

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

November 5, 2018

Volume 22 Number 21

What  
moves  
you?

Riders support Witness workers  
pg. 12

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## EDITORIAL

## Stories of generosity

VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

The young couple was living far from home, juggling college studies and part-time work, in preparation for overseas missionary work. Their first child was due and then complications set in. It was a difficult birth, and the hospital bill totalled much more than their meagre budget allowed. When the time came for the new father to take mother and baby home, the hospital authorities balked. Pay your bill first, they insisted. Neighbours in the small community came to the rescue, going from door to door to collect enough funds to cover the unexpected medical bills.

That is the story of the gracious generosity I experienced at the beginning of my life. Since then, many other stories have reminded me that good things happen when God's people practise faithful giving. Generous people have given to charities I have been involved with, supporting media projects, hospital work, museums, congregations and a whole variety of community-based charities. I have seen donors give gifts large and small, believing in the vision and integrity of those who made the requests.

Several years ago, I witnessed this generosity up close, in my work at the Mennonite Foundation of Canada (now Abundance Canada). I handled the actual cheques that went to charities, inserting them into envelopes along with letters containing the donors' intentions. Some

days—even though I was handling other people's money—I felt like Santa Claus!

These donors had taken stock of the resources available to them and had opened their hearts and hands to others. Some of them gave regular gifts, spread over many years. The gifts were of all sizes—from two digits to six digits. Sometimes gifts would go out with no donor name, because that giver wanted to bless a charity's mission anonymously. For some, the generosity extended after their death, through their estate.



*Some days—even though I was handling other people's money—I felt like Santa Claus!*

As I stuffed the envelopes, I imagined the joy that would pop out when their recipients opened them. Someone believed in the work of their charity—trusted enough to share!

While I have never had large amounts to donate, it is clear: I am rich. You probably are too. We live in a stable society, with many opportunities for work and leisure. We have access to information and education. Food is plentiful and healthcare is a given. War is far from our doors. (*If you still doubt your wealth, check out this website to see how you rate against people in other parts of the world: [globalrichlist.com](http://globalrichlist.com).)*

In our feature "Full stomach, faulty memory" on page 4, Dori Zerbe Cornelsen invites us to be active circulators of the

gifts we have received from the Giver of all that is good. Elsewhere in this issue, we highlight stories of giving: the highly successful MCC B.C. Festival for World Relief (page 20), the volunteer who has packed 35,000 school kits (page 22), and the Ride for Refuge cyclists who raised funds for Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers (page 12).

At times when the balance in the bank account is low, it can be hard to believe that we have something to give. Fear sets in, or maybe even panic: I worked hard for this money; I deserve to keep it. Will I have enough to meet my own future needs? I know I should give more but... Why does God ask so much of me?

Which brings us to the scariest hymn in

*Hymnal: A Worship Book: "Take My Life," (No. 389).* The poet Frances R. Havergal lists many elements of life—her hands, her feet, her voice, her time, her intellect, her will, her silver and gold, and even her heart—and offers them to God as an act of love. This hymn invites you and me to release those parts of ourselves to our Creator. As we loosen our grip on the things that bring security, can we trust that God will provide for our needs?

As we enter into a season when many requests for donations are coming our way, it is good to remember that we serve a generous God who cares for us. A God who seeks to unleash a spirit of giving in each of us. How will we respond? What new stories of generosity will we be able to tell?

## ABOUT THE COVER:

**Team Mennonite Boys and Girls Can Ride, from Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church, raised \$1,765 for MC Canada Witness workers during this year's Ride for Refuge. 'We had a great ride,' says team captain Brian Quan. 'It was a picture perfect day for our 15 riders.' Story and more photos on pages 12 and 13.**

Funded by the  
Government  
of Canada

Canada

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

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NOVEMBER 5, 2018 / VOL. 22, NO. 21

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40063104 REGISTRATION NO. 09613

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CANADIAN MENNONITE,  
490 DUTTON DRIVE, UNIT C5,  
WATERLOO, ON, N2L 6H7

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Web site: canadianmennonite.org

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**Reprint requests:** reprints@canadianmennonite.org

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## One-Year Subscription Rates

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

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

## Subscriptions/address changes:

(e-mail) office@canadianmennonite.org

(web) canadianmennonite.org

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Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press



## STEWARDSHIP FEATURE

# Full stomach, faulty memory

*A sermon on Deuteronomy 8 and 15*

BY DORI ZERBE CORNELSEN



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS PHOTO

*'Moses shown the Promised Land,' by Benjamin West.*

*When the people of Israel are settled comfortably in this good land, they could forget that they are a people who rely on God to protect them and provide for them. This warning is meant to jolt them out of dozing off, their stomachs full from feasting on the bounty of the land.*

**W**e are daily awash in choices and opportunities, and many of us are affluent enough to be able to choose among many options. Many of us make many choices even before we get out the door in the morning. Our stomachs are full, we live in fine houses, our income and assets have grown, our retirement funds are increasing, and our possessions keep multiplying.

As the people of Israel stand on the verge of possibilities in the land they are about to be brought into, Moses begins to say: *“When your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied . . .”* (Deuteronomy 8:13; NRSV). Apparently the people can expect that everything they have will multiply. Why might it be important for God’s people then—and now—to pay attention to the words of this text?

### **What is at stake?**

Like the people first addressed in this text, our very identity as people of God and our loyalty to God’s way are at stake. The speech in Chapter 8 anticipates the end of Israel’s long sojourn in the wilderness. It describes the bounty of the good land they are about to enter after their wandering in the desert: It is a land that will produce wheat, barley, fig trees, vines, pomegranates, olive trees and honey, and there will be no lack of bread. And what is more, the land has abundant resources of iron and copper, assets able to produce incredible wealth. The promise is vast: *“You will lack nothing”* (verse 9).

But in the next breath we read: *“Take care that you do not forget the Lord your God, by failing to keep his commandments . . . which I am commanding you today”* (verse 11).

### **What could go wrong?**

When the people of Israel are settled comfortably in this good land, they could forget that they are a people who rely on God to protect them and provide for them. This warning is meant to jolt them out of dozing off, their stomachs full from feasting on the bounty of the land. When *“all that you have is multiplied, then do*



GOOGLE ART PROJECT

*'Joshua passing the River Jordan with the Ark' (detail), by Benjamin West.*

*In his commentary on Deuteronomy, Walter Brueggemann writes that . . . 'a gift kept long enough begins to seem like a possession . . . separated in the memory of the recipient from the giver, so that the giver is forgotten.'*

not exalt yourself, forgetting the Lord your God" (verse 13-14).

### **A gift kept long enough seems like a possession**

The problem reflected in Moses' warning to the people of Israel is not that God is no longer trustworthy. Rather, because comfort could replace the people's awareness of their complete dependence on God, Moses knows that their identity could shift. They could begin to trust in themselves and say: *"My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth"* (verse 17).

Now wealth is not condemned in this text. In fact, the promise is that assets will accumulate and multiply in the good land. Moses' words do not condemn hard work, criticize dedication to one's career or censure the kind of perseverance amid hardship that yields success.

What Moses identifies is the danger that attachment to what makes us comfortable can compromise our true

identity. When our stomachs are full, our temptation is to look around at everything we have accumulated and simply be satisfied with ourselves. We can forget that everything is a gift. When we've eaten our fill, we can forget to bless the Lord.

In his commentary on Deuteronomy, Walter Brueggemann writes that Moses wanted to remind people that God would give them what they needed, whatever land they were in. They were to be on guard, because "a gift kept long enough begins to seem like a possession . . . separated in the memory of the recipient from the giver, so that the giver is forgotten."

Mark Allan Powell, in his book *Giving to God: The Bible's Good News about Generous Living*, uses the metaphor of house-sitting to explore this tendency. People who house-sit have access to all the amenities of the abode; for a time they can pretend that it's their place. Now, what if these house-sitters decided

to change the locks and claim the house as their own? Suppose when the owners confronted the house-sitters, the sitters' claim would be, "Hey, the house is mine. You gave it to me!"

### **As wealth increases, sensitivity decreases**

When we forget that everything is a gift, we can begin to believe that whatever we've gathered is ours: we earned it, deserve it and we can do with it whatever we please. In several recent social class experiments, researchers have shown that increased wealth is associated with decreased sensitivity to others in one's social environment.

Paul Piff, assistant professor of psychological science at the University of California, Berkeley, conducted several experiments documenting that as wealth increases, people are more likely to see themselves as deserving of good things in life and entitled to better outcomes. At the same time, they are less likely to show

compassion for others.

Moses suggests that to resist the amnesia that seems to accompany a full stomach, which leads to becoming complacent and self-satisfied, God's people are to reaffirm their identity and "keep the commandments of the Lord your God, by walking in his ways and fearing him" (verse 6), and by being careful not to "forget the Lord your God, by failing to keep his commandments" (verse 11).

### Keep the gift circulating

Ched Myers of Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries suggests that for us to resist the temptation to cling to what we have been given, the gift must always move. The natural abundance of creation lasts only as long as the gift circulates.

