immensely thanks to the generosity of our neighbours.

Thinking of my new neighbourhood, I am reminded of Jesus' words in Mark's Gospel: *"The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these'"* (Mark 12:31 NIV). Our neighbourhood has become a practical model of this

[O]ver the past year, we have been blown away by the kindness and generosity of our neighbours.

commandment for our children, and we have found the generosity around us is contagious. It fills me with joy when I see my children emulating the kindness they see around them.

Shortly after we moved in, our nine-year-old announced he'd invited some neighbourhood kids over for dinner. My wife and I encouraged him to invite their parents as well, and we enjoyed a lovely dinner getting to know them. Another time, our son invited some of the neighbourhood boys over to play video games,

and before we knew it we had a household of kids playing and sharing a meal together.

We've had more neighbours over for brunch and dinner in the past year than we did in the previous 10 years in our old neighbourhood. For a school fundraiser, we bought two cases of apples, and my wife made apple pies that the kids and I delivered to some of our neighbours. In the winter, we shovel the driveway for a single mom down the street and help mow her lawn in the spring. It doesn't feel like hard work, either. In fact, there is an atmosphere of easy joy about it.

I see this same joy when I am helping clients plan their giving using Abundance Canada services, and feel privileged to assist in their generosity journeys. I have always been delighted by the connection I see between generous living and generous giving among my clients. Since our family's move, this connection has

become even clearer. Each day, my new neighbourhood teaches me that it really is *"more blessed to give than to receive"* (Acts 20:35 NIV). And we have been blessed so richly.

Kevin Davidson is a gift planning consultant with Abundance Canada, serving generous people in Calgary and across Alberta. Visit abundance.ca to learn more about our services or call 1-800-772-3257 to meet with a gift planning consultant in your area.

(Continued from page 9)

Thank you for your editorial. You challenged and encouraged us to pray for all of our sisters and brothers, and to listen carefully to their voices. In that way, you envisioned that we may find ways to support them as they strive to live faithfully for Christ in that troubled land.

FRAN SCHILLER, OTTAWA

Fran Schiller is a member of Ottawa Mennonite Church.

✉ Reader enjoys CM, shares it with others

I REALLY ENJOY reading your magazine. I always pass it along to others in my building. Thank you.

DONNA ARMSTRONG, STOUFFVILLE, ONT.

✉ Loss of status, influence and pride leads to 'lonely death'

RE: "READER SEEKS information about Mennonite settlers," June 19, page 12.

It was the years 1924 to 1929 when a large group of Mennonite immigrants settled in the area southwest of Winnipeg.

By that time, most indigenous people had moved on to other areas in Manitoba. It helps to see the larger picture. Most indigenous people were hunters and trappers. The whole country was surveyed into ranges, townships and sections for the many settlers who came to find land for agriculture, like the many Mennonites who came to this area. So really there was a cultural difference.

When we came to this area in 1926, most land had been divided into sections. Now this system was foreign to the indigenous people, so that most of them

FROM OUR LEADERS

Simple, but not easy

DAN DYCK

Catching up on Witness worker reports, I came across an update from Mary Raber, who teaches at the Odessa Theological Seminary in Ukraine, a country continuing to experience turmoil despite the absence of stories in the mainstream news media.

In a class she taught about women in church history, she invited students to tell a story about a woman who had influenced their spiritual lives.

Although the particulars of each story varied, three common threads emerged: hospitality, prayer and faithfulness.

She writes, "These things are simple rather than easy, but let them serve as a reminder to all of us that profound, positive influence is always within our reach."

Consider hospitality. In its most simple form, hospitality is offered to family, friends and others with whom we feel comfortable. That's easy. That simple practice becomes a radical act

of influence—and far less easy—when we extend hospitality to newcomers, strangers or even those we perceive to be enemies. It can feel like work: Is my home clean and tidy enough? What should I serve? What if they stay too late? What if we have nothing in common?



It's not terribly hard to utter a silent prayer as we thank and petition God to act in our lives and in the lives of others.

Prayer, too, can be a simple act, but that doesn't always make it easy. It's not terribly hard to utter a silent prayer as we thank and petition God to act in our lives and in the lives of others. On the other hand, praying aloud can be challenging. Others will hear what we're thinking, and that tests our comfort zones. What if they don't agree? Does a prayer voiced before others change the listener's heart? Does a humble prayer of petition influence anyone? And what about praying for one's

enemies? That might be the most difficult "simple" challenge of all.

Faithfulness is a huge influencer too, but modelling faithfulness for others comes with its own unique risks and uncertainties. As a young man, I was asked to take on an influential role in the church, something I had never done. I responded that no one knew me and, therefore, I had no influence. Why would anyone pay attention to what I had to offer?

"Everyone influences someone," was the advice I received from one leader.

I carry those words with me to this day,

along with regrets for all the times I have not lived up to good standards of faithfulness. I wonder who I may have influenced, and whether it was a good or bad example. Thanks be to God for mercy and grace, and for the gifts of hospitality, prayer and faithfulness. Simple, but not easy.

Dan Dyck is Mennonite Church Canada's director of church engagement-communications.

could not adapt to the new system and simply lost control of the wider range for hunting and trapping.

When a sudden change takes place for some people, it does cause conflict. It was in the 1930s, as we brought my father some lunch in the field, he was talking to an indigenous man. He had been a chief in the Turtle Mountain area of southwestern Manitoba. In the change, he had lost his status, influence and pride. He died a lonely death in his cabin.

JACOB J. UNGER, BOISSEVAIN, MAN.

✉ 'Let's end the doubt about doubt'

RE: "WISDOM, WHERE art thou? (Pt. 9)," June 19, page 14.

In this column, Troy Watson promotes the idea that "toxic doubt" represents a slippery slope, insofar as it disenfranchises faith and the church to the point where it is no longer transformative.

This interpretation is problematic because it misses the entire point of "toxic doubt": It shatters traditional religion and morphs it into something ecstatic and new. As such, the (his)story of religion is replete with examples of "toxic doubt" as a catalyst for both religion and faith:

- **ARGUABLY, THE** "binding of Isaac" by Abraham is as much a story about faith in Yahweh as it is about doubting the practice of child sacrifice to the god Moloch. And for his faith—and doubt—Abraham is considered to be the father of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.
- **JESUS MOVED** beyond the mentality of "an eye for an eye" when he doubted sections of the Torah,

resulting in the salvation of a woman's life.

- **PAUL DOUBTED** that humanity remained under the curse of the first Adam in order to make way for the blessing of the second Adam.
- **LUTHER DOUBTED** that purchasing indulgences was a bona fide way to overcome anxiety about the uncertainty of death, thereby ushering in Protestantism.
- **ANABAPTISM CAME** about because Grebel, Manz and Blaurock doubted that Zwingli was up to speed on infant baptism, among other church practices.

The bugaboo of Watson's premise is that it underestimates—and is suspicious of—the full potential of "toxic doubt" to undermine faith and overturn our churches. Understood through the lens of self-definition, however, "toxic doubt" is the twin sibling of faith in the ever-spiralling perichoresis (a term referring to the relationship of the three persons of the triune God to one another) of religion.

Let's end the doubt about doubt, and have faith in its transubstantiating power.

GRANT SAWATZKY, CALGARY

Grant Sawatzky attends Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Bang—Aria Georgia (b. June 3, 2017), to Jimmy Bang and Johanna Petkau, Carman Mennonite, Man.

Bowman—Sawyer Anderson (b. April 26, 2017), to Corey and Bridget Bowman, East Zorra Mennonite, Ont.

Doell—Lucy Elizabeth (b. Oct. 30, 2016), to Carl and Leanne Doell, Carman Mennonite, Man.

Enns—Amari Violet (b. Nov. 23, 2016), to Travis and Stacie Enns, Carman Mennonite, Man.

Loewen—Meliha Kathleen (b. July 7, 2017), to Matthew and Theresa Loewen, Main Street Church, Chilliwack, B.C.

Lowden—Samuel Edward (b. June 8, 2017), to Adrian and Angela Lowden, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., in Switzerland.

Sawatzky—Theodore Isaac (b. May 3, 2017), to Mike and

/// Corrections

- **MENNO SIMONS** Christian School is in Calgary. Its location was incorrectly identified in "Farewell to long-time staffer," July 3, page 26.
- **THE CASTLE** at Passau, Germany, is on the Danube River. Incorrect information appeared in "A long and winding history," June 19, page 20. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error.

Melissa Bartel Sawatzky, First United Mennonite, Vancouver.
Tissen —McKenna Elizabeth (b. May 22, 2017), to Daniel and Nicole Tissen, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Baptisms

Rica Siva, Michael Wiebe—Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, May 28, 2017.

Kirk Wittig, Lea Wittig, Blake Bender, Josh Bender, Drew Brenneman, Emma Brenneman, Jayden Schumm, Blair Sparling, Hilary Bender, Kaylee

Kaufman, Hannah McLaren—Tavistock Mennonite, Ont., June 18, 2017.

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

Marriages

Attema/Regier—Dave Attema and Jennifer Regier, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, July 15, 2017.

Lobsinger/Pauls—Luc Lobsinger and Kaitlyn Pauls (Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.) in Queenston, Ont., June 17, 2017.

Paba/Witmer—Luis Paba and Courtney Witmer (East Zorra Mennonite, Ont.), in Cambridge, Ont., March 10, 2017.

Ropp/Willsie—Brent Ropp (East Zorra Mennonite, Ont.) and Heather Willsie, at Forest Baptist, Ont., July 8, 2017.

Stobbe/Wiebe—Blayne Stobbe and Emily Wiebe, Carman Mennonite, Man., June 3, 2017.

Deaths

Benner—Marlene Reller Keller, 75 (b. Aug. 30, 1941; d. July 13, 2017), Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., in Charlottesville, Va.

Dyck—Peter, 96 (b. April 3, 1921; d. April 26, 2017), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Eitzen—Peter, 93 (b. Sept. 3, 1923; d. June 20, 2017), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Jantz—Katherine (nee Goerzen), 87 (b. Nov. 1, 1929; d. May 18, 2017), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Kliewer—John, 79 (b. July 22, 1937; d. June 8, 2017), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Krause—Else, 95 (b. Feb. 15, 1922; d. April 8, 2017), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Martens—Erna, 97 (b. Aug. 8, 1919; d. June 25, 2017), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Mohr—Earl, 86 (b. April 1, 1931; d. May 7, 2017), Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.

Rempel—Kay, 86 (b. March 21, 1931; d. March 28, 2017), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Rempel—Peter, 93 (b. May 28, 1923; d. March 12, 2017), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Rempel—Tina (nee Schapansky), 91 (b. June 11, 1925; d. March 10, 2017), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Sawatzky—Katharina, 102 (b. Sept. 29, 1914; d. April 25, 2017), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Weber—Elizabeth (nee Snider), 93 (b. April 30, 1924; d. July 3, 2017), Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones announcements within four months of the event.

Please send Milestones announcements by e-mail to milestones@canadianmennonite.org, including the congregation name and location. When sending death notices, please also include birth date and last name at birth if available.

