

CANADIAN MENNONITE

February 26, 2018

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aim
at
summer
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Beating hearts all year round

KIRSTEN HAMM-EPP

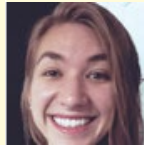
SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

Over the past few months I have had the privilege of seeing a whole new side of camps, and this experience has only confirmed and strengthened my belief in the importance of a camp ministry for the broader church.

Having been a camper, counsellor, Bible leader and kitchen volunteer, I thought there wasn't much more I could learn about camp, but taking on the Shekinah Retreat Centre's executive director role for an interim period has opened my eyes to the impact of camp even more.

Camp is transformational. There's no other way to say it. Camp challenges you, camp builds you up, camp pushes you out of your comfort zone and camp offers you a place where it's okay to be yourself. And all of this in a natural environment that puts you in the heart of the relationship between creation and Creator. And these statements don't just apply to campers and camp staff. I'm willing to admit my own ignorance when I say that I had no idea how busy camps are all year round, and how much they can be a place of transformation outside of the summer camp season.

A quick look at some numbers—based on an equal amount of research and guessing—would suggest that outside of seasonal camp staff, there are more than 400 people who work or serve at Mennonite camps in Canada year-round. That's 400 staff, board members and



community volunteers who are providing a ministry and doing the work of the church on a regular basis, which is a pretty incredible number when you consider that Mennonite Church Canada currently lists 225 congregations that are members through their regional bodies.

I think we could all say that we know camps have an impact on the broader Mennonite church through providing physical spaces/places for people to come to encounter God, and through what those people walk away with and can then share with others. And if you're anything like me, when you think about that impact, it's usually limited to what takes place in July and August. But it's funny how a change in perspective can lead to seeing something in a whole new light.

At Shekinah staff and board meetings, I have been struck by the sense of call that people have, and how that call can impact even the smallest thing. Recently, a staff member expressed anxiety about preparing meals for an upcoming rental group, but when I offered help with the grocery order, she said, "Oh no, that part I'm fine with. I just want to make sure they have a great Shekinah experience and want to come back." She cared just as much about this group's experience as a summer camper's, and knew that food was an important part of that experience. And this is just one of many examples I could list, to say nothing of the countless volunteer hours board members put in to make sure staff are supported and have

the help they need.

And this has been my favourite part of my time at Shekinah: to bear witness to the good work that people are doing for camps, and to play my very small part. While summer camping programs are at the heart of the ministry camps provide, that heart beats all year round in this group of staff, board members and community volunteers. It beats in the church, where even the grocery orders are prepared with love!

Kirsten Hamm-Epp is serving as the executive director of the Shekinah Retreat Centre until the end of March, when she will return to her work as one of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan's regional church ministers.

Mennonite camps and the Canada Summer Jobs Program

Recently, Mennonite camps faced a challenge as they applied for government funding through the Canada Summer Jobs Program. A change in the process now requires applicants to attest that the organizations' core mandate respects reproductive rights, which includes access to abortion, among other rights.

CM has been in touch with camps that relate to Mennonite Church Canada, to see how this requirement affects their ministries. Some have applied for the funding, without the attestation, and have included a written statement expressing concern that this requirement threatens freedom of religion and conscience. Their staffs and boards are having conversations, and are getting advice from the Canadian Council of Christian Charities. Loss of this funding could affect the hiring of staff for the upcoming season.

As this issue goes to press, we have no information on the status of these applications.

ABOUT THE COVER:

A camper at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp 'takes aim at summer.' Our Focus on Camping section begins on page 20.

PHOTO: ANNA KUEPFER, HIDDEN ACRES MENNONITE CAMP

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

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'Alas, unity seems to be eluding us these days, especially with respect to gender identity and sexuality,' writes **THOMAS R. YODER NEUFELD** in our feature article, but he wonders aloud if 'the mess we're in [might] quite possibly be the result of the Spirit at work.' **PIETER NIEMEYER**, who self-identifies as an LGBTQ person, responds in 'We are the body together,' saying, 'Yes, we are chained together, and the hurting needs to stop.'

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Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press





GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH FEATURE

Unity of the Spirit

A perfectly messy peace

BY THOMAS R. YODER NEUFELD

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

*You need such suffering, hopeful
patience not for walking with
those you like or agree with, but
with those who strain the chain
of peace to the breaking point.*

Ephesians begins by blessing God for revealing the great mystery, namely, to “gather up all things in Christ” (1:10). Ephesians 2:11-22 then celebrates Christ’s making peace between strangers and enemies, breaking down walls of hostility through giving his life on the cross, thereby creating a “new human.” Fittingly, the exhortation to recipients of that grace begins in Ephesians 4:1-3 with a call to “walk in a way that is worthy of your calling” which means to spare no effort “to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Alas, unity seems to be eluding us these days, especially with respect to gender identity and sexuality. And our efforts to address our differences are often anything but peaceful. Unity and peace seem possible only if those we disagree with are gone, or at least are silenced.

Might the mess we’re in quite possibly be the result of the Spirit at work?

Let me explain: Ephesians 4:3 makes clear that unity is to be maintained. It exists already, created by the Spirit. Stated simply, unity is the premise—the precondition—for addressing what threatens to tear us apart. It is not the result of our successfully having done so.

Why is this unity such a messy affair? For one, God “gathers up all things in Christ,” including the hostility and estrangement that can mark human life. Humanity is being swept up into the One who is “our Peace,” transforming and recreating us into a “new human” at peace with each other and with God. That’s God’s peace-making project, and the church is Ground Zero. Then, in 2:18, “we both”—we and those from whom we have been estranged—are



brought into the presence of our divine parent “through one Spirit.”

“Spirit” translates *pneuma*, which can be rendered equally as “breath” or “wind.” The Creator gives “breath” to the “new human” (think Ezekiel 37). The “unity of the Spirit” is strangers and enemies breathing together as one body (Ephesians 2:16; 4:4).

“Wind,” on the other hand, “blows where it wills,” as do those who are “born of the wind/spirit” (John 3:8). The peace brought about by the Spirit is not the calm after the storm; it is God’s life-giving storm that blows down walls and breaks barriers, whooshing strangers and enemies together into God’s home (2:21-22). We should more accurately translate 4:3 as “keeping the unity of the Spirit with the chain of peace.” In this hurricane of grace and creation, you need chains to hold things together.

Does that fit a Mennonite vision of the church?

Historically, “without spot or wrinkle” (Ephesians 5:27) has played a greater role. The emphasis is not on bringing together “all things,” but on separation and holiness, a bride fit for the divine groom. With such a vision of church, schism became already very early in the Anabaptist movement a version of nonconformity to the world, where the “world” was those within the community deemed to be sinful or heretical. This has been dubbed the *Täuferkrankheit*, the Anabaptist disease. No doubt often a consequence of intolerance and struggle for power, schisms have also often resulted from eagerness to be faithful. In such cases, unity can feel like complicity, and peace like a bogus peace (think Jeremiah 6:14).

Not for a moment am I suggesting that

we give up on a church “without spot or wrinkle.” It’s just that when we take that to be the starting point or baseline for what it means to be faithful, we will not be able to keep the unity of a Spirit who will keep bringing together strangers and enemies, along with all that made them such. If spotlessness is a starting point, unity can only ever be the result of agreement, or, when that is not possible, of the removal, distancing from, or departure of those who make agreement impossible.

Ephesians turns it around. Unity is the starting point, and wrinkle-free perfection the end point, possible only once all things have been gathered in, transformed and recreated. Unity is the arena within which the struggle with differences takes place, not the outcome of the struggle. Peace is the chain that keeps us at it, even when it hurts. That is where and how new creation takes place.

The New Testament shows clearly that the church has never been “without spot or wrinkle,” or even close. Moral laxity, ethical snobbishness, cynicism, power struggles and patriarchal privilege all played havoc in the church from the outset. Might this be a picture not only of sin, but also of the Spirit’s success? Is this what the “perfect” church looks like in a still-broken world?

When we read the New Testament with such a notion of perfection in mind, we see it everywhere. The same Jesus who calls people to repent, scandalizes his righteous critics by eating and drinking with sinners and gathering them into his inner circle. As he says to his critics: “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners” (Mark 2:17 paraphrase).

A perfect physician, a perfect hospital,

welcomes illness and brokenness—in order to offer healing. Just so, a perfect church is God’s gathering of hostile, broken and ill humanity. Race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, wealth and theology all bring both their gifts and their divisiveness into the *koinonia* of the church.

The “unity of the Spirit” (Ephesians 4:3) or the “*koinonia of the Spirit*” (Philippians 2:1) is thus by divine design a turbulent unity. Chains are required. You don’t need chains for what wants to stay together, but rather for what strains to break apart. But such is the “perfect peace” in a world of estrangement and hostility that God is gathering up. In Matthew 5:43-48, Jesus equates being “perfect” with loving enemies. Might that include the enemy within the church?

Unity is not an end in itself

The unity of the Spirit is missional and transformative at its heart. It is inseparable from the one who is “our Peace.” We betray it when we refuse to bring stains and wrinkles into the church. We betray it no less when spots and wrinkles go unaddressed, when illness is not treated, when prevention is not counselled, to go back to Jesus’ physician metaphor. We dare not give up on each other—or disengage from each other—so as to keep the peace. Such is a false peace, even if it parades as tolerance. Such is not the unity of the Spirit.

Unity may well be the hardest part of being a faithful church. Given that we are always only the “new human” in the process of birth, constantly challenged by the broken humanity the Spirit keeps adding, we will “walk in a way that is worthy of our calling” only when chained to each other by peace. And what God has chained together, we dare not put asunder.



To walk together in this unity will never be elegant, but it will be graceful, marked by humility, respect, deference, compassion, patience and forbearance, which is nothing other than suffering

each other in love (Ephesians 4:2-3; Philippians 2:1-4). You need such suffering, hopeful patience not for walking with those you like or agree with, but with those who strain the chain of peace

to the breaking point. Paul calls that having the “*mind of Christ*” (Philippians 2:1-11), whose solidarity with humanity took him to the cross. Might “*maintaining the unity of the Spirit*” be taking up our own

VIEWPOINT

‘We are the body together’

PIETER NIEMEYER
SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

*“Peace is the chain that keeps us at it, even when it hurts.”
“If one member hurts, we all hurt.”*

That God holds our unity has long informed my ecclesiology, discipleship and pastoral ministry. I take solace that nothing in my power can manufacture this unity; it is God-given and God-held. The question for all of us—and for me particularly as an LGBTQ person—is how to live into this unity in the face of harm done and hurt received. Like many others, I have discovered that there is no easy way when it regards those with whom I’d rather not be tied to.

I deeply appreciate Tom Yoder Neufeld’s feature article, “Unity of the Spirit: A perfectly messy peace,” wherein he unpacks Scripture with clarity regarding our unity, a unity of God’s peace that has broken down dividing walls and is “the chain that keeps us at it, even when it hurts.”

