

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

October 23, 2017  
Volume 21 Number 20

A hoof  
and heart  
both need  
mending  
pg. 4

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## EDITORIAL

## In praise of books

VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER  
EDITOR

**A** formative experience for my childhood faith was the reading of C.S. Lewis's Chronicles of Narnia series. Set in the fictional land of Narnia, the seven books tell stories of children from our world who are transported to a land of mythical creatures and cosmic struggles.

The main characters deal with temptations and self-doubts but they are called to live courageously in difficult times. They are encouraged to grow into better versions of themselves. Through it all is Aslan, the noble lion who calls, guides, teaches and supports them in their adventures.

As a child, I heard Aslan's voice as a divine calling, and that powerful-but-gentle voice still resonates with me today. Such is the impact of books.

If you are a reader, you have your own list of books that have helped you become the person you are today. The right book at the right time in our lives opens new doors; it pushes and pulls us into new ways of thinking and living. The best ones call us to become better versions of ourselves. They help us take steps on a journey of transformation.

You may have noticed that *Canadian Mennonite* runs a Books & Resources focus twice a year. This issue has 10-and-a-half pages (26 to 36) devoted to the topic. That's because we believe in the power of books and want to keep you informed about new ones hitting the shelves. The topics are varied, as are the genres, so we hope that the menu will

have something for everyone.

If you're not an avid reader of the printed page, there are other ways to access books. For example, a non-reader I know listens to audio books during daily commutes

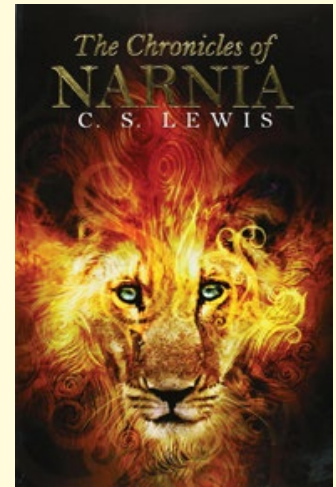
and longer rides. Some authors appear as guests on podcasts or videos. Hearing them speak will give you a taste of what they have written. For example, "Church Matters," Mennonite Church Canada's podcast, sometimes

runs interviews with authors. You can find it at [home.mennonitechurch.ca/ChurchMatters](http://home.mennonitechurch.ca/ChurchMatters).

Those of us who are in book clubs know the enjoyment of gathering with friends to discuss what we have read. New insights are added, both about the ideas in the books and about our own lives. Sometimes we are forced to broaden our horizons by reading books that we would not otherwise have chosen.

And of course we can't forget the "Good Book." From this collection of voices and genres, we hear the story of God's people. We encounter the hero Jesus, who demonstrates again and again what the reign of God is about. Throughout those pages, we hear the invitation to become an active character in the larger story. The Bible reminds us of the presence of the God who calls, guides, teaches and supports us in the adventure of discipleship.

I thank God for the Bible. I am also grateful for the authors, artists, bloggers, podcasters, publishers and distributors



in the church, who create, select, edit, design and curate, who invest in and promote, who sell and lend books and resources for all of us. I pray that the church will have the ongoing financial and human resources to sustain this important ministry.

Take time to browse our Books & Resources pages and choose something to read. Then tell others in your circles about how your reading has impacted you. Feel free to drop us a note too.

Now, it's time for me to go find my tattered copy of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

### New Manitoba Correspondent

This month we welcome Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe to our reporting team. She is a communications and media major in the fourth year of a bachelor of arts program at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg. She served in a variety of roles in Mennonite Church Manitoba's Camps with Meaning program and attends Charleswood Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.



### ABOUT THE COVER:

Doug Klassen's horse Dolly is kindly and carefully cared for by farrier Morgan Girletz, who spent an hour-and-a-half making a delicate repair to her hoof. It inspired Doug Klassen to pen our feature on page 4: 'A hoof and heart both need mending.'

PHOTO: DOUG KLASSEN, SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE ISSN 1480-042X

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Hebrews 10:23-25 • Accuracy, fairness, balance • Editorial freedom •  
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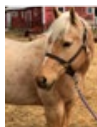
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Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press



**GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH FEATURE**

# A hoof and heart both need mending

REFLECTION AND PHOTO BY DOUG KLASSEN

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

**H**e was a welcome sight when his truck and trailer pulled into the yard. Even before the truck stopped moving, he jumped out the passenger side and started walking toward me. “Doctor Klassen?” he said as he held a cigarette at the side of his mouth. He reached out his tattoo-laden arm and introduced himself: “Morgan Girletz. Good to meet ya. Let’s see yer horse!”

Dolly had developed a very bad crack in her one hoof, and I was told that Morgan was the guy who could fix it. When I brought her up from the paddock, he had plenty of colourful adjectives to describe what he saw. And the vocabulary continued as he spent the next hour-and-a-half making the delicate repair.

There was a time when I wouldn’t have been comfortable being seen with Morgan. There was a time when I would leave conversations if people would use words or expressions that were objectionable. Or, if I decided to stay engaged, I would feel guilty, thinking that God would not be pleased with me keeping such company.

### **‘Kill all the Canaanites’ or ‘love your enemies’?**

That began to change a few years ago when I came to a crisis in my faith. For years I had not been able to reconcile the “kill all the Canaanites” God that I read about in the Old Testament, and the “love your enemies” Jesus that I read about in the New. I concluded that Jesus’ death on the cross saves us from God, but God still had high expectations of purity that I needed to obey.

In hindsight, I conclude now that God wanted a deeper relationship with me and would not let me rest in those thoughts. Time and again, those on the periphery of the church would bring up the violence of God in the Old Testament and their lack of desire to get to know him better.

At the same time, Sunday after Sunday I would preach Jesus, who was forever seeking out those on the margins and bringing them in. But bringing them in to what? It wasn’t until I led a Bible study of the first chapter of Hebrews that I realized I needed to figure out who God really was.

Hebrews 1 begins: *“Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being. . . .”*

Then there were those words in John 10:30: *“I and the Father are one”*; and John 14:8, in which *“Philip said to him, ‘Lord, show us the Father and we will be satisfied.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.”*

So what should I believe? Do I believe what Jesus says about himself and the Father, or do I believe what many of the Old Testament writers said? Certainly, there are

glimpses of a loving God in the Old Testament, but I just couldn’t get past the verses that endorse slavery, war, plunder, genocide and, perhaps the most troubling, God’s need for his own son to die on the cross to pay for my sins. Why can’t the Father forgive me as freely as Jesus forgave those in his presence?

Right around this time, a church member asked me to meet him for lunch downtown. He wanted to talk with me about the work of Rene Girard that had been featured on CBC’s *Ideas* program. Girard was primarily a philosopher and an anthropologist, but time and again his work drew him to the biblical story.

It was his vast knowledge of other ancient Near Eastern cultures and the mechanism of the scapegoat that became the breakthrough for me. Girard pointed out that God knew the only way to overcome the whole violent way of the world—memetic desire—was not to fight against it and beat it back, but to give himself up to it, to let it do its worst to him and then to overcome death itself.

If God was exactly like everything that was said about him in the Old Testament, Jesus would have appeared and been exactly like that, because we believe Jesus is God. If God did demand all of those violent sacrifices and genocides, then for Jesus to be considered God he should have acted just the same because one of the primary tenets of our faith is that God is unchanging.

But Jesus doesn’t act like that. In Isaiah 43, God was going to give Egypt as a

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ransom to get the people he loved back. Jesus doesn't subject any people; instead, he loves them all. In fact, he puts himself out as the ransom, so to speak.

Likewise, when Jesus delivers his first sermon that is recorded in Luke 4. When he quotes Isaiah, he leaves out the verses about God's vengeance. Even Jesus' cousin didn't see it at first. When Jesus approached the Jordan River for baptism, John cried out: "*His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.*" Yet in the Book of Revelation, we see that the lion of Judah is actually a slaughtered lambkin, and the gates of the city are open.

### Learning to read the Bible differently

The only way I could make sense of all this was to begin to read the Bible differently. John 1 clearly states that Jesus is the Word of God. And I have come to believe that the Bible is the story—or the witness—of how humankind, by God's grace, came to realize that.

We started out thinking that God was not much different than the other violent gods who commanded sacrifice. But even from the beginning, we see glimpses of a God who is not at all like the other gods of the region (Exodus 34:6; Numbers 14:18; Nehemiah 9:31; Psalm 86:15; Joel 2:13). Instead, God is regularly spoken of as forgiving, gracious, merciful and abounding in steadfast love.

Yet our desire to have Yahweh fight Baal on Baal's terms was too strong. Many of the prophets died trying to convince us that God didn't want sacrifice, but instead wanted our hearts.

Reading the Bible through the lens of Jesus is basic to our Anabaptist faith, but for some reason I had a new sense of that now. I could release those violent, genocidal texts in the Old Testament as writers trying their very best to understand the nature and will of God, but not quite getting there.

Further endorsement came in Colossians 1:19: "*[I]n [Jesus] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.*" Not just a third of God, but all the fullness of the Trinity was/is dwelling in Jesus. And if

this is true, if Jesus is the exact imprint, the very likeness of who God is, then there can be no violence in God at all, because there was no violence in Jesus. And there can be no exclusion in God at all, as Jesus never excluded anyone from his presence. In fact, much of what is written about Jesus in the gospels is of him going to the marginalized, the women, the ill, the outcast, even the thief on the cross, and demonstrating God's love for them by bringing them in.

### A transformed heart

Morgan knew what he was doing. With a combination of hot rasps, horizontally driven lace nails and a form-fitted shoe, he carefully avoided any nerve damage and repaired a deadly crack in Dolly's front hoof.

There was a time when I would have been uncomfortable being seen with Morgan. I was afraid of the chatter, "*this man welcomes sinners*" (Luke 15:2). But more than that, I was afraid of what God would think of me.

Since this transformation in my heart,

I can see now that God wants me to love all of God's children, without fear and without having an agenda. As Letty Russel says so beautifully: "Jesus' message is that all persons are created by God and all are welcome in God's household."

Further, Sarah Bessy writes: "Our lives tell the truth of what we believe about God."

Richard Rohr states, "We become what we behold."

What we believe about God shapes every aspect of our lives and our relationship with others, be they an adjective-gushing, tattoo-laden farrier, or the prim and proper, purity-seeking Pharisees of our time.

God makes room for everyone because God is "*above all and through all and in all*" (Ephesians 4:6). ❧



Doug Klassen is the senior pastor of Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary.

### /// For discussion

1. What were you taught about the need for faithful Christians to avoid immoral locations or people? In what situations is it appropriate to spend time with people who say and do things that your mother would not have approved of?
2. Have you struggled with the violent stories of the Old Testament? How do you deal with the seeming contradiction between Jesus' words to "love your enemies" and the Old Testament message to "kill all the Canaanites"? What conclusion does Doug Klassen come to in reconciling the violence of the Old Testament with the way of Jesus? Do you agree with it?
3. Klassen says that previously he assumed that "God still had high expectations of purity that I needed to obey," but he came to understand that God is love and "there can be no exclusion in God." What is the relationship between purity and inclusion? Is the search for purity always pharisaic?
4. Who are the marginalized people in your community? Klassen quotes from Letty Russel that "all are welcome in God's household." What does this message mean for the church?

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

## ✉ 'Shared land' event deserved front-page coverage

RE: "SHARED LAND" event photo, Aug. 28, back cover.

I was rather set back by the minimal attention you gave to an event at Ancient Echoes Interpretive Centre in Herschel, Sask. This is of front-page importance, not a back-page afterthought.

I have been there on various occasions over the years, as well as this one, and find this an outstanding venture of recognizing the activities of the past by our gracious hosts. These rocks have been preserved for us to recognize because they are located in a ravine that cannot be cultivated.

In this era of seeking to build bridges of healing and reconciliation, we have no greater mandate than to strive ever stronger to cross that "great divide" that

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## FROM OUR LEADERS



DEBORAH FROESE

For Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers and national office staff, preparations for restructuring have created challenges over the past few years. Reality hit home as beloved colleagues and friends were released from their jobs and others left voluntarily for new employment, leaving those who remained with a sense of loss and additional responsibilities.



We've lived with and juggled the uncertainty of impending change for a long time: What does it mean for the church and for those we serve? What comes next?

These struggles are a direct result of societal challenges facing congregations across the country. That's scary when we don't know what lies ahead.

As our annual September staff retreat approached this year, each of us were invited to submit an anchor word that would sustain us in the weeks leading up to Special Assembly 2017 and decisions

about the future. That word was emblazoned on a T-shirt that we wore at least once each week from that time forward.

I chose "metamorphosis." It's a big word. So big, in fact, that it had to be split in two to fit across the width of my T-shirt! But more important than its literal size is the depth of its meaning: "a striking alteration in appearance, character or circumstances" (Webster's online dictionary). I'll carry "metamorphosis" with me beyond Special Assembly 2017 because I choose to embrace the daunting prospect of change as an opportunity to become something more: To learn new things, to travel new roads, to see where God leads me. Only by releasing what I cling to, can I have room to receive the fullness of what God has in store.

Accepting change doesn't mean the journey will be easy, and it sure doesn't mean that I know where I'm going! I haven't worked long enough to financially sustain retirement, but I don't yet feel ready for another job. My particular skills

are specialized and not easy to market for equitable returns. I'm exhausted from the process of living through uncertainty and lament, and thinking too far ahead provokes further weariness.

But that's not what I'm focussing on. I choose to view my circumstances through the lens of hope. Eleven years with MC Canada have blessed me with immeasurable growth in faith, relationships and personal development. Somewhere over the past two years, profound gratitude for those blessings made bittersweet the sorrow of impending loss. Appreciation propels me toward the future with faith and optimism, believing that God will open new doors for me and my colleagues.

Adopting a hopeful viewpoint has "morphed" change into something new and exciting, a transformation that is rich with possibility.

Possibility is alive and well for the church too. Even as we face uncertainty, can we celebrate our blessings? What might our congregations each choose as anchor words in the face of uncertainty?

God is still at work among us, and where God is at work, the metamorphosing power of change is inevitable.