A moment from yesterday



Who are these five women from Siegburg, Germany, pictured in 1919? We don't know for certain, but on Jan. 13, soldier Gordon Eby wrote that he and an army buddy "called at the home of the Krohn family—Hubertina, Maria, Lena, Katie and Bettie." Eby was a long way from his home and Mennonite roots in Kitchener, Ont., when his battalion was quartered in Germany after the Armistice. Speaking German helped open doors for him to the warmth of German hospitality towards former "enemies." This is the kind of war story that seldom gets told. Why is that?

Text: Laureen Harder-Gissing / Mennonite Archives of Ontario

Photo: Mennonite Archives of Ontario



archives.mhsc.ca

VIEWPOINT

Mass starvation: Does anyone give a *%^\$?

JOHN LONGHURST

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

“I have three things I’d like to say today,” said American author Tony Campolo to a crowd at the 1982 interdenominational Spring Harvest church conference in England. “First, while you were sleeping last night, 45,000 kids died of starvation or diseases related to malnutrition.

“Second, most of you don’t give a *%^\$.

“Third, what’s worse is that you’re more upset with the fact I said *%^\$ than the fact that 45,000 kids died last night.”

Campolo’s words—for which he became infamous—come back to me as I think about the terrible food crisis in South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and parts of Kenya and Nigeria. An estimated 20 million people face starvation in those countries, the largest humanitarian crisis since 1945, according to the UN.

And it’s not as if this came out of nowhere. The disaster has been forecast for many months. And yet for the longest time it seemed as though the world—to use Campolo’s words—didn’t give a *%^\$.

Except for a bit of media coverage here and there, there was virtually nothing about the situation in newspapers or on radio and TV.

There are several reasons for this:

- **IT’S HARD** for the media to get into the worst-affected regions, and they don’t have the resources they used to.
- **THE TRUMP** effect. The new president, with his unpredictable ways, has sucked up much of the media oxygen.
- **ADDED TO** this is the general fatigue everyone feels over the extended Syrian crisis. Will it never end?

Two groups that are trying to break

the silence are the World Council of Churches and the All Africa Council of Churches, who issued a call for a Global Day of Prayer to End Famine earlier this year.

Noting that “more people face famine today than any time in modern history,” the groups called on national and international church bodies and organizations to ask their members and supporters to pray for an end to the hunger, and to the conflict that is causing so much of the need.

“Churches have a prophetic role in calling to mobilize their members, the wider

society and governments, and making a difference during this unprecedented period of suffering,” they stated, adding that “food is more than a human right; it is a divine gift that cannot be impeded.”

As far as I know, the only Mennonite bodies that signed up to participate were the Mennonite Church of India and Mennonite Central Committee.

By praying, we can give an answer to Campolo: We do care that 20 million people are at risk of starvation. And the fact that so many are in danger of dying matters more than someone using the word “*%^\$” in a sermon or a column.

As Campolo said back then in his now-infamous sermon in England: “The Christ of Scripture is not so much concerned with the four-letter words we use as he is with those who are dying and in need.”

To that, all I can say is “Amen.” ❧

John Longhurst of Winnipeg is director of resources and public engagement at Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

ACT ALLIANCE PHOTO BY PAUL JEFFREY



By praying, we can give an answer to Campolo: We do care that 20 million people are at risk of starvation.

LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

I'll melt with you

TROY WATSON

Our family was fortunate enough to see an iceberg this summer near Twillingate, N.L. It was a surreal experience for me. Everything around me paused for a brief transcendent moment, frozen in time, with the ironic exception of the massive spire of ice in front of me. "I'll Stop the World and Melt With You" by the 1980s band Modern English began playing in the back of my mind.



The iceberg seemed completely out of place in the sunlit blue water of such a small cove surrounded by green-covered rock cliffs. The smell of salt water and sunscreen filled the air. Sea gulls were squawking overhead, cheering on the fiery heat of the midday sun warming my skin. The floating white mountain appeared otherworldly in this summer seaside setting. It was from another place . . . far far away. It did not belong here. Certainly not on the dawn of August.

The colossal fortress of frozen water was from a different era as well, reportedly 10,000 years old. Now here it was melting, being reduced to nothing over the span of a few weeks by 15-degree Celsius water. A strange and tragic ending for something so ancient and strong, capable of destroying ocean liners and 60,000-tonne oil platforms. It brought to mind T.S. Elliot's poem "The Hollow Men": "This is the way the world ends, not with a bang but a whimper."

For some reason, this brought to my mind the church. Are we witnessing the

melting of the mighty western church in the 21st century?

These thoughts were undoubtedly induced by the upcoming final worship service of Riverdale Mennonite Church in Millbank, Ont. Riverdale will be officially closed by the time you read this.

Riverdale was the first church to extend a pastoral call to me. That was 19 years ago. I didn't know much about Mennonites at the time and I was extremely disillusioned with the church in general. To be honest, I accepted the call more out of curiosity than anything. It turned out to be providence. The Christ-like people and sense

of genuine community I encountered at Riverdale brought tremendous healing to me. It renewed my relationship with God and restored my love for the church.

Like an iceberg, Riverdale was otherworldly to me, totally foreign to the world I inhabited in 1998. It was a pure and simple place where compassion, peace and humility were the norm. My time there was profoundly transformative. I'm not sure where I'd be today if I'd never met Pastor Glenn Zehr and the good people of Riverdale.

I discovered that churches, like icebergs, shouldn't be judged by the little bit you can see on the surface. Approximately 88 percent of an iceberg's essence is below the surface, and the same is true for churches. For years I judged churches based on what I could see on the surface, not realizing that what I saw was significantly jaded by my past experiences. During my three years at Riverdale I plunged beneath the surface

to see the depth of a faith community that embodied the kingdom of God in a way I didn't think possible. No church is perfect, but the people of Riverdale were some of the most honest, loving, peaceful, caring people of integrity I've ever met.

It feels wrong that Riverdale's epic journey as a church community is coming to an end. Why would God allow this to happen? It seems not only unfair but abrupt. A member recently told me it was just 10 years ago that the church was running out of room and considering adding onto its building. That is how quickly these things can happen—like a massive iceberg melting in a few weeks.

How do we make sense of this? We can't. Yet as I contemplate melting

The movement of God's Spirit through the people of Riverdale is not ending, it's simply changing form.

icebergs, I realize it isn't an ending but a transformation. The essence of an iceberg is water. The water doesn't die when an iceberg melts, it simply changes form. In one sense the iceberg water is liberated as it melts, released to flow in its most life-giving state.

So, too, the essence of every church is the Spirit of God moving in and through people. The movement of God's Spirit through the people of Riverdale is not ending, it's simply changing form.

Sometimes flowing with the life-giving water of the Spirit means melting. This is difficult and painful because it means giving up our current form, but when we refuse to melt with the Spirit, we become lifeless, waterless chunks of dry ice.

It is only with humble faithfulness and trust in God that we learn to pray "I'll melt with you," as Riverdale has done. ☞

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



Do you know of someone in your congregation not receiving Canadian Mennonite? Ask your church administrator to add them to the list. It is already paid for.



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GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Best practices begin with prayer

Leamington United Mennonite Church thrives in 2017

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
LEAMINGTON, ONT.

While many congregations are shuttering or repurposing their education wings, Leamington United Mennonite Church built a whole new addition in 2011, replacing a 1959 building that had been linked to their new worshipping and office space when they were built in 1984. The new wing includes a dedicated prayer space as well as a suite of offices and a board room that is in high demand for adult study and discussion groups.

Victor Winter, coordinating pastor, says the church had already been looking at how to have a dedicated prayer space, and this seemed to be the perfect location, adding, "The prayer room has become a focal point for the work of the church."

Staff now meet four days a week to pray through a liturgy given them by the recently deceased Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary professor emeritus Alan Kreider. At the end of the prayer time, they say together, "Lord, you will be at work today; help us to see where you are working, and show us how we can enter in."

Congregational needs are remembered during this prayer time, and David Dyck, associate pastor, notes that people have begun to attend, especially a day or two before they have surgery or when other crises arise.

Leaders have also used the room for some sensitive meetings where they especially have desired to have God's guidance on difficult decisions.

In, Up, Out: three dimensions of ministry

Missio Dei is a concept that runs through the ReLearning Community project being supported by Mennonite Church Eastern



Louise Campbell poses with the New International Version Student Bible and a copy of the most recent 'Season of reading guide' used by Leamington (Ont.) United Mennonite Church to increase biblical literacy in the congregation for the past two years.

Canada. Dyck and a number of others from the church are in the third year of this process being led by Three Dimensional Ministry (3DM) from Europe. The three dimensions are:

- **IN: CARING** for one's own life.
- **UP: FOCUSING** on one's spiritual life and relationship with God.
- **OUT: MOVING** out into the community to make disciples.

The congregation is at the stage of trying to form missional communities that will see Sunday morning as only part of

their "church life." The other part will be a small group that meets weekly or bi-weekly, encouraging each other in their Up, In and Out lives. This is a difficult point in ReLearning Community, as often there is pushback on the idea that anything is as important as Sunday morning.

Dyck already sees the congregation embracing ministry outside the church walls. The community right around the church building has many new Canadians, and the congregation provides space and assistance to children after school. He acknowledges that "knocking on doors" to invite people to programs like a neighbourhood Halloween carnival is outside the comfort zone of many Mennonites.

The church hopes to be a "community of healing and hope" in Leamington. Two houses, bought years ago with the idea of expanding the parking lot, have been made available recently for people who need housing but cannot easily afford what is available. Relationships with the church have flourished from these gifts of housing.

In addressing the Up dimension, the church has spent the past two years reading through most of the Bible in "A season of reading." Designed by another associate pastor, Mike Williamson, regularly prepared reading guides have given congregants guidance in their readings.

On Sunday mornings, pastors took turns preaching on the material read the previous week, which meant addressing some hard topics. Purchase of the New International Version Student Bibles gave everyone the same, relatively simple translation to use. At least one couple began coming to Leamington United Mennonite because of the program and recently became members.

8 Cities, an In program for married couples, was sponsored by the congregation for about 40 couples. Created and presented by Joe and Carolyn Burjoski, the program (8cities.org/) introduces participants to eight different cities, exploring different aspects of marriage. For example, Paris, the city of love, focusses on sexuality, and Tokyo, on communications. Couples ranged from newlyweds to those who had silver weddings behind them. ❧



Mennonite Heritage Museum board chair George Epp points to the family register in a Bible once owned by Elder Peter Regier of the Rosenort Mennonite congregations.

No longer 'a repository of artifacts'

Mennonite Heritage Museum now offers 'interpretive storytelling' of Mennonite history

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
ROSTHERN, SASK.

Oliver Friesen's face lights up when he talks about history. "There's something about the past," he says. "It's alive and so interesting."

For the past two summers Friesen has been making history come alive for visitors to the Mennonite Heritage Museum in Rosthern. A student of history at the University of Saskatchewan, Friesen has been helping to develop one room of the museum into a Mennonite interpretive centre.

George Epp, who chairs the museum's board of directors, says visits to other museums convinced the board to move away from "the museum as a repository of artifacts" and towards "the museum as a centre for interpretive storytelling."

The old red brick building that houses the museum was once home to Rosthern Junior College. As a nod to the building's academic history, the board chose to use chalkboards as the canvas on which to tell

the story of Anabaptist Mennonite origins and eventual settlement in the Rosthern area. Chalkboards lend themselves well to storytelling; as additions and refinements are introduced, "you can take a cloth and change the display in a very short order," he says.