Paul encouraged Timothy to exhort his congregation to practise circulating their gifts. We can hear echoes of Deuteronomy 8 and 15 in his pastoral letter to Timothy: "As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous and ready to share" (1 Timothy 6:17-18).

Like Moses' admonition, Paul's antidote to the failure of memory that comes with a full stomach is generous living. Rather than dozing in a state of self-satisfaction, we can wake up, choose to take hold of life that really is life, and be generous with the gifts that we have been given. We can put our money where our mouth is when we say we love Jesus. In bumper sticker wisdom: "Tithe if you love Jesus! Anyone can honk."

### Living with 'comfortable guilt'

Still, we find many reasons to resist living with open hands. The authors of *Passing the Plate: Why American Christians Don't Give Away More Money* studied giving patterns and surveyed Christian givers. They write that many American Christians experience "a kind of 'comfortable guilt'—that is, living with an awareness and feeling of culpability for not giving money more generously, but maintaining that at a low enough level of

discomfort that it was not too disturbing or motivating enough to actually increase giving. . . . Many Christians did not have clean consciences about money. But neither did they seem prepared to change their financial dealings in ways that would eliminate their modest levels of guilt."

But before we conclude that Christians just need to give more, we must address the deeper question of what stories shape our identity and loyalty. We may need to ask whether we are able in our affluence to be jolted out of amnesia by what Brueggemann calls an "astonishing memory of generous sustenance," a surprising memory that God has been generous to us.

### Living out of astonishing memories of generous sustenance

On a frosty September morning in the middle of his shift, a Winnipeg bus driver stopped his bus on Portage Avenue at Main Street. He proceeded to jump out and give his shoes to a man he had noticed walking barefoot that day and

the day before. He drove the rest of his shift in stocking feet. To his surprise, the story went viral, picked up by media all over the world. Later that week, in an interview with a Winnipeg journalist, he recalled, "I couldn't imagine him walking a mile without shoes. I couldn't imagine how cold he was." So when a light turned red and the opportunity presented itself, he acted.

Let's share such stories of empathic imagination with one another, to stir ourselves out of the dozing that can overtake us when our assets multiply. Let's add these stories to the fund of narratives that shape our identity as people called to be openhanded by a God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ❧

Dori Zerbe Cornelsen is director of development at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg. Reprinted with permission from *Vision, Spring 2014, Vol. 15, No. 1* ([bit.ly/vision-economics](http://bit.ly/vision-economics)).



### ❧ For discussion

1. Do you consider yourself as living in affluence? How does your life compare to your parents' and grandparents' lives when it comes to things like income, housing, clothing, food choices or travel? Are there other signs that our possessions have "multiplied"?
2. Have we reached the point where we forget to rely on God to protect us and provide for us, assuming that we have created our own success? Is accumulated wealth the only thing that makes us feel that way? What practices help us to remember that everything we have is a gift from God?
3. Dori Zerbe Cornelsen refers to a study showing that North American Christians tend to live with some discomfort about the amount of money they give, but the guilt is not enough to increase their giving. Do you think that is true? What justifications do we give for resisting greater generosity, even if we feel guilty?
4. What does it mean to "keep the gift circulating"? What stories of compassionate generosity have you seen or heard? How can we encourage each other to share what God has given to us?

—BY BARB DRAPER

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## VIEWPOINTS

## /// Readers write

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## ✉ Story on Manitoba prison ministry lauded

RE: "PAYING ATTENTION to the invisible," Sept. 10, page 17.

Many thanks for the fine article about our prison ministry program.

On Oct. 3, Dorianna Toews, a new member of our team and a member of River East Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, and I led two groups of about 20 women in a Thanksgiving-focussed Bible study. As we opened with favourite songs, there was more emotion than usual. Several women wept during "May the Circle be Unbroken." It turned out that there were family members of Winnipeg's most-recent brutally murdered

(Continued on page 8)

## FROM OUR LEADERS

## Listen to the silence

CLAIRE EWERT FISHER

Recently, I heard a story about a young prince named Hullabaloo. He lived in a land where everyone and everything was noisy. When people talked, they shouted at each other. When they ate their soup, they inhaled it with a loud air-over-tongue sound. When they worked, they clanked and bumped until the air was filled with noise.

For this young man's birthday, Hullabaloo's father decided that the best gift would be for everyone to make their biggest noise all at the same time so that it would indeed be the biggest, loudest noise ever made. And so the king sent out an edict declaring that his son's birthday would be the noisiest birthday ever.

There was a woman working in her garden who decided that she would remain silent at the appointed time so that she could hear the biggest sound ever. She mentioned it to her husband and her friend. They liked the idea and so they told their friends and their partners. The idea spread like wildfire.

The day of Hullabaloo's birthday arrived. And the hour advertised as the

biggest-sound-birthday-gift arrived. With anticipation high, everyone waited . . .

But all they heard was silence. And then they heard the sound of a bird singing in a nearby tree.

Hullabaloo was delighted. This was the best gift he had ever received: silence. Then the sound of a bird's melody.

*"Be still and know that I am God"*  
(Psalm 46:10).



*Mennonite Church Saskatchewan is well into a three-year focussed journey with Christ, each other and the world.*

The body of Christ is in the midst of transition. And we wonder, do the old categories still work? Are the current structures helping us as we grow in relationship with God? Are God's purposes as identifiable now as they were before? Why are there roadblocks in our way if we are doing it right? Why is there a financial shortfall when we work so hard to build the kingdom of God on earth?

Perhaps there are more appropriate questions. Perhaps what we need to be

doing is spending time with Hullabaloo and his country folk as they slow it all down and listen. The questions might be: What is God doing? What are the transformations that will help us best to love God and our neighbours as ourselves? What is God desiring to do within us and with our lives?

Members of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan are well into a three-year focussed journey with Christ, each other and the world. As we accompany Christ, we are discovering that the Hullabaloo approach to church growth can usefully be realigned by the people's approach of listening.

A spirituality resource team is visiting churches and planning a Lenten retreat to introduce and encourage contemplative prayer and lifestyle practices. We anticipate God's guidance and affirmations as we seek to be more faithful.

"In silence, God ceases to be an object and becomes an experience" (Thomas Merton, Trappist monk).

*Claire Ewert Fisher is chair of MC Saskatchewan's Ministries Commission.*

(Continued from page 7)

Indigenous woman, Mary Madeline Yellowback, in each group. And so it became an honour song. We were once more humbled and encouraged by the spirit of resilience of these women and we left there thankful for this opportunity for fellowship.

ELSIE REMPEL, WINNIPEG

## ✉ Use of 'allegation' trivializes 'what Shantz said happened'

RE: "DECADES-OLD SEXUAL abuse comes to light," Sept. 10, page. 13.

It looks like *Canadian Mennonite* is defending the male side of this story.

The article reports that Ruth-Ann Klassen Shantz is

### IN THE IMAGE

# Worship happened

ED OLFERT

**T**he small church where I pastor, Grace Mennonite Church in Prince Albert, Sask., is probably not often accused of being "high church."

A few weeks ago, the service began with a worship leader wandering distractedly between his seat and the pulpit, wondering out loud whether he should shed his tools before the service began. Finally, he left his wrench at his seat but blurted stoutly, "I'm keeping my pliers!" He is a much loved member, and the congregation was charmed.

Some time ago, I sat over coffee with my congregational chair to discuss future church directions. The chair offered to arrange resource people to bring us a "blanket exercise," a creative method of opening our eyes and our awareness to the struggle of First Nation folks from the time settlers walked onto what we now call Canada. My input was to suggest that this exercise would be more than an educational event in the Sunday school area, but rather an experience of worship in the sanctuary. The pain of God's people is everyone's pain.

On that Sunday morning, I arrived early and moved pews to the sidelines. I discovered that church pews are heavy. My lower back sulked for days afterward. Then the presenters began appearing, and soon our sanctuary carpet was covered with colourful blankets. The only time I considered

calling a halt to these goings-on was when a few Toronto Maple Leaf blankets appeared right in the worship space!

We had spent energy encouraging congregants to risk a different worship experience and needed to widen the circle to make room for more. We are not many, but everyone was encouraged to invite guests. It was a varied group, including a homeless fellow who stopped by in the hope of scoring a bite.

We were invited to step onto the blankets. One person donned a top hat to represent the political might that Indigenous folks have encountered at every turn. Another strapped on a collar and became the church. As the narrator began taking us through the historical experience that his people had endured—the diseases, the fire-water, colonization, treaties, the schools—the power person swept among us, chasing

the narrator drew the exercise to a close, it was already noon, high time for the potluck portion of the morning to proceed. We Mennonites don't wait so graciously for our casserole!

But we were not yet done with the sanctuary space. Our leader suggested we go around in a talking circle, sharing our experience of the exercise. Tears were shared, stories were shared, including the homeless fellow, who grasped the microphone and told of hard chapters in his life of being a wanderer.

When my turn came, I could only express my remorse at the role of the church in this broken history, the church that took its orders and its plunder from the powers of the day, mixing colonizing with converting in some of the saddest chapters of that history.