It’s a compelling vision for being church, one that rightly needs to place the “*without spot or wrinkle*” vision of church towards the other side of the eschaton. However, I wince at the phrase, “even when it hurts.” You see, the “*without spot or wrinkle*” hermeneutic



has wreaked havoc on me and people like me. Based on such hermeneutics, we—as LGBTQ people—have been perceived as being the very spot/wrinkle to be erased. Like other oppressed peoples, we navigate a range of power dynamics that have left us battered and bruised. We are not equal partners in this pain, nor in this unity.

In addressing power dynamics among first-century Christians, Paul exhorts siblings in Christ to “*bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ*” (Galatians 6:2). It is one of 30 such exhortations that remind us siblings to love one another, honour one another, think of one another as better than ourselves, and so on. These “*one another*” exhortations are to be prescriptive of this messy peace that binds us together.

However, my experience has been descriptively different: more being judged than loved, and of being burdened more than having them shared. It’s been more reflective of Jesus’ words in Matthew 23:4 than of Paul’s words in Galatians 6:2. Jesus said of the Sadducees and Pharisees of his day: “*They tie up heavy burdens,*

with rules that are hard to bear and try to force people to obey them, but they are unwilling to help those who struggle under the weight of their rules” (Matthew 23:4). Jesus was addressing abusive interpretative approaches that diminish life. What’s at the heart for Jesus, and what Paul captures, is that the community of Jesus is one that inhabits mutuality rather than domination. Jesus said: “*Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me. For I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls*” (Matthew 11:29).

You see, I am regularly contacted by hurting, restless LGBTQ people across various Anabaptist denominations, from Mennonite Brethren to Amish. Many of them struggle with thoughts of suicide, attempted suicide or depression as they can no longer sustain compartmentalized lives. Those married with children find the thought of coming out layered with complexities both overwhelming and painful. In the face of constant, condemning messaging, they feel alone within cycles of guilt, shame and defeat. The closet was not created by LGBTQ people, but it became a necessary survival mechanism in a hostile environment. Many of them are heavily burdened with fear at the prospect of coming out in such an environment; they have seen what others have suffered due to heavy chains.

Yes, we are chained together, and the hurting needs to stop. We cannot dismiss one another. In Christ, dividing walls are breaking down, and that holds my hope. It is a messy peace that we are to live into,



cross to follow Jesus?

Questions remain

Is “*unity of the Spirit*” the same thing as organizational unity? Surely not. We

but for far too many LGBTQ persons the mess has caused harm. And persistent messages like “*no spot or wrinkle*” obscure the peace.

I am committed to nurturing relationships with people who disagree with me; I believe in this vision of church. However, I want to encourage my straight/cisgender siblings in Christ to exercise greater care, awareness and accountability in the power dynamics of our “*one another*” relationship. As LGBTQ people, we are present—even if closeted—members of the body of Christ.

We have valid reasons to challenge the traditional hermeneutical lens through which LGBTQ matters have been understood, and we recognize this journey may be hard for you. We, too, value Scripture and are lovers of Jesus. Our lives and our gifts in the body of Christ are valuable. Your redemption and liberation are tied up with ours. We are the body together, and if one member hurts or is diminished, then all suffer because of it. Therefore, let us honour the body as we work out this messy peace that chains us together in Christ, even when it hurts, that we may witness to God’s extravagant and grace-filled love.

Pieter Niemeyer is an ordained Mennonite Church Eastern Canada minister and is currently in a time of transition. He attends Toronto United Mennonite Church.

are rightly suspicious of empires and mega-corporations, and affirm the value of start-ups. That might apply to the church as well. But whatever distance or independence we might need must be within the unity, and in order to strengthen the unity of the Spirit. There is no “good riddance” in the unity of the Spirit.

Does—or should—patience ever run out? No doubt. It is, after all, patience, not impunity. But let’s not ask Peter’s impatient question: “*Is seven times enough?*” (Matthew 18:21). Patience’s stretch depends on suffering love and resilient hope, and for that reason must not be determined ahead of time. That is not a cop-out; it takes seriously the indeterminacy of “*seventy times seven*.”

By all means, let’s tug at the chain of peace, but within the unity of the Spirit.

Let’s tug with patience and hope-filled love. Conversely, let’s respect the tug at the chain of peace as the exercise of covenant solidarity, even if that tug is painful and feels like judgment. Only so can we rightly claim to be a “peace church.” ❧

Tom Yoder Neufeld is professor emeritus of religious studies and theological studies at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.; he retired in 2012. Adapted from “Unsettled peace: The unity of the Spirit,” presented at the 18th Believers’ Church Conference, “Word, Spirit, and the renewal of the Church: Believers’ Church, ecumenical and global perspectives,” in Goshen, Ind., last September.



/// For discussion

1. Tom Yoder Neufeld writes, “The peace brought about by the Spirit is not the calm after the storm; it is God’s life-giving storm that blows down walls and breaks barriers.” Can you envision that kind of peace? Can you think of examples of people being united in spite of deep differences?
2. Jesus said to love our enemies. Yoder Neufeld asks, “Might that include the enemy within the church?” Who might be your “enemy” within the church? What does it mean to love them? Is it possible that disagreements within the church are the Spirit at work?
3. Both Yoder Neufeld and Pieter Niemeyer suggest that a church “*without spot or wrinkle*” is not necessarily an expectation for the present. How much toleration do we have for “spots” in the church? Are we willing to suffer in order to keep the unity of the Spirit? How do we respond to the hurts of others in the church?
4. The church is facing major differences regarding gender identity and sexuality. Which view holds the balance of power in your congregation? What about the national and regional churches? What do we need to do to be a united body of Christ in the midst of this struggle?

—BY BARB DRAPER

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VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

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✉ God's graciousness is 'prior to our faith and love'

RE: "WE KNOW who we are," Jan. 1, page 8.

I find myself agreeing with Willard Metzger but wishing he had said more. I would say that God's love for us precedes our love for God as the basis of the church's unity; love for God is our response. To put it another way, our most profound commonality is that God has been gracious to us; we are "forgiven, loved, and free," as the hymn says.

From the Old and New testaments onward, the church has sought adequate ways of confessing God's graciousness. All of them begin with the mystery of who God is: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three in one. The point is that God created us, redeems us and

FROM OUR LEADERS

The nature of change

ED KAUFMAN

"Changes coming upon us / It keeps moving, moving around us. / Got to keep singing, knowing he loves us; / Got to keep joy in our hearts."

Those words from the song "Changes" by Jim Croegaert seem appropriate as I look forward to retirement in less than two months. But they also reflect this past year in Mennonite Church Alberta, as we have experienced the change of structure across MC Canada and also the unexpected changes that happen in life.

Being the smallest of the regional churches, we faced some particular challenges since we had little structure in place to pick up the added responsibilities assigned to us. And then, as we prepared for those changes, we were faced with the sudden death of our moderator, Dan Jack, a loss felt across the nationwide church, but particularly here in Alberta, and by me personally as Dan's pastor and friend. Subsequently, I stepped back into the vice-moderator role that I had held for the past five years, as Paul Neufeldt stepped into the moderator role.

MC Alberta will continue to work at



the changes that are needed in this new structure. We have increased Tim Wiebe-Neufeld's executive minister position to full-time and hired June Miller in a half-time communication position. Committees are working to define what new responsibilities they need to carry, and we hope to

MC Alberta will continue to work at the changes that are needed in this new structure.

begin a visioning process over the next year as we look toward the future.

As I reflect on these past seven years here in Alberta and my 40-plus years of ministry, I can't help but note the changes I've seen. I began my ministry in the Mennonite Conference of Ontario in 1976, in the midst of Inter-Mennonite discussions that led to the formation of MC Eastern Canada. After I moved back to the U.S., the broader integration process got into full swing, with the eventual formation of MC U.S.A. and

MC Canada—much to my regret—and for a time I served as conference minister for a newly integrated conference, Central Plains. And now MC Canada is in the midst of restructuring.

Each of those changes has meant new labels, new relationships and new ways of working. I once joked that having served in both Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite congregations, as well as in Canada and the U.S., I actually knew all the acronyms we like to throw around. In each of those changes some things have worked and other things have had to be tweaked, or even discarded. Such is the nature of change.

As I wrap up my ministry and prepare

to move back to the U.S., I will continue to watch with interest how the future unfolds. The church will survive, of that I am sure. And it will continue to change as God leads us into the future.

"So we enter a new time, / There are places where it's a hard climb / But there are faces, carrying sunshine / Warming our paths as we go."

Ed Kaufman is pastor of First Mennonite Church in Calgary.

sustains us. In the fullness of time *“the Word became flesh and dwelled among us”* (John 1:14). He taught us the way of life, healed the sick, died with us and for us, and was vindicated when God raised him from the dead. Amazingly, that lets us in on the love that has always been there between the Father and the Son (John 17:20-26).

“We love Jesus” because God first loved us.

Confessing that God loved us in Jesus Christ—his life, death and resurrection—and the Holy Spirit is the rock on which we stand. In our time of theological turmoil this confession of God’s initiative towards us cannot be assumed. It needs to be named.

That is what I am pleading for in this letter. Our subjective response to the Bible’s disclosure of God’s

(Continued on page 10)

FAMILY TIES

Tender times call for kindnesses

MELISSA MILLER

It was a tender time. Our 86-year-old mother had fallen ill and was hospitalized. Family members who lived nearby were keeping vigil at the hospital, consulting with doctors and caring for Mom’s basic needs, at points even helping her to eat.

Those who lived further away were being regularly updated. All of us were praying. When a little space cleared in my schedule, I made arrangements to trek halfway across the continent to sit by my mother, to see for myself what was happening, and to offer support.

That’s when the kindnesses occurred. First, my sister Beckie emailed to ask what kinds of breakfast foods she should have on hand for me. A small



act, a simple question, yet it represented thoughtful care towards a weary, anxious traveller. The gesture brought tears to my eyes. When I arrived and saw the items my sister had laid in store, I felt warmed and cared for.

A few days later, my sister Amy asked me, “How are you doing processing all this?” “All this” meant our mother’s illness and, as it turned out, her near death. It also meant an abrupt move for our mother from her three-bedroom home

into permanent nursing care.

Certainly our mother, at the centre of the crisis, felt the change most keenly. Yet other family members were affected as well. After all, our mother had provided a warm and welcoming home for her family and guests for nearly 70 years. Mother’s move to nursing care signalled the end of a treasured era.

We recognized that she needed additional support. I wished she had made the transition a few years earlier. Still, when the time came I lamented with my mother the loss of her home and

It isn’t just one person who looks out for the others. . . . It’s that everyone has a way of seeing and responding to the needs of others.

independence even as I was thankful that skilled nursing care was available. Sorting through the mix of worry, hope, sadness and relief took some time. My sister’s kindhearted query about my well-being opened up a gracious space for me to voice, and begin to come to terms with, the many feelings inside.