*Deborah Froese is MC Canada's director of news services.*

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separates our two cultures. We need to recognize how God has been speaking through the ages in other forms; not only how he has, and is, speaking through us. The prayers that have been uttered around this rock, estimated to date back as far as 5,000 years, is phenomenal!

HENRY NEUFELD, WINNIPEG

## ✉ Sorrow over the Holocaust a better starting place than accusations

RE: "NAZI DENIALISM must end" letter, Sept. 25, page 10.

I am surprised at the response of Ben Goossen to Barb Draper's review of his book. She raises the issue of Mennonite motivation during the Second

## FAMILY TIES

# Hermeneutic of suspicion

MELISSA MILLER

In a previous Family Ties column on sexual ethics (June 19, 2017), I wondered, "Where does the Bible help us [in this regard]? And where is it limited?" As I wrote, I imagined some readers might share my questions, while others would be puzzled, even disturbed, by them. Like many of you, I imbibed Paul's teaching to Timothy that *"all Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness"* (II Timothy 3:16).

Of course, Paul, writing in the first century A.D., was referring to the Hebrew Scriptures. The Christian Scriptures were not compiled and set into canon until the third century, or perhaps the fifth century, depending on which history one is following. Unity on Scripture was shaken up, along with many other things, by the Reformation, as Protestants omitted a number of books included by Roman Catholics.

Biblical history is full of much deliberation and debate. Those of us who value Scripture ought to become familiar with the fierce struggles that took place in its shaping, to determine what was sacred and should be included, and what was peripheral or heretical and therefore omitted.

Still we claim them as our holy writings. We trust the God-breath that worked through human hands and motivations

to produce them and to guide us today, as they have countless others in the past. I persist and delight in engagement with Scripture, beginning most days with a psalm followed by a gospel passage. Such a rhythm grounds my little life in God's unfathomable love, as intimate as breath, as vast as the ocean.

Questions persist. I ponder the opinion of my atheist friend, who thinks that an ancient book is woefully inadequate as a guide to ethics today. Part of me disagrees strongly, although I am not one to argue with an unbeliever. Part of me wants to point to Jesus, whose self-giving love ethic is magnificently compelling, timeless and exactly the model needed for the world in any age. How can the teachings of Jesus not inspire, guide and disturb anyone who considers them?

There is another part of me that under-



*Our perspectives and our location in a society influence the story we tell or even the stories we think are worth telling.*

stands my friend's scepticism, what I call a hermeneutic of suspicion. My hermeneutic—how I interpret Scripture—has been shaped in many ways, including by my seminary studies. From feminist and liberation scholars, I acquired permission to approach Scripture with respectful critique. What does it mean that much of

the Old Testament was written down by royal scribes, possibly during the years of Israel's monarchy, possibly when Israel was in exile?

It is reasonable to assume that the writers were male and privileged, given gender roles, subsistence living conditions and scarcity of literary skills at the time. I know as a writer that there are many ways to tell a story. Our perspectives and our location in a society influence the story we tell or even the stories we think are worth telling. A hermeneutic of suspicion invites me to look at the Bible with curious eyes, asking, "Who is benefitting from the story being told this way? Who is being suppressed or disadvantaged?"

These questions have led me to a broadened appreciation for the Bible's powerful message, particularly when interpreted by those who are weak, oppressed and marginalized. The God who brought liberation to the Hebrew slaves is still liberating and redeeming today. The God who broke open exclusionary divisions between Jews and Greeks is still inviting all peoples into the one universal family.

Perhaps suspicion is too strong a word

for some lovers of the Bible. Perhaps caution or curiosity is more fitting, and can lead us to new insights.

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



World War, especially among Mennonites in the Soviet Union. Did they support the occupying regime because they believed in the Nazi ideology or out of anti-Soviet sentiment?

While Goossen is right that Mennonites collaborated with the occupying forces in Ukraine, I've found little evidence of widespread support of Nazi ideology among this group of Mennonites. As Holocaust

scholarship has shown, people collaborated for a variety of reasons: some out of necessity, others out of boredom, for material benefit, and some on the basis of ideology. Goossen's insistence on the primacy of ideology obscures the broader and more important point that Mennonite labour was significant in building the administrative system that allowed for the

*(Continued on page 10)*

## GOD, MONEY AND ME

# The 'yes' perspective

SHERRI GROSZ

**W**hen I was a very young girl, I realized that the coloured papers in my mother's purse could get you things. That was my introduction to money. Growing up, I remained fascinated by the intense influence money has on human behaviour. The Bible has a lot to teach about our relationship with money, but adopting a biblical approach to wealth often requires us to reject the things our society tells us we should cling to. It's not easy.

I often think of the story in Luke's Gospel of Peter being called into discipleship. *"Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.' So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him"* (Luke 5:10-11 NIV).

Imagine Peter in that moment. Walking away from his career, his home and his family. Stepping into the unknown, unsure what might happen; not knowing the delight, the surprises and the amazing things he would experience. Still saying yes.

Most of us have stepped out into the unknown in some area of our lives: heading off to post-secondary school in an unfamiliar place, hoping we've made the right choice of school and program of study; saying yes to employment, hoping that we have found a good place to work; saying yes to dates, to engagements and even to marriage, trusting that the

laughter and joy will outweigh the tears. And yet we are often reluctant to extend this bold "yes" to our money.

I sometimes feel the reflex to close my hand firmly around my money and hold on tight. Wealth can give us the illusion of self-sufficiency and security. It's hard not to swallow the lie that if I have enough money, I can deal with any problem that comes my way; or if I have enough money, I don't have to ask for help or rely on the mercy of others. In those moments when I am tempted to see money as my hope, I think back to Peter's "yes" and remind myself that I need to trust my God, not my wealth.



*I sometimes feel the reflex to close my hand firmly around my money and hold on tight.*

There is no denying that Peter's decision to leave his nets and follow Jesus was a spiritual one, but it was also financial. There was security in continuing to earn a living in the fishing business, but Peter said "yes" to giving that away. And we can, too. It feels risky to share our wealth instead of keeping it safe for a rainy day, but we can lean on Jesus' words to Peter: *"Don't be afraid."*

Several years ago, I got to know an entrepreneur who learned to provide for his family while still stepping out in fearless generosity. He started many different businesses over the years. Some

were successful, and others weren't, but somehow he always came out ahead. He once told me he felt he was gifted with the ability to make money, but that this gifting came with the responsibility to give generously. Early on, he had prayerfully examined his finances and determined how much his family needed to live comfortably. He drew a line across that financial ceiling, and he gave away everything above it. In seasons of prosperity, there was more money above the ceiling, and in seasons of scarcity there was less. Giving in this way became easier over time. After all, he felt the money had never belonged to him in the first place.

We all experience those flashes of "just in case" fear when it comes to our money, but I am so grateful for the generous people I work with, who have encouraged

me to look at wealth and money differently than our world does and just say "yes."

*Sherri Grosz is a gift-planning consultant with Abundance Canada in Kitchener, Ont. Saying "yes" to a commitment of charitable gifting may seem daunting at first; however, whether your financial capability is large or small, you can tell us how much, when and where your donations are made to the causes you care about most. Call Abundance Canada today at 1-800-772-3257 to speak with a gift-planning consultant in your area.*

*(Continued from page 9)*

destruction of Jews in Ukraine. Even if they did not believe in these ideas, their actions helped to support them. From this point we can no longer hide.

This, however, does not mean that we should ignore the difference between sympathy and benefit. Many of those who benefitted never expressed any support for these ideas; on the contrary, they remembered the treatment of their neighbours, both Jewish and Ukrainian, with deep sorrow.

Instead of starting the conversation on Mennonite culpability in the Holocaust in Ukraine with accusations, perhaps we should begin with this sorrow. While it cannot undo what has been done, it might remind those of us prone to indignation and judgment to remember to add a little humility as we encourage others to address these painful issues.

**AILEEN FRIESEN, WATERLOO, ONT.**

*Aileen Friesen is the J. Winfield Fretz Visiting Research Scholar in Mennonite studies at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo.*

## ✉ One letter doesn't prove Mennonites are in denial

**RE:** "NAZI DENIALISM must end" letter, Sept. 25, page 10.

*Canadian Mennonite* publishes one letter to the editor describing a personal experience under Nazi occupation ("Ukrainian survivors rebut 'Aryan' claims," Nov. 7, 2016) and Ben Goossen concludes that Canadian Mennonites are in denial about their involvement in Nazism.

That pretty well describes the method used in his

book as well. All of the evidence Goossen uses to make his case that some Canadian Mennonites supported Nazism is from published, easily accessible works: the books of Frank Epp, for example, or the *Journal of Mennonite Studies*. I suppose "published" no longer counts as "public."

I find curious Goossen's claim that there was no "pro-Nazi movement" among U.S. Mennonites, but that there has nevertheless been a "robust public reckoning." Where? When? In his book, the almost total absence of "U.S.-based" Mennonites—more than half of all Mennonites in the early 20th century—is strange. Have U.S. Mennonites entirely transcended their "racialized" identity?

Obviously, the impact of John Howard Yoder has been more profound and successful than I had realized. Goossen might have acknowledged the positive influence of leaders like Yoder, and given us a few more examples of how Mennonites have moved beyond a racialized identity. Or does Goossen believe it's impossible for us to do so?

**RICHARD RATZLAFF, TORONTO, ONT.**

*Richard Ratzlaff is a member of Toronto United Mennonite Church. He worked at the University of Toronto Press for 11 years, during which time he was responsible for Jacob Neufeld's Path of Thorns, Anne Konrad's Red Quarter Moon, and P.R. Magocsi's A History of Ukraine, all quoted or cited by Goossen in his book Chosen Nation.*

## ✉ Mennonites have a long history of responding to those in need

**RE:** "NOW IS the time to respond," Sept. 11, page 14.

Thank you for carrying Will Braun's very moving report on the devastation being suffered by Mennonites in the Congo, as well as many others there.

Obviously our concern should not be restricted to fellow Mennonites, but we can draw inspiration from the long history of Mennonites in one country helping those in another. The biggest such effort relates to those in the Soviet Union nearly 100 years ago, but already in the late 1700s Dutch Mennonites sent relief and did lobbying on behalf of those persecuted in Switzerland.

Can that history prompt us to respond substantially and imaginatively to Mennonites and others in the Congo? The methods would be different, but the need is enormous, and we have significant resources.

**BILL JANZEN, OTTAWA**

## /// Corrections

- **THE CAPTION** accompanying the Snapshots photo from Camp Valaqua (Aug. 28, page 23) incorrectly reported that the \$23,000 raised by Camp Valaqua's garden party and hike-a-thon was to be used for a water treatment system and renovations on the main lodge washrooms. In fact, the water treatment system was fully paid for through a donation made from the estate of the late Theodore Janzen of Bergthal Mennonite Church in Didsbury, Alta. Money raised by the garden party and hike-a-thon is going toward washroom renovations.

- **THE STATEMENT** on the new sign at Conrad Grebel College was written by members of Grebel and the Waterloo Aboriginal Education Centre. The quotation in the third-last paragraph of the same story ("On a journey towards reconciliation," Oct. 9, page 17) was actually spoken by Reina Neufeldt. Due to an editing error, that was unclear.

*Canadian Mennonite* regrets the errors.

## ✉ Readers respond to Maple View's paid supplement on sexuality

RE: "HONOUR GOD with Your Bodies" insert, Sept. 25.

EARLIER TODAY, I opened up the latest mailed issue of *Canadian Mennonite*, as I always have, and browsed through until I reached the paid supplement from Maple View Mennonite Church. Near the end, it stated, "We recognize it may spur diverse responses."

Here's one: I have cancelled my subscription. If I wanted another reiteration of annotated, cross-referenced, proof-texted, footnoted "scriptural truths," I would have asked for one. I didn't. I didn't, because I'm already familiar with all the arguments that uphold traditional perspectives 'in love'.

These interpretations kill people. I don't let weapons that can kill into my house, and *CM* snuck one in without me knowing it was coming. For shame. I'm done.

**BENJAMIN WERT, TORONTO**

I WAS STUNNED that *Canadian Mennonite* allowed Maple View Mennonite Church to do an end-run around its editorial process by publishing this congregation's "paid supplement." Apparently, one can write a passive-aggressive rant to attack our LGBTQ sisters and brothers, substantiated by nothing more than a few proof texts and condescending self-righteousness, and get it published—as long as it's accompanied by a cheque! This "supplement" is in complete contradiction to the spirit of the Being a Faithful Church resolution adopted at Assembly 2016 and should have been refused outright.

*Canadian Mennonite* should apologize to its constituency and make amends by donating the money received from Maple View to an organization such as the Brethren and Mennonite Council for LGBT Concerns.

**BARRY ÉSAU, GATINEAU, QUÉ.**

I WAS DEEPLY saddened and profoundly confused to read the paid statement from Maple View Mennonite Church.

In her editorial in the same issue, Virginia A. Hostetler challenged us to move "beyond judgment to a posture of listening and caring," and to provide "gracious space for the other." I agree completely. I am indeed keen to stretch myself, to understand better the convictions of my fellow Mennonites, to build understanding where currently we disagree. But sadness and confusion set in when I read Maple View's reference paper.

The Being a Faithful Church recommendations advocate for ongoing unity and dialogue in spite of theological differences, but Maple View expresses

dismay at them. Is it saying that it doesn't want to engage in further dialogue? That it has arrived at truth, and is done listening? I want to dialogue, but dialogue can't work that way.

And in the midst of this confusion, it baffles me that *Canadian Mennonite* would accept payment and print this statement. In this issue, you asked readers to quest for unity in Christ. I wonder if publishing a creed in the midst of disagreement is more likely to cause disunity. By publishing it, I ask you to consider your role in furthering disunity and perpetuating the ongoing oppression of our LGBTQ community.