We were an hour late before we could tuck into our repast. The only prayer of the



*The only time I considered calling a halt to these goings on was when a few Toronto Maple Leaf blankets appeared right in the worship space!*

some off blankets, forcing others to inhabit much smaller spaces. And always, the power person was followed mutely by the person representing the church, folding and removing blankets, and responding however the top-hatted person directed him.

Soon, there were few left standing. As

morning was in Cree, asking for blessing on our food. Laughter rang out often. Phone numbers and addresses were shared. Folks hugged. And worship happened.

*Ed Olfert (p2ptheo@sasktel.net) continues to find awe in every direction, even in the absence of casserole!*



making “allegations.” This seems to question whether her story is believable.

The whole broader social #MeToo movement is based, in part, on the premise that women are not being taken seriously, that their stories are questioned. Use of the word “alleged” brings her statement into the legal sphere and trivializes it.

Publishing the perpetrator’s apology looks like the

matter is somehow settled. However, the apology hardly touched on what Shantz said happened. His apology was for the “stress and pain caused . . . as a result of our relationship.”

Relationship? Preying on an innocent child is abuse, not a relationship.

KEN DRUDGE, KOMOKA, ONT.

## GATHERING AROUND THE TABLE

# Family tradition goes back 500 years

DAVE TOEWS

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

“**P**feffermusse,” Dora repeated after me in amazement! She couldn’t believe that my Christmas treats were the same as hers.

It was Nov. 7, 2002, and we were sitting around the pool at Toddy’s Backpacker Hostel in Alice Springs, Australia. Nostalgia crept among us; we had wandered far and wouldn’t be home for Christmas.

At the age of 56, I had received a bronze-handshake severance package from General Electric after 30 years of service. My wife Marion and I decided that I would not go back to work immediately. Instead, we would take a break, and live and work overseas for a couple of years.

The first year we lived in South Korea, where Marion taught English full-time. I taught part-time, volunteered at the Korea Anabaptist Center, and played ice hockey with a group of Canadians, Americans and Koreans.

From there we embarked on an eight-month backpacking tour of Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Mongolia and Russia. That is how we came to be in Australia for Christmas 2002, away from family and friends.

Marion and I were discussing our mutual Dutch/Germanic heritage with our newly



PHOTO BY DAVE TOEWS

*Making peppernuts for Christmas are, from left to right: daughter-in-law Emma Sauriol, granddaughters Kishina and Anaya Toews, and Oma Marion Toews.*

found friends, Lex Evers and Dora Twikler of the Netherlands. I mentioned that my people, the Mennonites, had taken the culinary Christmas tradition of peppernuts with them when they left Friesland in the 16th century.

Dora found it difficult to comprehend how this tradition had been carried through Eastern Europe and on to North America over a period of almost 500 years. She marvelled at my German pronunciation, still almost identical to hers. How could this be after all those years?

The history of *Pfeffermusse* (literally translated as peppernuts) is not well documented. Many Dutch Germans simply say that the recipe is from *Oma’s Ziet* (the time

of our grandmother).

Peppernuts are a special kind of *Lebkuchen* or German gingerbread. The making of gingerbread in Germany, is a hallowed process; it’s a tradition taken seriously. As early as 1643, strict rules authorized only certain bakers to make and sell gingerbread.

The name refers to the cookies’ hard texture and nut-like size and shape. It also refers to the *Pfefferlander*, the spice-rich countries of the east that supplied the more exotic ingredients for this delectable little biscuit.

Peppernuts and wheat are two traditional Christmas foods Marion and I have brought together from our distinct family backgrounds. Peppernuts come from my Russian Mennonite culture, and wheat boiled with poppy seeds mixed with walnuts, sugar and cream comes from Marion’s Austrian Catholic heritage.

Making peppernuts every year is a big part of our Christmas celebrations with our children and grandchildren Kishina, Anaya, Zachary and Nathan. The warm glow from the hearth, Christmas lights, muted conversation, card and board games, and peppernuts and wheat for dessert make for a perfect family celebration.

We always share a small, brightly wrapped container or bag of peppernuts with family and friends who come to visit, and we take a bowl full of them to the church family Christmas banquet.

We’re happy to share our family peppernut recipe with you as well! May you enjoy this recipe as much as our family has throughout the generations—and don’t forget to bake them with love till golden brown.

The recipe is available online at [canadianmennonite.org/stories/omas-peppernuts](http://canadianmennonite.org/stories/omas-peppernuts).



## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Bean**—Allie-Mae Fern (b. July 21, 2018), to Candace and Adam Bean, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

**Braun**—Connor Owen (b. Oct. 10, 2018), to Ryan and Cory Braun, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Gunn**—Wyatt Martin (b. Aug. 2, 2018), to Anne and Will Gunn, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.

**Toews**—Sophia Nina (b. Oct. 2, 2018), to Joel and Manuela Toews, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

### Marriages

**DeWeerd/Yantzi**—Hannah DeWeerd and Dylan Yantzi (East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.), in Exeter, Ont., June 16, 2018.

**Millard/Schwartzentruber**—Ruth Millard and Keith Schwartzentruber, at East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont., Sept. 22, 2018.

### Deaths

**Burkhart**—Coral Arlene (Peggy) (Shaw), 93 (b. March 18, 1925; d. Oct. 7, 2018), Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**Epp**—Henry P., 102 (b. Aug. 8, 1916; d. Oct. 10, 2018), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

**Froese**—Werner, 85 (b. May 12, 1933; d. Oct. 8, 2018), Leamington United Mennonite Church, Ont.

**Gingerich**—Grace Elizabeth, 86 (b. Aug. 26, 1932; d. Sept.

15, 2018), Wilmot Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

**Harder**—Elfriede (nee Klassen), 96 (b. Jan. 26, 1922; d. Sept. 7, 2018), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

**Holst**—Susan (nee Schwindt), 86 (b. June 15, 1932; d. Oct. 8, 2018), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**Koop**—Margaret (Toews), 80 (d. Oct. 3, 2018), Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

**Kosumovic**—Otilie (nee Horn), 91 (b. July 15, 1927; d. Oct. 13, 2018), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**Povey**—Ivan, 75 (b. July 25, 1943; d. Sept. 20, 2018), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Rempel**—George Alfred (Fred), 74 (b. Feb. 6, 1944; d. Aug. 29, 2018), Carman Mennonite, Man.

**Rempel**—Henry, 90 (b. Oct. 29, 1927; d. April 20, 2018), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Weise**—Gerhard, 91 (b. July 8, 1926; d. March 29, 2018), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Unrau**—Gordon, 86 (b. Sept. 1, 1932; d. Sept. 13, 2018), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

**Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones announcements within four months of the event. Please send Milestones announcements by email to [milestones@canadianmennonite.org](mailto: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



Johnny Kehler, left, with his plane and George Groening, at Matheson Island, Man. Groening grew up near Lowe Farm, Man., and served the Mennonite church community for decades. As a long-serving leader, he not only witnessed change but instituted changes as well. He started his preaching at Lowe Farm Bergthaler Mennonite Church, was the pastor of Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, and was on the board of Mennonite Pioneer Mission of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada. In B.C., he served at Eden Mennonite Church in Chilliwack from 1971 to '84 and as moderator of the Mennonite Church British Columbia conference from 1975 to '79. His collection of more than 3,800 sermons spans 70 years; they are available at the Mennonite Heritage Archives in Winnipeg.

*Text: Conrad Stoesz*

*Photo: Conference of Mennonites in Canada / Mennonite Pioneer Mission Photo Collection*



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

## VIEWPOINT

# 'I'm sorry:' Apologies and abuse

CAROL PENNER

**W**hat role do apologies play in healing from abuse? We may feel that we can't go wrong by offering an apology. We encourage people to apologize to each other in church. Unfortunately, too often quick apologies lead to more hurt than healing, especially in the context of abuse, where the hurt done is so long-lasting and painful.

Here are six areas where apologies can go wrong:

**1. IT'S TOO SOON.** People who abuse others often do this by objectifying the other person. People who abuse are profoundly self-centred and have little empathy for their victims. When they are caught, they may feel some remorse, but

*Apologies are more likely to have a positive effect if they are vetted by an accountability and support group rather than just by a lawyer.*

often they are more sorry for themselves than they are for their victims. Apologies from abusers can fall flat because they don't show empathy. Intensive counselling, often for years, is needed before abusers can develop empathy, let alone formulate words that can convey true repentance.

**2. LAWYERS GET INVOLVED.**

Sometimes people get legal advice, and lawyers are worried that their clients may be sued, so they urge those accused of abuse not to make public statements taking responsibility. Instead of statements saying "I did . . ." which name behaviours, or "I was wrong to . . ." which show awareness of wrongdoing, they express sorrow or regret "if you were hurt." This

vagueness and deflection is extremely painful, particularly when statements subtly blame or implicate the survivor in the abuse. Apologies can be a way of manipulating survivors or of gaining public support at the expense of survivors.

**3. WORDS ARE NOT ENOUGH.** Words are entirely empty unless they are accompanied by some sort of practical restitution. If abusers are sorry for something they've done, are they willing to pay counselling costs for their victims? Are they naming other people that they hurt and seeking to make amends to them? Words without any actions to back them up are cheap and insincere for survivors whose lives have been shattered by abuse.