Writing some six months after the two kindnesses were extended to me, I am grateful still for the sensitive tending I received. Our families, communities and

churches are stronger by such acts of caring. They are the living out of the Golden Rule, to do to others as you would have them do to you. They are the enfleshment of Paul’s injunctions to the Philippians to *“look not to your own interests, but to the interests of each other”* (2:4). They are marks of the church, for we have covenanted with each other “to support each other in joy and sorrow, and in all things to work for the common good” (*Hymnal: A Worship Book*, No. 777).

Such kindnesses are what healthy families and communities do for each other. It isn’t just one person who looks out for the others, who is quick to extend a hand and offer care—although we all know some people who seem more naturally wired for kindness. It’s that everyone has a way of seeing and responding to the needs of others. The giver today may be the receiver tomorrow. The one who is

enveloped in support in one season may be the one who reaches out in another. Tender times—when a mother moves into nursing care, when a heart is broken, when a crisis erupts, when a loss ensues—call for kindnesses. Blessed are we to give and receive.

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

(Continued from page 9)

love and how it came to embrace the world is essential for our faith and love to have integrity. But, as I understand it, the church's identity is grounded in God's graciousness prior to our faith and love.

JOHN D. REMPEL,
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, ONT.

Correction

Chinda Kommala, with the assistance of Dale Bauman, founded Lao Evangelical Mennonite Church in Toronto. Incorrect information appeared in "We need the peace theology," Jan. 15, page 23. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error.

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Moments of kindness

SHERRI GROSZ

It wasn't really a bad day, but there had been enough inconveniences to put me in a bad mood. I tripped and bruised my knee. The milk was sour, a fact I only discovered after it was in my mouth. I was stood up at a meeting I'd confirmed. The zipper on my jacket broke. None of these events were earth-shattering, but I wasn't keen to repeat them either. I decided to console myself with a cup of tea on the way back to the office.

At the drive-through, I rolled down my window and held out some money to the cashier, but rather than taking it she beamed at me and said, "Your order is paid for." This didn't immediately make sense to me. I kept holding my money out. "Pardon?" I asked. "The guy ahead of you, he paid for your order," the smiling clerk explained. Neat! Suddenly, all seemed right with the world again.

It would have been easy to get bogged down by everything that had gone wrong that morning, but this one small glimmer of kindness reframed it

for me. I gave the clerk some money and asked her to use it to cover someone else's order. My tea-break benefactor had only saved me about a loonie, but the person's kindness was so much more valuable. It changed my day. I drove back to work with a smile on my face.

Sometimes, it feels like kindness is in

short supply. I've heard it so often, and even said it myself: "I'd love to help but I have to <insert whatever series of activities I'm running to or from that day>." We tend to blame our modern lives for this disconnection, but it's not a new problem.

Jesus told the story of a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho, who was attacked on the road, robbed and left for dead. First a priest and then a Levite pass along the same road, but both avoid the injured man. Then a Samaritan comes along and, despite historical enmity between their peoples, the Samaritan stops to help. He disinfects and bandages the man's wounds, then brings him to an inn to recuperate. In the morning, the Samaritan gives two silver coins to the innkeeper, saying: "Take good care of him. Whatever you spend beyond that, put it on my bill. I'll pay you on my way back"



I sometimes wonder how the Samaritan's charity affected the traveller once he recovered.

(Luke 10: 35, paraphrase)

I sometimes wonder how the Samaritan's charity affected the traveller once he recovered. Did he remember the cruelty of the robbers and shape his life with that memory? Or did he remember the generosity of the Samaritan and shape his life with that debt? Did he "pay it forward" to others?

Jesus concludes his parable by asking: "Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise" (Luke 10: 36-37, NIV).

I've recently been trying to emulate the Good Samaritan, paying more attention to those around me. I'm being more open with my money, but as that cup of tea bought by a stranger in the drive-through taught me, kindness is so much more than that. So I am also seizing tiny moments of kindness each day: holding the door, letting someone else go ahead in line, taking time to interact with the store clerk.

Our schedules will always be busy, no matter what time of year or stage of life we're in, but by practising simple gestures of kindness we might just change someone's bad day into a good one. Kindness might even change the direction of a life. I think we all have time for that.

Sherri Grosz is a gift planning consultant with Abundance Canada. For more than 40 years, Abundance Canada has effectively helped Canadians with their charitable giving in their lifetime and through their estate. To learn more, visit abundance.ca or call 1-800-772-3257 to arrange a free, confidential, no-obligation consultation.

LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Change in the church is complicated

TROY WATSON

It was my first day on the job as associate pastor. I enthusiastically unlocked the door to my new office and was taken aback by the writing on the wall. Literally. There was a massive white banner hanging on the wall with a warning, handwritten in giant red letters, that read, “We don’t like change!”

It turned out to be a “gift” from the youth group. As ominous as the welcome was, I ended up having a blast working with those young people over the next few years. We shared many hilarious, exciting and meaningful moments. I think back on those years with great fondness.

I never did ask them why they put that banner up or what they meant by it. I didn’t have to. They were simply expressing what most people in the church were thinking and feeling. Sure, their communication style was more direct than how most adults informed me about the unspoken rules, but the message was the same: “We don’t like change around here.”

This church was not unique. In fact, “We don’t like change” could be the official motto of most churches. I’ve heard many pastors from most denominations summarize their church’s attitude towards change the same way: “Sure our church wants change, but not if it means changing.”

The general assumption is that people don’t like change, especially in church. What I’ve discovered is that this is a devilish, destructive and debilitating lie. The truth is, everyone loves change. Even us church folk.

Imagine you get a call from head office offering to double your salary—or pension—immediately. Would you turn



down the offer because you don’t like change? Would any church member you know respond by saying, “I’ll talk to my family and create a sub-committee to discern and pray about it for six months, but I’m pretty sure the answer is no. We just don’t handle change well

around here.”

Imagine the doctor calls and says the cancer is miraculously gone, so there’s no need for chemotherapy treatments anymore. Would you or anyone you know react disapprovingly because they don’t like when change happens too fast?

This notion that we don’t like change is horse manure. We all love change that works in our interests or fulfills our desires. It’s only the changes that work against our interests and desires that we dislike.

We often need guidance to learn how to prayerfully reflect on our resistance to change

What this means is that when something changes at my church, and I say, “I don’t like change,” what I’m really saying is, “I’m not getting what I want in this situation,” or, “I don’t like it when I don’t get my way,” or, “This is isn’t serving my needs,” which almost always means “my preferences.”

It’s important to name the specific changes I don’t like and explain why I don’t like them, at least to myself and to God. Why? Because my resistance to a specific change will reveal what I truly value and desire if I take the time to listen to it.

For instance, it can help me understand why I say I want young people to attend

my church but simultaneously resist any attempt to create a more welcoming and accessible worship atmosphere for young people. The reason we do contradictory things like this—and we all do—is because we have many desires, and those desires often oppose and compete with each other.

When we start to be truthful and prayerful about our likes and dislikes, which is where our resistance to change usually stems from, we open ourselves up to the transformative Spirit of Christ. When we do this, we usually experience change within ourselves.

We often need guidance to learn how to prayerfully reflect on our resistance to change, but whenever we do this in a healthy way, individually or as a church community, it can be a tremendous opportunity to:

- **INCREASE AWARENESS** of our hierarchy of desires.
- **INCREASE AWARENESS** of God’s desires.
- **VALUE GOD’S** desires above our personal preferences.

A positive attitude towards change is not optional for a healthy church. To be

blunt, if a church doesn’t like change, it’s in the wrong “business” because the “family business” is change. God established the church to change lives and ultimately the world.

“Change is what we do” should be our official motto. The church is called to be God’s agent of change in the world, and this means being constantly changed ourselves. If we are not consistently being transformed, we are not fully participating in God’s work of renewing all that is wrong in the world, because that includes us. ✎

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

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Cooper Driedger—Iris Abyss (b. Jan. 18, 2018), to Jakob Driedger (Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.) and Samantha Cooper.

Knight—Kinsley Jordyn (b. Jan. 30, 2018), to Danika and Tim Knight, Sterling Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Prejet—Betty Janet Odette (b. Jan. 12, 2018), to Alana Fast and Joel Prejet, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Voth—Devereaux (Devin) Ryder (b. Jan. 21, 2018), to Stephanie and Trent Voth, Toronto United Mennonite.

Wagler—Liam Jackson (b. Dec. 19, 2017), to Krista and William Wagler, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Wiebe—Jesiah Peter (b. Jan. 18, 2018), to Jordan and Rhiannon Wiebe, Sterling Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Baptisms

Jordan Riekman—Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Jan. 28, 2018.

Deaths

Bender—Linda Jean, 64 (b. Oct. 27, 1953; d. Nov. 18, 2017), Rockway Mennonite and KW House Church.

Doerksen—Isaak, 86 (b. Sept. 21, 1931; d. Jan. 10, 2018), Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Epp—Louise (nee Krause), 77 (b. June 30, 1940; d. Jan. 25, 2018), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Gerber—Arlene (nee Lichti), 89 (b. Nov. 2, 1928; d. Jan. 27,

2018), Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Gerber—Marie (nee Steinman), 70 (b. Oct. 20, 1947; d. Jan. 21, 2018), Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

Klassen—Otto, 90 (b. Jan. 17, 2018; d. Jan. 23, 2018), Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Lauber—Sylvia Marie (Yoder), 71 (b. March 7, 1946; d. Jan. 19, 2018), First Mennonite, Edmonton (from Camrose, Alta.).

Lemky—Ben, 89 (b. Sept. 4, 1928; d. Dec. 14, 2017), Carman Mennonite, Man.

Poettcker—Doreen Lydia, 87 (b. Sept. 27, 1930; d. Jan. 4, 2018), Hanley Mennonite, Sask.

Regier—Velma (nee Epp), 91 (b. Feb. 4, 1926; d. Jan. 23, 2018), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Sawatzky—John, 93 (b. July 2, 1924; d. Jan. 20, 2018), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Suderman—Henry, 95 (b. Oct. 31, 1922; d. Jan. 26, 2018), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

Teichgraf—Erika (nee Duerksen), 91 (b. Aug. 8, 1926; d. Jan. 28, 2018), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Willms—Katherine (nee Rempel), 97 (b. Oct. 18, 1920; d. Jan. 17, 2018), Kelowna First Mennonite, B.C.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones announcements within four months of the event. Please send Milestones announcements by email to milestones@canadianmennonite.org, including the congregation name and location. When sending death notices, please also include birth date and last name at birth if available.

A moment from yesterday



“In the spring of 1928, not quite 15 years after the settlement had begun, Jake Funk opened the new red-brick store on a prominent corner of Main Street in Blaine Lake, Sask. It had high steps leading to the front door and a bright red-and-white sign above it that read ‘OK Economy Store.’ In front, he placed two benches, which soon found ready takers in older Doukhobor and Russian men who loved to wander downtown to sit and visit in the sunshine, cracking sunflower seeds,” wrote Katie Funk Wiebe in *My Emigrant Father*. The photo shows the OK Economy store, circa 1930s, that Jake Funk (1896-1986) managed. Mennonites, like most Canadians, have strong feelings about the role and reach of department stores, markets, grocers, thrift shops and online retailers. What stewardship issues concern you most?