Friesen agrees, noting that as he works on the chalkboards he thinks of other things that could be changed or improved. "You could spend so much time just on the chalkboards," he says.

But Epp and Friesen have been careful not to overwhelm visitors with printed text. Snippets of information are offered with illustrations, and beneath the panels museum artifacts add another visual dimension to the story. For those who wish to read more, the story continues on printed handouts that visitors can take with them.

In addition to the chalkboards, the room boasts an interactive digital installation.

Created by Wes Ens, the installation features an animated tour guide that leads visitors through Anabaptist Mennonite history from the days of Felix Manz and Georg Blaurock to 21st-century Rosthern.

Epp says the interpretive centre is designed to appeal to a broad range of visitors. School groups may engage in a museum scavenger hunt, while adults might choose to do research using the museum's growing library of community and family history books.

Friesen estimates that about 50 percent of visitors are Mennonite. "They want to know whether we have information regarding their families," he says. "They want to connect with their history."

Others who step through the door have no idea who Mennonites are. Friesen says they will ask questions such as, "So what is a Mennonite?" and, "Are Mennonites Russian?" When he tells them about the early Anabaptists and what Mennonites believe, he says the conversation then "shifts toward religion and how people should treat each other."

Friesen says he has always had a passion for history but was never interested in the Mennonite kind until recently. Working at the museum has helped him discover his immediate family history, as well as the faith story of his Anabaptist forbears.

He indicates a family photograph on display in the room. "I look at a picture like that and I imagine what was happening in the family moments before the picture was taken," he says. "There is so much more [to history] than what we see."

He hopes that Mennonite visitors to the museum will come away knowing that their heritage is valuable. "The Mennonite story is fascinating and adventurous," he says. "People died for their faith. People left their homeland. It's important to know your heritage, but it's also exciting."

For those who aren't Mennonite, he hopes a tour through the museum's interpretive centre will spark an interest in learning about their own heritage. "It's important to know your own identity and history," he says. ❧

To view more photos, visit canadianmennonite.org/repository-of-artifacts.



Vietnamese Fellowship drops 'Mennonite' name

Same-sex decisions by MC Canada spark the move to 'Evangelical' instead

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent

A name change, effective immediately, heralds a time of direction-setting for the former North American Vietnamese Mennonite Fellowship.

From June 30 to July 1, the Fellowship held its biennial conference at Calgary Vietnamese Mennonite Church, where the name change to North American Vietnamese Evangelical Fellowship (NAVEF) was approved. This reflects the fact that some Vietnamese churches have left Mennonite Church Canada over discomfort with recent discussions and decisions around same-sex relationships, while other congregations are currently considering their affiliation with MC Canada.

Twenty-two delegates, representing churches in Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver, approved the name change, along with a recommendation to continue working with MC Canada in administration and missions until decisions

are made about what to do next. Delegates from several Vietnamese congregations in the U.S. were not able to attend the conference. A committee has been struck to study possible denominational affiliations and to offer a proposal at the next biennial conference, to be held in Vancouver in 2019.

Following the meeting in Calgary, the Vietnam Reference Committee, which represents Mennonite organizations in Vietnam, met with representatives from Eastern Mennonite Missions, MC Canada Witness and the MC U.S.A. Mennonite Mission Network.

In minutes from this meeting, Gordon Janzen, director of Asia, Europe and Middle East Ministries for MC Canada, noted that structural changes to the national church—which had partnered with the Fellowship for 15 years to support the growth of the Evangelical Mennonite



PHOTO COURTESY OF GARRY JANZEN

Pictured at the recent meeting of what is now the North American Vietnamese Evangelical Fellowship, are from left to right, front row: Nhiem Pham, pastor of the Vietnamese Mennonite Church in Vancouver and chair of the newly named organization; and his wife Lien; and back row: Garry Janzen, MC B.C. executive minister; and Tim Wiebe-Neufeld, MC Alberta area church minister.

Church in Vietnam—will be made following an assembly in Winnipeg in October, with decentralization of its powers likely. “The capacity of MC Canada Witness to support NAVEF mission financially, and with staff support for NAVEF, is not clear at the moment, but continuity in partnership with NAVEF will be explored.” ❧

Camp Moose Lake now sold

Five decades of camping ministry there will be celebrated on Sept. 24

Mennonite Church Manitoba



MENNONITE CHURCH MANITOBA PHOTO
After 51 years of youth camping at Camp Moose Lake, a deal for the Mennonite Church Manitoba facility will close on Sept. 29.

Camp Moose Lake, one of Mennonite Church Manitoba's three Camps with Meaning (CwM) locations, has been sold to the Division Scolaire Franco-Manitobaine. Possession date for the camp, located in the southeast corner of Manitoba near the community of Sprague, is set for Sept. 29.

“We are so thankful for the incredible

ministry that has taken place at this location. We know it has been holy ground for campers, volunteers and staff,” says Ken Warkentin, the area church's executive director. “It has been so good, and it's also good to look forward to refocussing this same kind of passion across a more sustainable footprint.”

CwM began with one location, Camp Assiniboia, near Headingly, in 1949. Passionate regional groups oversaw the beginning of Camp Moose Lake in 1957, which was then joined by Camp Koinonia, in the southwest part of Manitoba near Boissevain, in 1966.

It has been a challenge for MC Manitoba

to operate three locations in the landscape of decreasing volunteers and resources, while summer camp options for children and youth have exploded.

“Longtime Camp Moose Lake supporters will certainly be disappointed, although many of us have been preparing ourselves for this reality for some time,” says Darryl Neustaedter Barg, the area church’s associate director of communications. “Camp Moose Lake is where I took all I learned

from home, church and school, and made my faith my own. It’s where I learned to play guitar and lead singing. I know others had similar life-changing experiences. That said, I’ve also learned that our camping ministry is more about the people and how we use our resources than a particular location.”

Camp Moose Lake and Camp Koinonia are leased from the provincial parks in which they are located, so the sale value

reflects building and equipment only. The Camp Moose Lake deal does not include the iconic timber frame picnic shelter that will be disassembled and moved to Camp Assiniboia. ❧

A celebration service is being planned for Camp Moose Lake at the camp on Sept. 24. For more details online, visit mennochurch.mb.ca.



Farewell to a faithful servant

BY KARLA BRAUN

Mennonite World Conference

You may not have heard of one of the longest-serving workers for Mennonite World Conference (MWC) who is retiring this year, but many will be familiar with his work.

Glenn Fretz was at the beginning of his career as a designer when Paul Kraybill, a former MWC general secretary, contacted the resident of Waterloo, Ont., to do all the design work related to Assembly 10 in 1978. He designed the publications in multiple languages, created signage that features pictorial symbols to communicate across cultures without using words, and he created the organization’s logo.

His simple, memorable combination of the cross and the globe is the instantly recognizable symbol of MWC that continues to ground its visual identity to this day.

Over the next four decades, he designed the 1990 *Mennonite World Handbook: Mennonites in Global Witness*; the 1990, 2003 and 2009 assembly songbooks; a variety of brochures; the 2012 and 2015 World Directory publications; the 2009 and 2015 MWC world map; and signage for Assembly 16 in Harrisburg, Pa., in 2015.

He also designed the global MWC section at the visitors centre in St Jacobs, Ont., and in 1997 he designed the then new

Canadian Mennonite magazine for editor Ron Rempel.

In 2012, Rempel, who had become MWC’s chief communications officer, brought Fretz on retainer with MWC as visual identity consultant to create a manual to standardize the look of MWC communications for the evolving needs of the future. Applications he produced include the trilingual signature (the logo plus MWC in 3 languages); letterhead; templates for print applications like brochures, posters, report and resource headers; and templates for electronic applications such as the website, MWC Info (e-newsletter), Facebook and PowerPoint. He also supervised a redesign of *Courier/Correo/Courrier* magazine.

His final MWC project was the proceedings book, a record of the speeches and activities at Assembly 16. ❧



PHOTO BY BYRON REMPEL BURKHOLDER

Glenn Fretz is pictured with the initial planning map and some of the hallway signage he designed for Assembly 16 in Harrisburg, Pa., in 2015.

Where's 'quirky' church going?

MC U.S.A. Future Church Summit sparks ideas that delegates call a guide for discernment

By PAUL SCHRAG

Mennonite World Review
ORLANDO, FLA.

After 14 hours of talking about how to follow Jesus as Anabaptists in the 21st century, Mennonite Church U.S.A. delegates faced the question of how to describe what they had done. Had they set a direction for the denomination's future or made a list of ideas that needed further discernment?

It quickly became clear that many believed the nine-page document summarizing the Future Church Summit had not charted a definite path, yet a resolution proposed by the Executive Board called it "the direction of our national body."

Delegate Dean Wimmer voiced the concern: "We are being asked to affirm this as the direction, and we can't even say what that is."

Sensing the need for an amendment, the resolutions committee sent one of its members, Samuel Voth Schrag, to the podium. The committee, he said, was "hearing energy to soften the language of direction." He proposed less-prescriptive language. The summit report might be called "a dynamic document that is offered to the church to guide further discernment for living into God's calling in agencies, conferences, constituency groups and congregations," he suggested.

And so it was. The 500 delegates adopted the amended resolution, with about 10 dissenting votes, as they wrapped up their work on the final day of the MC U.S.A. convention on July 8.

"We wanted a list of things we hold in common, but also flexibility for these to be used by congregations and conferences," said Iris de Léon-Hartshorn, a member of the "theme team" that wrote the report, in an interview. "It's hard to rank what's more important. We didn't want the themes to



PHOTO BY VADA SNIDER

Dayna Olson-Getty, associate pastor at Community Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va., talks with another convention-goer beside a timeline that helped the Future Church Summit consider how the past has shaped today's MC U.S.A.

be in competition with each other."

The themes—short phrases of description and aspiration, critique and praise—emerged from a process of recalling the past, evaluating the present and dreaming about the future. There were 154 bullet points, including:

- **CRITIQUES OF failure:** the "marginalization of people of colour, women and LGBTQ people," and, "painful patterns of splitting/division."
- **OBSERVATIONS:** "WE struggle together with the boundaries of our church body—regarding our biblical vision for inclusion/exclusion."
- **CATEGORIES FOR action:** "immigration: tending to the undocumented."
- **GENERAL ADVICE:** "Listen. Learn. Change. Repeat," and, "Like a marriage, some things would be easier to do on your own, but other things are done better

together even though there are some headaches along the way."

Summit participants were polled twice to see if the report accurately reflected their discussions; 89 percent and then 85 percent gave it the highest or second-highest rating.

The "theme team" also recorded a list of laments, including: "using assimilation to white Mennonite culture to deal with differences," misuse or abuse of power in

relationships with people of colour and LGBTQ people, and a "declining focus on spiritual vitality and formation."

Table discussions produced 1,254 affirmations, which the theme team's report distilled to eight, including being a Jesus-centred community that studies Scripture and discerns the moving of the Spirit, "saying no to war and yes to peace," and affirming women in ministry.

Individuals had various opportunities to speak to the entire group.

"We are not seeing privilege for what it really is in our church," an African-American woman said, "and how it affects those who are not in the privileged groups."