**4. WE LIKE THINGS CLEAN AND TIDY.**

When abuse happens in church, there is a lot of pain and suffering. Sometimes we feel that if someone would just apologize, and someone would just forgive, this whole mess would go away. Unfortunately, it's not that simple. Apologies usually don't miraculously heal people. Healing from abuse is a gift from God that usually takes years. One apology cannot short-circuit that process.

**5. POWER DYNAMICS.** Abuse is about power. People who abuse are often good at getting their own way and at manipulating others. This manipulation often extends to the apology process, which they control to their best interests. Unless survivors of abuse are consulted

extensively about the apology process, they may feel that the abuser has again gained the upper hand.

**6. VICTIM BLAMING.** After an apology, sometimes churches expect survivors to move on: "You've got your apology, now you have to let it go." Survivors need support, not judgment about how they are reacting to an apology or how they are processing their ongoing pain.

Apologies can serve a purpose. They work best when people who have abused participate in counselling to really understand what they have done. Apologies are more likely to have a positive effect if they are vetted by an accountability and support group rather than just by a lawyer. This group can advise those apologizing when their words are self-serving or vague, and are likely to be more hurtful than helpful.

It's hard to get it right when it comes to responding to abuse. What may seem like common sense can turn out to be hurtful, simply because you haven't been in that situation before. It's important to pray for guidance and to equip yourself with ideas about best practices in responding to situations of abuse. ❧

*Carol Penner teaches and writes in the area of practical theology. After many years as a pastor in various Mennonite congregations, she now teaches at Conrad Grebel University College. She is the author of "Sacred trust," an educational series on sexual misconduct in the church ([mcec.ca/sacredtrust](http://mcec.ca/sacredtrust)).*



## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

# What moves you?

*Riders support Witness workers*

BY JASON MARTIN  
Mennonite Church Canada

A big thank you to our 75 participants on 12 teams, and to our generous Mennonite Church Canada family who sponsored these riders in this year's Ride for Refuge event held in communities across Canada on Sept. 29. Together, we raised more than \$19,500 towards our International Witness ministry.

The Ride for Refuge event bills itself as “a family-friendly cycling and walking fundraising event” that enables people to support charities that provide refuge and hope for the world's most vulnerable people. Our 12 Ride for Refuge teams participated in order to stand up for those “whose lives are deeply and often permanently affected by forces and events they can't control, or who are exploited by the greedy and powerful who care nothing for human suffering.”

The funds that we raised will be used

to enable Witness workers to continue to walk alongside those struggling with alcohol and gambling addictions, mental health issues and spiritual darkness; empower local church leaders to put Scripture into action to help the poor by dedicating their time and finances; facilitate small conversation groups that provide participants with a safe space where they can be vulnerable with others; unite small communities of faith to reinforce a shared Mennonite identity in a context of misunderstanding and suspicion; and to stand in solidarity with Indigenous peoples in their struggle to protect their ancestral lands and in their journey towards their right to self-determination. ❧

*Jason Martin is the director of MC Canada's International Witness program.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF KARL BLANK

*Team FMC Edmonton rode to support Witness workers Michael and Cheryl Nimz in the United Kingdom. Team members pictured from left to right: Jacob Wiebe-Neufeld, Tim Wiebe-Neufeld, Karl Blank and team captain Ryan Andres, all of Edmonton First Mennonite Church.*

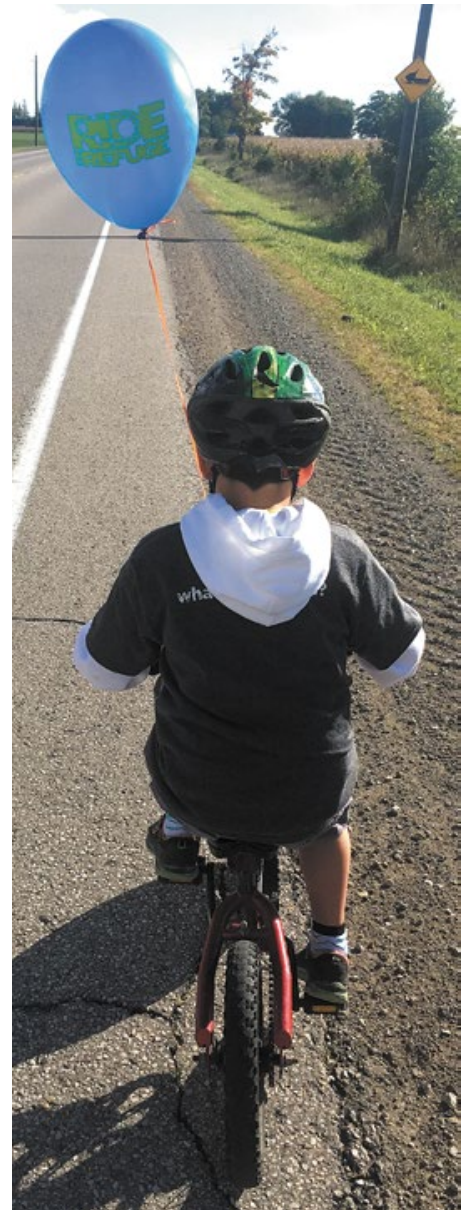
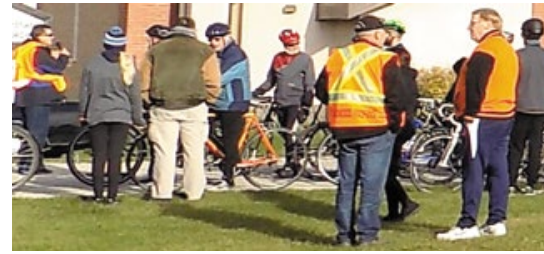


PHOTO COURTESY OF ADRIAN HASTINGS-FUHR

*One of two child members of the Mannheim Mennonite Cruisers from Ontario. 'We had a great response from our church,' says team captain Adrian Hastings-Fuhr. 'Four bikers from Mannheim biked 10 kilometres and two bikers travelled 25 kilometres.'*



PHOTO ABOVE COURTESY OF MC MANITOBA

*Bikers taking part in the Winnipeg Ride for Refuge, including those riding in support of MC Canada Witness workers, are pictured at Covenant Christian Reformed Church before the ride began.*



PHOTO LEFT COURTESY OF MC SASKATCHEWAN

*Craig Neufeld, team captain of the Rosthern Rouleurs, in action. The Rouleurs raised \$4,320, the most of any of the 12 MC Canada teams.*

# RIDE FOR REFUGE

Team name	Amount raised
Rosthern Rouleurs	\$4,320
Tiefengrunters	\$3,230
Team FMC Edmonton	\$2,025
Mennonite Boys and Girls Can Ride	\$1,765
Mannheim Mennonite Cruisers	\$1,640
MC Sask'ers for Witness Workers	\$1,465
Grace Riders for Nimz	\$1,325
Team CMF/Poovongs	\$1,020
Waterloo-Kitchener UM Church Team Kim/P	\$960
Pleasant Point Pedallers	\$650
Team Poovong, Carman MC	\$620
Nordheimers+	\$571
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$19,591</b>

*Numbers accurate as of press time. The total represents 26 percent of the fundraising goal of \$75,000.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF MC MANITOBA

*Mary Anne Falk, left, and Tina Doell, both of Carman (Man.) Mennonite Church, were riding for Christine and Tom Poovong, Witness workers in Thailand.*

# From grief to gratitude

*Remembering the centennial of the Russian Revolution*

BY MARIA H. KLASSEN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

**M**oments in time can change the course of history. Decisions made in Russia in the years following the Russian Revolution in 1917 changed life for thousands of Mennonite families.

On Oct. 13, an evening of remembering and thanksgiving took place at St. Catharines United Mennonite Church. Those who took part and those who attended remembered together the years of grief for their forebears in Russia and gave thanks for their lives in Canada a century later.

The idea for this event came from John B. Giesbrecht and, with the help of George Dyck, an evening of history and music was planned. The event was hosted by Randy Klaassen, the church's pastor.

Music for the evening included a mass choir conducted by John Rempel and accompanied by Kathy Rempel, who performed Franz Schubert's "Deutsche Messe." The congregation sang "Holy God, We Praise Thy Name" and "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah."

A Russian folk song by soloists Renate Klaassen and Elizabeth Pereira, with pianist Shirley Dick and mandolin player Alan Teichroeb, told the story of a mother sewing a red party dress for her daughter, who doesn't think she'll ever wear it.

In his presentation, "Doors closed, doors opened," Senator Peter Harder said, "Governments sometimes make mistakes . . . and sometimes governments correct mistakes."

In May 1919, the Canadian government sanctioned an order-in-council that Doukhobors, Hutterites and Mennonites would not easily be assimilated into Canada and should be prohibited from entering the country. These groups were undesirable, Harder said, because of their peculiar customs, habits, modes of living and methods of holding property. This order-in-council was rescinded in June

1922, allowing Mennonites to immigrate to Canada. This decision allowed many of the parents and grandparents of those assembled to come to Canada, a decision that changed the course of many lives.