Text: Jon Isaak / Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies

Photo: Katie Funk Wiebe Photo Collection / Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies



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GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Witness workers to be funded for the next three years

During that time they will have to begin raising half of their financial needs

BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Transition plans, storytelling and navigating change were all part of the Jan. 27-28 weekend when the Mennonite Church Canada Joint Council convened at Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond. This was the second time that the Joint Council has met since the October 2017 special assembly in Winnipeg.

In business meetings, the Council approved a three-year transition plan for the work of International Witness, during which time each Witness project will be enabled to achieve the necessary relational funding through national and regional support. This plan anticipates that most current workers will return to North America pending normal term reviews.

Witness workers will be supported financially for their next three-year term, during which time the workers will be expected to move towards raising half of their funding on an ongoing basis through relationships with individuals and the regional churches, with MC Canada continuing to fund the other 50 percent.

Following an in-depth review with the finance team in December, the financial guideline of \$1.9 million presented at the October assembly “looks to be on track,” said Joint Council moderator Calvin Quan. The regional church moderators are testing this plan, and their respective boards will be finalizing it as they look at budgets in the coming weeks in anticipation of upcoming annual meetings.

While meeting for business, the Joint Council also recognized the importance of meeting with local church members to hear about happenings in the life of individual congregations, and for better

conveying how decisions on important church matters are made. Time was set aside on Jan. 28 for any interested MC B.C. people to get acquainted with the Joint Council and to allow for questions. Forty-one attended, including representatives from the regional church’s executive staff and members of congregations in the Vancouver area, Abbotsford and Kelowna.

This public meeting “was not about making decisions, but rather about having conversation as to the regional church’s place in the nationwide agenda, the Making Healthy Connections agenda that we in MC B.C. have been working on all year,” said MC B.C. moderator Lee Dyck, who sits on the Joint Council.

Lydia Crutwell, pastor of Vancouver’s First United Mennonite Church, and Winston Pratt, pastor of Peace Mennonite Church, shared stories from their congregations, as did Council members Alicia Good from MC Eastern Canada and Andrea De Avila from MC Manitoba. MC B.C. executive minister Garry Janzen gave an update on happenings in B.C., and time for questions and conversation over coffee followed.

“The amazing part of the evening, which was completely unanticipated, was that people stayed at their tables after the closing prayer and continued the conversation,” Dyck added.

Despite the fact that meeting on the West Coast meant many had a distance to travel, Good felt the time in B.C. was worth it. “I left the meeting feeling encouraged that we are a part of working together at being God’s people, developing a shared identity and shared priorities as

we work out together what it means to be Mennonites in today’s culture,” she commented later.

“Nurturing trust is important as we navigate this time of change,” Quan told *Canadian Mennonite*. “What we realize is that, even though we come from different backgrounds, we all belong to a local congregation that’s trying to make sense of what faith means as a follower of Jesus in a changing world,” he said. “My hope is that excitement we feel as the Joint Council, the possibilities we see for the future would be felt and experienced by people in all our local congregations across the country.”

Staff change

MC Alberta creates new communications position

• JUNE MILLER began work in a new position as quarter-time communications assistant for MC Alberta in the fall of 2017. The move



was a result of Mennonite Church Canada transitioning into a new structure, with communications between the nationwide and five regional church bodies following suit. The new role creates a regional hub of communications for Alberta congregations, as well as providing regular contact with a regional communicators team that connects the ministries of the nationwide body with the regions. Miller’s current focus is to create and update a weekly email message for MC Alberta, and to refresh and update the region’s website. Miller says that the regional communicators and the MC Canada Executive Staff Group “are working together to develop a nationwide and global communications strategy under our new structure.”

—BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

'Tapestry of uprooted cultures'

Authors Rudy Wiebe and Joy Kogawa speak about Mennonite and Japanese experiences in southern Alberta

BY MARIE MOYER
LETHBRIDGE, ALTA.

What would bring 200 people out on a windy, grey afternoon last November to the Southern Alberta Ethnic Association Centre for the fall conference of the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta?

While most of the audience—a mixture of local Japanese and Mennonite community members, Mennonite history enthusiasts and lovers of Canadian literature—were attracted by the guest speakers, authors Joy Kogawa and Rudy Wiebe, the event itself proved to illustrate the theme, “Tapestry of uprooted cultures,” before the first address was even made.

As one attendee observed, the Coaldale area was unique among many rural Mennonite centres, in that it was far from homogenous. Wiebe estimated that when he and Kogawa were schoolmates there in the early 1950s, a third of the students were Mennonite, another third were Japanese, and the remainder were either “English” or Mormons. Rather than creating

segregation and division in the community, relationships of mutual respect, admiration and friendship developed.

David Tanaka, president of the Nikkei Cultural Society, which co-hosted the event, gave a brief history of Japanese migration to the area. Like Mennonites, the Japanese arrived in distinct waves. The first group, working primarily in coal mines and for area farmers, arrived in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The second and best known group were the interns—Japanese people who had been living on Canada’s West Coast who were forcibly relocated to the Prairies at the start of the Second World War; 2,500 settled in southern Alberta, including Kogawa’s family. A final group of primarily university students arrived in the 1960s, when Canada opened immigration to Japan and Asia.

Katie Harder, a historical society board member, introduced Kogawa and Wiebe, noting that the imagined living of history can sometimes be “more truthful” than

formal histories, which include only that which can be footnoted.

Although Kogawa’s and Wiebe’s families arrived in southern Alberta under very different circumstances—one due to forced exile and the other as a voluntary escape—both identified the resulting internal struggle with self-identity as the central focus of their early writing.

For Kogawa, being from the fundamentally different mindset of an eastern culture living in a western world, as well as being visibly distinguishable as Asian, gave rise to a deep crisis of self-identity and a desperate desire to be anything but Japanese-Canadian. This was reinforced when her first and best known novel, *Obasan*, a veiled telling of her own family’s story of internment, was initially refused publication. Publishers did not expect anyone would want to read it. Writing, however, remained therapeutic for her, and with her later novel, *The Rain Ascends*, she was finally able to shed her feelings of alienation.

For Wiebe, the difficulties faced by Mennonites during the Second World War were due to their beliefs and refusal to fight rather than due to their racial identification. In this context, his first book, *Peace Shall Destroy Many*, was an exploration of identity problems internal to the Mennonite community—how to respond to war—rather



PHOTOS BY DAVE TOEWS

Authors Joy Kogawa and Rudy Wiebe speak of their ethnic histories at the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta’s Fall 2017 meeting in Lethbridge.

than the challenges of fitting into the larger community. While he had no trouble getting it published, he faced the threat of expulsion from his own community for having exposed these struggles.

Looking beyond these earlier novels, both Wiebe and Kogawa discussed how they, as writers, also confront the ills and needs of society at large.

“Writing helps to awaken consciousness,” said Wiebe. “We need to know our stories, to understand them.” As a writer, he has been committed to telling the whole story, “both the beautiful and the lurid.”

Kogawa also spoke of her commitment to truth-telling through her writing. For her, writing is both an art and a cure for humanity. In addressing the woundedness in society, she spoke of the need for mercy, not only justice: “We no longer have time to deal with justice first,” she said. “We are desperate for reconciliation. Mercy will lead us there.”

The conversation throughout the afternoon returned again and again to the gift that the community of Coaldale had been.

Wiebe recalled a particularly influential



Japanese dancers from the Nikkei Cultural Society perform at the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta's Fall 2017 meeting in Lethbridge.

teacher, Mr. Robinson, who modelled inclusion and under whose influence bullying disappeared. He noted that his years in Coaldale were crucial in allowing him to continue his education, which set him on his life's path.

Kogawa credited her passion for truth-telling and honesty to her Mennonite friends and neighbours who modelled it faithfully under challenging circumstances. Her family noticed a marked difference between this community-minded approach and their previous experience of big city life in Vancouver. ❧

A longer version originally appeared in the Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta newsletter.

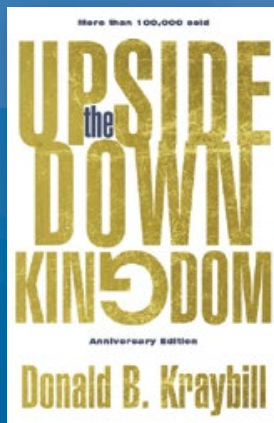
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Staff changes at Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
KITCHENER, ONT.

The numerous staff changes at Mennonite Church Eastern Canada in the last year have been coming for a long time.

DAVID MARTIN, the regional church's executive minister, believes that the 2005 MC Eastern Canada restructuring influenced the new mission statement and began to shift staff structures and job assumptions. "Extending the peace of Jesus Christ: Making disciples, growing congregations, forming leaders" is part of the thinking that has moved the regional church toward a focus that has become one of "supporting congregations to be more engaged in witness in their local communities, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally," he says. "The focus and target [have] been to help congregations to think beyond themselves, to see themselves as less centred on self-care and more focussed on engaging their faith in the marketplace, with their neighbours."

HENRY PAETKAU, the area church minister, adds that this has been "a shift from delivering and providing program support."

AL REMPEL, now the full-time regional minister, has developed a congregational assessment tool together with Credence and Co. that helps congregations see what their passions, internal gifting and resources are, a move away from helping congregations in visioning and goal-setting.

To his role have recently been added three quarter-time regional minister associates—ROBERSON MBAYAMVULA, CATHERIN VAN SINTERN DICK and KEVIN DERKSEN—to "pastor pastors"

so that they can help their congregations be faithful in their "increasingly secular" local context. This includes the increasingly intercultural nature of the church with both new Canadian congregations, and many new Canadians in and around established local congregations.

MC Canada's restructuring has also focussed mission work within congregations, including International Witness through a relational funding model that requires part of each worker's support to come directly from local congregations.

To help make these connections, NORM DYCK begins a two-pronged role—Witness connections and overseeing the ReLearning Community process MC Eastern Canada is recommending for all congregations.

Less a program, and more of a way for congregations to look for God at work in their community and join God in that work, ReLearning Community helps individuals and congregations connect with their own needs and also connect with God and the community around them.

Dyck's first task will be to go to Myanmar to help develop an Anabaptist presence there. Eight years ago, when BRIAN BAUMAN, the regional church's mission minister, first went there, the question was, Why is a regional church engaging internationally? Now it is part of the regional church's role to be doing such work, and the presence of several Chin congregations in MC Eastern Canada is driving this particular connection.

Paetkau is retiring this spring, to be replaced by MARILYN RUDY-FROESE. This

position has changed over the years, from conference minister to area church minister, and is now changing again to church leadership minister.