A woman who identified herself as a new Mennonite said she was drawn to the church by its emphasis on Jesus-centred discipleship, yet "we leave parts of that out. Jesus sought out the marginalized. . . . I lament that there has been silencing and

blaming victims of abuse while protecting perpetrators.”

Participants were asked to consider how to be evangelists and peacemakers. Several emphasized the two cannot be separated.

“Peace without Jesus doesn’t make any sense,” said Gary Wolfer. “Our understanding of peace comes from who Jesus is.”

Matt Lehman Wiens said evangelism begins with asking others what they need. “Evangelism is something we need to do with, and not to,” he said.

Evangelism “is not a triumphalistic proclamation, but it is a humble and bold one at the same time,” said Dorothy Jean Weaver.

Participants discussed what kind of church God is calling MC U.S.A. to be.

Juel Russell said: “I want us to be the kind of church where we white people give up our power and allow our persons of colour and LGBTQ siblings to lead us.”

“I affirm diversity, but as a person who holds the traditional view of sexuality, I have not felt safe to express that,” said delegate Larry Diener.

Nathan Ebbs of Albany, Ore., suggested flipping the denomination’s power structures upside down, and “not just balance the scales, but tip the scales over.” ❧

MC U.S.A. acknowledges ‘suffering’ of Jews, Palestinians

American church also chooses divestment ‘from companies that are profiting from the occupation,’ a year after MC Canada did the same thing

Mennonite Church U.S.A.
ORLANDO, FLA.

Culminating a three-year process, delegates at the Mennonite Church U.S.A. assembly in Orlando last month adopted a resolution entitled “Seeking peace in Israel and Palestine,” with approximately 98 percent voting in favor. The resolution addresses the injustices of military occupation as well as the suffering caused by anti-Semitism.

The resolution notes that “the suffering of [Palestinians and Jews] has too often been set against the other. We recognize, rather, that the legacy of Jewish suffering is intertwined with the suffering of Palestinians.”

At the MC U.S.A. assembly in Kansas City in 2015, delegates tabled a previous resolution on Israel-Palestine and asked that it be revised and brought back to the next delegate gathering. A three-person writing team and a 10-member reference group worked intensely during the past two years, consulting widely across the church and with Palestinian and Jewish partners.

“I could not support the resolution two

years ago. It was too simplistic,” Nelson Kraybill, the Mennonite World Conference president, said, speaking in support of the new motion at this year’s assembly. “I commend the committee for their thorough work.”

The resolution focusses on ways American Mennonites have been involved in harms against both Palestinians and Jews, and names concrete steps to address those harms. This restorative-justice approach is one of the significant shifts from the resolution considered by delegates two years ago.

André Gingerich Stoner, a member of the writing team, introduced the resolution to delegates with words from Psalm 85: “*Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other.*”

“That’s what we are seeking to do in this resolution,” he said, “to hold together mercy and truth, grace and justice.” A goal of the process, he added, was to “help different parts of the body have conversation with each other,” drawing together advocates, agency staff and others to create a

more comprehensive document.

One of the commitments of the resolution is to avoid economic support for the military occupation of Palestinian territories. Drawing on a long tradition of stewardship practices, the resolution calls on members to avoid purchase of products associated with the occupation or produced in Jewish settlements in occupied territories. It also establishes a process for the church to review its investments “for the purpose of withdrawing investments from companies that are profiting from the occupation.”

The resolution also calls on Mennonites to examine the legacy of anti-Semitism in their own history and life. It commends plans for several conferences in the next two years on topics including Mennonite involvement in the Holocaust, and examining how the church reads Scripture in light of the Holocaust. The resolution encourages American Mennonites at different levels of church life to strengthen and build relationships with Jewish communities.

Introductory remarks at the July 5 session came from both Alex Awad, a pastor in East Jerusalem and professor at Bethlehem Bible College in Palestine, and Rabbi Brant Rosen of the Jewish Voice for Peace Rabbinical Council. Both of them praised the engagement and learning that had occurred through the process and pledged ongoing support.

“It’s been a wonderful journey the past two years,” Awad said. “I’m thankful you have been listening.” He compared the July 6 vote to a “final exam” on the issue after all the studying that had taken place.

The resolution underscores a commitment to active nonviolence and a rejection of violence as dehumanizing and ineffective. It highlights the work of Palestinian and Israeli peacemakers who work for peace with justice, and reject violence and oppression, and challenges Mennonites to learn from and support these partners.

Several speakers at the microphones urged MC U.S.A. to diligently provide resources and to follow up on the resolution’s commitments so that it is not just “put on a shelf.” ❧

/// Staff changes

Pastoral transitions in Manitoba

• **LAURIE REDPATH** concluded his time as lead pastor of Graysville Mennonite Church in May. Redpath, who graduated from Canadian Mennonite University with a bachelor's degree in theology in 2009, had served at Graysville Mennonite since January 2013. He now works in carpentry, based in Carman, Man., where he and his family live.

• **MELISSA MILLIER** started a 12-month term as intentional interim pastor at Home Street Mennonite Church in Winnipeg on July 1. Miller, who grew up in Pennsylvania, had served previously as pastor at Springsteen Mennonite Church just west of Winnipeg.



When asked what she likes about being a pastor, Miller, who has written *Canadian Mennonite's* long-running "Family ties" column, said, "I like the opportunity to walk with people in their God moments." She specifically mentioned how people "meet God and trust God at the doorstep of death." As for the congregation she has joined, she characterizes Home Street as a church that listens for, and responds to, needs in its neighbourhood.

• **LEE HIEBERT** started as lead pastor of Steinbach Mennonite Church on Aug. 1. Originally from Kelowna, B.C., where he was a member of First Mennonite, he graduated from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., this past spring with a master of divinity in Christian formation. Prior to that, he served as part-time associate pastor at Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church in Winnipeg while attending Canadian Mennonite University. About his upcoming move to Steinbach Mennonite, he says, "there is so much energy and excitement in that church, I feel like I am being swept up."



—BY WILL BRAUN

Pastoral transitions in Ontario

• **STEVE COX** began his pastoral role at The Gathering Church in Kitchener, Ont., on Aug. 8. Previously, he was the young-adult pastor at Agincourt Pentecostal Church, Toronto, from 2004 to 2005, and the associate pastor at Niagara United Mennonite Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., from 2005 to 2017. He earned an honours bachelor of business administration degree from Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ont., in 2002, and a master of divinity degree in pastoral studies from Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, in 2005.



• **SUSAN KENNEL HARRISON** was licensed toward ordination on June 11 at Windsor Mennonite Fellowship, where she has been pastor since September 2015. She has pastored at Evanston (Ill.) Mennonite Church, and served as interim/supply pastor at Grace Community Church in Chicago, and at Warden Woods Mennonite Church and Jane-Finch Community, both in Toronto. In addition, she has been supply preaching in Mennonite, United, Presbyterian and Anglican churches for more than two decades. She is a PhD candidate in theology at Emmanuel College at the University of Toronto and is developing a business in spiritually integrated psychotherapy.



—BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Rebecca Stoltzfus appointed Goshen College's 18th president

• **REBECCA STOLTZFUS** has been jointly appointed as Goshen (Ind.) College's 18th president by unanimous votes from both the college's board of directors and the board of the Mennonite Education Agency. She will officially take office on Nov. 1. A 1983 Goshen College graduate, Stoltzfus is currently vice-provost for undergraduate education and professor of human nutrition at Cornell University, an Ivy League institution in Ithaca, N.Y. She studied chemistry at Goshen and received master's and doctoral degrees in human nutrition from Cornell. Before joining the Cornell faculty in 2002, she taught human nutrition at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, Md. Her ongoing research focusses on the causes and consequences of malnutrition in women and children in low-income countries. Stoltzfus will succeed James E. Brenneman, who served as the college's president since 2006 and ended his tenure on June 30. Goshen's provost, Ken Newbold, began serving as interim president on July 1. "Rebecca has an outstanding record as an executive leader, administrator, teacher and scholar," said Conrad Clemens, chair of the Goshen College Board of Directors. "She understands the complexities and rapid changes we are experiencing in higher education. And as a critically thinking problem solver, she will bring extensive experience from other fine institutions of higher education as she comes to serve her alma mater."



—Goshen College



Do you know of someone in your congregation not receiving *Canadian Mennonite*? Ask your church administrator to add them to the list. It is already paid for.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GARRY JANZEN

The beauty of British Columbia roads summoned seven riders on four bikes on July 15 for the 10th-annual MC British Columbia Motorcycle Ride. Pausing for a selfie are the faithful who have been on most of the past rides: Len and Cheryl Dyck, Peter Krahn, Ann Plasway, Rick Smith, Garry Janzen and Diane Janzen. 'The main feature of this year's ride was enjoying the roads and scenery north and east of Mission, ending up at Cascade Falls,' says Garry Janzen, MC B.C.'s executive minister and organizer of the annual event.



CAMP VALAQUA PHOTO

Camp Valaqua hike-a-thon participants pose in front of the Ribbon Creek waterfall on June 17. A garden party that followed the hike featured a worship service, chili lunch, and time for fellowship and camp activities. Together, the two events raised \$23,000 for needed water treatment equipment and washroom renovations. A treatment system to remove iron that stains washroom fixtures and makes the water taste unpleasant was installed before summer camps began. Renovations are set to begin in the off-season.

God at Work in the Church Snapshots

DIE MENNONITISCHE POST PHOTO

Die Mennonitische Post, one of the last remaining German-language publications in North America, celebrated its 40th anniversary in June. Pictured from left to right: Abe Warkentin, the founding editor who managed this Mennonite Central Committee program for more than two decades; Isbrand Hiebert, the managing editor in the early 1990s; and Kennert Giesbrecht, who has been at the helm since 2002. Each man holds copies of the Post published during their tenures.



GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

'Colombia fever'

Mexican Mennonites head for new 'promised land' in South America

BY WILL BRAUN

Senior Writer

Despite warnings from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), Low German Mennonites from drought-prone regions of northern Mexico have bought over 20,000 hectares of land in Colombia.

Kennert Giesbrecht, long-time editor of *Die Mennonitische Post*—a newspaper for Low German Mennonites throughout the Americas—notes the Liviney Colony and another 12,000-hectare parcel as two examples of land acquisitions. Another group is currently considering a 10,000-hectare plot. The lands are all in the Eastern Plains of Colombia, about 200 kilometres east of Bogotá.

Giesbrecht says houses and a school have been built, farm equipment has been bought, electricity has been brought in, and roughly 20 families have moved to Liviney. Reportedly, the crops have been a success, although significant fertilization was required.

The area “undoubtedly looks like the land of milk and honey,” says Bonnie Klassen, MCC’s area director for South America and Mexico. Klassen, who is based in Colombia, where she has lived for 20 years, says the area is lush and fertile.

The quest for free and fertile new lands is fundamental to the story of Low German Mennonites. Giesbrecht says that, over



IMAGES COURTESY OF KENNERT GIESBRECHT

David Fehr, left, and Klaas Wall in the middle of a rice field not too far from Puerto Gaitán, Colombia.

the last three decades, roughly 100 new colonies have been established in Latin America. A few years ago, colonies in Mexico and Bolivia even sent representatives to Russia, although he says nothing came of it.

Now, “Colombia fever,” as Giesbrecht calls it, has Mennonites from Bolivia to Alberta talking.