In her talk, "Out of the ashes of revolution, into the promise of Canada," Aileen Friesen, co-director of the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg and executive director of the Plett Foundation, invited those in attendance to remember the major impact the Russian Revolution made on the course of their Mennonite history.

There were, in fact, two revolutions in 1917, she said. In February, Czar Nicholas II abdicated, which ended the 300-year-old Romanov dynasty. During the reign of the czars, Mennonites lived in thriving communities in the Russian empire, which they had built through their hard work, the good fertile soil and the booming wheat market. They started successful businesses, expanded their educational systems, sent their youth to study further afield, and became involved in politics, becoming mayors of large cities. But life was not all a paradise. There was a land hunger that divided the Mennonites into haves and have-nots, and religious divisions tore families apart.

The second revolution, in October 1917, saw Lenin take leadership of the Russian government. Life changed in the Mennonite villages. The Red Army took money and horses from Mennonite villages. Hostages were taken among Mennonite leaders, and millions of rubles had to be collected to secure their release. Executions took place for past crimes that had been fabricated. Groups of Mennonite men organized and armed themselves in self-defence units, patrolling village streets to protect people and property.

In the summer of 1918, Mennonite villages were caught between the Red and



PHOTO BY RANDY KLAASSEN

*Historian Aileen Friesen speaks to a full house at St. Catharines United Mennonite Church.*

White armies and roving bandits. Villages were burned, families were massacred, and rapes, murders and pillaging was rampant. The full impact of the trauma of civil war was long lasting—no balm could heal these wounds. These were the conditions of 1918.

In 1920, the Red Army was victorious. Desperate for help, the Mennonites reached across their borders and the ocean to their American and Canadian families. The relief kitchens of Mennonite Central Committee, founded in 1921, fed all in need. And the need was great. Not only was the country recovering from the ravages of war, it was also in the midst of a widespread famine and a typhus epidemic. The first train of Mennonite immigrants left the Soviet Union in 1923.

More than 20,000 Mennonites were able to leave before the doors were shut. B.B. Janz, H.H. Ewert, David Toews, A.A. Friesen and Gerhard Enns were instrumental in helping with transportation, lodging, travel credit and so much more.

Today, through the opening of the KGB secret police files in Ukraine, Russian Mennonites are able to retrieve information about many of their families and leaders who remained and disappeared in subsequent years, especially during 1937 and 1938.

Donations from this centennial event were collected for the University of Winnipeg's project for the retrieval of KGB victim files and for the ongoing humanitarian work of the Mennonite Centre in Molochansk, Ukraine. ❧



PHOTO BY JOS GRUNDY

*Members and friends of Erb Street Mennonite Church—originally the David Eby congregation—gathered for the dedication of its history panel ‘What is this place?’ on Oct. 7. Located in the church’s cemetery at the corner of Erb Street West and Fischer-Hallman Road in Waterloo, Ont., the panel recognizes the congregation’s 180th anniversary in 2017, along with the early people and places of that area of Waterloo.*

## God at Work in the World Snapshots



CANADIAN MENNONITE PHOTO BY D. MICHAEL HOSTETLER

*At Oct. 20 and 21 meetings in Winnipeg, the Joint Council of Mennonite Church Canada signed an updated covenant of the five regional churches that make up the nationwide church. The occasion celebrated one year since the restructuring of the denomination. Signing are the moderators of the regional churches, from left to right: Lee Dyck, MC British Columbia; Brenda Tiessen-Wiens, MC Alberta; Terry Stefaniuk, MC Saskatchewan; Gerald Gerbrandt, MC Manitoba; and Arli Klassen, MC Eastern Canada. Calvin Quan, moderator of MC Canada, stands at the far right. Other members of the Joint Council stand in the rear; from left to right they are: Betty Loewen, MC B.C.; Allan Hiebert, secretary/treasurer; Henry Funk, MC Saskatchewan; Andrea De Avila, MC Manitoba; Margaret Kruger-Harder, MC Alberta; Geraldine Balzer, assistant moderator; and Alicia Good, MC Eastern Canada.*

# Modern ghosts of a horse-drawn scandal

## Part III: Intervention

BY WILL BRAUN  
Senior Writer

*Eight men went to prison, the media gaze moved on, and colony life resumed. But the saga of mass rape in the Bolivian corner of our family of faith is far from over.*

When word of a serial rape crisis on the Manitoba Colony in Bolivia emerged in 2005, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) faced pressure to intervene. The situation demanded a response that would protect women and girls on the colony.

In the wake of the crisis, MCC staff met with colony leaders and offered trauma care for the victims, an offer declined by colony leaders. The MCCers heard women's stories and met with the men in prison. They supported several colonies in setting up an addiction treatment centre. And they continued publishing a range of printed materials for colony Mennonites.

That response seemed understandably inadequate to some. But critics did not seem to have a clear vision of what more MCC could have actually done. Denunciation of colony leaders would have achieved little more than to isolate MCC from the colony. To remove women and girls, or somehow impose a new order, was not remotely practical nor morally plausible, in part because colony Mennonites tend to see outside Mennonites as worldly and assimilated, and thus lacking moral authority.

The need for protection and healing could not have been more clear, while the path to those ends could hardly have been more complicated.

### **Different approaches/ views on colony work**

Evangelical groups working in Bolivia tend to view the colonies—which tend to be the most conservative Mennonite colonies in Latin America—as places of irredeemable spiritual darkness. This view means that they have no rapport with colony leaders and are

not welcome on the colonies. They work with the people who leave. In response to the rape crisis, they could only work with the few who fled.

MCC takes a different approach. It respects the autonomy of colonies and, as per its modus operandi around the world, works at the invitation of locals. Taking a long view, it builds relationships, to the extent possible among the roughly 80,000 colony Mennonites in the country.

Former MCC Bolivia worker Wilmar Harder says that colony leaders “know what their issues are,” and “they know North Americans have their issues too.” The MCC intent is to walk alongside, recognizing the good in the colonies.

Currently, MCC's colony work in Bolivia includes accompaniment of colony initiatives related to water; health; crop diversification; and distribution and production of printed materials, in part to encourage literacy.

“It is unsatisfying,” admits Steve Plenert. “I wish we had more reach into the colonies.” Plenert was MCC co-director for Bolivia when I spoke with him in January. The cultural gap makes the work challenging. Plenert says *Die Mennonitische Post*, a German-language newspaper widely read on colonies throughout Latin America, is MCC's best resource for this work, and he praises editor Kennert Giesbrecht for the relationships he has established.

Jack Heppner articulates an approach that neither dismisses the colony system outright nor accepts it unquestioningly. Heppner lived in Bolivia in the 1970s and '90s, and visited again in 2009-10, at which time he independently investigated the rape crisis. The



investigation led to a thorough report.

### **Colony views on church-state relations**

In an interview, as in his report, Heppner says that the more-conservative colony Mennonites have replicated one of the key things early Anabaptists rejected: the church-state.

With considerable autonomy from Bolivian governments, colonies function nearly as mini-states, or mini church-states, considering that on many Bolivian colonies







PHOTO BY KENNERT GIESBRECHT

*Wilmar Harder of Mennonite Central Committee speaks with Johan N. Peter of the California Colony in Bolivia.*

you need to be a member of the official colony church in order to live on the colony and participate in the economy. Church leaders (bishops) and civic leaders (*vorsteas*) rule in tandem. If you leave the church, you must leave the colony.

Not all Bolivian colonies, and certainly not all colonies elsewhere, adhere to this

single-church approach.

As Heppner notes, in 16th-century Europe one had to belong to the church in order to marry, register children, find employment and, in many cases, to find safety. Anabaptists said church membership must be voluntary. This notion of a free church posed a profound threat to the societal order. Anabaptists of the 1500s died over this matter.

Heppner traces Mennonite church-state problems back to Russia, where Mennonites were given so much autonomy that they essentially had to create their own de facto governments, which in some cases came under the influence of bishops, who considered themselves the real leaders. Where there was only one church option, Heppner writes that the colonies “began to emulate the old church-state synthesis that Anabaptists had so vigorously opposed early on in their movement.” Heppner says that a certain spiritual nominalism and social devolution followed.

He says that, while the more-conservative colony Mennonites in Bolivia “sincerely think they are upholding the original Mennonite vision,” they are really upholding more-recent distortions. “To be fair,” he writes, “one also has to ask . . . how well the Anabaptist vision can be expressed in the context of a pervasive individualism in North America.”

“The deficiencies inherent in a church-state colony system cannot be ignored in our search for an appropriate response to the present crisis on the colonies in Bolivia,” Heppner writes. But he does not believe colony Mennonites should be urged to forsake their Mennonite ways and strip themselves of their Mennonite identity. Instead, colony members and leaders should be gently encouraged to reach further back into their Mennonite heritage, thus opening up an avenue to remain true to their heritage while also making room for change.

While Giesbrecht shares very favourable experiences of his visits to colonies, he says in response to Heppner’s analysis, that it is “absolutely true” that the colony system at colonies such as Manitoba, are “comparable to what Anabaptists left behind” in the 16th

century. Giesbrecht notes that, on the colony he grew up on in Paraguay, there were distinct churches rather than a single official option.