**MARGARET ANDRES, WATERLOO, ONT.**

I ENCOURAGE MAPLE View Mennonite Church to prayerfully reconsider the statement on sexuality that was distributed with *Canadian Mennonite* on Sept. 25. Although it's striking to find a "reference statement" on sexuality that has almost nothing to say about love, I am particularly concerned about the implications of the comments it contains about intersex people:

- **FIRST, THE** statement incorrectly defines what the word "intersex" means. I plead with all people who want to express opinions about sexuality to take the time to learn the meaning of the words being used. There is more information available at [isna.org](http://isna.org).
- **SECOND, THE** statement uses the existence of intersex people as a particular example of living in a fallen world, which is a non-biblical idea. Nowhere does Scripture suggest that we can see sin in the shape of people's genitals. If biological variation in sex at birth is viewed as sin, what other physical and chromosomal differences in our church family might be viewed the same way?
- **THIRD, BY** claiming that it is the Fall that results in the birth of intersex people, the statement suggests that sin itself shapes human creation, rather than God. This is another non-biblical idea, standing against Psalm 139:13, which says, "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb."

I am happy to affirm that it's not the Fall that shapes each of us, but God alone, and God is evidently satisfied with a creation that is full of difference and diversity.

Jesus teaches that all the law and the prophets hang on the commandments that call us to love (Matthew 22:34-40), and so our view of sexuality cannot just be considered in terms of legalism and sin, but must hang on love.

**MATTHEW FROESE, HAMILTON, ONT.**

I LAMENT THAT Maple View Mennonite Church probably considers this insert an affirming (of the "love the sinner, hate the sin" variety) document of LGBTQ people, intended to lovingly chide those of

us who have fallen into bad theology back onto the straight and narrow again. (Admission: Ten years ago, I would have agreed with most of Maple View's sentiments. That was before I knew of any friends or family members who were LGBTQ.)

I lament that once again my LGBTQ friends and family members are reeling from the emotional and spiritual violence of this document. Their entire identities have been trashed again. All of us are broken, but Maple View's document makes clear that they are a special kind of broken, unsalvageable unless they take a lifelong vow of celibacy, or go against their natural leanings and enter into a heterosexual marriage, which would apparently honour God—an idea which I do not accept.

I lament the deep irony of this insert being published almost simultaneously with the General Board

of MC Canada's Confession to LGBTQ people, less than two weeks before the Future Directions Special Assembly. This insert stirs up more fear, anger and division that will undoubtedly overshadow the mood at the assembly.

I lament that this vision of sexuality is so narrow as to confine all of us, of whatever sexual or gender identity or sexual orientation, to tired old tropes of what men and women should be and how they should behave.

I lament that this insert decreases my enthusiasm for *Canadian Mennonite*, and makes me question whether I should continue to read it at all, when it sustains such ongoing violence against my LGBTQ friends and neighbours, many of whom I'm learning unsubscribed long ago.

**JULIE ARMES, KITCHENER, ONT.**

## Canadian Mennonite responds

**THE SEPT. 25** print issue of *Canadian Mennonite* contained an insert from Maple View Mennonite Church entitled "Honour God with Your Bodies." Some readers have asked about the rationale for its inclusion, many expressing pain, anger and confusion about its contents, and the fear that it will do further harm to LGBTQ Mennonites who have suffered rejection, shaming and exclusion from the body of faith, and to the church as a whole.

We have been deeply impacted by the stories we have heard. We regret the harm this insert has caused.

We want you to know that the decision to accept this insert was not taken lightly, but in response to the recommendations of the Becoming a Faithful Church (BFC) process.

*CM* publishes paid "promotional supplements" as an option for companies, organizations and church bodies to present their goods, services or ideas to our readers in the form of an insert that looks and feels different from the magazine. A supplement offers a sponsor control over format, paper stock, and content without the same editorial oversight given to news and viewpoints pages. While these inserts obviously generate revenue, the content must fit our editorial policy. *CM* has rejected requests when the insert does not, for example, represent a body related closely to the Mennonite church and its mission.

When Maple View Mennonite Church, a member of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, approached *CM* about having a place to present its conclusions on its three-year participation in the BFC process, this was the vehicle it chose—certainly an unconventional one for a single congregation. This included having

it stapled in the centre spread, so it wouldn't slip out during mailing and could then be easily detached. Our staff was in dialogue with the church over a period of months. Because of the sensitive nature of the topic, we also discussed it with our board and church leaders. Because Maple View is a member of our church body, and the magazine's stated mission includes helping diverse voices speak to the larger church, the difficult decision was made to allow the church's statement to appear in a promotional supplement.

We believe making space for this is consistent with the recommendations of the BFC process, as the recently released General Board Confession states: "The General Board decided at the outset, that the process of the BFC should reflect the congregationally based polity of the denomination. This meant that discernment of faithfulness would emerge from the congregations and not only from the academy, advocacy groups, institutional structures or a representative committee. The BFC Task Force was mandated by the General Board, not to do the discerning, but to design a process that would allow all voices in our church to speak, to be heard, and to hear what others were saying."

*CM*'s mission is "to educate, inform, inspire and foster dialogue on issues facing Mennonites in Canada . . ." We recognize that this is a difficult and painful conversation, particularly for those who have experienced it in a deeply personal way, and we need to keep learning how to facilitate it. How do we "allow all" of us to speak, to be heard and to hear?

—**TOBI THIESSEN, PUBLISHER**

## VIEWPOINT

## Today's beatniks

JOHNNY WIDEMAN

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE



The end is seriously nigh, folks. Just look around you. Yet again we find ourselves on the brink of being blown to smithereens. It's times like this I'm forced to ask myself: How have we survived this long?

I've spent a lot of time studying the Beat Generation, whose members were the young, offensive culture-shapers of their time. This was the generation that found itself graduating high school at the end of the Second World War. The "real world" the beatniks were entering was one in which war and genocide had left 60 million people dead. A generation raised in the shadow of the nuclear bomb that watched in horror as the world's leaders stockpiled weapons of mass destruction like there was a "buy one, get one" sale.

Things were bleak, to say the least. But the beatniks were young. They weren't

with a bleak, fruitless world, the Beat Generation's response was writing poems and hitchhiking. Pointless, from an outside perspective, but it made more sense to these young culture-shapers than to continue following the old ways of doing things. I mean, look where that got us.

The beatniks were written off as bums and troublemakers. In the eyes of the world, they were doing something completely useless at a time when so much seemed to be at stake. These young people's responses seemed laughable, if not inappropriate. And yet, here we are. Not all blown to smithereens. Because what the older generation didn't understand about the beatniks was that the world's problems keep evolving. What the world forgot in the '50s was that their young people only understood the world as it was, not as it used to be. The

people have today—just like their elders once had—is a fresh perspective. Elders know this world as it compares to the world they once knew. But young people know this planet in its latest version. They were raised in it and influenced by it. Their cartoons have taught them modern values. Their education has included the latest breakthroughs in science and philosophy; literally everything about them and the way they think is more applicable to this world. Their foundations and influences are more relevant. So the things that come naturally to them, the things they like, the things that make sense to them but might not make sense to their parents—who knows—maybe that's the unique, unjaded perspective we need right now.

It's a comforting thought, really. What if each new generation has been handcrafted to understand the unique problems of today? What if we allowed ourselves to believe that God has etched each and every one of our young people into a custom key, shaped precisely for today's shackles, today's problems? What if every young generation, shaped by its own culture at that time, asks precisely the questions it is meant to ask? That would mean that its members have been given the thoughts, imaginations and passions that God wants them to have. If that's true, we should take comfort! That would mean that they are already exactly who the world needs them to be. That would mean that all they need to do is what comes naturally, no matter how useless or irrelevant that might feel to us who are their elders. ❧

*I mean, no matter how bad things got in the '50s, we're still here, right?*

accustomed to things being terrible because they were new to the world; their perspective was fresh. This meant they saw things differently, which in turn meant they did things differently.

When it seemed like the world was only giving them one option—to be blown to smithereens—they decided to blaze a new trail and contradict everything society reflected back at them. If the world said, "Arm yourself to the teeth," the beatniks would be pacifists. If the world said, "Happiness is a white picket fence with the latest central vacuum cleaning system," they would live simply, with few possessions.

Obviously, such a countercultural decision was very much misunderstood by the generations that had come before them, and rightfully so. When faced

beatniks were witnessing their fragile "real world" for the first time. It was fresh to them.

Which is maybe the point. Maybe in the face of all this hopelessness—the bombs, the threats, the environmental catastrophes—a fresh perspective is just what we need! I mean, no matter how bad things got in the '50s, we're still here, right? And although things are looking pretty bad at the moment, I believe there's still hope. Because we now have our own Beat Generation: those offensive, culture-shaping millennials, here to offer their fresh perspective and to shake things up.

Make no mistake, young people have a lot to learn from their elders. Elders have wisdom that was earned through trial and error from the moment they entered their own "real world." But what young

*Johnny Wideman is a playwright, actor, short story author and the artistic director of Theatre of the Beat. He lives in Stouffville, Ont., with his partner Leah, three friends and two cats.*

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

# Indigenous, Mennonite oral traditions engage

CONRAD STOESZ

MENNONITE HERITAGE ARCHIVES

**D**ecades ago I remember my Mennonite grandmother telling me a fascinating story about the Indigenous peoples that travelled through the area around Altona, Man. I never knew what to make of her story until I compared it with the oral traditions of the Indigenous neighbours that I've learned from recently.

My grandmother, Cornelia (Friesen) Stoesz, was born in 1923 and grew up in the Rosenheim area, north of Altona. One day at her home in Winkler, she told me the fascinating story about the origins of *De Fastinj*, or “The fortress,” as she knew it.

Travelling west out of Altona on Highway 201, the flat landscape slopes gently toward Buffalo Creek. Westward across the creek, the land takes a noticeable rise. Grandma said that the rise was created by Indigenous women carrying dirt in their aprons. Her belly rolled as she chuckled, and wondered if the woman actually used aprons. But that was how the story went. Grandma said that at the top of the rise there was once a big battle and a lot of blood had been spilled. To this day, plants grow poorly there. She mentioned that farmers in the area have reported finding many arrowheads.

I carried this story with me for years, never quite knowing what to make of it. On a chance meeting with an Indigenous elder and historian, I took a risk. With a bit of embarrassment, I told Grandma's story to David Daniels from the Ojibwa community that settled near Portage la Prairie. With a twinkle in his eye, he said, “Of course, your grandma was right.”

That area was a “bison kill” location. Bison was a staple in the Indigenous



PHOTO BY KEVIN M. KLERKS / ROYAL ALBERTA MUSEUM

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*Diorama of a buffalo pound at the Royal Albert Museum in Edmonton.*

peoples' diet. On many parts of the Prairies, buffalo jumps—cliffs over which bison were traditionally driven during big hunts—are non-existent due to the largely flat landscape, so a different hunting technique was employed in those locations.

At the lip of a ridge with a coulee or valley below, a bison pound was built by hollowing out an area 30 metres or more in diameter and surrounding it with a sturdy fence made of branches. Then other piles of branches or rocks were placed one to two metres apart and a half-metre high, creating drivelines several hundred metres in length to funnel the bison herd into the pound.

Hunters on foot would carefully, slowly at first, move a herd of bison towards the mouth of the funnel and then drive them into the pound. The drivelines would act as blinds for hunters to stand behind, keeping the bison contained within the funnel. Once inside the pound, all of the

bison in the herd were killed with bows and arrows.

The hunters feared that if a single bison escaped, knowledge of this hunting technique would be passed along to other bison herds, threatening the success of the kill and their food supply. After the kill, the whole community came out to process the carcasses, using water from the creek as needed.

This hunting technique was used until the mid-1700s, after which hunters began to hunt bison on horseback. As it turns out, the big battle that Grandma talked about referred to something other than a human battlefield. It was the location where hunters “battled” bison. The blood in the soil came from the many bison kills and, together with the turned up soil and clay that formed the pound, helps explain the poor soil conditions and the concentration of arrowheads at the fortress.

Recently, the stories of the Altona bison pounds were reinforced when I spoke with Lawrence Klippenstein, the former director of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, who grew up in Altberghthal, near Altona. He remembers as a boy swimming in Buffalo Creek and noticing a circular area that was significantly deeper than the rest of the creek. His friend Bernie Wiebe maintains that this circular part of the creek was known as *De kleije Fastinj*. In view of the stories told by Grandma and David Daniels, I now wonder if this circular area was another “little fortress,” the corral portion of another bison pound.

But how did my grandma know the story of the big battle? Mennonites were not in Manitoba when the bison pound was used. Somewhere there must have been a sharing of stories among Indigenous and Mennonite peoples in order for her to have heard this story. Clearly, the echoes of the past have survived in oral traditions, but in this case, one tradition was needed to help interpret another. ❧

*Conrad Stoesz is the archivist of the Mennonite Heritage Archives in Winnipeg.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF GERRY BINNEMA

*Bi-vocational pastor Gerry Binnema takes Gilford McGrath, who attends United Mennonite Church in Black Creek, B.C., for a spin in his plane.*

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

# The best way to live

GERRY BINNEMA

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

I am somewhat of a non-conventional bi-vocational pastor, since pastoring is a vocation that I longed for my whole life, but God only released me to serve in that capacity later in life. Until that moment, my career was in the aviation industry, as a pilot, mechanic, missionary pilot, instructor, accident investigator and, for the last 20 years, as a safety professional.

During my time as an aviation safety professional, I have seen the approach used towards safety change radically, and have seen how the gospel has changed aviation safety. Yes, you read that right. The gospel of Jesus is truth, and that truth is transformational, and can be seen even by people who don't acknowledge Jesus as Lord.

When I started working in aviation safety, the dominant message was focussed on pilots, mechanics and other frontline workers, and the message was:

"Follow the rules and we'll all be safe." It was very much the message of the Old Testament. The rules are good. Follow them. If you break them, bad things happen and you will be punished.

But we already know that all of us fall short. This is true when it comes to the Ten Commandments, and it was certainly also true in terms of following the thousands upon thousands of rules that government bureaucracy and company managers imposed on aviation professionals. As a result, non-compliance was commonplace. In fact, to get the job done, rules often had to be broken. It was only when there was an incident, that blame had to be placed and punishment duly handed out.

About 15 years ago, though, there was an upheaval that is still rippling through the industry. What if we didn't blame people and didn't punish people after an incident? What if we extended grace?

What if we looked at the root causes of the non-compliance and tried to fix those things? What if we made it safe for an individual to stand up and confess that he is not perfect and needs help?