But Klassen has serious concerns, which Giesbrecht has given considerable play in the *Post*. Klassen says the “vast majority” of land in Colombia does not have clear legal title, and even where official documents

exist, they may not stand up to legal challenges.

Colombia is emerging from five decades of armed conflict in which an estimated six- to eight-million hectares of land was taken from its rightful owners, according to government numbers. Klassen says that, in many cases, the new owners of this land will have received documentation of ownership either by coercing officials or by collaborating with unscrupulous ones. The

area where Mennonites are buying was an area of considerable displacement.

The Colombian government is working to bring clarity and fairness to land rights, something that began even before the Peace Accords of last year. According to the country’s Law of Victims and Land Restitution, passed in 2011, if a landowner is found to have unknowingly obtained land that is rightfully someone else’s, that landowner is given replacement land elsewhere. If someone is found to have knowingly obtained land in an untoward fashion, the land is taken away with no

Seeding a field.



compensation.

This means that if Mennonites were found to have acquired land that changed hands unlawfully at some point, the Mennonites would be given land elsewhere, but that could be scattered parcels for individual families instead of a single tract for a colony.

The law also means that people who knowingly obtained disputed land have reason to sell before their ownership is called into question. Such sellers would presumably welcome the prospect of unsuspecting foreign buyers.

While Klassen has no knowledge of Low German Mennonites having purchased disputed land, and is certainly not suggesting ill-intent on their part, she feels the risks are too high. She wonders about the possibility of questionable Colombian interests operating in the background.

About a year ago, Klassen met with a group of Low German Mennonites involved in acquiring land in Colombia. They had been given certain documents by their lawyers, but evidently not the certificate that can be obtained at no charge from the government that would certify that the land purchased was clear of dispute.

The Mennonite newcomers have also obtained correspondence from the Colombian government that they feel exempts them from military service, although Klassen found the letter obtuse and potentially misleading. Giesbrecht says he is somewhat surprised that these sorts of privileges seem less important to these settlers than they usually are for Low German Mennonites.

As for Colombian Mennonites, who are known in the country for their peace work, Klassen says there is some “uneasiness” that the purchase of large tracts of potentially disputed land by other Mennonites will send a mixed message about what Mennonites stand for.

Mennonites have a long history of moving to areas and unknowingly stepping into their questionable politico-historical dynamics.

Wilmar Harder, former head of MCC’s Low German program in Bolivia, notes that Mennonites have often settled areas recently cleared of other inhabitants, and Mennonite settlement has often served the



The yellow pin shows the location of a new Mexican Mennonite colony in Colombia.

politico-economic interests in their new countries. In the 1700s, Catherine the Great invited Mennonites to settle areas of Russia from which the Tatar people had been removed. In Manitoba, the government granted the “East Reserve” and “West Reserve” to us a few short years after Treaty 1 had cleared the legal path for settlement.

Harder cites further examples from Kansas and Minnesota, where Mennonites came in following the Indian Wars; the Paraguayan Chaco, where Mennonite settlers helped Paraguay solidify its border

with Bolivia; Bolivia, where Mennonites helped settle newly cleared, politically significant lands as per the 1953 Agrarian Reform Law; and Mexico, where some large landowners, afraid of a changing government, were happy to unload their land holdings.

Harder, now a pastor in Buhler, Kan., implies no ill-intent on the part of Mennonites now or in the past; he only notes a pattern by which our restless eye for opportunity and godly sense of adventure have served interests beyond our own. ☞



A new road and hydro line in the Liviney Colony.

PHOTO BY JOHN DAWSON

The sun sets in Oliver, B.C., against a hazy sky during the first week in August. Smoke from fires in B.C.'s interior spread throughout the province this summer.

B.C.'s wildfires affect large region

Fires burning, smoke lingering, MDS responding

BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent

Haze lingered over a wide area of British Columbia in early August, a reminder that wildfires in the province's interior were affecting residents several hundred kilometres away. An air quality advisory index was issued in Metro Vancouver on July 31, and 10 days later it was still in effect, the longest in recorded history.

The fires, exacerbated by lightning and tinder-dry conditions, began the first week of July. Residents were evacuated in regions such as Williams Lake, 100 Mile House and Ashcroft in the province's Cariboo Region. Particulate matter from the resulting smoke was noticeable in the Fraser Valley by early August.

No Mennonite Church B.C. congregations have been directly affected, although church members in various communities reported a noticeable decrease in air quality. Cariboo Bethel Church of Williams Lake, a Mennonite Brethren congregation, was responding with aid in its community, including volunteering at the Williams Lake Emergency Centre and with meal preparation for RCMP first responders.

"From the start, our church has had a desire to reach out and to serve. We believe it's our role to reach out where we can and to love our neighbours," said Pastor Jeremy Vogt in an interview on the church's Facebook page.

Summer programs at Camp Squeah, near Hope, had not been significantly affected by the wildfires, according to executive director Rob Tiessen, who said, "We have experienced some of the smoky haze for a few weeks, and are not able to cook over campfires for our overnight program—due to the province-wide campfire ban that has been in effect since the beginning of July—but those are minor inconveniences relative to what many in the Interior are facing." He said he knew of some other camps that had

to evacuate and shut down programs for a good portion of their summer.

In Kelowna, First Mennonite Church member Helene Wieler said the smoke in the area was "just enough to be visible." She described several local fires, including a small grass fire just off the highway in central Kelowna, a large grass fire in the lake country just outside of town that spread rapidly and destroyed a number of homes, and a growing mountainside fire controlled within an hour by water bombers.

Smoke had spread as far as Dawson Creek near the Alberta border, reported Eileen Klassen, administrator of Northgate Anabaptist Fellowship. "Even as far north as we are, we have experienced periods of smoke from the southern fires over the summer," she wrote on Aug. 13. "In the last couple of days, it increased to the point where visibility was severely reduced, and air quality was bad enough that I had difficulty in breathing and my husband had very sore eyes. There are also fires breaking out in the mountains west and south of us that are inaccessible to heavy equipment."

Representatives from Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) were on the scene of the worst fires beginning in early July, with B.C. unit chair Gerald Dyck and vice-chair Vic Janzen assessing the situation in 100 Mile House and deciding whom to help rebuild. As fires intensified, MDS Canada and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) also became involved, connecting with homeowners, local recovery people and church leaders.

"Since the fires and firefighting and evacuations continue, there is little MDS can do other than raise funds and communicate awareness to the Mennonite community in anticipation of being early on the ground to serve," Janzen told *Canadian Mennonite*. "MDS is monitoring



PHOTO BY JOHN DAWSON

Smoke from wildfires make the mountains of Oliver, in B.C.'s Okanagan country, barely visible.

the situation daily through a provincial disaster response agency. We are also in touch with people we know in the area, as well as the family we will be helping initially. With something in excess of 300 homes destroyed, MDS anticipates heavy continued involvements in the B.C. Interior, possibly for several years into the future.”

Mark Rempel of MDS B.C., along with Ross Penner of MDS Canada and Melissa Giles of MCC B.C., visited the affected community of Williams Lake. Rempel called Williams Lake a “ghost town,” with the city on evacuation order, roadblocks, many charred homes and a large military presence. “We have had some meaningful meetings focussed on a ‘long-term recovery program’ and the supporting role that MCC and MDS could have,” he reported.

Rainfall and shifting winds provided relief by mid-August, with blue skies evident once again in the Lower Mainland. ❧

Volunteering offers and donations for relief can be made to: MDS Region 5, 6A-1325 Markham Road, Winnipeg, MB R3T 4J6.



PHOTO BY RON BUSHMAN / TEXT BY DONNA SCHULZ

Volunteers with the Saskatchewan unit of Mennonite Disaster Service built three ready-to-move homes in Hague for families who lost their homes to wildfire in Fort McMurray, Alta., last year. Unit chair Ike Epp says MDS chose to build in Hague because building materials there are cheaper than in Fort McMurray, even with the cost of moving the houses factored in. Meanwhile, other volunteers worked in Fort McMurray to prepare basements. The finished homes headed north on July 24. A dedication ceremony was tentatively scheduled for August 25.

A 'good feeling' to help people who are hungry

BY SHAYLYN MCMAHON AND AMANDA THORSTEINSSON

Canadian Foodgrains Bank

WINNIPEG

When Jenn Loewen and Colleen Epp of Winnipeg first heard about the famine facing more than 20 million people around the world this past spring, they didn't just want to make a donation. They also wanted a way of drawing in their friends and family, encouraging them to get involved in the fight against hunger.

"My experience is that people want to help, but they don't know how," said Epp. "It can feel overwhelming and intimidating."

With that in mind, Loewen offered to match donations to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank toward the famine crisis from family and friends, up to \$1,000. Epp, along with her children, volunteered to bake a pie for anyone donating more than \$100.

"Jenn and I had talked about doing something like this for a long time. It's nice having a friend who wants to make the world a tiny bit better with you," said Epp.

Loewen teaches English to newcomers in Winnipeg. Through her role, she engages with people who have experienced the very things people in South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and Nigeria are currently facing.

"These people have names and faces

for me," she said, noting that she's also worked abroad in Egypt as a service worker with Mennonite Central Committee, a Foodgrains Bank member. "It's been on my heart to do something to help people needing food."

Wanting to do something for people around the world experiencing hunger had also been on Epp's heart for a while. She also wanted to get her children involved. "I so want my kids to get it," she said. "To know there is life beyond what we know about here in Canada."

When the 1:1 government match was announced, "it felt like the right fit at the right time," she says.

In total, Loewen and Epp raised \$3,100, exceeding their goal by \$100. For Epp and her kids, that means they made 11 pies,

and a special order for chocolate chip cookies. The pie flavours ranged from apple to chocolate, and Epp's children—Isaac, 14, Daniel, 10, and Grace, 10—helped her make them. A visit on pie-making day in July found the children cutting fresh apples for the first batch of pies.

"When people give to us, it feels nice to give them something back," said Isaac.

"And it's not nice to always receive and not give back," added Daniel.

It can be difficult for children to understand what people overseas often experience, said Epp, but having an initiative that brought friends and family together to support their efforts was a way to show her children how they can make a difference.

"It's a good feeling [helping those who are hungry overseas]," said Grace.

"I'm grateful for the fact that I don't need to worry about what I'm going to eat every day and night," added Isaac. "We have so much stuff. Why not spread it around a bit?"

The pies were a way to "sweeten the pot" and encourage others to support their efforts, said Epp, but her children had their own message: "If you donated, thank you!" ☺



PHOTO BY SHAYLYN MCMAHON

Jenn Loewen, left, and Colleen, Daniel, Isaac and Grace Epp cut fresh apples for the first batch of pies given to Canadian Foodgrains Bank donors who gave more than \$100 to their famine-relief initiative.

CANADIAN
MENNONITE

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



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

GOD AT WORK IN US

OBITUARY

'Dan has left us'

William Daniel (Dan) Jack
Jan. 17, 1953 - July 17, 2017

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD
Alberta Correspondent

The four short words of this obituary's title, sent to Mennonite Church Alberta's area church minister Tim Wiebe-Neufeld, heralded a large impact for the province's churchgoers, for the Jack family, and for the many friends of Dan and Marguerite Jack.