Royden Loewen, who is Chair in Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg, says the colony system, now and in Russia, has pros and cons. He says that there “are contradictions in that system” but adds that he is “not sure that there is something inherently dysfunctional about [it].”

Heppner’s report makes specific suggestions:

- **CONTINUE SUPPORTING** people who leave the colony system.
- **ENCOURAGE FREE** churches.
- **SUPPORT ADDICTIONS** treatment and women’s shelters.
- **MAINTAIN CONNECTIONS** with colony leaders, seeking to walk with them as they deal with a changing world, and seeking to share a positive interpretation of Mennonite identity, one based on original Anabaptist values.

He says it is not helpful to think that things like the rape scandal can be solved from the outside or in the short term. He also emphasizes the need for long-term relationships.

Unfortunately, as the Low German language fades among North American Mennonites, the gap between us and our colony cousins will prove even harder to bridge. Plenert says it is difficult to recruit Low German-speaking people suited to the work. MCC is currently advertising for two long-term positions for Low German-speaking people in Bolivia.

In the final article in this series, I will look at the most prominent effort to bring outsiders into the colony reality and to give voice to the extremely isolated women of Manitoba Colony. Miriam Toews’s new novel, *Women Talking*, raises key questions, intentionally or otherwise, about who speaks for whom, and how our own inescapably modern lenses complicate our ability to relate humbly with traditional members of the Mennonite family. ❧



PHOTO BY NOAH FRIEDMAN-RUDOVSKY (NOAHFR.COM)

*Mennonite children learn patriarchy from a young age. Gender roles are strictly defined: men work the fields and women take care of the home.*

# 'Leaving behind what wasn't healthy'

*Langham congregation experiences a rebirth*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent  
LANGHAM, SASK.

**Z**oar Mennonite Church in Langham has a new home—and a new name.

When the congregation discovered black mould growing in the basement of its old church building some years ago, it didn't immediately decide to build a new church building. Instead, it gutted the basement and had it cleaned and disinfected. But the problem persisted, making some congregants unwell.

Ed Bueckert, the congregation's chair, says the decision to build a new building was not an easy one. "We drew up plans based on our dreams, but we couldn't afford that," he says. "We also looked at leasing space somewhere in town." That option didn't seem feasible either. In the end, the congregation decided to build what it could afford.

New plans for a meetinghouse that would be quite a bit smaller than the one originally dreamed of were drawn up. But then, muses Bueckert, the congregation is also quite a bit smaller than it once was.

According to the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online, the congregation averaged 175 members between 1950 and 1990. Today, about 40 congregants meet each Sunday for worship.

"For a while, we beat ourselves up because we could see the community growing, but the church wasn't growing," says Bueckert. "We even did a blitz of the town and were received well, but it didn't result in people coming through the doors."

He says this forced members to ask themselves, "If people aren't coming through the church door, how can we be a light to the community?" The answer was simple: "We need to be out there."

And congregants are "out there," he adds. With involvement in everything from ecumenical activities to recreation boards and seniors groups, the church's members are actively involved in the Langham community.

With that in mind, congregants voted to change their church name from Zoar



*Ed Bueckert, Langham Mennonite Fellowship's congregational chair, says the church wants its new building to be of service to the community.*

Mennonite to Langham Mennonite Fellowship. The name Zoar means "place of refuge," and, for early settlers, the church was a place of refuge. "But," says Bueckert, "we felt the name didn't suit us anymore [because it isn't] as important for the community to come to our church [as it is] for us to be out in the community."

Keeping "Mennonite" in the name was important to congregants, and they chose to call themselves a "Fellowship" because "fellowship" is important to us, and we include our whole community in that," says Bueckert.

The new church building is a reflection of that intention. The small sanctuary accommodates up to 80 worshippers on movable chairs rather than pews. Tables, stored in a closet off the foyer, are brought out for fellowship meals served from the adjacent kitchen and eaten in the same multi-purpose space. A balcony houses the sound system and a small office. The basement, as yet unfinished, will house Sunday school rooms and another multi-purpose space, which will be available for rent. "We want this building to be a service to our community," says Bueckert.

The estimated cost of the new building was \$450,000, and Bueckert expects the project will come in under budget. The congregation does not have a mortgage. While the cost to build did not cover demolishing the old building, a quirk of nature helped the church out. A severe summer hailstorm damaged both buildings



*The new home of Langham Mennonite Fellowship stands on the same site as the old Zoar Mennonite Church.*

and, even though the old church was slated to be torn down, the church's insurance company paid out the claim and the payment helped to cover the cost of demolition.

### /// Briefly noted

#### 'Contagious joy in Christ' theme of MC B.C. retreat



PHOTO COURTESY OF PAT LOEWEN

*Some of the 72 participants at this year's MC B.C. women's retreat.*

HOPE, B.C.—The fall Mennonite Church British Columbia women's retreat at Camp Squeah continues to be popular with participants of all ages, with this year's event in mid-October drawing 72. The theme was "Contagious joy in Christ" through all circumstances of life, joy being defined as "different from happiness." Participants were taught how to work towards zero waste in their lives by Donna Gumprich from All Things Being Eco, learned their heritage in a genealogy workshop led by Waltrude Gortzen, and enjoyed expressing their creativity while making greeting cards with Debbie Visser. Outdoor adventurers enjoyed hiking the trails at Squeah with Kim Tiessen. Pat Loewen and Carol Kropp planned the event. Although many women continue to enjoy attending the annual retreat, it has become increasingly difficult in recent years to secure leadership for planning. Some expressed concern over whether the retreat would continue but, much to Janette Thiessen's relief, four women volunteered to help her with planning next year's event.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN

The congregation moved into its new facility on Sept. 9. The day began with a final service in the old building. Bueckert says. "We talked about leaving behind what wasn't healthy and taking along what was useful and helpful, both physically and spiritually."

Every physical item that members wished to keep and use in the new church building had been cleaned and disinfected prior to the move. Even hymnals had been

laid out in the sun to remove every trace of mould spores. Then, he says, "every person carried an item over to the new building [and we] had a second service."

Bueckert says the congregation doesn't know where God will lead it next, and he speaks of the church as "a work in progress." He adds, "We're feeling our way. Everything is up for grabs." //

### /// Briefly noted

#### Housebound seniors create quilt for church anniversary

OSLER, SASK.—John and Anne Friesen may be housebound, but they still have gifts to offer their congregation. When Osler Mennonite Church celebrated its 90th anniversary on Oct. 13 and 14, a quilt handcrafted by the Friesens was presented to the congregation. The quilt depicts Osler Mennonite's church buildings and the pastors who have served the congregation since its founding in 1928. The Friesens, who live in Saskatoon, have been making quilts together for eight years. It all started when surgery to John's neck left his right side paralyzed. Because he could no longer enjoy woodworking, he decided to learn to quilt. "It's something to do," he says with a smile. Anne helps with the cutting, but John does all the machine sewing, and he does it, quite literally, single-handedly. When a quilt top is finished, it is custom quilted by someone else, and then Anne sews the binding on by hand. They have lost track of how many quilts they have sewn over the years. Many have been given as gifts or donated to charity. The Friesens made a quilt for Canada 150 in 2017; read about it at [bit.ly/canada-day-quilt](http://bit.ly/canada-day-quilt).

—BY DONNA SCHULZ



PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

*Being housebound hasn't stopped Anne and John Friesen from giving to others. Together they crafted a quilt for their church's 90th anniversary.*



PHOTO BY SUSAN BRAUN

*The quilt John and Anne Friesen stitched for Osler Mennonite Church's 90th anniversary features images of the church building through the years and each pastor who served the congregation.*

## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

## MCC B.C. festival raises more than \$1 million

BY KATIE KOWALCHUK

Mennonite Central Committee B.C.  
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

More than 20,000 people attended the annual Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) British Columbia Festival for World Relief in mid-September, raising more than \$1 million to support uprooted people locally and around the world.

The annual Bread of Life auction, which raises funds for food security projects, contributed in excess of \$230,000 to the festival's fundraising total. This year, these donations will support food security projects in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is assisting some of the 1.4 million people displaced by the conflict in the country's northeast region.

More than a hundred riders of all ages and abilities took part in the Pedalling for

Hope cyclathon, which raised more than \$220,000 in support of internally displaced people in Syria. The cyclathon funds will support a project assisting 6,000 affected households.

The remaining funds that contributed to the \$1 million-plus total were raised through food, craft and booth sales, as well as other fundraising efforts held at the two-day festival, and will support MCC's work with uprooted and vulnerable people in B.C. and around the world.

"The festival has such a rich history, and it's always encouraging to see many volunteers working to make it happen," says Wayne Bremner, executive director of MCC B.C. "It's a reflection of the generosity of our volunteers and donors, as well as



MCC B.C. PHOTO

More than 20,000 people attended the annual MCC British Columbia Festival for World Relief on Sept. 14 and 15 at the Abbotsford Tradex.



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the community here in the Fraser Valley. We are honoured that MCC continues to be trusted to help people who are facing conflict, poverty, and disasters. For all of this we are grateful."