The change in approach took the focus off blame and punishment, and placed it on how to make the system safer. Soon people became aware that the real key to a safe operation was a good safety culture. In this way, doing things safely was simply the norm in the company. The rules were written on their hearts, so to speak. Since then, much has been written about safety culture and building the kind of environment in which people feel free to step forward and confess, so that everyone can learn from the mistakes of others, without blame and shame.

What I have found so interesting in watching this transformation is how it neatly corresponds with Old and New Testament thinking. I have witnessed so many people struggle with this new approach, and witness the exact same struggles in the church, as people still wrestle with what it means to be New Testament believers. We are hard-wired to blame and to judge, but the message of Jesus is that there is a better way. By extending grace and learning that God's way is the best way to live, people can transform—not because they are forced to follow these rules that they don't really understand, but because they see that God's desire for their lives is the best way to live.

The truth of the gospel is available to all people. The concept that grace is available to those who confess and repent is written in our hearts. David understood the principle when he wrote Psalm 51. Paul says in Romans 1 that the truth about God is clearly visible through what God has created. And the truth about grace becomes evident even in the secular workplace as people strive to find the best way to do things. ❧

*Gerry Binnema is a bi-vocational pastor of United Mennonite Church, Black Creek, B.C.*

## LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

# You're getting worked up over nothing

TROY WATSON

Jesus and his disciples were invited to Martha's house for dinner.

Martha was toiling away in the kitchen by herself while everyone else, including her sister Mary, was in the living room huddled around a fascinating rabbi named Jesus, a man some were calling the Son of God. Stressed out and frustrated, Martha finally marched into the living room and interrupted the conversation.

"Rabbi, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work in the kitchen by myself? Tell her to help me!" she blurted out.

Jesus, being full of compassion and the Spirit, looked at her and said, "Martha, I will help you in the kitchen."

It's a nice story. It's what you'd expect from a servant leader like Jesus. Most Christians would do the same if someone they knew was voicing a legitimate complaint and genuine need. We seem naturally wired to do whatever we can to correct an obviously unfair situation. After all, that's what Jesus would do. Right?

Of course, those familiar with the story in Luke 10:38-42 know this isn't what Jesus did. What he did was astonishing. He gently rebuked Martha, the one sacrificially preparing a meal for him and the rest of the group, saying, "*Martha, dear Martha, you're fussing far too much and getting yourself worked up over nothing*" (MSG translation).

Worked up over nothing! Wow. What was Jesus thinking?

In a nutshell, Jesus knew Martha was reacting to illusions (nothing real) because she was in a state of disharmony with God, truth and her own soul. Jesus



had incredible insight into people's inner beings. He knew when someone was being controlled by his or her ego, painbody or false self. Here are some cursory definitions if you're unfamiliar with those terms:

• **EGO IS** a state of mind that wants to be central, important and separate from everyone else.

• **PAINBODY IS** an energetic entity within you, made up of old pain you've accumulated and not fully dealt with. It feeds on pain, and thus misinterprets

experiences and situations as being painful, so it can feed on new pain and thrive. When you're "triggered," your painbody is likely taking over.

• **FALSE SELF** is the self you present to others and sometimes yourself. This is the self you want to be, think you ought to be or sometimes believe you are.

Another rudimentary way of understanding ego, painbody and false self is to combine them into one overarching term, what Paul calls the "flesh." We operate from the "flesh" whenever we value and desire anything more than God, our connection with God and our spiritual growth.

For example, sometimes when someone is driving very slowly in front of me and I'm in a big hurry, I get triggered. I start reacting to illusions. Irrational thoughts begin swirling around my head,

such as, "Is this person intentionally driving slowly to annoy me?" or, "This person shouldn't have a licence! Seriously, what kind of maniac drives the speed limit!"

However, when I'm in the same situation but in the Spirit, I become aware of the frustration growing within me and I pray, realizing this is an opportunity to grow spiritually, and to practise patience, self-control and compassion. I respond to the exact same situation differently because when I'm in the Spirit I value God, my connection with God and my spiritual growth more than everything else, including getting where I need to be on time.

When we're triggered, we're in "the flesh" and almost always reacting to illusions. We're getting worked up over nothing.

Jesus never responds to "the flesh." He always addresses the true self. And if the person's "flesh" barrier is impenetrable, he simply doesn't engage. Jesus knows that responding to the "flesh" never helps. It only reinforces and strengthens that person's illusions and bondage.

Jesus focusses on long-term needs,

*We operate from the 'flesh' whenever we value and desire anything more than God, our connection with God and our spiritual growth.*

not immediate gratification. Jesus isn't concerned with what will make Martha's afternoon easier, as much as her holistic well-being over the long haul. Jesus sees Martha's current trajectory, not only her current situation. He sees the probability of health issues and damaged relationships with everyone she's close to if she continues reacting to stress in unhealthy ways. Martha's situation might not be fair but it's an opportunity for her to experience healing and freedom.

Something I've learned over time is that Jesus rarely corrects, changes or fixes unfair, painful or difficult situations when that unfair, difficult or painful situation is best utilized as a tool or opportunity for transformation. ❧

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



## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Cornies**—Bodhi Beckett (b. July 2, 2017), to Brian and Sonya Cornies, North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

**Fransen**—Perrin Wolfgang (b. Aug. 29, 2017), to Amy and Matthew Fransen, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Friesen**—Thea Eloise (b. Sept. 5, 2017), to Wolfgang and Steffi Friesen, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Friesen Schellenberg**—Ronan Lee (b. Sept. 16, 2017), to Terry Schellenberg and Lenore Friesen, Sterling Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Peters**—Nikolas Sawatsky (b. Sept. 13, 2017), to Cory Peters and Lindsay Sawatsky, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.

### Baptisms

**Maria Erb, Teddy Ferede, Jill Shore, Dennis Thomas, Clara Wheaton**—Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont., at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg, Ont., Sept. 17, 2027.

### Marriages

**Grainger/Martin**—Devon Grainger and Camille Martin (River of Life Fellowship, Kitchener, Ont.), at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg, Ont., Sept. 1, 2017.

### Deaths

**Bergen**—Arthur, 67 (b. March 16, 1950; d. Aug. 3, 2017),

Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Bergen**—Jakob, 82 (b. Jan. 4, 1935; d. Sept. 25, 2017), Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Candy**—Alan, 90 (b. Dec. 18, 1926; d. Sept. 20, 2017), Hamilton Mennonite, Ont.

**Driedger**—Margaret (nee Peters), 95 (b. March 20, 1922; d. Sept. 24, 2017), North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

**Dyck**—Leonard, 94 (b. Oct. 28, 1922; d. July 13, 2017), Trinity Mennonite, DeWinton, Alta.

**Klassen**—Margaret Agnes Ada, 77 (b. Feb. 3, 1940; d. Sept. 10, 2017), Hanover Mennonite, Ont.

**Ramseyer**—Oliver, 89 (b. Aug. 19, 1928; d. Sept. 7, 2017), Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.

**Rempel**—Arthur, 89 (b. March 27, 1928; d. Sept. 15, 2017), First Mennonite, Calgary.

*Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones*

*announcements within four months of the event.*

*Please send Milestones announcements by e-mail to [milestones@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:milestones@canadianmennonite.org), including the congregation name and location.*

## /// Correction

Sucre is the capital city of Bolivia. Incorrect information appeared in the caption on the back cover of the Sept. 11 issue. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error.

## A moment from yesterday



Cooperatives allow community members to pool their economic resources and were quickly adopted in many Mennonite communities as a continuation of the Mennonite mutual-aid tradition. During the economic and agricultural Depression of the 1930s, Mennonite farmers sought new sources of income. In the Altona and Winkler areas of Manitoba, the average number of milk cows went from three in 1931 to 10 in 1941; the extra supply drove down milk prices. Farmers from the Reinland village area started the Reinland Co-op Dairy Society in 1936 as a way of diversifying farm income. Milk from six villages was sent to the dairy for cheese production. By 1940, 636 kilograms of cheese was being made each season. The society closed in 1949, having met its goals.

*Text: Conrad Stoesz / Mennonite Heritage Archives*

*Photo: Abe E. Ens*

## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

# Pioneer Park celebrates 175 years of change

By DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
KITCHENER, ONT.

When Ed Snider left Kitchener to farm in the Hanover-Chesley area of southwestern Ontario, Pioneer Park Christian Fellowship, then known as the Weber Mennonite Church, was nearly five kilometres from the city limits.

On Oct. 1, at Pioneer Park Christian Fellowship's 175th-anniversary celebration, he could see the houses of the Pioneer Park subdivision through the church windows, now fully inside the city boundary.

In 1842, when the congregation had its official beginning and constructed a building in the current location, Mennonite settlers from Pennsylvania had already been meeting informally for worship for at least

a decade, and had been living in the area, then called Strasburg, for more than three decades. A brick building, constructed in 1894, was fully renovated in the early 1970s and was replaced by a new building in 1980.

Many local farms were purchased in the 1970s by the City of Kitchener and private land developers for residential and industrial expansion. The Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopaedia Online notes that, at this time, "several church families moved away as the congregation dwindled to 35 people. These were difficult and discouraging times, and the church faced the decision whether to close its doors or to open them wider. The Weber congregation changed its name in 1972 to Pioneer Park Christian Fellowship-Mennonite, as part of its desire to identify geographically with Kitchener's new Pioneer Park subdivision."

The current congregation has a good spread of demographics, from young children to seniors. Many of the congregants live nearby, some having chosen to leave congregations further away to worship locally. Business people and professionals make up the lion's share of the membership, instead of the original farming community.

The Oct. 1 celebration was hopeful and forward-looking.

Current pastor Johanna Wall said that young adults in the congregation are saying, "God is with us. We're okay." She added that Pioneer Park has "a long history of believing in the presence of God. Without a past, how can we hope in the future?"

The anniversary celebration made clear that the church has a rich history of which it can be proud, and that it has hope for their future in Pioneer Park and the wider community. Its ministry of connecting women



PHOTOS BY ERIN YANTZI

*Elgin Shantz gets the first piece of cake at Pioneer Park Christian Fellowship's 175th-anniversary celebration.*

*Watching him are Carolyn Baechler and Lisa Yantzi.*

from the local prison, just a kilometre from the church, with seniors at Fairview Mennonite Home in Cambridge, continues.

A hymn sing in the afternoon included very early Anabaptist songs, a song sung in the style of Old Order Mennonites north of Kitchener-Waterloo, and 20th-century songs, accompanied by piano and rhythm instrument, or sung a capella. A traditional potluck right after the morning worship service was finished with cake and coffee and more visiting after the hour-long hymn sing.

A tree was planted by parents and children, expressing the desire for a future together.

Michelle Dueck wrote in the prayer for the tree planting: "May our branches grow wide to offer shelter and love like yours. And as the seasons and surrounding landscape change, may we always grow toward the sun/Son. Like the tree and the land, the earth and all that is in it, we are now and forever grateful to you, our God, the source of life." ❧

Visit [canadianmennonite.org/pioneer-park-175](http://canadianmennonite.org/pioneer-park-175) for more anniversary photos.



*James and Oliver Loewen help finish planting a tree in honour of Pioneer Park's 175th anniversary. All the church children helped plant the new tree.*



PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

On a visit to Palestine in 2008, Abe Janzen, right, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Alberta’s executive director, was getting a bit tired. His group was touring a small farm when the farmer noticed his predicament. He found a stick, cut it to the right size, and gave it to Janzen as a walking stick. On Sept. 30, at the organization’s 2017 annual general meeting in Pincher Creek, Janzen passed the stick to his successor, Thomas Coldwell, left. “It’s a stick, but it was a significant gift to me,” Janzen said. “A gift from a field where seeds had been planted. The planting of seeds is always a sign of hope, of faith. This stick came from such a field. It’s also a gift from a man who was suffering. Surviving as a Palestinian farmer is very difficult. And that is why MCC exists. We work with people who are suffering, in over 50 countries.” At the end of November, Janzen will step away from 21 years in the position of executive director, and Coldwell will step in. Janzen will continue to work with MCC Alberta, though, in the area of constituency relations, on a part-time basis.

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## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD



*Sylvia McAdam listens as Leah Gazan answers an audience member's question about the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.*

## 'We need legislated protection'

*Speakers at Saskatoon teach-in urge audience to advocate for Indigenous human rights*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent  
SASKATOON

"My people don't believe in coincidence," Sylvia McAdam told her audience, "so you're meant to be here today." McAdam was speaking at a teach-in at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon.

Billed as Let's Walk the Talk Saskatoon, the Oct. 6 event was co-sponsored by Mennonite Church Canada, MC Saskatchewan and the college. It featured the teachings of Leah Gazan, an educator at the University of Winnipeg and a member of the Wood Mountain Lakota Nation; and McAdam, co-founder of the Idle No More movement and a member of the Big River Cree Nation.

Both women are passionate advocates for Bill C-262 and the adoption of the

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). They also have powerful personal stories.

Gazan told the story of her grandmother who, with no money and no means of supporting her two young children, abandoned them in a hotel room in Moose Jaw, Sask. Her mother, in spite of this, grew up to be one of the first psychiatric nurses in

*'Talk of reconciliation seems to be a new trend, but the current government doesn't seem to want to move beyond rhetoric.'*  
*(Leah Gazan)*

Canada. When the grandmother showed up many years later, her mother welcomed her because she understood that it was not lack of love—but lack of options—that made her abandon her children many years before. "Many people suffer from colonial trauma," said Gazan.

"Talk of reconciliation seems to be a new trend," she said, "but the current government doesn't seem to want to move beyond rhetoric." She spoke of how she could not celebrate Canada 150 because the country that is Canada is made up of stolen Indigenous lands.

In spite of this, Gazan expressed hope for the future, saying, "I believe it is possible to move forward in a way that benefits all and not only the privileged few."

McAdam spoke of her experience with the Sugar Beet Policy, what she called "a well-hidden piece of genocide." At the age of five, she was made to accompany her family to work in the sugar beet fields of southern Alberta. They were made to work from 8 a.m. until 10 p.m. McAdam said she "carried a lot of shame" for the way she and her family were treated by the white farmers. She challenged audience members to try researching the Sugar Beet Policy. "You're not going to find it in colonial



*Sylvia McAdam and Leah Gazan pose for a group photo with participants at the Let's Walk the Talk Saskatoon teach-in.*

history,” she said. “There is still history that is hidden away.”