Jack, the moderator of MC Alberta, died peacefully on July 17 after a medical emergency precipitated by a 15-year struggle with Crohn's disease.

Skates, a bat and ball, a cowboy hat, a study Bible and a pile of books were among the items on display at a memorial service at Calgary's First Mennonite Church, where the Jacks are members, on July 28, showing that he was a man with many interests and involvements.

Jack was born in Toronto but spent the first two years of his life in Brazil, where his parents were missionaries. He graduated from Prairie Bible Institute with many questions that he took with him to the University of Calgary. While there, he paid his way by putting up eavestroughs. He enjoyed the work and the people he met so much that an exterior renovation business became a lifelong career.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARGUERITE JACK

He never stopped asking questions and learning, and he became a convinced Anabaptist.

He tutored for Athabasca University in world religions, history and philosophy, and was keenly interested in creation care, indigenous issues, justice and peace concerns.

Over the years, Jack gave of his passion and skill to many boards and committees, some of which include MennoMedia, the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta and the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto.

At the time of his death, he was keenly interested in, and excited about, being a part of the Interim Council as it continued the Future Directions process of re-imagining and restructuring MC Canada. MC Alberta will feel the loss of his positive energy and vision.

He is survived by his wife of 44 years, Marguerite (Goerzen), daughters Bronwynne of Calgary and Charis (Nathan) Rousu of Edmonton, and their children Katie, Kody and Taylor. ☸

Dan Jack was born in Toronto but spent the first two years of his life in Brazil, where his parents were missionaries.



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OBITUARY

A man worthy of his calling

Darrell W. Fast

Sept. 5, 1939 - June 11, 2017

By ROSS W. MUIR

Managing Editor



Darrell W. Fast, born in Mountain Lake, Minn., passed away at the Leamington (Ont.) Mennonite Home, leaving Loretta Fast, his wife; his children Douglas (Michelle) Fast and Larissa Fast; two grandchildren; and many friends, relatives and former colleagues to mourn his passing.

After graduating from Mennonite Biblical Seminary (now Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary), Elkhart, Ind., in 1966, he began a life service to the church on both sides of the Canada-U.S. border for the next 40 years.

"Perhaps it was growing up in the Midwest, with its wide-open vistas and unimpeded view of distant horizons, that challenged, inspired, even compelled him to look beyond the local setting to the bigger picture," said Henry Paetkau in a tribute at Fast's funeral. "Perhaps it was his understanding that the 'church' was more, much more, than the local congregation; that God's plan and purpose were wider and broader than the confines of congregation or regional conference."

Right out of seminary, he began a

two-year stint as a short-term service director with the Board of Christian Service in the General Conference Mennonite Church, followed by another two years as the board's peace and social concerns secretary.

Ordained in the summer of 1970 in Nebraska, he pastored his first church, Toronto United Mennonite, from later that year until 1987.

Said Paetkau of Fast's time there: "[W]hat left me in awe was his ability to serve in the urban context of Toronto, a setting so foreign to my experience. . . . Darrell seemed like a minister for new times, a new generation and a new context. And so he was!"

Whatever motivated or compelled him, Paetkau said Fast "became one of the innovators and architects who helped to reshape and transform the church amid

A year later, he was elected vice-chair of the Inter-Mennonite Conference, Paetkau recalled. Since these were annually rotated roles among the three partner conferences, he also served as secretary for two years and as chair for one year. In 1980, he returned to the executive council as representative of the Inter-Mennonite Pastoral Leadership Training Board, which he chaired.

In 1987, Fast became pastor of Bethel Mennonite College Church in North Newton, Kan., a position he held until 2000. During that time, the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church began exploring a new partnership, one that culminated in a merger, on the one hand, and a separation into two separate country entities, on the other.

Fast served as moderator of the General Conference from 1992 to 1999.

"His was the steady hand, the calming presence and the encouraging voice that helped navigate through this very complex and sometimes conflicted process," said Paetkau.

After returning to Ontario in 2000, to pastor Leamington United Mennonite, Fast also served as moderator of MC Eastern Canada for three years until his retirement from ministry in Leamington

"[W]hat left me in awe was his ability to serve in the urban context of Toronto, a setting so foreign to my experience. . . . Darrell seemed like a minister for new times, a new generation and a new context. And so he was!"
(Henry Paetkau)

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the changes and challenges of the past half-century.

Just a few years after arriving in Canada, he was elected secretary of the Conference of United Mennonite Churches in Ontario. The Inter-Mennonite Conference, the predecessor to what is now the almost 30-year-old Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, was just beginning. By virtue of office on the executive of the United Mennonite Conference, Fast joined the Inter-Mennonite Executive Council in 1974.

in 2006.

"He had come full circle from the experiment in inter-Mennonite cooperation he helped shape over 20 years earlier," Paetkau said.

In his concluding remarks, Paetkau said, "My thoughts were drawn to Ephesians 4:1-3: *'I . . . beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.'*" ❧

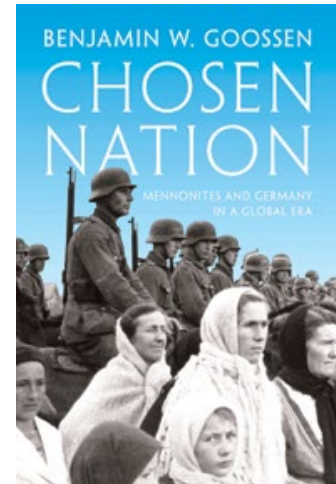
ARTBEAT

BOOK REVIEW

Menno-Nazi connection unconvincing

Chosen Nation: Mennonites and Germany in a Global Era.
Benjamin W. Goossen. Princeton University Press, 2017, 266 pages.

REVIEWED BY BARB DRAPER
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT



Ben Goossen argues that German-speaking Mennonites of the 20th century had a sense of Mennonite nationality and that this concept of Mennonites as a “chosen nation,” a people with a distinctive heritage, culture and ethnicity, was influenced by the racist ideas of the Nazis. He says he began this study in an effort to understand his grandfather, a retired Mennonite minister from Kansas, who was devoted to the church but who also identified himself as a “proud Prussian.”

The 20th century was a time of global connections, with the forma-

Mennonitism is not just a religion but it embraces “all that which culture, language, tradition and a distinct way of life implies.”

Goossen argues that because MCC accepted an ethnic definition of “Mennonite” when it resettled refugees in Paraguay, ethnicity was profoundly important to Mennonites.

Probably most disturbing is Goossen’s suggestion that Mennonites were Nazi sympathizers. While he acknowledges that the Amish and traditionalist Mennonites had little admiration for Hitler, he points to various individuals

how the Prussian Mennonites were more urban and educated than Mennonites from the southern German states. They were also more militaristic and were the first Mennonites in Germany to drop pacifism. Whether or not to join the regular army was considered a personal choice, not a basic principle of the faith.

The latter half of the book was more disturbing. It caused me to consider deeply whether Goossen could be right and my experience of the Mennonite world was just a rose-coloured illusion. Could he be right that if Mennonites “strip away the ethnic trappings of their faith, they are left not with a core of values, but with a process”?

In the end, I found his arguments unconvincing. While he obviously has studied a lot of European Mennonite history, too much of his argument involves the turbulent years between 1941 and 1943. He gives lip service to the profound anti-Soviet feelings of Mennonites in Ukraine but seems overly eager to see their actions as pro-Nazi.

While I have a deep fascination with genealogy and recognize that I come from a distinctive religious culture, those things are not the basis of my faith. In my Mennonite tradition, what binds the tribe together is the foundation of Jesus Christ, not culture nor ethnicity, and certainly not race.

I would encourage others, especially historians and theologians, to read this book and carefully consider their own response to Goossen’s argument. ❧

Goossen argues that because MCC accepted an ethnic definition of ‘Mennonite’ when it resettled refugees in Paraguay, ethnicity was profoundly important to Mennonites.

tion of Mennonite World Conference and international Mennonite publications. Goossen sees this as evidence of a cohesive peoplehood and the concept of one tribe. He also points to the growing interest in preserving a Mennonite heritage, suggesting that genealogical studies, family reunions, historic atlases and church directories prove that Mennonites were interested in preserving their ethnicity and racial purity.

He quotes Peter Dyck of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), who worked with refugees in the 1940s, as saying, “These Mennonite refugees are neither ‘Russian’ nor ‘German,’” and that

who were overtly pro-Nazi. Especially between 1941 and 1943, when the Germans had taken over Mennonite villages in Ukraine, he declares that Mennonites widely benefited from Nazi rule, sometimes receiving goods that had been taken from murdered Jews. He points out that some Mennonites joined Nazi killing squads while others joined the German army and many became naturalized German citizens.

I appreciated the first part of Goossen’s book, as he describes how Mennonites in Germany responded to the rising nationalism of the German states in the 19th century. He gives a vivid picture of



PHOTO BY JOSH KRAYBILL

Ted Swartz and Michelle Milne play a variety of characters throughout Ted and Company's latest production, Discovery: A Comic Lament.

Lamenting the 'discovery' of America

New play takes a humorous look at the Doctrine of Discovery

BY AARON EPP
Young Voices Editor

An American theatre company with Mennonite roots performed its newest production, which explores indigenous-settler relations, to a capacity crowd in Winnipeg earlier this summer.

Hundreds gathered at Home Street Mennonite Church on June 28 as Ted and Company TheaterWorks presented *Discovery: A Comic Lament*. The play explores the Doctrine of Discovery, the legal framework dating to the 15th century that gave Christian governments moral and legal rights to invade and seize indigenous lands and dominate indigenous peoples. The doctrine was first repudiated by the Catholic Church in 1537.

It was the third time the company had ever performed the play, which was written by Alison Brookins, a recent graduate of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

Directed by Phil Weaver-Stoesz, the production consists of 13 different scenes—some connected and some not—each dealing with the Doctrine of Discovery. It stars Ted Swartz and Michelle Milne.

Speaking by phone prior to the Winnipeg performance, Brookins said she was inspired to write the play after talking with a friend who is a member of a coalition of Anabaptists in the United States who are working at dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery. "I . . . believe strongly in the power of comedy to help us have difficult conversations, and this is one of the more difficult conversations in existence," Brookins said.

Swartz, who founded Ted and Company more than 20 years ago as a way to use humour and storytelling to talk about issues of faith and social justice, is excited to be

performing *Discovery*. "I'd been given some encouragement to write a show on racism specifically, and I didn't feel I had the capacity to take [that] on at the moment," said Swartz, who was last in Winnipeg in May, performing his one-man show about mental illness, *Laughter is Sacred Space*.

"While [*Discovery*] isn't specifically about racism, it is a conversation that gets at something that's even a little bit deeper," he said. "There are a number of people who have said this issue . . . undergirds a whole raft of injustices that North Americans have been involved with."

The play uses a variety of theatrical styles, including dance and slapstick, throughout its 13 scenes. That variety is part of what attracted Milne to the project. "It's a great opportunity as a performer to engage in issues I care about, with people that I like and styles that are fun to play with," she said.

Many stops on the play's premiere tour, including Winnipeg, featured a talkback session after the performance led by restorative justice scholar Elaine Enns. This allowed audience members to share their reactions to the play.

Swartz, Milne and Brookins have been using some of that feedback to refine the material for future performances.