More than 800 volunteers helped cook and serve a variety of foods from around the world, and managed craft booths, live auctions, a children's area and more. ☘

### ☘ Briefly noted

#### Orange Shirt Day celebrated in Toronto



The Toronto United Mennonite Church congregation, some of whom are pictured, turned the sanctuary orange on Sept. 30 to mark Orange Shirt Day, a day to remember the survivors of Indian Residential Schools and those who didn't survive. "The residential schools are a stain on Canadian history and on the history of the church," Pastor Michele Rizoli reminded the congregation. "If you don't know about the schools, make a commitment to find out more. Take time to lament the harm that was done to those children and the generations that follow, and the lasting harm in our society." The congregation has committed itself to educating members and working towards peace and reconciliation with its Indigenous brothers and sisters. That has taken several forms, including spending a Sunday morning experiencing the blanket exercise, a series of sermons reflecting on growing up on disputed territory, creating a heart garden at the end of the Truth and Reconciliation process, taking part in community solidarity events, weekly acknowledgments of the traditional territory on which the church sits, and studying the book *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry*.

—STORY AND PHOTO  
BY DOREEN MARTENS

# 'It's not too late'

*Treaties are about the future, not the past*

BY GLADYS TERICHOW

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
WINNIPEG

Public recognition of the traditional territory of First Nation groups that were signatories to specific treaties is a fairly new concept in Canada.

Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, a panellist at the Oct. 10 Canadian Mennonite University Face2Face discussion on "Treaty One and Mennonite Privilegium," described treaties as "vessels of family making." The assistant professor of Indigenous studies at the University of Manitoba and a *Winnipeg Free Press* columnist said, "Treaties have not ended. . . . A treaty sets forth a path that others will follow. A treaty is a template. It's about the future, not the past."

Both Treaty One and the Mennonite Privilegium deal with land and assurances. Treaty One, signed in 1871, appropriated land from the Anishinabek and Swampy Cree of southern Manitoba. The Mennonite Privilegium, signed in 1873, offered land reserves to Mennonites emigrating from south Russia, now Ukraine, to Canada.

Sinclair said that Indigenous peoples saw treaties as a way to establish a family relationship with settlers, based on equality. The treaties, he explained, are not only about relationships among people but also about relationships between people and the land, water and other non-human "family" members.

He encouraged people to engage in frank and difficult conversations about treaty rights being minimized and unequal sharing of land and resources. "It is not supposed to be that way," he said. "But it is not too late. We live together and can look towards the future as a family."

Hans Werner, a retired associate professor of Mennonite studies at the University of Winnipeg, discussed the Privilegium agreement that granted privileges to Mennonites, such as exemption from



*Panelists Niigaanwewidam James Sinclair, left, and Hans Werner at Canadian Mennonite University's Face2Face discussion on 'Treaty One and Mennonite Privilegium.'*

military service and the right to educate their children without restrictions.

The Mennonite signatories to the Privilegium had anticipated that Mennonites would continue with the communal land ownership system that had been tested in south Russia. Mennonites were granted land reserves for exclusive Mennonite settlements, but Werner said that within a few years, "Mennonites embraced property and property rights," and by the mid-1880s the village system started breaking up.

In the 1920s, a large number of Mennonites from Manitoba and Saskatchewan moved to Mexico, where they re-established Mennonite colonies and German-language schools similar to what they had had in south Russia.

In response to questions from the audience, both panellists emphasized the importance of sharing stories and listening. "It is hard to talk about land theft and genocide," said Sinclair. "It takes bravery and courage. It is your job to be brave now. Once you know something you cannot un-know it." ❧

/// Briefly noted

## Menno Office offers sense of belonging and support



*Karannina Schonwetter, left, Gabby Martin and Kaija Heppner-Mueller perform at a fundraising event for the Manitoba Inter-Mennonite Chaplaincy Association.*

WINNIPEG—University campuses can be lonely places for students. At the University of Manitoba students find a sense of belonging and pastoral care at the Menno Office, a campus ministry supported by the Inter-Mennonite Chaplaincy Association, a partnership of Mennonite Church Manitoba, Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference and Evangelical Mennonite Conference. "We are a small community among thousands," says environmental sciences student Karannina Schonwetter of Winnipeg. "It helps me realize how applicable faith is for university students. We can grow in faith, even though it is not a faith-based university." Schonwetter was among 19 musical entertainers who performed at a coffeehouse that took place on Sept. 29 at Schonwetter's home church, Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship. The coffeehouse raised funds to support the chaplaincy and created awareness of services provided by Chaplain Mark von Kampen. Menno Office activities include informal drop-in opportunities, personal and spiritual guidance, a weekly discussion forum called Menno Talk, and joint lunches and worship services with students from other chaplaincy ministries. Each church conference appoints representatives to serve on the association's board and provides financial support.

—STORY AND PHOTO  
BY GLADYS TERICHOW

## GOD AT WORK IN US

# Congratulations, Simon Eng

*MCC Alberta volunteer lauded for packing 35,000 school kits over the past 12 years*

BY LINDA DICKENSON

Mennonite Central Committee Alberta  
CALGARY

Every Tuesday, the bell at the front desk of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Alberta headquarters in Calgary dings incessantly, whether a receptionist is sitting there or not. “Hi, Simon!” someone says, and Simon wanders off to get a coffee and a snack, and then he ambles down the hall to the material resources warehouse.

Simon Eng, 33, has Down syndrome. Through a partnership with Columbia College, a Calgary vocational institute, and together with Edwin Juarez, his community rehabilitation worker, Eng packs school kits—35,000 of them in the last 12 years.

Thirty-five thousand school kits weigh

as much as 7.5 elephants, they have 19.6 million pages of paper, and the erasers in them weigh as much as an adult polar bear.

Eng started off as a thrift shop volunteer 14 years ago, but after one session in the warehouse he declared that material resources was the place to be.

He has limited communication skills but says he wants to help kids go to school. “I may not have much, but I have my hands,” is something he has said many times over the years.

Once in the warehouse, it’s time to get down to work. “*Uno, dos, tres, cuatro*” is heard from the table where Simon works, counting out the notebooks, pencils, pens and other items that go into a school kit. Each kit needs one blue and one black pen—not two of the same colour—and he lets Juarez know when he needs more of any item.

Eng is diligent and focussed, and the Alberta material resources warehouse wouldn’t be the same without him. Of the nearly 2,400 school kits packed in Alberta last year, Simon packed about 1,600 of them!

As his morning continues, the sounds of mariachi music fill the air. Boxes are made and filled, and the number of kits packed is carefully written down and totalled.

Then goodbyes are said, and it’s on to the next thing on Eng’s daily schedule. He loves to look at maps and can figure out directions to get almost anywhere!

Any story about Eng isn’t complete without mentioning Juarez, who has been with Eng for almost

12 years. Juarez has infinite patience and gentleness and has been a catalyst for Eng’s growth and maturity.

Eng likes to feel important and he loves being at MCC Alberta. He’s very much a part of the MCC Alberta family. ✎

## ✎ Staff change

### First woman appointed to lead MEDA as CEO/President



• **DOROTHY NYAMBI** has been named as the new chief executive officer and president of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA). She

will succeed Allan Sauder, who is retiring from the role which he has held for the past 16 years, on Nov. 26. Nyambi is a dual citizen of Canada and Cameroon and is fully bilingual, speaking both English and French. Her background includes more than 20 years of international development policy and programming experience at the strategic and analytical level, with country, regional and continental scope. She has work experience in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean and North America. She began her career as a medical doctor before moving into the field of international development. She resonates strongly with MEDA’s approach and framework of entrepreneurship as the pathway to alleviate poverty, particularly with work that is sustainable, scalable, measurable and replicable, and she is attracted to MEDA’s inclusive work with many diverse communities. She holds a Christian faith commitment and an appreciation of MEDA’s Mennonite beliefs and values. “I’m honoured and humbled by this opportunity to serve in leadership for this world-class organization and to continue building on the amazing impact MEDA has,” she says.

— MEDA



MCC ALBERTA PHOTO

*Linda Dickinson, MCC Alberta’s material resources coordinator, presents Simon Eng with a cake honouring his achievement in packing 35,000 school kits over the past 12 years. ‘I may not have much, but I have my hands,’ is something he has said many times over the years.*

## ARTBEAT

## BOOK REVIEW

# Life: Great potential . . . tinged with sorrow

*Bird-Bent Grass: A Memoir, in Pieces.*

Kathleen Venema. Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2018, 340 pages.

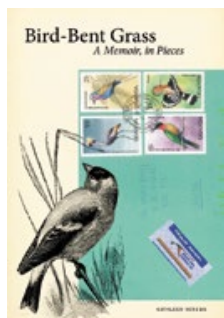
REVIEWED BY BARB DRAPER  
BOOKS & RESOURCES EDITOR

**B**ird-Bent Grass truly is a “memoir, in pieces” as it explores the lives of Kathleen Venema and her mother, with anecdotes from the past, excerpts from old letters and reflections on the present, all mixed together. But the strength of the book is that the pieces fit together to tell the story of a mother-daughter relationship that continues into a painful journey with Alzheimer’s disease. As the stories shift back and forth through the decades, the reader is given an example of how a diseased brain can function in a scattered way.