Bill C-45 triggered the birth of Idle No More, said McAdam. She added that she felt she couldn’t stand by anymore while her people’s lands and water were unprotected. “The Liberal government promised to repeal Bill C-45, but they haven’t,” she said. “The water is still unprotected.”

“My people are experiencing a level of genocide right now,” said McAdam. She noted that children in Quebec receive \$19,000 toward their education. Children in Saskatchewan receive \$11,000. But her grandson on the reserve receives only \$3,454. “The government can get away with that because they’re depending on racism, and on people believing they are unworthy of justice,” she said.

Like Gazan, McAdam also expressed hope for the future. “The power and energy of young people is amazing,” she said. “Absolutely there is a lot of hope.” She spoke of plans to build mini-homes so that her people can occupy the land and prevent oil and gas exploration there. “We’ll certainly need your bodies out there,” she told the audience. “Your children and grandchildren will benefit, not just my grandchildren.”

Gazan explained that Bill C-262 provides a legal framework for the adoption of UNDRIP. It also affirms the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 Calls to Action. “We need legislated protection,” she said, urging the audience to do what they can to pressure the government to pass the bill. “We don’t have time to wait. Our suicide rate is 20 times the national average. Fundamental Indigenous human rights should never be a debate.”



## Staff change

### Gordon Janzen leaves MC Canada, joins Foodgrains Bank

• **GORDON JANZEN**, director of Asia, Europe and Middle East ministry for Mennonite Church Canada, concluded his position as of Oct. 6. Janzen served Witness International Ministry for 16 years, administering ministries and mentoring workers in Thailand, Palestine, Israel, China, Macau, Mongolia, India, Hong Kong, Philippines, South Korea, Vietnam and, more recently, the United Kingdom, Ukraine and Germany. The son of missionary parents in India, he previously worked with Mennonite Central Committee in Lebanon and Egypt, and served for a time as a pastor in rural Saskatchewan and Manitoba, equipping him well for bridging ministry in multicultural and local settings. “Leaving this work and my family of colleagues is bittersweet,” he said. “At the same time, I’m excited to continue serving God and the church in a different way.” Tim Froese, executive minister of MC Witness, said, “Gordon has been a long-time colleague and friend. I have greatly valued Gordon’s steadfast personal and programmatic support of our international workers and ministry partners, his collaborative work style, and his faithful walk and witness as a disciple of Jesus. I wish him all the best in his new role.” Janzen, who has degrees in theology and agriculture, has accepted a position with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank as regional representative for Manitoba, based in Winnipeg.

—Mennonite Church Canada



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*Curious pigs come to check out the Local Food Trail bike tour participants.*

## Bringing people and food together

*Gord Enns is passionate about the way people interact with food*

BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent  
OSLER, SASK.

On a sunny Saturday in early September, 13 cyclists set out to explore the Local Food Trail near Osler, Sask. Gord Enns, who is executive director of the Saskatoon Food Council and who lives on a farm in the Osler area, organized the tour in conjunction with the town of Osler and the rural municipality of Corman Park.

The four-hour trek took cyclists to five farms: Farmyard Market, Petter Farms, Pine View Farms, Anna's Orchard and

Floating Gardens. They ended their excursion at Enns's home, where they savoured a meal made from food purchased at each of the farms.

Enns sees cycling as a great way to explore local agricultural enterprises. "Biking is so cool," he says. "It gives people a sense of being together." The purpose of the tour was to expose people to—and celebrate—locally grown food. "It turned out to be a really nice way to do that," he adds.

Enns, who is a member of Nutana Park Mennonite Church in Saskatoon, has had a wide range of work experiences related to food. He once worked on a food-security project under Mennonite Central Committee in Zimbabwe; he spent 12 years promoting feedlots for the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture; and he served as director of Heifer International in Canada for over a decade, working on food issues in relation to both international development and First Nations.

In his current position, Enns develops policies related to food use and security. "We wanted to change the policy around where you can garden and we've done that," he says. "People can now plant boulevard gardens." Enns also worked with the city to develop a policy whereby vacant lot owners would be entitled to a tax rebate if they allow people to plant gardens on the lots.

Some of Enns's work relates to food insecurity. It is a reality that some people living in Saskatoon do not have enough to eat. "Most times it's related to a lack of income to cover the basics of life," he says. "People are forced to make tough choices between paying their rent and accessing healthy food."

He is part of a food security action team made up of members of the Saskatoon Food Bank, the Friendship Inn, Chep Good Food and the Saskatoon Health Region. "There's a lot of really good food action in Saskatoon, different agencies doing different things, but they don't necessarily talk to each other," he says. "So that's one of the key roles that I work at, to try to be that connector and know what's happening food-wise."

While he does all of these things as part of his job with the Food Council, they are also a natural expression of his faith. "I would



*Participants check out the produce available for sale on the Local Food Trail.*

PHOTOS COURTESY OF GORD ENNS

say that that's something I've kind of lived out," he says. "Food brings it all together for me. There are a lot of issues you can work on, whether they're environmental, social

or economic, but, to me, everything is represented in food. You can work at issues of social engagement and inclusion using food as a tool. You can work at economic development using food as a tool."

Enns believes the church has a responsibility in this area as well. "I think we have to be more active," he says. "As people with a voice and a vote, we need to think about how we eat. That's just the responsible thing to do." People wanting to think about what they eat might consider being mindful of their food purchases: opting for pastured rather than factory-raised meat, or spending a bit more for locally grown vegetables. It might also include being mindful of what they throw away, or slowing down enough to savour the food they eat.

The goal is not to replace the existing food system, but rather to develop a local food security system parallel to the existing one. Enns says, "The [two systems] are very much complementary and can learn from each other." ❧

Visit [canadianmennonite.org](http://canadianmennonite.org)  
/local-food-trail for more photos.



## Mennonites walk for reconciliation

*Two dozen 'Mennonite Folks' join thousands in support and call to action*

BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent  
VANCOUVER

The 2017 Walk for Reconciliation recognizing First Nations peoples drew an estimated 50,000 people in Vancouver on Sept. 24. Some two-dozen Mennonites from several Lower Mainland congregations walked together under a "Mennonite Folks" sign organized by Garry Janzen, Mennonite Church B.C.'s executive minister.

As an encouragement to join the walk, at least one MC B.C. congregation cancelled regular morning services.

The walk was a call to action, born from the vision of Chief Robert Joseph, ambassador and founder of Reconciliation Canada, to inspire Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to make a shared commitment toward reconciliation and revitalized relationships between the two groups. A statement from Joseph on the Reconciliation Canada webpage ([reconciliationscanada.ca](http://reconciliationscanada.ca)) says, "Our future and the well-being of all our children rests with the kind of relationships we build today."

The two-kilometre walk, a Canada 150+ signature event, was jointly hosted by the City of Vancouver and by Reconciliation Canada, following in the tradition of the 2013 walk that drew 70,000 participants. It began in downtown Vancouver and ended in Strathcona Park with a community festival. Indigenous speakers included Perry Bellegarde, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, who gave the keynote address, and Joseph. Booths, dances and displays by various organizations, as well as a blanket exercise, were included.

Commented participant Stan Olson of

Abbotsford, "I was really encouraged by the many thousands of people who participated in the walk, in support of taking further steps on the journey of reconciliation, in the spirit of 'Namwayut-We are all one.' Will Mennonites embrace the ongoing journey to build new relationships with First Nations people around us, as one way for God's healing and hope to flow through us to the world?" ❧



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# Remembering the 'forgotten people'

*Palestinians tell their stories*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent  
EDMONTON

As a teenager, Ghada Ageel had heated debates with her grandmother at their home in the Khan Younis refugee camp in South Gaza.

"I asked my grandmother many questions: Why didn't you stay in Beit Daras and die there? Why do I have to be a refugee and live this misery?" Her grandmother was forced to flee in 1948, when Israel occupied and destroyed her village.

In 2003, Ageel found herself in the same situation, as Israeli bombs and tanks attacked the camp. The visiting professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Alberta writes in her book *Apartheid in Palestine*: "That night, 55 years after the destruction of Beit Daras, and the military occupation of what remains of historic Palestine, I, the third generation of Palestinian refugees, found myself carrying my son, fleeing to nowhere, and leaving the place that I regarded as home. That night, I repeated the



same scenario that occurred in 1948, when my grandmother carried my dad Abdelaziz and my uncle Jawad . . ."

With a child in her arms, Ageel understood why her grandmother chose to live. Where there is life, there is at least the possibility of hope.

Ageel was in the audience at Lendrum Mennonite Brethren Church in Edmonton on Sept. 28 to hear a presentation by Alex Awad. Born in Jerusalem in 1946, he is a Palestinian Christian, who, along with family, has lived through the occupation and continuing troubles in Israel/Palestine. For 26 years, Awad was a professor at Bethlehem Bible College, served as a missionary and pastor in Palestine, and has authored books about the conflict in the Middle East from a Palestinian peace perspective.

He was brought to Alberta by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Alberta for a series of presentations to tell the stories of Palestine and to speak for peace across the province.

With his prodigious knowledge of Scripture, he spoke clearly about the history and current situation of Israel and Palestine, dispelling what he called common myths. He articulated reasons for the engagement of North Americans in the pursuit of peace between Israel and Palestine. "What happens on the streets of Jerusalem echoes around the world," he said. "If someone gets killed [there], you hear about it. On the positive side, if peace could happen, that too could echo around the world. [We must] embrace every party.



*Ghada Ageel, a visiting professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Alberta, grew up in a refugee camp in Gaza and still has many friends and family trapped there.*

God loves them all. The only thing God does not love is oppression."

One example of oppression, he said, is the situation in Gaza, where more than 1.8 million people, the majority of them women and children, effectively live in squalor in what has been called the world's largest open-air prison, surrounded by walls and guns, unable to travel or transport goods beyond the barriers. He encouraged those in attendance to search a variety of sources, including resolutions passed by the United Nations regarding Palestine and Israel, to read newspapers such as *Haaretz* and the *Al-Monitor*, to pay attention to what their church mission representatives say, and to seek out personal stories from those who have lived the struggle.

During the talkback session after his presentation at Lendrum, Ageel stood. "Thank you for mentioning the forgotten people in Gaza," she said. Fighting back tears, she told the gathering that her mother was still in Gaza, living with cancer, with no access to proper treatment. It is exceedingly difficult for Ageel to visit her, or even to contact friends and family in Gaza. There is rarely phone or Internet connection, as electricity is available only for very short periods each day. Water is also in very short supply.

She told *Canadian Mennonite* afterwards: "Alex Awad's talk is so important. People need to do their bit, to break the silence, and open a small window or hole into the lives of the forgotten people." ▮



*Alex Awad is a Palestinian Christian who now lives in Eugene, Ore. He was a professor at Bethlehem Bible College for 26 years and has been a pastor and missionary.*



## GOD AT WORK IN US

# 'Participation, not performance'

*Brandon Leis looks to involve the community in music*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
WATERLOO, ONT.

**L**ike most musicians and artists, Brandon Leis uses his gifts in many places and in many ways to make a living.

Most recently, he was appointed as the new music director of the Menno Singers, a Waterloo Region choir founded in 1955 by Abner Martin. Besides that, since 2003 he has been the music director at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener and a voice instructor at Wilfrid Laurier University. He also has a private studio of students, consults with congregations about "music problems," and is an avid promoter of "community arts," particularly music.

Community arts is a relatively new field, having been founded in 2003 by Lee Higgins of the United Kingdom. Leis is one of its first practitioners. The goal of community music is to move away from performance to participation, from audience to practitioners.

In stark contrast to artists like classical pianist Glenn Gould and the Beatles, who gave up performing and only recorded, in order to create a perfect piece of music with no interference from the audience, Leis instead invites and encourages participation, even if a person has little or no training.

"The questions are," he says, "'Why do we do music?' 'How do we do music?' and 'What music do we do?'" These are the questions he asks when he is consulting with congregations who find themselves with "music problems." Often the problem is not music at all, but simply the visible outcome of other problems. But by looking at these three questions, congregations can often rethink their purpose and goals.

One of the major issues in community music is power. When trained musicians make room for the untrained, they become vulnerable and their authority is eroded. But, Leis points out, music has belonged to the community through the ages, being made at home, in the community and in places of worship. This is a form of "cultural democracy," he says.

Like many other fields, music is becoming interdisciplinary, returning to its place as part of the community. Music, he says, is the "community expressing itself." Leis sees the joy of people at Stirling Avenue regularly as they get to make music with others.

With regard to the Menno Singers, his first two-year contract will involve "a focus on the role of a choir like the Menno Singers." Leis is talking to other conductors, including Leonard Enns of the DaCapo Singers, Mark Vuorinen of the Grand Philharmonic, and Peter Nikiforuk, recently retired music director of the Menno Singers, and they are thinking about collaborations. Choirs like Laurier's Inshallah singers, a multi-faith, multicultural choir led by Debbie Lou Ludolph, also interest Leis, especially as they practise "paperless music," allowing people who can't read music to learn by rote.

This fits Leis's theory and practice of allowing people to become themselves through community and to be enabled through music. ☿



*Brandon Leis, the new music director for the Menno Singers, in his studio in the music building at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ont. (See back cover for another photo.)*

## FOCUS ON BOOKS &amp; RESOURCES

## BOOK REVIEW

# ‘Where do we go from here?’

*Trouble I've Seen: Changing the Way the Church Views Racism.*

By Drew G.I. Hart. Herald Press, 2016.

REVIEWED BY DAVE ROGALSKY  
EASTERN CANADA CORRESPONDENT

*Nobody knows the trouble I've seen / Nobody knows my sorrow  
/ Nobody knows the trouble I've seen / Nobody knows but Jesus*

**B**y entitling his book with the words of the African-American spiritual, one known by whites through popularization in modern entertainment, Drew Hart puts his thesis front and centre.