Brookins said that the phrase "a comic lament" may not be as paradoxical as it initially appears to be. "They hold together a lot more than we think," she said, adding that laughter can open people up to new ideas and ways of thinking. Taking time to lament is important.

Lamenting changes how one processes an experience, she said. Typically, the Mennonite impulse is to take action right away. The play asks the audience not to do that.

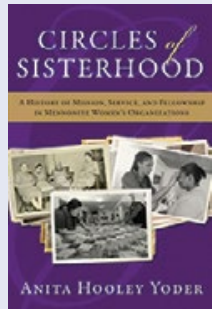
"Lament is something that we skip over very often in our North American culture," she said. "Lament is sitting in the ashes for a little while. . . . Lament is railing against injustice, and lament is petitioning for things to get better. But you can't really know how things could get better if you don't take time to sit in that lament."

Swartz said he hopes the play leaves audience members wanting to explore the topic further. "There are no clear answers in it," he said, "but we hope you become much more curious about this issue." ❧

/// Briefly noted

Landmark history traces Mennonite women's groups for the past century

Circles of Sisterhood by Anita Hooley Yoder tells the story of Mennonite women's groups for the past century. The Herald Press book was released at a book launch and author signing at the Mennonite Women U.S.A. centennial celebration during the MC U.S.A. convention in Orlando, Fla., on July 5. The 51st volume in the Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History Series, *Circles of Sisterhood* traces the movement of Mennonite women's groups from the sewing circles of the early 20th century to today. Subtitled "A History of Mission, Service and Fellowship in Mennonite Women's Organizations," the book contains 12 chapters and is broken into three parts. Part 1 describes the beginning of Mennonite women's groups in the early 1900s in both the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church. Part 2 goes into more depth about the evolution of Mennonite women's groups, including increasing diversity and how the groups were affected by the denominational merger. Part 3 discusses Mennonite women's groups today, including specific groups active presently. The book frequently discusses the "dual purpose" of Mennonite women's groups: service and fellowship.



—MennoMedia



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Congolese Mennonites suffer atrocities amid displacement of 1.4 million

The Democratic Republic of Congo is home to more than 235,000 Mennonites. Dozens of their churches lie in a conflict area. canadianmennonite.org/congo-mennonite-violence



Committee invites input for Resonate music project

Planners of the new hymnal want to hear what's giving life to worship and music across the Mennonite church. canadianmennonite.org/worship-music-survey



Supporting women's education with a party and a quilt

An 80-year-old teacher threw herself a birthday party that will help other women get an education. canadianmennonite.org/quilt-education



A witness for nonviolence from Nigeria

Daniel Mbaya wrote his doctoral thesis on his church's peace witness in his home country. canadianmennonite.org/nonviolence-nigeria



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/// Briefly noted

Six-session handbook released to accompany *Smart Compassion*

A new handbook to complement Wesley Furlong's book *Smart Compassion: How to Stop "Doing Outreach" and Start Making Change* has been released. The six-session guide includes Scriptures, discussion questions, prayer prompts, diagrams and practical action points for engaging in a community and helping families and

neighbourhoods to flourish. The study guide also features QR codes that lead readers to web-based resources such as tools for community mapping and strengths-based assessments. The study guide will help churches, ministry teams, small



groups and individuals go from "doing outreach" to embodying healing presence, living out radical hospitality and working towards collective empowerment. Furlong is the founder and director of City of Refuge, a network for community transformation, and the director of church development for Evana, an evangelical Anabaptist network of churches across North America.
—MennoMedia

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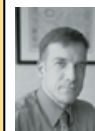


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A very special relationship

Mekiah Yonda and Amber Muskego are friends thanks to a partnership between two Manitoba churches

BY AARON EPP
Young Voices Editor

A relationship between a Winnipeg church and a community in northern Manitoba has resulted in a special friendship between two young women.

Mekiah Yonda and Amber Muskego met when members from Yonda's church, Sterling Mennonite Fellowship in Winnipeg, travelled to Cross Lake in 2010 to run a Vacation Bible School (VBS) program for children in the community. Today, the two describe each other as sisters.

"We just made such a big connection, it was like I'd known her forever," Yonda, 20, says of the first time she met Muskego. "It's the highlight of my summer every year, just seeing her."

"Honestly, I didn't think our friendship would turn into this sisterly love," adds Muskego, 18, recalling the first summer she met Yonda. But the deep connection was almost immediate. "That's where it kicked off, where we were going to be friends forever, till the end. That's what it felt like."

Cross Lake is located 530 kilometres north of Winnipeg, and is one of the homes of the Pimicikamak Cree Nation. Sterling Mennonite's involvement in the community stems from its partnership with Living Word Church in Cross Lake, which was established through Mennonite Church Manitoba's Partnership Circle initiative.

A group from Sterling has travelled to Cross Lake for a week each summer since that first visit in 2010. In the past two years, members of Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg have also gotten involved.

This past July, in addition to offering a VBS program for more than 150 children in the community, the group from Sterling and Bethel also offered a youth mentorship

program and a sports camp.

Yonda is one of a handful of people from Sterling who have made the trip north each summer. "It's a must. I have to go," she says, adding that it's the relationships she's formed with people in Cross Lake that keep her going back.

During the year, Yonda and Muskego keep in touch via text, FaceTime video chats and Facebook. They also make sure to see each other whenever Muskego is in Winnipeg, even if it's just a quick visit at the airport.

"We've both grown together, we've both matured, we've both changed," Yonda says. "It's hard to describe the bond we have."

As an only child, Yonda's friendship with Muskego is especially meaningful. "She has a big heart and she does a lot for the community," Yonda says of Muskego. "She's funny, she's smart, she's outgoing. She's a big teddy bear."

Muskego describes Yonda in similar terms. "She's funny, she's caring, she is basically the older sister I never had," Muskego says. Yonda accompanied Muskego to two ultrasound appointments when she was pregnant with her son Oliver, who is now 18 months old. "She was someone who was there for me when I needed someone to talk to, someone to cry to. She was the one I had there. . . . She's such an amazing person. Her personality is so bright."

Cross Lake made national headlines in early 2016 when Pimicikamak Cree officials declared a state of emergency after four teenagers killed themselves in less than three months.

If it weren't for her friendship with
(Continued on page 36)



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MEKIAH YONDA

Mekiah Yonda, left, and Amber Muskego have been friends since 2010, when this photo was taken.



Amber Muskego, left, and Mekiah Yonda in Cross Lake, Man., this past July.



Mekiah Yonda goes for a walk with Amber Muskego's son Oliver.



Amber Muskego and Mekiah Yonda, back row second and third from left, pose with, from left to right: Yonda's mother, Kristi Grunsten-Yonda; Muskego's son Oliver (in her arms); and her brothers Rondell and Arlo Muskego.

(Continued from page 35)

Yonda, Muskego believes she would have committed suicide by now, too.

"We see drunk [people] walking around every day," she says. "I've seen that ever since I was a little girl. You see arguments; it's hard to be here. There came a point in my life, before I had my son, where I just didn't want to be around anymore because of how hard things were getting, but then I thought about Mekiah."

"I managed to call her and tell her everything," Muskego continues. "If I hadn't met a person like her, I probably wouldn't be here today. She has shown me . . . you can't just think of yourself, you have to think of other people. You can't be selfish."

Moses Falco, Sterling's pastor, says that the close bond that Yonda and Muskego have formed is an example of what good church outreach work can look like. "We

can go up and run a great program, but if none of the kids from Cross Lake or none of the kids from Winnipeg remember each other or care to hang out with each other, it doesn't matter," he says. "To see this relationship after eight years, it's a sign that, wow, there's something real here. It's one of the reasons we keep going back—because of these kinds of relationships."

Yonda points out that her friendship with Muskego, and her visits to Cross Lake, have transformed her. "We go out there for the week and we do our best," she says of the group from Sterling, "but we learn so much more than we put out, and we take away so much more than we give." ❧

See more photos at canadianmennonite.org/very-special-relationship.



VIEWPOINT

Pollution in the heavenly province

In China, development is creating environmental problems most Canadians can't imagine

BY VANESSA SNYDER-PENNER

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE



PHOTO COURTESY OF V. SNYDER-PENNER

Vanessa Snyder-Penner recently spent a year in China's Sichuan province.

The first thought that struck me when I arrived in China's Sichuan province was how green it was.

Somehow, perhaps from tales of air pollution and reading "Made in China" stamped on most goods, I had formulated an image of China as a grey, smoke-filled country. This image might represent some parts of the country. China is so massive that images as diverse as coniferous forests, tropical beaches and wind-swept deserts are all accurate snapshots of certain parts of the nation.

The province of Sichuan, on the other hand—where I recently spent a year serving with Mennonite Central Committee's

Serving and Learning Together program—is best described using adjectives like "lush" and "verdant."

In fact, Sichuan is so fertile that the old epithet of the province, "Tianfu," means "heavenly province" or "land of plenty." In the city of Nanchong, where I lived, parks and green space are integrated far better into the urban architecture than most cities I've visited in Canada. While a few months in Toronto will leave me yearning for the smell of trees and grass, I was never lacking a natural retreat in Nanchong.

Despite my love for Nanchong's parks, where I ran most mornings, there was

the incessant question of the fog. The fog rolled in during the wintery months of November to February, hovering two metres off the ground every morning. Frequently, the fog was so thick that we couldn't see the car in front of us in the rush-hour traffic jam.

The jury was out as to the cause of the fog. About half the people I spoke with claimed the fog was a natural occurrence caused by Sichuan's humidity ("humid" is an understatement—in the winter, my clothes could take up to a week to dry after washing) and Nanchong's river. I don't doubt that Nanchong has a naturally foggy climate.

Others, however, were sure the fog was pollution, and I did notice an increase in the number of bad-air days during the winter. I eventually stopped running in the park and began exercising inside instead. My rule was that I could run stairs if the air quality index read "unsafe for sensitive groups," but if the warning reached "unsafe air quality," I'd take the day off.

Air pollution in China is not a uniform problem across the country. The air quality where I lived was "moderate" and some cities, like the southern Kunming, are known for their good air. It is provinces with heavy industry and coal plants, as well as the developed, east coast cities, which suffer most in terms of air quality.

One city I heard many anecdotes about was Beijing. At one point in November, the air was so bad in the capital that it was a popular topic of gossip in Nanchong. The head of my host organization told me that her friend in Beijing had pulled her child out of school and went on vacation to Shanghai due to the air.

A former student, who studied in Beijing, had a permanent cough after three years of study. He told me an unnerving story about waking up one night in his dorm room and realizing that he couldn't see the next building only a few metres away because it was obscured by pink smog.

Environmental problems are certainly in the public and political consciousness in China. A short ride on the Nanchong city bus goes past multiple billboards, all printed with government-endorsed

slogans encouraging green development. Cleaning up China's environment, however, conflicts with the fast rate of development to which China has committed itself.

The standard of living of many Chinese has not yet reached the standard of middle-class Canadians. For many Chinese, hard times like the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution are living memory, complicating the choice between economic development and environmental protection. Despite the commitment of many Canadians to environmentalism, all of my friends in Nanchong use far less daily energy than most Canadians.