In writing about her role, Rudy-Froese says, "As I have engaged with pastors at all levels of experience . . . [I have] heard their visions for the church and how God is calling us to move out of our comfort zones and build relationships with our neighbours and communities around us."

"When Henry [Paetkau] was called," says Martin, "there was already a move away from just administration, to helping pastors to take on the challenging questions of their ministry situation. With Rudy-Froese, there is a strong emphasis to help pastors and congregations to respond to the new context," and to help them answer the question, "Where is God calling the pastor and congregation in their community?"

Again, a focus on the intercultural community—in which there is comprehensive mutuality, reciprocity and equality between people of different cultures, nationalities or religions—in MC Eastern Canada and its congregations is key. "This is a journey we're on," says Bauman. "We are currently multicultural [in which people groups live alongside one another] and not intercultural," adds Martin, including MC Eastern Canada staff.

But the lengthy presence of MOLLEE MOUA from First Hmong Mennonite Church in Kitchener on the administrative staff has helped the Hmong feel more ownership of the regional church.

While no more changes are imminent, Bauman, Paetkau and Martin admit that there are more changes on the horizon as current senior leaders reach retirement.

The way Martin tells the story of these staff changes, while it may look like a flurry of recent activity, it has been slowly developing over many years, repositioning MC Eastern Canada to support congregations to discover their calling from God and to give them resources to fulfill their particular, local callings. ❧



/// Briefly noted

Saskatchewan youth explore what it means to answer their call

WALDHEIM, SASK.—Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization retreats are an annual highlight, and the senior-high retreat held at Shekinah Retreat Centre has been an opportunity for youth to reunite with each other for a long time. The weekend event has seen some changes over the years, but always includes worship times featuring a speaker and band, outside winter fun, a coffee house, and often cinnamon buns. This year, the youth welcomed back Catherine Richard as the speaker. She has attended retreats in the past as the Saskatchewan admissions counsellor from Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg. Last fall, she made the decision to call Saskatchewan home, giving her a good perspective to speak on the topic of “Answering your call.” The current CMU admissions counsellor, Alex Tiessen, led the youth in an outdoor curling bonspiel on the pond. A large snowfall that coincided with the youths’ arrival at Shekinah made Jan. 27 the perfect day to be on the ice and around the outdoor fire with hot chocolate. Being a small group this year gave participants the opportunity to have an intimate weekend of connecting and sharing their stories with one another.

STORY AND PHOTO
BY KATIE REIMER-WIEBE



Participants at Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization’s senior high retreat in late January enjoy hot chocolate around the campfire.



ONLINE NOW!

at canadianmennonite.org

Who is my neighbour?

In this moment of national reflection, Will Braun offers some thoughts on the Colten Boushie case. canadianmennonite.org/boushie-neighbour



Mennonite diaspora encounters Muslims in the Russian Empire

Historian Aileen Friesen unveils commonalities and misunderstandings between the two groups living side by side in Ukraine. canadianmennonite.org/mennonite-muslims-ukraine



The way of the open palm

Vietnamese Mennonite Thien Phuoc Quang Tran is serving as an IVEP intern at the MCC United Nations office in New York City. canadianmennonite.org/open-palm



JoinMen for a better world

Representatives of the organization Mennonite Men call for truth-telling about sexual abuse and invite men to embrace a healthy masculinity. canadianmennonite.org/mennonite-men-statement



Notice

**CANADIAN
MENNONITE**

47th Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Annual Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the members of the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (CMPS) for the year ending December 31, 2017, is scheduled for April 28, 4:00 p.m., at Foothills Mennonite Church, 2115 Urbana Rd NW, Calgary, AB T2N 4B9.

CMPS is the non-profit corporation that publishes Canadian Mennonite. The agenda includes receiving reports from the board of directors, the 2017 financial statements, and election of new directors. The meeting is public, but voting is limited to CMPS members (individuals who donated at least \$25 in 2017 and who register in advance), and board members who represent the regional and nationwide Mennonite Church (see names and nominating bodies on page 3). To register as a member for the annual meeting, please email office@canadianmennonite.org by April 20, noting “CMPS annual meeting” in the subject line.

The annual report and audited financial statements will be posted at www.canadianmennonite.org, after the meeting.

Nine TTV stores to close in four provinces

MCC Canada / Ten Thousand Villages
TORONTO

In early February, Ten Thousand Villages (TTV) began the process of permanently closing nine stores in four provinces. They include:

- CALGARY (Heritage).
- SASKATOON (2nd Ave.).
- ST. JACOBS, ONT.
- STRATFORD, ONT.
- MONTREAL (both Monkland and St. Denis outlets).
- INDEPENDENTLY OPERATED stores in Red Deer, Alta., and Windsor, Ont., will also close their doors.
- LETHBRIDGE, ALTA., was closed at the end of 2017.

The decision was made after an in-depth

review of the profitability of TTV stores across Canada by the board of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada and the TTV advisory board.

“The retail industry in Canada continues to experience turmoil, as consumer habits and patterns shift, resulting in financial pressures and closures,” says Holly deGraaf, TTV’s chief executive officer. “Unfortunately, Ten Thousand Villages, MCC Canada’s fair trade social enterprise, has not been immune to these challenges.”

In the short term, TTV will close unprofitable company-operated stores to reduce overall losses. Continued focus will be placed on the remaining stores, to improve sales and streamline operations. Emphasis will also be given to wholesale



TTV PHOTO

The Ten Thousand Villages Heritage store in Calgary is one of nine Canadian stores that have already closed or will be closing in 2018.

and e-commerce channels. Products will still be available in the 25 remaining brick-and-mortar locations across Canada, as well as at tenthousandvillages.ca.

“We have communicated this news to all Ten Thousand Villages staff, and our priority will be to work out these closures with respect for our staff, volunteers and the communities they serve, as well as our artisan partners,” says deGraaf.

Started in 1946 by MCC, TTV is North America’s oldest and largest fair-trade organization, with stores throughout the U.S. and Canada. TTV partners with independent, small-scale artisan groups, co-ops and workshops to bring their wares to North American markets. In 2017, TTV provided sustainable livelihoods to more than 20,000 artisans from 27 countries through its direct, fair-trade purchases of quality, handcrafted products.

“We recognize the impact of these difficult decisions on many individuals who work for and support the mission of Ten Thousand Villages,” says Rick Cober Bauman, MCC’s Canada executive director. “We are deeply concerned about the impact on artisans, some of whom will have reduced access to markets for their products. Artisans have been paid in full for the goods we have purchased from them, in keeping with fair-trade principles.”

MCC Canada and TTV ask shoppers to continue supporting TTV’s storefront and online shops, and seek their prayers for wisdom and direction in navigating market challenges and future planning.

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“There is a high commitment from the whole of MCC and Ten Thousand Villages to see this remarkable ministry of sustainable livelihoods thrive,” says Cober Bauman. “We commit to continued communication with our communities as we pursue this objective.”

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FOCUS ON CAMPING

Music Camp keeps the tunes playing

Its leaders keep on serving the church

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

MARIE PENNER from Toronto United Mennonite Church had a dream of a camp that would develop the musical talents of young Mennonites in Ontario.



Penner remembers going to the Inter-Mennonite Conference, the precursor to Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, for support. Her husband, who was on the conference board, told her that she needed to make the case. With the idea of providing trained musicians and worship leaders to congregations, the board enthusiastically supported her.

So did Conrad Grebel University College, which from the beginning has been the home of Ontario Mennonite

Music Camp (OMMC). Penner then went from congregation to congregation drumming up support in the form of campers, directors and counsellor-teachers.

Instead of a camp on a lake or among the trees of Northern Ontario, it would be located in an institution that could provide room for camp activities, and the instruments and space for music practice, instruction and performance. Besides that, it would be a place of preparing youth to provide music in churches.

Over the 34 years since that first camp in 1984, the camp certainly has done that. Alumni have enriched many congregations, institutions and the wider church over the years, even as they fondly remember being enriched by the camp:

• **BRANDON LEIS** was the voice director at OMMC from 2005 to 2008. He has since gone on to a busy musician's life: he teaches at Wilfrid Laurier University, performs as a tenor, directs music at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., conducts the Menno Singers in Waterloo Region, and currently sits on the OMMC board. He also conducts seminars with churches to help them figure out their music in the midst of the music wars in many congregations.



• **STEPHANIE MARTIN** was one of OMMC's first counsellor-teachers. She remembers being hired by Penner, and that her mom Shirley Martin was on the committee that first year. Martin became the director in the camp's third year. Now associate professor of music at York University's School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design, she is also the director of Schola Magdalena, a women's ensemble for chant, medieval and modern polyphony; conductor emeritus of Pax Christi Chorale; and past director of music at the historic church of Saint Mary Magdalene in Toronto. Her compositions for choir and small groups are in use around the world.



ONTARIO MENNONITE MUSIC CAMP PHOTO

Ontario Mennonite Music Campers fine-tune a musical number from Jesus Christ Superstar during a dress rehearsal.

She is currently working on an opera about nurses on a First World War hospital ship called *Llandovery Castle*.

She remembers the first year of the camp fondly. "It was a blast," she says. "The first camp had 21 kids. It was sort of like J.S. Bach's family. The kids worked hard, learned a lot, but the most memorable things to me were the real 'camp' experiences: campfires and sing-alongs, skits and creative fun."

• **TIMOTHY CORLIS** is another composer with roots at OMMC. He directed the choir in 1999 and 2000, when Ben Bolt-Martin was the director. He joined the Anabaptist family at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church. While no longer attending, he says, "I still hold the beliefs of my baptism and consider myself part of the Anabaptist tradition."



His current work is as a full-time composer and director, writing large commissions for orchestras, choirs, music festivals, educational institutions and philanthropic organizations around the world.

A recent memorable experience that reminded him of his time at OMMC was directing the UN Women's Stand Together campaign concert for the rights and safety of women and girls. The concert featured

a 300-voice choir drawn from churches all around the capital city of Papua New Guinea that collaborated with the Port Moresby Police Concert Band, a local celebrity funk band and a local rap artist. "It was very much the same as directing the choir at OMMC except on a much bigger scale," he writes.

• **ANN SCHULTZ** still has music in her life, even though in 2012 she became the principal of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener, where she had been the head of the music department since 1997 and part of the faculty since 1991. Even with her administrative duties, she still finds time to play piano for at least one choir at Rockway and plays in her home congregation.



"Music is an important vehicle in the Mennonite church for expressing our theology and building community," she writes. "We need to continue to nurture music in the Mennonite church because it is part of the Mennonite story. Institutions like camp, specifically OMMC, and our Mennonite church schools are required to ensure our young people continue to sing and support the great hymns of the church!"

Although she was never a camper, she was a counsellor in the summer of 1989,

when she served as the piano instructor. "I wished I could have been [a camper]. I would have loved it!"

• Current director **ANNELI LOEPP THIESSEN**, a music and piano performance student at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, was one of the leaders of the Emerging Voices Initiative that put significant work into MCCCanada's recent restructuring.