Until whites, especially the white church in the United States and the West in general, come to see the racialized society in which we all live from the perspective of those under the system—blacks, Indigenous peoples and other-gendered people—the only one who understands is Jesus. And, according to Hart, Jesus understands, since he was from under the system in imperial-oppressed Palestine and he made a habit of associating with those from the under-classes religiously (Samaritans and lepers), ethically (tax collectors, prostitutes and drunkards), politically (Canaanites or Zealots), sexually (adulteresses), culturally/racially (Galileans), and spiritually/mentally (demonically possessed).

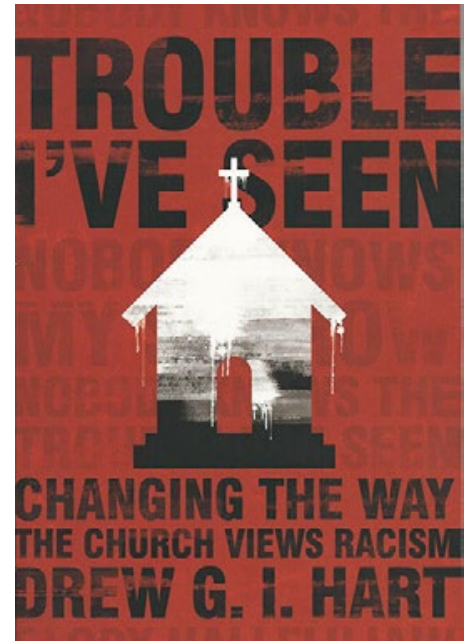
As an African-American Christian, Hart, an assistant professor of theology at Messiah College, a private Christian college founded in 1909 by the Brethren in Christ Church, in Mechanicsburg, Pa., has personally experienced the racialized society and the fact that the over-class of whites do not understand, nor have to understand, his underclass society and oppression.

He turns to an African proverb to help understanding: “Until the story [of the hunt] is told by the lion, the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.” But

Hart does not count on whites inside or outside the church believing him. He writes that whites “take for granted their own ideas and perspectives because they are backed by a majority. From there, they lose sight of the fact that their particular view is just as socialized and contextualized as everyone else’s.”

He draws on studies, others’ accounts, statistics and examples to drive home his repeated point: “My Christian formation has prepared me to see society differently from how the dominant group frequently views it. Those of us who must navigate life on the underside of racial hierarchy require transformed minds and perceptions of society, because each of our lives depends on it. Christians who live in denial of such experiences don’t know that their own transformation is intimately tied to coming alongside and learning from those at the bottom rung of our societal ladder. This is where Jesus has always chosen to be uniquely present. Jesus’ delivering presence has always been especially available outside of the camp, where the crucifixion takes place.”

But Hart does not see white supremacy only in relation to anti-black sentiment. In a recent presentation in Kitchener, Ont., he aligned “Indigenous erasure” with systematic anti-black systems in the U.S. and Canada. He said his checklist about blacks’ lack of economic opportunity, high incarceration rates, distrust by whites, negative stereotypes of blacks



held by both whites and blacks, inequalities in education funding and access to resources, and police brutality, sounds exactly like the situation of Indigenous people in Canada.

In his last chapter, Hart asks, “Where do we go from here?” He suggests “seven Jesus-shaped practices for the antiracist church:

- **SHARE LIFE** together.
- **PRACTISE SOLIDARITY** in the struggle.
- **SEE THE** world from below—joining Jesus in the company of the oppressed.
- **SUBVERT RACIAL** hierarchy in the church.
- **SOAK IN** Scripture and the Spirit for renewed social imagination;
- **SEEK FIRST** the kingdom of God.
- **ENGAGE IN** continuing self-examination, reserving our sharpest criticism for ourselves.

The book would be more useful with an index and questions for discussion associated with each chapter. ❧



**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.

## BOOK REVIEW

# How to avoid 'a tense faith'

*The Sin of Certainty: Why God Desires our Trust More Than our 'Correct' Beliefs.*

By Peter Enns. Harper One, 2016, 240 pages.

REVIEWED BY DEBORAH FROESE  
MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA

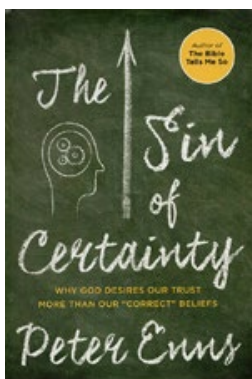
Humans have a long history of elevating knowledge over trust. Consider Adam and Eve. They had God's full attention and companionship—and Eden—but they couldn't resist the off-limits "tree of knowledge." What did that get them? Misery.

That's just one of the insights offered by Peter Enns, professor of Bible at Eastern University in St. David's, Pa., in his new book, *The Sin of Certainty*. He distinguishes between placing faith in God and placing faith in "correct" beliefs or intellectual knowledge, and says that God desires our trust more than our correct beliefs.

Beliefs themselves aren't the problem, he assures us—it's good and right that we continue working out what we believe—but the refusal to deviate from absolutes will ultimately result in a faith crisis.

"Life isn't fair or nice, and sometimes things don't work according to script, what we think should happen, and if we place our faith in the way we think things should be, rather than in God, the very foundation of our faith can be challenged," Enns says in a Church Matters podcast interview about his book.

Enns writes that "when correct thinking is central to faith, we transmit onto God our own distorted mental image of God, with all its personal baggage, hang-ups and deep fears. That is a tense faith, which we cover up with cleverness and arrogance, and which slides easily into anger and hatred toward those who think differently."



His words touch a nerve. The concept of "thinking differently" points directly to the challenges facing the church, and indeed society, today.

Our understanding of the Bible has been challenged throughout history. With easy-to-read and engaging text, *The Sin of Certainty* digs into biblical complexities. Enns encourages

readers to take a closer look at how some "correct" beliefs we have come to know as biblical have been influenced by the external forces of science, history and culture.

Enns draws from the darker books of the Bible to illustrate this timeless struggle. From Solomon's sense of hopelessness to the Psalmist's laments and Job's cries of injustice, it's clear that bad things happen to good people. Yet our biblical forebears continually turned to God, even when it seemed as though God had abandoned them and their certainties. They trusted God enough to cry out as Jesus did: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

In his own faith journey, Enns says that he is learning to distinguish between trusting God and controlling God in his thoughts, worrying less about his own expectations, and learning to see where God is already at work in his life and around him.

He says that releasing the need for certainty shapes how we live. It lets us pursue God rather than rules, and in doing so, casts out fear. Trusting in God rather than correct beliefs, he says, allows

## /// Briefly noted

### On being a peacemaker in a world of violence

In her timely debut book from Herald Press, *Shalom Sistas: Living Wholeheartedly in a Brokenhearted World*, Osheta Moore, a writer and podcaster, sheds light on being a peacemaker in a world of violence, alienation and injustice. When Moore and her husband lost everything to Hurricane Katrina and found themselves relocated to a new city, she made the life-changing decision to become a "seeker of shalom." Assuming herself to already be a peacemaker, Moore took a bold step and threw herself into her Bible and intensively studied the word "peace" for 40 days. *Shalom Sistas* is the story of what happened after Moore asked God to help her make peace with peace. "In the book, you'll see how God used the Hebraic concept of *shalom*—God's dream of wholeness for you and for me—to show me I can be a peacemaker right in my everyday life," says Moore. Moore takes readers through her Shalom Sista Manifesto, 12 guideposts for living wholeheartedly in a broken-hearted world. The manifesto includes points such as "We are beloved," "We will rest," and, "We will choose subversive joy." Readers may race to the end of the book for Moore's Shalom Steps, practical ways people can practise shalom. She also includes a few special recipes in the book, like her famous red beans and rice.

—MennoMedia



us to "cultivate a life of trust that flourishes regardless of how certain we feel." ///

Find *The Sin of Certainty* ([bit.ly/sin-of-certainty](http://bit.ly/sin-of-certainty)) at *CommonWord*, the resource-sharing collaboration of Mennonite Church Canada and Canadian Mennonite University.



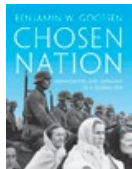
# 2017 Fall list of Books & Resources

## Theology, Spirituality

*Approaching the Divine: Signs and Symbols of the Christian Faith.* Margaret Loewen Reimer. CMU Press, 2017, 96 pages.

This book explores the history and meaning of various Christian holidays, and the symbols and rituals connected with them. Many symbols have ancient roots, but Reimer also includes any Mennonite connections. She also considers the role of art and imagination in expressions of faith.

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



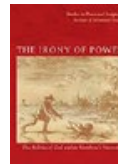
Goossen describes the Mennonite church in Germany in the 19th and early 20th centuries as it was influenced by German unification and the rise of nationalism. He argues that Mennonites also thought of themselves as a "nation," with a defined language and ethnicity. He suggests that the Nazis influenced Mennonites to have a sense of racial purity.

*God's Country: Faith, Hope and the Future of the Rural Church.* Brad Roth. Herald Press, 2017, 224 pages.



With experience as a rural pastor, Roth reflects on what it means to be the church where the terrain is open and the population density is low. He recognizes both the benefits and the challenges facing rural congregations.

*The Irony of Power: The Politics of God within Matthew's Narrative.* Dorothy Jean Weaver. Pickwick Publications, 2017, 300 pages.



Weaver is a long-time professor of New Testament at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va. The essays in this collection explore the irony of how those who appear to hold power in Matthew's Gospel are actually powerless. The book is part of the Studies in the Peace and Scripture series of the Institute of Mennonite Studies.

*Quest for Respect: The Church and Indigenous Spirituality.* Jeff Friesen and Steve Heinrichs, eds. Mennonite Church Canada, 2017, 182 pages.

This special edition of *Intotemak*, a magazine that seeks to nurture Indigenous-settler relationships, is a collection of poems, photographs, artwork and short essays that explore the relationship between the church and Indigenous spirituality. Most articles are by Canadians, but some stories are from the U.S. and other parts of the world.

*Shalom Sistas: Living Wholeheartedly in a Brokenhearted World.* Osheta Moore. Herald Press, 2017, 224 pages.



As a follower of Jesus and a pastor's wife, Osheta Moore reflects on what it means to be a peace-maker in a broken world. Her musings are based on Scripture and daily life. She writes with authenticity and "sass," acknowledg-

ing her vulnerability while striving to be true to her calling.

*Water My Soul: 90 Meditations from an Old Order Mennonite.* Darla Weaver. Herald Press, 2017, 200 pages.



The author of this collection of 90 short devotionals draws most of her inspiration from flowers and gardens, as well as her young children. Divided into 13 weeks, it is designed for one a day and includes short prayers and questions for reflection.

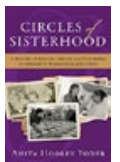
*The Way of Letting Go: One Woman's Walk Toward Forgiveness.* Wilma Derksen. Zondervan, 2017, 234 pages.



Derksen reflects on her journey of grief as her daughter was brutally murdered more than 30 years ago. She concludes that forgiveness is multi-faceted and extends over time; it is an attitude that requires daily attention. This is a powerful story about coping with heartache and the triumph of love over hate.

## History

*Circles of Sisterhood: A History of Mission, Service and Fellowship in Mennonite Women's Organizations.* Anita Hooley Yoder. Herald Press, 2017, 315 pages.



Women's groups in the church not only provided aid to those in need, they were also important in developing women leaders, says Yoder. While sewing circles were predominant in the early years, women's groups have broadened what they do. Yoder considers how these groups can be relevant in the future.

*Love in a Time of Hate: The Story of Magda and André Trocmé and the Village that Said No to the Nazis.* Hanna Schott. Herald Press, 2017, 272 pages.



This book tells the story of a village in France that risked giving asylum to Jewish refugees during the years of the Nazi

## FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

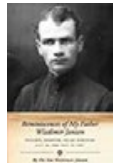
regime, including biographical details of André and Magda Trocmé, the local pastor and his wife. This powerful story is told in an easy-to-read style.

*Peace and War: Mennonite Conscientious Objectors in Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union Before World War II and Other COs in Eastern Europe.* Lawrence Klippenstein. Privately published, 2017, 358 pages.



Klippenstein examines how and why Mennonites moved to southern Russia, and their experiences through changes in government policy and through various wars, including the Crimean War and the First World War. His writing is very accessible and includes significant diary excerpts translated into English. Available by email to lawklippenstein@shaw.ca.

*Reminiscences of my Father Wladimir Janzen: Teacher, Minister, Gulag Survivor.* Waldemar Janzen. Privately published, 2017, 140 pages.



Waldemar Janzen tells his father's story, based primarily on correspondence received between 1936 and 1957. He was a man who maintained his integrity and faithfulness in spite of great oppression.

*Saving Germany: North American Protestants and Christian Mission to West Germany, 1945-1974.* James C. Enns. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017, 328 pages.



Among the North American mission and service agencies working in post-war Germany were Mennonite Central Committee, Youth for Christ, Janz Ministries and Billy Graham. Although Enns points out that some of these missionaries were anti-communist, connecting salvation in Christ with western democracy, he argues that Germany was profoundly influenced by the work of these Protestant groups.

### Other books

*Anything But Simple: My Life as a Mennonite.* Lucinda J. Miller. Herald Press, 2017, 195 pages.



Raised in a Conservative Mennonite community in Minnesota, Miller describes her struggles to feel comfortable within the entrenched expectations of her church community. This is part of the Plainspoken series that involves real-life stories of the Amish and Mennonites.

*The Essential Amish Cookbook: Everyday Recipes from Farm and Pantry.* Lovina Eicher. Herald Press, 2017, 320 pages.



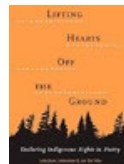
This cookbook of authentic Amish recipes has lots of colour photos, as well as photos from Amish life. Eicher herself is Amish and writes a syndicated column called "Lovina's Amish Kitchen."

*Grandmother, Laughing.* Armin Wiebe. Turnstone Press, 2017, 280 pages.



Wiebe's fifth novel is the story form of the stage play *The Moonlight Sonata of Beethoven Blatz*. Like the other novels set in Gutenthal, this one also uses occasional Low German words and some literal English translations of Low German expressions.

*Lifting Hearts Off the Ground: Declaring Indigenous Rights in Poetry.* Lyla June Johnston and Joy DeVito. Mennonite Church Canada, 2017.



Following each of the 46 articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are short poems, one by an Indigenous writer, the other not. The preface is written by Steve Heinrichs.