Canada has been blessed with the abundant resources and small population that enable us to lead a wasteful lifestyle while feeling minimal environmental consequences. In China, where there are more than a billion people, that is not possible. The environmental impact of 36 million Canadians will always be smaller than the environmental impact of 1.4 billion Chinese citizens.

Despite worrying about the air I was breathing last year, I knew that I would soon return to a country that offers both clean air and a comfortably unsustainable lifestyle. My friends in China do not have that luxury. ❧

Vanessa Snyder-Penner is a 23-year-old university student from Waterloo, Ont., and a member of Waterloo North Mennonite Church there.



PHOTO COURTESY OF V. SNYDER-PENNER
Vanessa Snyder-Penner, left, spent her time in China serving with MCC's SALT program.



PHOTO COURTESY OF V. SNYDER-PENNER
Living in Canada affords Vanessa Snyder-Penner luxuries that her Chinese friends don't have, she writes.

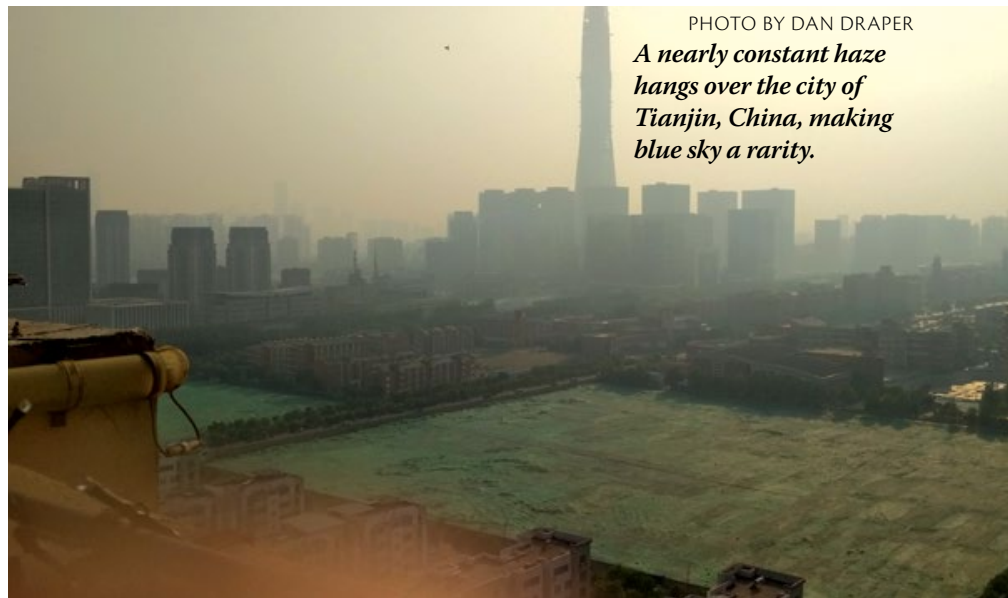


PHOTO BY DAN DRAPER
A nearly constant haze hangs over the city of Tianjin, China, making blue sky a rarity.

Calendar

British Columbia

Sept. 15-16: MCC B.C. Festival and Auction, at the Tradex in Abbotsford. For more information, call 604-850-6639.

Sept. 24: Walk for Reconciliation begins at Queen Elizabeth Park, Vancouver at 9:30 a.m.

Sept. 30: MCC B.C. annual general meeting, at South Abbotsford Church, Abbotsford.

Alberta

Sept. 16: Golf with MCC La Crete. For more information, visit mccb.ca.

Sept. 30: Mennonite Central Committee Alberta annual general meeting, at Springridge Mennonite Church, Pincher Creek.

Saskatchewan

Sept. 15-16: "Refresh, refocus, renew," a mini-retreat with Betty Pries. To learn more about this year-long prayer and

visioning process, visit mcsask.ca.

Sept. 30: Mega Menno youth kick-off event, at Nutana Park Mennonite Church.

Manitoba

Sept. 9: Fifteenth annual Head for the Hills fundraising ride for mental health. For more information registration or support for cyclists, visit edenhealthcare.ca.

Sept. 17: "Manitoba open farm day" at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach.

Sept. 23: MCC Relief Sale, at the Keystone Centre in Brandon.

Sept. 24: Celebration of the ministry of Camp Moose Lake, at the camp. For more details, visit mennochurch.mb.ca.

Ontario

Sept. 8-10: "Building community" retreat at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg. Speakers: Gord Alton and Johanna Wall. Theme: "Growing in understanding." For more information, call 519-625-8602.

Sept. 10: Erie View United Mennonite

Church celebrates its 70th anniversary; worship service at 10 a.m. followed by light lunch and an informal sharing time. Seating is limited; RSVP to ptwarner1985@gmail.com.

Sept. 16: "Mennonite life in the Detweiler Neighbourhood 150 years ago" presentation by Sam Steiner, at the Detweiler Meeting House,

Roseville, at 11 a.m.

Sept. 17: Jim Reimer Memorial Bluegrass Concert, at Conrad Grebel University College's Great Hall, at 2:30 p.m., featuring Rescue Junction and 5 on the Floor. In support of the Reimer Scholarship in Theological Studies.

Classifieds

For Sale

Great potential - Unique family farm, house, several barns, working cookhouse with wood cookstove. Located on 68.49 acres in small quiet town on main road, great opportunity for roadside market.

The property is located 300 km north/east of Toronto, 187 km west of Ottawa. This property is right across from the Madawaska River, known for its kayaking; public dock access 1 km from the farm. Currently in hay operation but did include livestock prior. Flat and good growing land with creek running through middle of property. Suitable for cattle, sheep, horses or any other livestock.

For more information please Google MLS# 1043203 or contact Al Schutt at 613-332-7065.

For Sale

For sale: complete equipment for sock making. Includes 15 one-hundred-plus-year-old commercial sock knitting machines (Komet Knitter and Scott and Williams model B5, Google these models to see photos online) recently in full operation in Barrys Bay, Ont. Original manual and a 20-foot container full of yarn. \$10,000 or best offer. Contact Theo: **613 756 2212** or email theo28lange@outlook.com.

Announcement

ABNER MARTIN MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP

This annual scholarship is awarded by Menno Singers to a student who is affiliated with a Mennonite Church Eastern Canada congregation and is, or will be, in a full-time program of music study, graduate or undergraduate, during 2017-18.

Applications must be mailed by Sept. 15, 2017. For application documents or further information, contact Lewis Brubacher at phone: 519-884-3072 email: lbrubacher@sympatico.ca

Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunity



Mennonite Church Manitoba

Mennonite Church Manitoba is accepting applications for the position of Associate Program Director of Camping Ministries

(APD). The APD oversees all aspects of our summer and winter programs including their design, promotion, implementation and evaluation. The APD also provides ongoing support and training to all summer program staff and volunteers. This is a 1.0 FTE position.

The application deadline is September 21, 2017. For more information please visit our "News" page at <http://www.campswithmeaning.org>.

GOT SKILLS & TIME TO SHARE?

Volunteer to be a leader — project directors, cooks, crew leaders, office managers needed

JOIN THE TEAM
mds.mennonite.net/projectleaders
 717-735-3536

Employment opportunity

Three Regional Ministers

MCEC is seeking three .25 FTE Regional Ministers to support pastors in MCEC.

The position requires pastoral experience, a familiarity with denominational resources, a depth of spiritual maturity and a commitment to Anabaptist theology. Applicants will be excellent communicators and pastoral care providers who are energized by MCEC's mission of Extending the Peace of Jesus Christ. Ordination and seminary level training required. Application deadline is September 15, 2017. For more information or to request a position description, please contact:

Brent Charette, Church Engagement & Operations Minister
Phone: 1-855-476-2500 Ext. 709
E-mail: bcharette@mcec.ca
Web: www.mcec.ca

Employment opportunity
Lead Pastor

Niagara United Mennonite Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario is inviting applications for a FULL-TIME LEAD PASTOR. Start time is early 2018.

We are a congregation with approximately 200 in attendance for worship and seek a pastor to lead in growing people as intentional followers of Jesus and missional servants to our community. The pastor we seek will be committed to Anabaptist theology with strengths in leadership, evangelism through community engagement, preaching, teaching and pastoral care.

Inquires, resumes and letters of interest will be received until the end of September 2017, and may be directed to:
pastoraltransitions@mcec.ca

To view the Pastoral Profile, visit
<https://mcec.ca/jobs/lead-minister>.

Conrad Grebel
University College

Faculty Position in Musicology

Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo invites applications for a regular, full-time, tenure-track faculty position in Music, effective **July 1, 2018**. This position involves undergraduate teaching, scholarship, service, and community education. The successful candidate will have teaching and scholarship expertise in Music History, as well as one or more of the following areas: church music and worship, sacred music, and music in religious traditions. The preferred candidate will be able to lead one of the music ensembles in the Department, and mentor students in practical skills related to music and worship.

*Review of applications will begin **November 1, 2017**.*

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

Employment opportunity
Choral Music Teacher

Anchored in the Anabaptist tradition, UMEI Christian High School exists to educate the whole person, cultivating full academic, spiritual and individual potential.

UMEI Christian high school is seeking a dynamic and engaging individual to join the school family as Choral Music Teacher. The Choral Music Teacher must be committed to providing an education that graduates students who are spiritually fulfilled, academically excellent, and empowered to make a difference.

Qualifications/responsibilities:

- Have a Bachelor of Education and hold a valid Teaching Certificate
- Must have music major or extensive teaching experience in music programs.
- Ability to build a program with an Anabaptist/Mennonite perspective.
- Ability to lead student body in weekly music chapels; accompaniment through piano/guitar highly recommended.
- Instrumental music and other teachables an asset.
- Seeking highly qualified dynamic teacher.
- A high energy level and commitment to establishing and maintaining an excellent music program.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.
- Ability to work as part of a team that is committed to whole-person education.

For further information visit our website umei.ca/careers/ or contact Sonya Bedal, Principal, at (519)326-7448. Applications will be received until a suitable candidate is found.

Please send cover letter and resume to the attention of:
Sonya Bedal at principal@umei.ca.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID NEUFELD

The Ancient Echoes Interpretive Centre in Herschel, Sask., celebrated Canada's 150th birthday in mid-June with a three-day event focussing on the 10,000-year history of the country. Blackfoot, Gros Ventre, Cree, Lakota and Metis peoples from across Western Canada and the U.S. were invited, as were settlers, immigrants and refugees. Steve Heinrichs, Mennonite Church Canada's indigenous relations director, was one of three keynote speakers at the 'Shared land' event, which concluded with prayer and song at an ancient prayer/teaching stone that some believe dates back as far as 5,000 years.



God at Work in the World Snapshots



PHOTO BY MURRAY LUMLEY

During a 'blanket exercise' at Danforth Mennonite Church in Toronto on June 25, Ben Wert (portraying a European) shakes hands with Suchana Pandey-Pokharel (an indigenous person) being comforted by Leslie Sheriff, as he tells her she is now 'enfranchised,' since she is a lawyer, but has lost her Indian status at the same time because of a ruling in Canada's Indian Act. Indigenous elder Bob Phillips of Toronto led a talking circle after the exercise concluded. One participant was so disappointed with the history of colonialism in Canada that she said she was not going to participate in any Canada 150 celebrations. Several said that, with this new awareness, settlers must find a way to make reconciliation real, even with small personal acts of kindness.