She was a camper over two years, 2010 and 2011, and has since served musically in several congregations, and is on the committee choosing songs for the next MC Canada/MC U.S.A. collection.

Having had the chance to plan worship and devotionals as a camper, "those were incredible formative experiences," she writes.

• There are many others. **JASON WHITE** is music director at Trillium United Church in Cambridge, Ont., and helped found the Jazz Room in Waterloo. **ELIZABETH ROGALSKY LEPOCK** is a soloist and frequent contributor to choirs in churches all over Waterloo Region while she works on her doctorate in music arts at the University of Western Ontario in London.

The list goes on and on. ☺



PERSONAL REFLECTION

Faith leads to composting

ANNA KUEFFER

HIDDEN ACRES MENNONITE CAMP

Donning my biology lab coat and goggles, I push through the bustling crowd of eager campers who are anxiously waiting to sing for their lunchtime mail delivery, and I raise my hand in the air. “Ready?” I ask. “One, two, three!” And the crowd of 80 bursts into an enthusiastic, barely organized uproar.

“Tekas Bokashi bin!” they cheer, vaguely to the tune of “Bill Nye the Science Guy.” We cover our mouths rapper style and chant “Te-ka’s Bo-kashi-bin” in false deep voices before yelling “Waste free, waste free” with emphatic fist pumps on every syllable. It’s ridiculous.

What began with an offhand comment from Chris Pot at the summer staff Christmas reunion ended with another version of myself smelling like compost and cheering along with the campers about decaying food waste. Bizarre doesn’t even begin to describe it.

But the campers loved it, compost happened and food waste stayed out of the dumpster. That’s what mattered.

Since 1962, Hidden Acres, near New Hamburg, Ont., has been a place to find

God in nature, and our effort to be advocates for the environment is founded in our faith. Yet, as our green roof flourished, more than a thousand kilos of food waste ended up in the dumpster every summer. As stewards of creation, it didn’t feel right.

I was hired as the environmental services coordinator to design a functional composting system for the camp, and while my nights were packed with scientific research, planning and troubleshooting, my days were filled with teaching children to care for creation by making food waste fun. Miraculously, they loved it. At the end of designated waste-free lunches, only a few paper napkins would rest in the bottom of our Bokashi compost bin. It was a sweet victory.

As I type this, successfully composted food waste rests peacefully in the Hidden Acres gardens, smelling like celery and ready for spring planting. I feel a twinge of nostalgia for the crazy campers who—voluntarily—licked their plates clean to reduce waste. And more than anything, I’m relieved that the macaroni has finally been reduced to crumbly, rich soil.



HIDDEN ACRES MENNONITE CAMP PHOTO

Anna Kueffer (aka Tekas) is pictured in her role as Hidden Acres’ environmental services coordinator.

As our system stands, we have four barrels of food waste layered with Bokashi microbes to break down meat, eggs and dairy. Beside it rest two large spinning composters for vegetable scraps. By the time you read this, we’ll have another fresh batch of compost ready for the garden. It’s beautiful. And it’s one more step towards living out our faith at Hidden Acres. ❧

PERSONAL REFLECTION

‘A place I feel most comfortable’

RUTH CHARETTE

SILVER LAKE MENNONITE CAMP

When I was 5, my parents dropped me off for a week of camp at Silver Lake, near Sauble Beach, Ont. I was terrified. When they were trying to say their goodbyes, I would



not let them go.

The first few days were hard. I called my mom and dad saying I wanted to come home, even though I was actually having a great time. I was scared the first

time without my parents, sleeping in a cabin, in the forest, not knowing anybody.

Then one of the first evenings as we gathered around for campfire, Jill Sauer, a kind, welcoming lady I knew from church, caught my eye. When campfire was done, her son went over to give her a hug. This made me miss hugging my mom so much that I went over to her and gave her a big hug too. I did that every night that week, and it made me feel much better. She became my camp mom.

I made new friends the next summer. I wasn’t missing my parents as much and really enjoyed camp. I did that summer after summer. Every year, I was a bit tentative to go, not knowing what would happen. Every year, I got more comfortable. I started going

for two weeks, then three, then doing out trips.

Every out trip is unique. They're never easy and never what you think they will be. And they're always life-changing. Out trips can also be scary. With no connection, no running water, no electricity, no other people than your camping group, you're carrying the only supplies you have, and they are very minimal.

You all are sweaty and gross. Your tent is muggy and hot. Outside is freezing. But you are with a second family. You're tired and scared, and never know what the next day is going to bring. But no one does. You're relying on each other. Things in life can be scary, but at camp everyone is trusting each other in some way, from a simple hug before bed from a friend when you miss your mom, to your

out-trip members helping each other out.

Camp pushes people's trust, builds it and makes it stronger. It stretches you to reach your fullest potential, even if just for a week, but you will hold that with you as you go home.

Camp is one of the places I feel most vulnerable. Because of that, it is my favourite place, a place I feel most comfortable. ❧

PERSONAL REFLECTION

No place I'd rather be

JANET PETERS
Mennonite Church Manitoba

A young girl pretends she is an expert equestrian. Slightly older, she learns the difference between a J-stroke and a C-stroke. Later, as a counsellor, she races through pouring rain near midnight to the lodge bathroom. Another night, she holds a tiny hand as someone struggles to fall asleep in a strange place. As nature instructor, she

prides herself on one-match fires and going barefoot pretty much everywhere.

Her time at camp inspires and accompanies her to Bible college and work as a youth pastor. The confidence she gained leading singing, encouraging and building relationships with children and youth, and even her time with adults with disabilities, all colour her adult choices.

When her daughters reach school-age, there is no question that a week at camp will be part of their summers too.

A 40-something mother of pre-teen girls longing to be a pastor re-imagines her summer to include teaching the Bible to young children. She finds a place among the 20-somethings on her leadership team, and is inspired and challenged by their energy, their faith and their passion. The next summer she again finds herself at camp, this time working at the ministry of integration, revelling in one-on-one time with adults and children who embody love and resilience.

And then the possibility of making camp a career appears, an opportunity to blend that pastoral longing with a re-ignited passion for camping ministry.

Now I get to have my fingers in every aspect of camp, and be part of creating a space for others to experience camp in the many ways that I have over the years. I get to build relationships with leadership, staff and campers, as well as parents and church communities.

Camp has provided opportunities for me to grow in every stage of my life—as a child, a teen, a young adult and even in my middle age. The shy young girl who began attending camp was accepted and supported as she grew into a more and more self-confident young woman, who could lead singing and speak about her faith in public. Those gifts in music and speaking led me to pastoral ministry, which somehow has led me back to camp, and I can't think of where I would rather be. ❧



CAMPS WITH MEANING PHOTO

Janet Peters, right, the associate program director for MC Manitoba's Camps with Meaning, is pictured with an adult camper.

Janet Peters is the associate program director for MC Manitoba's Camps with Meaning.

Transforming lives with horses and Jesus

Youth Farm Bible Camp offers year-round equine program

By DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
ROSTHERN, SASK.

Many summer camps offer horseback riding as part of their overall programming. The Youth Farm Bible Camp is developing its summer horse program into a year-round ministry.

The camp, situated near Rosthern, already has a full-time, year-round horsemanship director in the person of Cheralyne Gibson. A former camper and wrangler at Youth Farm, Gibson is a



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHERALYNE GIBSON

Campers pose with assistant wrangler Janelle Martens, holding the horse, at the Youth Farm Bible Camp.

Jump out of your comfort zone at Peace Camp

By KATIE GINGERICH

Peace Camp

Have you ever been in a place, space or community where you have been encouraged to try something new? Have you been challenged to take risks and leap out of your comfort zone? Have you tasted the confidence that comes with mastering new skills?

At summer camp, youth often have the opportunity to take these risks in the form of tackling a high ropes course, canoeing for the first time or performing in a talent show. These experiences are transformative and life-long confidence builders.

At Peace Camp, jumping out of your

certified western riding instructor and is also trained in English riding and jumping techniques. According to the camp's website, "Her passion is to see lives impacted by horses and transformed by Jesus."

Currently, Gibson offers riding lessons two days a week at a facility near Hague, Sask., about 20 kilometres south of the camp. But Youth Farm executive director Mark Wurtz would like the program to be based entirely on the Youth Farm campus.

To this end, the camp plans to build an indoor riding arena, pending Mennonite Church Saskatchewan approval. The 1,900-square-metre facility is expected to cost \$325,000.

In addition to offering riding lessons, the camp plans to offer a program of equine-assisted learning, through which students with academic or behavioural challenges learn to interact with, and care for, horses.

With equine-assisted learning, says Wurtz, the horse actually teaches the instructor what issues the student is dealing with. Working with horses can help high-risk teenagers mature and overcome inappropriate behaviours.

Wurtz says the camp is expanding its horse program in order to use the camp's 12 horses to greater capacity.

The camp will be raising awareness of its new program through its First Annual Skijoring Competition and Fun Day. Skijoring is a winter sport in which competitors on skis, snowboards or toboggans are pulled by horses. The event will take place on March 10, beginning at 10 a.m. ☘

comfort zone looks a bit different. It's practising a new conflict-resolution strategy and learning how to advocate for an issue you're passionate about. It's having a dialogue with someone who has different experiences, and learning that together we can make a difference.

Peace Camp is a week-long day camp for youth who have finished grades 6 to 8. It's held at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., from July 30 to Aug. 3 this year. The camp is designed to inspire campers to volunteer in their communities, and they learn from local peacebuilders who have found innovative



PEACE CAMP PHOTO

Johnny Wideman of Theatre of the Beat shares his peacebuilding wisdom with campers at Conrad Grebel University College's Peace Camp. Peace Camp is a day camp and peace educational program for youth aged 11 to 14 in Waterloo Region. Campers learn that peace is possible as they share stories and learn from community members and meet people from various cultural backgrounds, faiths and orientations.

ways to make a difference. Through crafts, games, guest speakers and field trips, Peace Camp is a week filled with activities and discussions to equip young people with the skills to create peaceful change in their

schools, homes and friendships.

Whether learning from a local peace advocate or playing a justice-themed game, Peace campers explore how they can create peace. One previous camper commented, "I learned that lots of people create peace,

and that inspired me to volunteer somewhere next year."

Campers share that their time at Peace Camp shows them how they can take steps toward change. Another camper reflected, "I learned that you can do small things to be peaceful, even though we usually think about the big things."

This year's superhero theme will invite campers to discover their own peace super powers and learn how they can use them to build peace locally and globally. ☘



PHOTO BY JUNE MILLER

Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary hosted a trivia night fundraiser for Mennonite Church Alberta's Camp Valaqua on Feb. 10. Calgary First Mennonite's team, the Mächman, pictured, was crowned the winner of this possibly annual event's inaugural competition, beating out three other teams. While a final tally has not been calculated, it is estimated the camp will receive in excess of \$3,000. Pictured from left to right are the winners: Ed Kauffman, Mackenzie Hollinger, Nick Robinson, Madison Fell, Austin Janz, Cole Hollinger and Henry Dick.