*Nine Mennonite Stories.* David Bergen, ed. Mennonite Literary Society, Winnipeg, 2017, 172 pages.



This collection is Issue 41 of *Rhubarb* magazine. It includes stories by David Bergen, Sandra Birdsell, Lois Braun, Dora Dueck, David Elias, Carrie Snyder, Miriam Toews, Armin Wiebe and Rudy Wiebe.

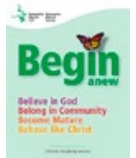
Copies can be ordered online at rhubarb-mag.com.

*Under Siberian Skies.* David Funk. Privately published, 2017, 246 pages.

This novel, set in southeast Siberia in the 1920s and '30s, is based on historical fact. Because conditions in the Soviet Union under Stalin are so difficult, the Jacob Enns family decides to try to escape. Available through Amazon or the Mennonite Heritage Museum in Abbotsford, B.C.

### Resources

*Begin Anew: Christian Discipleship Seminars.* Palmer Becker. Mennonite Church Canada.



This 16-session series, designed to be used by an entire congregation, takes a fresh look at the meaning of discipleship. It includes a variety of resources, including an online video series, a leader's guide, participant's guide and daily meditations. Resources are available for purchase or download from CommonWord. The participant's guide is also available in Spanish.

*Live Your Call: Embracing God's Mission.* Anna Liechty Sawatzky. MennoMedia, 2017, 91 pages.



This Bible study guide is part of the Mennonite Women's Bible study series produced annually by Mennonite Women Canada and Mennonite Women U.S.A. Its 12 sessions are designed for women's groups or individual study.

*Pathways for Peace and Justice in Palestine and Israel: A Congregational Study.* Mennonite Church Canada.

This four-session PowerPoint and script comes with a discussion guide and other suggested resources. It was put together by the Palestine and Israel Working Group in response to the resolution passed at the MC Canada assembly in Saskatoon in 2016. It is available from CommonWord as an online download.

*Upside Down Living: Sharing Faith Stories.*

## FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

April Yamasaki. Herald Press, 2017.  
*Upside Down Living: Violence*. Fred Kauffman. Herald Press, 2017.

These are the last two of a six-part Bible study series and are intended to be used in small groups or adult Sunday school classes.

—Compiled by Barb Draper, Books & Resources Editor

Many of the featured titles on the book list are available for purchase or to borrow from CommonWord Book Store and Resource Centre in Winnipeg. For more information,

visit [commonword.ca](http://commonword.ca), or call 204-594-0527 or 1-877-846-1593.

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### VIEWPOINT

# Why we change hymn texts

KATIE GRABER

MENNONITE WORSHIP AND SONG COMMITTEE

Should hymns be sung in their original form or should they be updated? This is a more complicated question than it may seem. Take “Be Thou My Vision,” for instance. *Hymnal Companion* discusses three versions of this song: the Old Irish poem from the eighth century, a 1905 English translation, and a later “versified” or metered version. If someone wanted to be true to the original, which version would they believe we ought to sing? Or, if someone wanted to update the language, could they do so without losing the stately poetry?

The Mennonite Worship and Song Committee, working under the name Resonate Team, includes a text subcommittee (made up of myself, Tom Harder and editor Adam Tice) that reviews new works and studies each text that will move from the current hymnals into the future collection. Our purpose statement begins, “In selecting and revising congregational songs and worship resources, we seek to explore the breadth and depth of our faith. In Scripture, tradition and experience, we encounter God in many ways. The language we use can clarify and expand our faith or limit our vision.”

In “Be Thou My Vision”—as with any translation—we seek to balance the meaning of the original with a poetic and singable

English rendering.

Further complicating the question, “Which original version?” is the fact that many older English texts have a long history of alteration. For example, the line “Hark! the herald angels sing” replaced Charles Wesley’s original “Hark how all the *welkin* rings” in 1753. *Hymnal Companion* tells us that “*welkin* is an Old English word for ‘vault of heaven,’” but since most singers are unfamiliar with this word it would be impractical to return to the original. Language changes over time, and the text subcommittee seeks to balance elegant and traditional with comprehensible and relatable.

We have had discussions about many questions already, from the minute to the weighty: Should this be a semicolon or a dash? Should this be O or Oh? Is this reference to humans inclusive or limiting? Does this word used for God fit the rest of the song’s biblical depictions of Creator, Christ, I/Emmanuel, Sophia or other image? Is “Lord” being used as a translation of the Hebrew title “Adonai,” or is it serving as a stand-in for the name of God?

In many cases, we make no changes; sometimes we modify words or phrases, and occasionally we make larger amendments,

such as adding a lovely but forgotten verse. We know there will be disagreements about our decisions. In fact, many of us on the committee have already heard conflicting suggestions about changes we ought—or ought not—make.

The committee that assembled *Hymnal: A Worship Book* (a partnership between Mennonites and the Church of the Brethren) made numerous textual updates, many of which have become comfortable and beloved. The changes it made toward gender inclusivity matched those that have become commonplace in other writing, so much so that now many publishers have policies requiring gender-neutral language when possible.

Another kind of alteration was a line in “Have Thine Own Way, Lord” changed from “whiter than snow” to “wash me just now.” *Hymnal Companion* explains, “Though the cleansing can be construed as referring to the soul, it is one more example of how purity in North American Anglo culture has often been equated with whiteness, to the detriment of people of colour.”

The current text subcommittee likewise takes seriously our job of evaluating texts. We do not make changes lightly and we try not to make them excessively. While we hope that most alterations we do make will be so smooth as to be almost undetectable, we also hope that some changes will be an opportunity to re-experience a hymn. Sometimes we sing without thinking; perhaps encountering something new in the midst of a familiar favourite can allow us to experience a cherished song in a fresh way. ❧

For more about Resonate Team and its work toward developing a new worship and song collection, visit [MennoMedia.org/Resonate](http://MennoMedia.org/Resonate).



## /// Briefly noted

### Resonate now one year into its work

Members of the Mennonite Worship and Song Committee are now one year into their work towards a new hymnal. At a recent meeting in Michigan, the committee processed more than 220 songs and reflected on the past year of learning and working together. The 13-member volunteer committee, working under the name Resonate Team, is discerning content for the 2020 release of a suite of new worship and music materials to be published by MennoMedia in cooperation with Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A. Amy Gingerich, editorial director of MennoMedia, brought a report about the various products that will be included in the new worship and song collection:

- **THE NEW** pew edition hymnal is projected to be about 30 percent larger than the current *Hymnal: A Worship Book*. In addition to music, great care is being given to worship resources for the future church.
- **THE SAME** content that is in the pew edition will also be available to congregations in the form of a projection edition. MennoMedia plans to have PDF and PowerPoint versions of the songs available in the projection edition.
- **A SEPARATE** volume of expanded worship resources is being planned for pastors and worship leaders.
- **THE COMMITTEE** is pursuing various options for a keyboard accompaniment edition, and expects to offer increased musical accompaniments.
- **MENNO MEDIA** will contract to produce an app edition offering access to several products surrounding the worship and song collection. While the app itself will be free, customers must purchase the hymnal, the worship resources edition, or the accompaniment edition within the app to enjoy the content.

—MennoMedia



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

### Anti-racism is a 'lifelong pursuit'

Author Drew Hart challenges the community at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate to face the harsh realities of racism. [canadianmennonite.org/hart-antiracism](http://canadianmennonite.org/hart-antiracism)



### Supporting alternate rites of passage for African girls

An MCC partner in Tanzania helps to educate and empower young women to choose against female circumcision.

[canadianmennonite.org/rites-passage-girls](http://canadianmennonite.org/rites-passage-girls)



### Quito Mennonites pray and work for peace

The Quito Mennonite Church offers a ministry to support and encourage refugees in their midst.

[canadianmennonite.org/quito-mennonites-peace](http://canadianmennonite.org/quito-mennonites-peace)



### Mennonite Historical Bulletin now online

A source of historical records spanning 73 volumes is now online, as part of the Digital Mennonite Periodicals project.

[canadianmennonite.org/mennonite-historical-bulletin](http://canadianmennonite.org/mennonite-historical-bulletin)



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## FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

### Staff change

#### MennoMedia executive director plans to resign

• **RUSS EANES** has announced his intention to resign as executive director of MennoMedia and its book imprint Herald Press, effective early 2018. Eanes was named executive director to lead MennoMedia in 2011, when the new organization was formed from a merger of Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN) and Third Way Media, and set up its headquarters in Harrisonburg. Under Eanes's leadership, the



organization expanded and revitalized its Herald Press book imprint, which saw a 20 percent increase in sales for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2017. In recent years, the organization has co-published a new children's Sunday school curriculum called "Shine: Living in God's light." A highlight of that ongoing curriculum, co-published with Brethren Press, has been the successful launch of *Shine On: A Story Bible*. Last year, MennoMedia began work on a new worship and song collection, scheduled to be published in 2020. He is currently president of the Protestant Church-Owned Publishers Association.  
—MennoMedia

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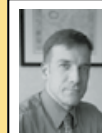


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## FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

# Writing that ‘really, really works’

Author Justin Rempel talks about five of his favourite books

BY AARON EPP  
Young Voices Editor

Justin Rempel has been making up stories ever since he learned to write. The animals on his parents’ hobby farm near Gretna, Man., and the stories he heard while attending Sunday school at Blumenort Mennonite Church in Rosetown, Man., were his initial inspiration.

“Very naturally, the first stories that came to me at 6 were an amalgamation of those things,” he says. “All the biblical figures would be swapped out for pigs and sheep and all the things we had on the farm.”

Now 25 and working as a teacher, Rempel will publish his first book next year. Aimed at teenage readers, the novel tells the story of a Métis high-school student who is facing the typical frustrations that come with adolescence, including school, friends and crushes. The teen comes across a magical item that sends him on a series of adventures.

“It’s this magic blend of otherworldly things and the humdrum life of going to school in Winnipeg,” Rempel says. Rebelight, a Winnipeg-based company, is publishing the book.

As he continues to work on the novel, as well as a few other manuscripts he has on the go, *Canadian Mennonite* asked him to talk about some of his favourite books. “The writing voice I’m developing is a product of all these things,” he says. “It’s nowhere near as good as these, but it’s fashioned by them.”

• **LES MISÉRABLES** by Victor Hugo (1862). “It’s a very romantic piece, with eloquent,

flowing language,” he says of the epic French historical novel that tells the story of Jean Valjean, an ex-convict who decides to turn his life around. He adds that much of the novel focusses on the internal life of the characters—the things that are going on in their hearts and minds. “There are a lot of battles going on, but the real action is taking place inside people as they wrestle with moral dilemmas,” he says. “It’s a terribly exciting novel.”

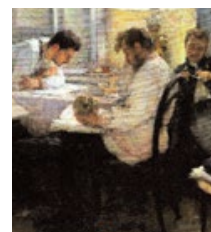
• **THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV** by Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1880). The famous 19th-century Russian novel revolves around the murder of Fyodor Karamazov, the father of the titular brothers. “It explained to me, in a way nothing else had, this struggle between grace and justice,” he says. “It explores [that] through some pretty intense family relationships . . . you get this wonderful clash of personalities and thinking patterns.” Part of the novel’s appeal, he adds, is the way Dostoyevsky creates fully-expressed characters, each with their own distinct personality. “For one mind to do that is really, really remarkable.”

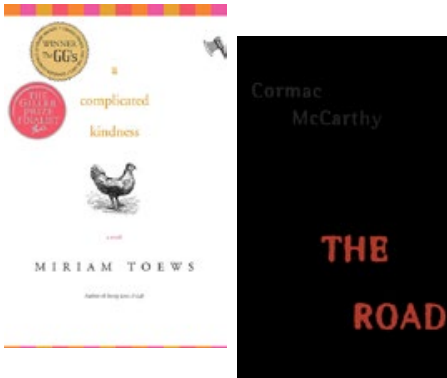
• **EVERYTHING THAT RISES MUST CONVERGE** by Flannery O’Connor (1965). He points to “Revelation,” which is found in this collection, as his favourite short story by O’Connor. “It’s about a hard-headed woman who . . . discovers God’s vision of salvation is broader than she thought it was,” he says. O’Connor was a Southern Gothic writer whose work reflected her  
(Continued on page 36)



PHOTO BY AARON EPP

Winnipeg teacher Justin Rempel is publishing his first book next year.





(Continued from page 35)

Catholic faith. “What O’Connor does for me is expose the places where I am in need of grace, the places where I have been a hypocrite or I have been selfish in the way I have viewed or treated others,” he says.

• *A COMPLICATED KINDNESS* by Miriam Toews (2004). “A very important book to me and a favourite of mine,” he says of Toews’ novel that won the Governor General’s Award for English Fiction. “It’s a story about growing up in a Mennonite community, and the frustrations of being young and rebellious in the Mennonite world of southern Manitoba. . . . It resonated so closely with what I have thought

in the past, and many things I still think. A beautiful, heartbreaking book.”

• *THE ROAD* by Cormac McCarthy (2006). This Pulitzer Prize-winning novel tells the story of a man and his son as they journey through a post-apocalyptic landscape. “It’s very, very minimalist,” he says. “It strips all excess away, and you’re just left with the relationship between two people, and it feels like the most essential thing you could read. You’re just looking at survival, and what bonds people together, and why people care for each other.” The prose, he adds, is absolutely poetic. “It’s this incredible juxtaposition: the setting is harsh and the language is beautiful. It really, really works.” ❧

## From Mexican Quaker to Canadian Mennonite

*Winnipeg pastor Andrea De Avila traces her faith journey and reflects on her ministry*

BY AARON EPP  
Young Voices Editor



PHOTO BY AARON EPP

*Andrea De Avila enjoys her role as associate pastor of Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.*

Ask Andrea De Avila when she first wanted to become a pastor and her answer is simple: “I didn’t.”

While studying at Hesston College in Kansas, and Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg, Va., De Avila became involved with Mennonite Church U.S.A. As part of her biblical studies at EMU, she participated in the Ministry Inquiry Program, which allows young adults to explore pastoral ministry. At the same time, she enjoyed attending MC U.S.A. conventions, and had a hand in organizing the 2013 gathering in Phoenix, Ariz.