Katie Gingerich is director of The Ripple Effect Education (TREE) and Conrad Grebel University College's Peace Camp. To learn more about Peace Camp, or to register, visit uwaterloo.ca/grebel/peace-camp.

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Accessing different realms of musical exploration

Composer Luke Nickel talks about the artistic journey that's taken him from Canada to England

BY AARON EPP
Young Voices Editor

Since Luke Nickel was young, his parents instilled in him the value of thinking critically. He recalls one conversation—the exact topic escapes him—during which his father said to him and his siblings, “I don’t care what you think about it, as long as you think about it.”

“It didn’t matter what conclusion we came to, as long as we were really thinking about it,” the 29-year-old explains. “Similarly, they don’t have a huge expectation of what we’re going to do [for a career], but they encourage us to grow and explore and do something. I guess I’ve had that open-ended, quiet encouragement from a young age.”

That, Nickel says, is how he ended up becoming an experimental music composer rather than a doctor or a lawyer.

Raised in Winnipeg, where he grew up attending Hope Mennonite Church, Nickel currently lives in Bristol, England. He recently completed a PhD in music composition at Bath Spa University.

Nickel’s PhD dissertation centres on memory and the process of transmitting musical scores. While studying for his master’s degree at McGill University in Montreal, Nickel found that he enjoyed composing music but became frustrated by traditional means of notating scores. So he began devising alternate ways of scoring his music.

One of those methods involves him describing the piece and how it is to be played to the musicians who will perform it, either in person or via an audio recording. By

doing things this way, the musicians have a larger role in the piece’s creation than they would if they were simply following notes on a piece of paper.

“With my piece, if there’s no performer, there’s no piece in the first place, and I really see that as a benefit, in that it means everyone in the creation process is engaged and equally owns the end product and is responsible for it,” he says.

Composing without writing a score means he can “access really different realms of [musical] exploration than I would have otherwise.”

“Working this way allows me to get straight to the vibe of the piece . . . this core sound world, or this place the music inhabits,” he says. “I feel now I can get to that much quicker and I can communicate that really easily.”

One of Nickel’s main focusses right now is the 2018 edition of the Cluster New Music and Integrated Arts Festival, which takes place in Winnipeg from March 1 to 4. He co-founded the festival about 10 years ago while doing his undergraduate degree in flute performance and music composition at the University of Manitoba.

The idea behind Cluster, he says, is to showcase emerging contemporary classical music creators as well as dancers and visual artists. “We started thinking, how can we make a music festival that bridges these kinds of art form gaps and gets everyone excited about experimental new work?”

(Continued on page 28)

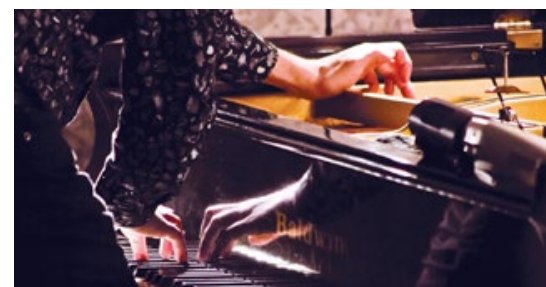


PHOTOS THIS PAGE BY LEIF NORMAN

Luke Nickel recently completed a PhD in music composition at Bath Spa University in England.



Luke Nickel co-founded Winnipeg’s Cluster New Music and Integrated Arts Festival while studying at the University of Manitoba.



Pianist Everett Hopfner performs one of Luke Nickel’s pieces at the 2017 edition of Cluster.



PHOTO BY AARON SIVERTSON

The Cluster New Music and Integrated Arts Festival aims to bridge the gap between new music, dance and visual art.

(Continued from page 27)

He credits his passion for music to his parents. In an article he wrote for the summer 2015 issue of *Rhubarb* magazine, he wrote: "I was . . . fortunate that both of my parents were musicians: my dad was a church-addled prog-rock enthusiast, and my mom was a classically trained pianist and amateur singer. They insisted that I take piano lessons at a young age, and baited me with the reward of playing any instrument of my choice after a year's study. At the same time, I was surrounded by endless hymns in church."

In the same article, he wrote: "I have always had the sense that I can change the world. Or maybe it would be more accurate to say that I have always had the desire to change the world. I have never had the sense that I can do this alone; rather, my greatest joy has always been inspiring others to change the world with me."

Two-and-a-half years later, he still feels

the same way, although he qualifies that quote with the recognition of the privilege he enjoys as an educated white man "who's probably never going to have a super difficult time with life."

"We all change the world in small ways," he says. "I'm not sure I esteem to change the world in a big way, but it's just the idea of making the world better or more beautiful, or bringing people together in small ways, in the ways that I can."

In addition to his parents, he credits growing up at Hope Mennonite, and attending high school at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, as "essential in getting to where I am now."

"I have to pay some thanks or responsibility to the church and then to Westgate for giving me a solid group of friends, but even more than that, giving me a solid understanding of community, and how important that could be in doing the work that I'm doing." ❧

'The tensions of taking Scripture seriously'

CMU students explore the Bible in an increasingly secular world

BY RACHEL BERGEN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*



PHOTO COURTESY OF CMU

Claire Hanson, Braden Siemens, James DeGurse, Marnie Klassen and Kenny Wollmann share their views of Scripture at CMU on Feb. 5.

Scripture is a massive, ancient, messy archive of God's relationship with humanity that many claim to interpret correctly.

But with such diverse understandings of the Bible, how can Christians approach it with humility while granting God's words

authority over their lives? How can young people take Scripture seriously in an increasingly secularized world?

These questions and others were raised at the Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) event, "The Bible tells me so . . . doesn't it? A conversation with young

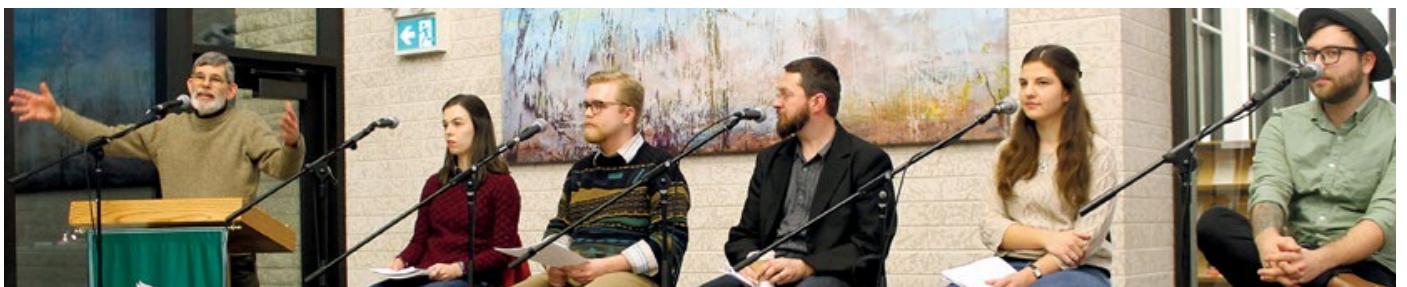


PHOTO BY AARON EPP

'What actually does the Bible tell us?' CMU professor Dan Epp-Tiessen, left, asks during his introductory remarks.

adults on the tensions of taking Scripture seriously,” a panel discussion that took place on Feb. 5.

The panelists included undergraduate students from diverse Christian denominations, including James DeGurse, who attends a Roman Catholic church; Claire Hanson, who belongs to a Mennonite Church Canada congregation; Marnie Klassen, who has a Mennonite Brethren background; Braden Siemens, who attends both Pentecostal and Anglican churches; and Kenny Wollmann, who is Hutterian Brethren.

Some addressed the importance of reading the Bible in community.

DeGurse said he finds value in reading the Bible in a group through the sacrament of communion in his experience in the Roman Catholic tradition. Each service involves a reading from the Old Testament, the Psalms, the epistles and the gospels. “This communal, liturgical reading tells me I need to situate myself in this great tradition that has come before me,” he explained. “It’s communal reading in the deepest sense.”

From there, DeGurse noted that the reading of the Bible culminates in the eucharist. “It properly orients me in relation to the Bible,” he said.

Wollmann has found positive and negative connotations with communal reading of Scripture and the Hutterian interpretations. He pointed to the *Lehren*, a collection of teachings developed in the Hutterite community that include deeply biblical reflections on spiritual themes as well as direct exegesis of biblical passages.

“Throughout our history, it has been these teachings that have been the impetus for surges of reform and recommitment,” Wollmann said. “Hutterites are still utterly reliant on these teachings. This collection of nearly 400 texts has been a source of blessing for me and my people. Many of the scriptural interpretations therein are rich and nuanced even today.”

Wollmann added that Hutterites, like many other Christian denominations, have confidence that they have the “surest way of living the Christian life, and therefore possess the best understanding of Scripture,” which has sometimes led to “exclusionism and arrogance.”

Wollmann’s community, the Baker Colony near MacGregor, Man., sent him to study at CMU, which has allowed him to look deeper into his faith tradition and has been a source of delight and spiritual nourishment, he said.

When Klassen spoke, she described her upbringing as ecumenical. Although her home church is Mennonite Brethren, she attended a Catholic elementary school, went to the youth group at an Alliance church and, as a child, attended a Mennonite Brethren church that used MC Canada materials.

Being exposed to so many different ways of viewing Scripture and God was confusing at times. “The Christian social justice world was assuming a God of compassion, while much of the theology I experienced elsewhere assumed an austere God,” she said. “There had to be a better way to read the Bible.”

Over time, through advanced education and a more nuanced worldview, she’s coming to a more balanced idea of the role of Scripture. “I’m coming to an understanding that all stories are valid, and there’s something to be gleaned from everyone’s experience,” Klassen said after the discussion.

For Hanson, who grew up in Asia with parents who volunteered with Mennonite Partners in China, living in a different cultural context impacted the way she experienced Christianity and Scripture.

“No one person or culture can fully comprehend the great mystery of God, but by being open-minded to the possibilities of differences, we can see God in a new light, bringing us to greater understanding and insight,” she said.

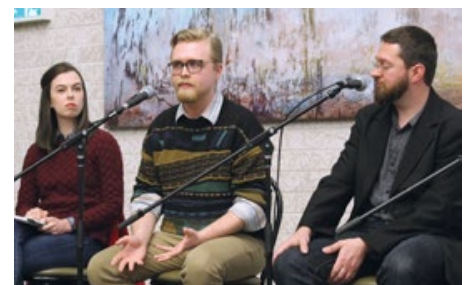
Siemens, who attends two very different church services every Sunday, said that church, school, books, people and places have affected his interpretations of Scripture. “The Bible is in itself a conversation, a symposium of ideas—sometimes in conflict, sometimes not—that labours toward a narrative moment that demands to be interpreted, not to be known scientifically or grasped somehow rationally,” he said.☞

To watch a video of the panel discussion, visit cmu.ca/face2face.