“All of that just kept pushing me into ministry,” she says. Today she serves as the associate pastor of Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

The 26-year-old was born and raised in Ciudad Victoria, the capital city of Tamaulipas, a state in northwestern Mexico. Growing up a fifth-generation Quaker in a country that is predominantly



Catholic made for an interesting upbringing. As a result, she grew up with a strong belief in pacifism.

When her family moved to Matamoros, a city across the border from Brownsville, Texas, that belief was tested. While waiting outside to meet a friend one evening, De Avila encountered a group of drug-cartel members driving by in a white Cadillac Escalade. They wore ski masks and dangled their assault rifles out the windows. The cartel members were being obnoxious and saying things to De Avila.

“I can still feel the anxiety of wondering, what if they get out of the car?” she recalls. “It wasn’t so much wondering what if they shoot at us, but wondering if they get out

of the car, what am I going to do?"

The men drove away without incident, but it was an experience that forced her to think about how she might actually respond when confronted with violence.

Growing up, De Avila learned about Quaker history and beliefs from her paternal grandfather, who was her Sunday school teacher. She also learned from her paternal grandmother, who would tell her about travelling to places like Japan and Kenya as a result of Quaker gatherings.

One of the formative experiences in De Avila's faith formation was participating in a Quaker Youth Pilgrimage when she was 17. She was one of 20 young Quakers from around the world who spent a month touring the United Kingdom. "All the stories my grandma would tell me about Quakers

and her husband Nate moved to Iowa City, Iowa, where he earned a master's degree in choral music education. For their last six months in Iowa, the couple co-pastored a small Methodist congregation.

When Nate finished his degree, the couple moved to Winnipeg. She began working at Sargent Avenue in January 2016. She balances the job with studies at Canadian Mennonite University's Graduate School of Theology and Ministry.

While being a pastor isn't something she necessarily sought out or imagined for herself, she has felt called to be at Sargent Avenue and is happy serving there. Winnipeg—some 3,200 kilometres from where she grew up—has become home.

Meeting one-on-one with the youth at Sargent Avenue is one of the things she

*While being a pastor isn't something that she necessarily sought out or imagined for herself, she has felt called to be at Sargent Avenue and is happy serving there.*

that believed differently [from us], that's where I got to experience that," she says.

She experienced her first silent meeting on the trip, and others in the group challenged her theology. She recalls some of the participants being vegan because of their beliefs about creation and care for the Earth, something that was foreign to a girl from northern Mexico who was used to eating meat. "That was incredibly eye-opening," she says of the trip. "It was hard, but . . . I grew a lot during that time."

When her family moved to Matamoros, there was no Quaker church in the city. Her father saw a Mennonite church one day and began researching the Mennonite faith. The emphasis on following the teachings of Jesus Christ and the commitment to pacifism resonated with him, so the family checked out the church. "We visited this Mennonite church," she says, "and just stuck with it."

After high school, De Avila was planning to study psychology at a university in Tamaulipas, with the hope of becoming a counsellor. When a family friend suggested she study at Hesston, she enrolled there instead.

When she finished her degree in psychology and biblical studies at EMU, she

most enjoys about her work. "Hearing the things they're thinking about, what they're struggling with, how they care for each other, how they are trying to figure out relationships—that's my favourite part," she says.

She also enjoys working with Sargent Avenue's other two pastors, and she appreciates the people who make up the congregation. "We have no family here, we didn't know anybody, and now it just feels like we're part of the community," she says. "That has been a gift." ❧



*Participating in a Quaker youth pilgrimage to the U.K. was a formative experience for Andrea De Avila.*



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANDREA DE AVILA

*Andrea De Avila, second from left, celebrates Christmas in 2013 with, from left to right, her sister Isabela, mother Norma, father Rodrigo, sister Laura and brother Rodrigo.*



*Andrea De Avila is pictured at her graduation from Eastern Mennonite University. To the left are her grandparents, Ana Victoria Aguilera Martinez and Juan Manuel De Avila Perez. To the right are family friends Nancy Peachy Bontrager and Marion Bontrager.*



*Andrea De Avila is pictured at the Forks in Winnipeg with her husband Nate and their friend Carina Contreras.*

## Calendar

### British Columbia

**Nov. 12:** Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. fall fundraiser, A Legacy: The Mennonite Conscientious Objectors, featuring "The Last Objectors" film by Conrad Stoesz, at King Road MB Church, Abbotsford, at 3 p.m. Fasma to follow. For more information, visit mhsbc.com.

**Nov. 17:** Senior youth Impact retreat at Camp Squeah.

**Nov. 19:** Symphony of Hymns II fundraiser to benefit MC B.C.; featuring Calvin Dyck, violin, and Michael Berg, tenor; at Level Ground Mennonite Church, Abbotsford; at 3 p.m.

**Nov. 20-25:** Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. annual Christmas market at the Mennonite Heritage Museum, Abbotsford. Visit mennonitemuseum.org for more information.

**Nov. 23:** Columbia Bible College view day.

**Dec. 9,10:** Advent Vespers with Abendmusik Choir: (9) at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford;

(10) at St. Philip's Anglican Church, Vancouver. Both services at 7:30 p.m. In support of the Menno Simons Centre.

### Alberta

**Nov. 10-12:** Let's Talk About Conflicting Loyalties event, at Trinity Mennonite Church, DeWinton. Keynote speaker: Gordon Zerbe of CMU. Topics: patriotism, justice, pacifism, active peacemaking. For more information, call the church at 403-256-7157.

**Nov. 25:** Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta conference, Tapestry of Two Uprooted Cultures: Japanese and Mennonites in Southern Alberta, featuring authors Joy Kogawa and Rudy Wiebe, followed by cultural dancing, music and food; at 1 p.m. Call the historical society at 403-250-1121 by Nov. 16 to register.

### Saskatchewan

**Nov. 11:** Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan hosts a peace event at Bethany Manor, Saskatoon, at 2 p.m. Walter Klaassen will tell three short

peace stories followed by two short films on conscientious objectors.

**Nov. 18:** Mega Menno youth event at Osler Mennonite, at 7 p.m.

### Manitoba

**Until Nov. 18:** Colourful Faith exhibit by Segun Olude and Gibril Bangura, at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery.

**Nov. 9-11:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate senior-high drama, "Radium Girls," at the Gas Station Arts Centre, Winnipeg.

**Nov. 21:** Evening of the Arts, at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

**Nov. 27:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate annual general meeting, at 7 p.m.

**Dec. 2:** Ready my Heart: Preparing for Advent retreat, in Winnipeg, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Learn focal practices to use in the season of Advent and make Advent wreaths. For more information, or to register, visit butterflyjourneys.webs.com.

**Dec. 4:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Christmas concert, at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

### Ontario

**Oct. 29:** Conrad Grebel University College installs its eighth president, Marcus Shantz, in the University of Waterloo's Hagey Hall, at 2 p.m. Reception to follow at Grebel.

**Oct. 29:** Pax Christi Chorale presents Romantic Masters, at Grace Church on-the-Hill, Toronto, at 3 p.m.; featuring works by Bruckner, Brahms and Beethoven.

**Nov. 4:** Menno Singers presents Come Evening's Rest: Evening, Eternity and Time, its first concert with new artistic director Brandon Leis, at Rockway Mennonite Church, Kitchener, at 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit mennosingers.com.

**Nov. 11:** MCC Peace Conference, at Cornerstone Christian Community Church, Markham, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Focus: MCC's Cry for Home advocacy campaign on Palestine and Israel.

**Nov. 17-18:** Spirit of Christmas celebration at Nairn Mennonite Church, Ailsa Craig, featuring homemade treats and crafts by local

talent and Ten Thousand Villages, plus music of the season. Canned goods welcomed for the local food bank.

**Nov. 17:** Spirituality and Aging Seminar: The Need for a Spiritual Revolution in Residential Care, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. For more information, email Rebecca.gibbins@uwaterloo.ca.

**Nov. 18:** Fairview Mennonite Home in Cambridge presents its annual handicraft sale, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; includes decorations, gifts, sweet shop, wreaths, knitting, woodworking; refreshments in the tea room.

**Nov. 18:** Nithview Christmas Bazaar, in New Hamburg, featuring a bake sale, silent auction and community vendors, from 2 to 4 p.m.

**Nov. 18,19:** Soli Deo Gloria Singers present their fall concert, To God Alone be the Glory; (18) at UMEI, Leamington, at 7:30 p.m.; (19) at Leamington United Mennonite, at 3 p.m. For more information, call 519-326-7448.

**Nov. 25:** MennoHomes annual general meeting and Inshallah ensemble concert, at Rockway Mennonite Church, Kitchener, at 7 p.m. For more information, visit mennohomes.com.

**Nov. 26:** Fifth annual Welcome Advent event at Detweiler Meeting House, Roseville, at 2:30 p.m. Featuring Lifted Voices. For more information, call Sam Steiner at 519-884-1040.

**Dec. 3:** Menno Singers presents Come Emmanuel with Menno Youth Singers

## Classifieds

### Employment Opportunities

BLUFFTON UNIVERSITY invites applications for the following full-time, tenure-track faculty positions beginning fall semester 2018. Choral Music/Director of Choral Activities: Doctorate preferred (ABD considered) in choral conducting. Social Work: MSW required (PhD or ABD preferred). Review of applications for these positions begins December 1. For full position description and Equal Opportunity Employer statement visit [www.bluffton.edu/employment](http://www.bluffton.edu/employment). EOE.

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and Inter-Mennonite Children's Choir, at St. John's Lutheran Church, Waterloo, at 3 p.m. For more information, visit [mennosingers.com](http://mennosingers.com).

**Dec. 17:** Menno Singers presents Singalong Messiah, at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m. For more

information, visit [mennosingers.com](http://mennosingers.com). **Dec. 15-17:** Listowel Mennonite Church presents An Advent Journey Marketplace: (15 and 16) from 7 to 9 p.m.; (17) from 2 to 4 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. For more information, call 519-291-2350.



**Position Overview**

The Senior Development Officer (SDO) reports to the Senior Director, and is a key contributor to the ongoing fundraising success for MEDA, nurturing both new and existing relationships with high capacity donors and working to explore new ways to intersect their philanthropic goals with ways that meet the support goals of the work of MEDA.

The role will work within the landscape of Western Canada, with a focus on Vancouver, BC and vicinity and actively travelling throughout the Western Region and internationally as needed as well. The SDO will also work to implement a cultivation and solicitation plan for individual major gift prospects. The successful SDO will have the satisfaction of helping donors fulfill their faith, purpose and passions through their investing with MEDA, and to make a lasting positive change in our world.

**Candidate Profile**

- Minimum five years demonstrated experience in not-for-profit fundraising.
- Accreditation in a nationally recognized fundraising education (or working towards accreditation).
- Highly motivated, self-starter, achieving results with minimal supervision.
- Knowledge and skills in business principles with emphasis on marketing/sales.
- Excellent and proven interpersonal skills in relationship building, active listening, communicating, negotiation and leadership.
- Skills to work with tools such as multi-media presentations, the entire Microsoft Office Suite, including SharePoint, and donor management systems (Raiser's Edge).
- Understanding of the Moves Management system for cultivating gifts and investment funds.
- Knowledge and understanding of MEDA's constituency (Mennonite, Anabaptist and Christian business and professionals).
- Appreciation and support of MEDA's faith, values and goals.

**How To Apply**

Our online application will allow you to apply to this role as a complete candidate –not just a resume. The application will assess your qualifications, personality traits and culture fit, and should take about 10–15 minutes to complete. You can get a copy of your personality assessment when you are done by logging into the tool at

[bit.ly/SDO-MEDA](http://bit.ly/SDO-MEDA)

To ensure timely publication of upcoming events, please send Calendar announcements eight weeks in advance of the event date by e-mail to [calendar@](mailto:calendar@canadianmennonite.org)

[canadianmennonite.org](http://canadianmennonite.org). For more Calendar listings online, visit [canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar](http://canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar).



**JDC.ca Inc.**

**Employment opportunity**  
**Senior Network Engineer**

We have an immediate opening for a Senior Network Engineer.

The ideal candidate will have mature experience in the Windows Server 2008-2016 environment with excellent troubleshooting skills and a deep understanding of related network infrastructure including routers, switches, cabling, patch panels, access points, POS, workstations, printers and mobile devices.

We are an IT solutions provider located in Leamington, Ontario. We provide network consulting, design, implementation, monitoring and troubleshooting services to a wide range of organizations from SMB to Enterprise. Leamington is located in SW Ontario. Local housing costs make it an attractive move from the big city.

Please email your resume to: [fiona@jdc.ca](mailto:fiona@jdc.ca) or call **519-324-0090 x101** to discuss this opportunity.

Employment opportunity

Church Leadership Minister

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada invites applications for Church Leadership Minister (formerly Area Church Minister). The Church Leadership Minister will be a leader of leaders, who oversees the credentialing, formation, and resourcing of pastors for effective missional leadership in MCEC congregations.

The applicant for this full-time position will be an excellent communicator and team builder. He/she will work with the senior staff team to realize MCEC's mission of extending the peace of Jesus Christ.

Applicants will have previous pastoral experience, a commitment to Anabaptist theology, and a familiarity with Mennonite denominational polity. Ordination and post-graduate theological training are required. Preferred start date is flexible. Resumé and current MLI are due by October 30, 2017.

For more information, a job description, or to submit an application contact:  
 Brent Charette  
 MCEC Operations and Church Engagement Minister  
 Phone: 1-855-476-2500 Ext. 709  
 E-mail: [bcharette@mcec.ca](mailto:bcharette@mcec.ca)  
 Web: [www.mcec.ca](http://www.mcec.ca)

**Mennonite Church Eastern Canada**

God at Work in the Worlds of Art and Music

# Snapshot



CANADIAN MENNONITE PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

*Brandon Leis, the new music director for the Menno Singers, holds up a piece of art he created. The church, founded on sacred music and filled with it, exudes music through the cross on the steeple. Or is it receiving heavenly inspiration through the cross and being filled with spiritual music? Or maybe both. Only visible when held up to the light are the Alpha and Omega, God's beginning and end. The piece hangs over his desk—and coffee maker—in his studio in the music building at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ont. (See story inside on page 25.)*