PHOTOS THIS PAGE BY AARON EPP

Braden Siemens's take on Scripture is informed by attending both Pentecostal and Anglican churches.



James DeGurse, centre, a Roman Catholic, finds value in reading the Bible communally.

Calendar

British Columbia

- March 23:** "Living the gospel" fundraising banquet for MCC B.C., at Northview Community Church, Abbotsford; at 6:30 p.m.
- April 14:** Reading the Bible conference, location and time to be announced.
- May 5:** Women's Inspirational Day, location and time to be announced.

Saskatchewan

March 9-10: MC Saskatchewan annual delegate sessions, at Zion Mennonite Church, Swift Current, cohosted by Emmaus Mennonite Church.

Manitoba

- Until March 10:** Art and Reconciliation exhibit at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg featuring works by Indigenous artists and a collaborative quilt by CMU students.
- March 11:** Mennonite Community Orchestra presents its spring concert, featuring Strauss's "Die Fledermaus Overture," Mozart's "Piano Concerto No. 25," and Dvorak's "Symphony No. 8," in CMU's chapel, Winnipeg, at 3 p.m.
- March 15-16:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate junior-high students present three one-act plays, at the Centre culturel franco-manitobain.
- March 16:** Opening of exhibits by Anthony Chiarella and Faye Hall at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, at 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit gallery.mennonitechurch.ca.
- March 16-18:** MC Manitoba senior youth retreat at Camp Assiniboia.
- March 21:** Bach on the Bridge, at CMU's pedestrian bridge.
- March 25:** Bells and Whistles with Strings Attached, featuring CMU's handbell ensemble and guitar ensemble, in CMU's Laudamus Auditorium, at 7 p.m.
- March 27:** CMU open house. For more information, visit cmu.ca/openhouse.
- March 30:** The Winnipeg First Mennonite Church Choir, with orchestra under the direction of Yuri Klaz, presents Mendelssohn's

- "Lobgesang" on Good Friday at 7 p.m. at the church.
- March 30,31:** "Good Friday through the senses," self-guided contemplative half-day retreats in Winnipeg: (30) 1 to 5 p.m.; (31) 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information, call Laura Funk of Butterfly Journeys at 204-489-7016.
- April 4:** CMU Jazz and Concert Band perform, in the CMU Chapel, at 7 p.m.
- April 21:** CMU spring choral concert, in the Loewen Athletic Centre, at 7 p.m.

Ontario

- Until April 13:** Conrad Grebel University College's Peace and Conflict Studies program celebrates its 40th anniversary with Beyond Essays: Approaching Peace Education Differently, an exhibit of art-based PACS assignments completed by students over the past decade.
- March 1-2:** Conrad Grebel University College present the Bechtel Lecture in Anabaptist-Mennonite Studies, at the College, at 7:30 p.m. each evening: (1) One Generation Away: Martyrs Mirror and the Survival of Anabaptist Christianity, by David Weaver-Zercher; (2) Mennonites and the Media: Telling Mennonite Stories Today, a panel discussion with David Weaver-Zercher, Sherri Klassen, Katie Steckly, Sam Steiner and Johnny Wideman.
- March 2-4:** Winter camp for grown-ups (20- and 30-somethings) at Silver Lake Camp, Sauble Beach. To register, visit slmc.ca/retreats.
- March 10:** Naomi's Colouring Recital, in support of Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, at the Hamilton Association for Residential and Recreational Redevelopment Programs, Hamilton, from 9 a.m. to noon.
- March 10:** Conrad Grebel University College hosts its March Break open house, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, email rjdejong@uwaterloo.ca.
- March 12:** Grandparent/grandchild day, at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg, features playing, singing, laughing and worshipping together; with The Ripple Effect Education's Alexa and Becki exploring ways to work for peace in everyday life. For more information, email info@hiddenacres.ca.
- March 17:** Elmira meat canning

- fundraising breakfast, at Calvary United Church, St. Jacobs. Speaker: Stefanie Heide, a 2016-17 MCC Service and Learning Together worker who served in Cambodia. For tickets, call 519-745-8458.
- March 22:** "Never forget the victims of crime" lecture. Speaker David Crane will reflect on his role in prosecuting Charles Taylor, the president of Liberia, for war crimes. At the Centre for Governance Innovation Auditorium, Waterloo, at 7 p.m. A Conrad Grebel University College event.
- March 25:** Menno Singers presents "Come Light and Life Eternal," at the Church of St. John the Evangelist, Kitchener, at 3 p.m. For more information, visit mennosingers.com.
- April 7:** Conscience Canada annual general meeting, at Conrad Grebel University College, at 3:30 p.m. Speaker: Tamara Lorincz. Topic: "The climate costs of Canada's new defence policy."

- April 10:** Kindred Credit Union annual general meeting, at Creekside Church, Waterloo; registration begins at 6:30 p.m.; meeting starts at 7 p.m.
- April 20:** Conrad Grebel University College's Peace and Conflict Studies program celebrates its 40th anniversary with "Pursuing peace: Stories from home and abroad," at the University of Waterloo's Federation hall; alumni networking at 5:30 p.m., followed by a gala dinner at 6. For more information, or to register, email rreist@uwaterloo.ca.

To ensure timely publication of upcoming events, please send Calendar announcements eight weeks in advance of the event date by email to calendar@canadianmennonite.org. For more Calendar listings online, visit canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar.



Classifieds

Employment Opportunities

LEAMINGTON MENNONITE HOME

The Leamington Mennonite Home & Apartments, a multilevel Community of Care to 320 seniors and frail elderly, is inviting applications for the position of Administrator.




This leader, facilitator and project planner should possess:

- A graduate degree in social sciences, healthcare administration, nursing or related discipline
- 8-10 years senior management experience
- Exceptional oral and written communication skills
- Excellent report-writing skills with an ability to summarize and outline
- Community-development capabilities, including work with a volunteer Board of Directors representing area Mennonite churches
- Experience in leading a large workplace consisting of union, non-union and contract staff
- A passion for promoting and leading seniors care, services and accommodations in a faithbased setting

Start Date: Spring-Summer, 2018. To be negotiated.

The position includes a comprehensive compensation package, including an excellent pension.

Interested applicants should submit their resume to [Henry Hildebrandt at LMHBoardofDirectors@gmail.com](mailto:Henry.Hildebrandt@LMHBoardofDirectors@gmail.com) by April 6, 2018.



Community Care Leader / Pastor – Part-time (0.5)

Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church is a small community of diverse Mennonites and other individuals who seek to be part of an inclusive faith community in contemporary society. The **community care leader/pastor** provides leadership by connecting with individual members, groups and committees by facilitating inter-generational community life and by providing pastoral support and spiritual guidance.

For full job description including qualifications, visit cimchurch.org/career-opportunity/



Leamington United Mennonite Church Employment opportunity
Full time associate pastor

Leamington United Mennonite Church, an active congregation in southwestern Ontario, is looking for an individual to join our existing pastoral team as a full-time associate pastor.

The focus for this associate pastor will include primary responsibilities for youth ministry with further duties adapted to complement the three continuing team members and regard the candidate's gifts and sense of calling.

The candidate will share the congregation's strong Anabaptist theology and growing community initiatives. Weekly attendance averages about 225 in the multi-generational worship service with an additional 100 or more participating through remote TV in the local Mennonite Home & Apartments.

Flexible starting time during 2018. Compensation according to MC Canada pastoral salary guidelines. This position is unique in that the successful candidate will join a team of more senior associate pastors. **Contact: Erwin Tiessen, Search Committee, 519-733-9940, etiessen@cogeco.ca.**



Employment opportunity
Outtatown Site Leaders
2018/19

Come be a Site Leader with the Outtatown Discipleship School, a unique, one or two-semester certificate program of Canadian Mennonite University.

The Site Leader must be a committed follower and disciple of Jesus Christ, a learner, and at the same time dedicated to teaching and training young adults to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. The Site Leader must be willing to work closely with others in leadership settings which are constantly changing.

Visit our website for more information about the site Leader opportunities in Burkina Faso, South Africa, and Guatemala.

www.outtatown.com



Artist in Residence opportunity

Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, strongly supports the continual development and strengthening of the arts in our faith community. Therefore in 2016 it implemented an initial three-year program for an Artist in Residence at Bethel.

Our aim is to embody Bethel's Vision Statement with creative expressions of faith. In different years alternative artistic genres will be explored. The first Artists in Residence, 2016-17, focused on story-telling; the second Artist in Residence, 2017-18, focused on visual arts. Other suggested areas to be covered include poetry, music, drama/liturgy, visual arts, and culinary/food artistry; other areas of creativity will also be considered. If you have gifts in any of these areas and you are interested, please send your resume and a one-page proposal to office@bethelmennonite.ca. The proposal should identify how you anticipate contributing to the life of the church using the artistic and creative gifts you wish to explore. Please check our web site at <http://www.bethelmennonite.ca> and click on "About" and "Volunteering & Employment" for further information and requirements.

Annual term of service (fall to spring): September to May/June. Remuneration: Bethel will provide an honorarium of \$1000/annum or \$500/half-year, and pay any pre-approved expenses for the project(s).

Applications for the term beginning in September, 2018 are invited until March 31, 2018. If you would like to discuss your proposal before you submit it, please feel free to talk to a member of the Worship Committee – call the Church Office at 204-453-2199 for contact information.



Employment opportunity
Lead Pastor

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

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

Inquiries, resumes and letters of interest may be directed to: pastoraltransitions@mcec.ca

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

The search committee will review and process candidates as they come forward until the position is filled.

PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

The material aid department at Mennonite Central Committee B.C. in Abbotsford celebrated Family Day on Feb. 12 with a drop-in Kit and Caboodle afternoon. Youngsters—including Caleb, foreground, and Grace Platt —packed bags of health and hygiene kits for shipment to refugees overseas.



God at Work in the World Snapshots



PHOTO BY NIKKI HAMM / TEXT BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE

Around 25 local rural residents, members of Roseau River First Nation and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) staff gathered at the MCC Material Resources Warehouse in Plum Coulee, Man., on Jan. 23, for a treaty land acknowledgement ceremony, during which they witnessed the posting of a plaque in the warehouse to acknowledge Treaty 1 territory, the land on which MCC Manitoba and MCC Canada live and work. The plaque is intended to be a symbol of honour and respect to the Indigenous people of this land and a visual reminder that MCC's presence impacts the land and the people with whom it is shared. Roseau River drummers played during the ceremony (see photo at left) and Peter Atkinson, an elder and a representative of the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, addressed the crowd along with MCC Manitoba and Canada representatives Darryl Loewen, Miriam Sainnawap and Kerry Saner-Harvey. Afterwards, those gathered shared tea and bannock together. MCC Manitoba held ceremonies at its two Winnipeg offices last fall and has posted plaques in all MCC office locations in Manitoba. Treaty land acknowledgement is one way MCC Manitoba and MCC Canada are responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action addressed to faith groups.