In the 1980s, Venema travelled to Uganda to teach under the auspices of Mennonite Central Committee. This was a challenging time because Uganda was recovering from political unrest and the infrastructure was not dependable. During her time at the school in Ndejje, many letters went back and forth between Canada and Uganda, and these letters are used throughout the book to help tell the story.

The author’s parents were immigrants from the Netherlands after the Second World War. Her mother, who was a child during the Nazi invasion, goes back to many of her childhood memories as her cognitive health declines. Some of these recollections are very painful, but Venema often adds the spark of humour that is so essential in dealing with Alzheimer’s.

Through the letters and Venema’s comments about them years later, we see



that her mother is passionate about her faith and is concerned about peace and justice in Canadian society. She is also a deep thinker who enjoys conversations about theology and literature. As Venema contrasts her own life with that of her mother, she is saddened that her mother’s formal education ended so

early and she recognizes how blessed she

has been with academic opportunity.

Readers who are walking the journey of Alzheimer’s with a loved one should find a sense of rapport with this story. Venema describes the progress of the disease in an honest and straightforward way, tinged with sadness, but always spiced with laughter.

The title comes from a common sight in Uganda, a tiny bird perched on a thin blade of elephant grass, which Venema describes as having “simultaneous serenity and tension.” She thinks of this delicate resilience and tension as symbolizing our existence: Life offers great potential but it is also fleeting and tinged with sorrow.

Although this memoir is “in pieces,” it is very accessible. While the scenes are not in chronological order, Venema describes the situations and emotions of each vignette in a reflective way that brings the characters to life. Many women in the “sandwich generation” should find this book a sympathetic friend. ☸

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**Mennonite Gallery celebrates 20 years of art and relationships**

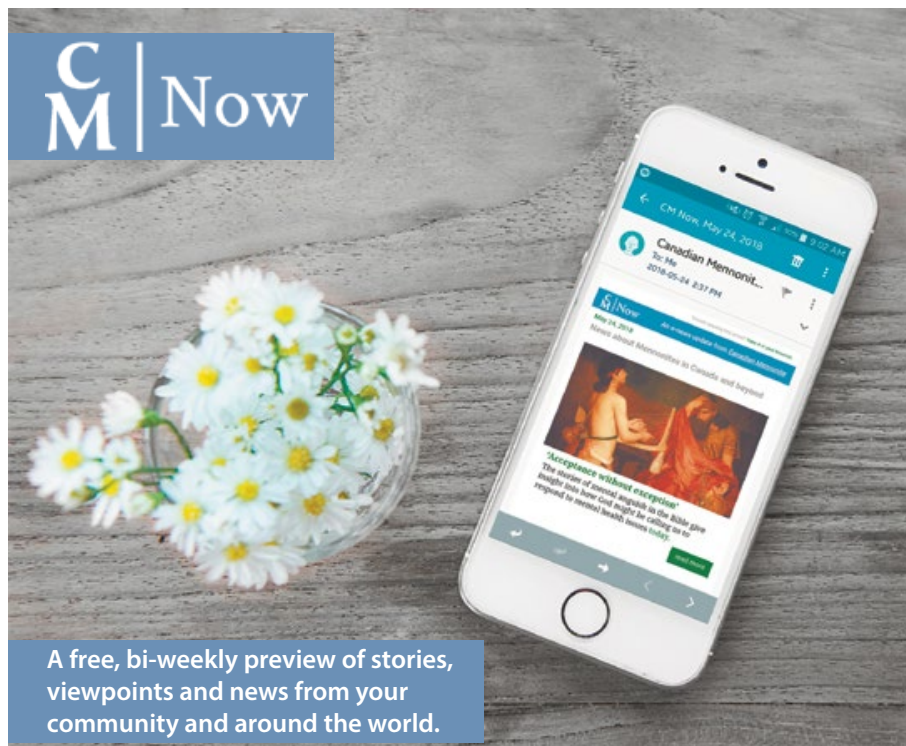
The anniversary of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery provided the occasion to feature artists who were involved in past exhibitions.  
[canadianmennonite.org/art-gallery](http://canadianmennonite.org/art-gallery)

**Rooted and Grounded speakers call for changed worldviews**

At a conference on land and discipleship at AMBS, speakers challenged listeners to reconsider their attitudes toward the Earth.  
[canadianmennonite.org/change-worldviews](http://canadianmennonite.org/change-worldviews)

**Study connecting genetics and bipolar disorder enlists Mennonites**

Researchers believe that the relatively shallow gene pool of Mennonites is helpful for understanding the neurobiology behind bipolar disorder.  
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# MCI Community Covenant

Cassidy Penner, Student Council vice-president

What is community? And what does it mean to be part of a community?

These are the questions that we, as Mennonite Collegiate Institute (MCI) student leaders for the 2018-19 school year were faced with on our annual leadership retreat. We thought long and hard for the two days we had together and came up with what we called our Community Covenant.

We took time to put together Bible verses, and then come up with characteristics we hope to see in our student body throughout the school year, both in and outside of the school walls. Although the covenant comes across as idealistic and clichéd, we believe as a school that we can achieve these goals. This year, our core verse comes from Philippians 2:1-5, encouraging us to walk with one spirit, one mind, "having the attitude of Christ Jesus."

Once the new and returning students started arriving, we presented the covenant to them and explained what we expected of

them as MCI students: to be welcoming and friendly, to step out of their comfort zones and to befriend people who may not be in their friendship group.

We then proceeded to get the whole school to sign the covenant, as if agreeing to act by it. By creating this covenant, we are setting a new tone for the school year as well as keeping up the warm, welcoming MCI community. Our hope is that, throughout the school year, students and staff will keep coming back to the covenant to be reminded of what is expected of them as a part of the MCI family. In our first month of school I have seen community alive in MCI more than ever.

At MCI, in Gretna, Man., community has always been present, but, having been part of the MCI family for four years now, this year seems to have a very different mentality. Students are taking this responsibility seriously, and it has only brought us closer together as a community.



MENNONITE COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE PHOTO

Cassidy Penner, front row far right, with her Grade 12 classmates at Red Rock Retreat.

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Conrad Grebel  
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## VIEWPOINT

# Lost and found

*We may put divisions between ourselves and others, but Jesus shows us a different way*

MOSES FALCO

SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES

**W**e love boundaries. These boundaries may help us to define who we are, but they also can lead us to assume we know others based on appearances. Most of the time, if people aren't like us, we consider them lost.

Are you conservative or liberal? Are you pro-life or pro-choice? Are you LGBTQ-affirming or traditional? What's your race, your favourite sports team, your gender, your religion, your favourite ice cream flavour?

Let's think about the church. We have thousands of denominations, all boundaries that we set up so we can say that we are right and others are heretics.

There are people who are "in" and "out" when it comes to our boundaries, and, of course, we think that everyone who's "in" with us is right. Those who are "out" simply need to see things our way and then be found.

Jesus has something to say about this. Luke 15 includes three stories about being lost and found that all tie together.

First comes the story of the shepherd who cares so much about one sheep that wanders off, that he leaves 99 others to find it and bring it back to the flock.

The second story is of a woman who has 10 silver coins and loses one. Instead of counting it as lost, she searches the whole house until she finds it.

The third story is about the prodigal son. A father who has two sons was asked by the one to give him all his inheritance.

The father agrees, and the son goes away and wastes it all on useless things. After reaching rock bottom, the son returns home, to be greeted by the loving embrace of his father.

All three stories are about being lost and found, and all three stories end in celebration because what was once lost is found. The shepherd, the woman and the father rejoice with their neighbours and families, except for the brother of the prodigal son. He's angry that his father would welcome his lost brother back and throw him a homecoming party. The father tries to convince him to join the party, but he sulks and refuses to celebrate.

Boundaries can be helpful in many ways, but in other ways they unnecessarily divide us. We are often just like the second son, believing we are right in excluding others from being found. We like it when we can define who's in and who's out. Then we know who's on our side and who we can hate and put down.

But what happens when the father welcomes home those we thought were out? What happens when we are invited to their homecoming party?

The transforming power of the gospel of Jesus is that enemies become friends and boundaries are destroyed. We must all realize that we have been welcomed into the family of God. It wasn't of our own doing so we can't take any credit. If we have been welcomed in, we have no

*(Continued on page 28)*



PHOTO BY AARON EPP

*Luke 15 includes three stories about being lost and found that all tie together.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF MOSES FALCO

*Jesus calls us to a radical love that bridges boundaries, Moses Falco writes.*

*(Continued from page 27)*

right to sulk when God welcomes others in, even if they are the long-lost brother or sister we despise.

There's another lesson we get from the text that may make us feel even more uncomfortable. It comes from the context in which these stories are told. This is why Jesus told the parables: "Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, 'This man welcomes sinners and eats with them'" (Luke 15:1-2).

If there was any group in the time of Jesus that considered itself "in," it was the Pharisees. They knew the law by heart and thought they knew exactly where to make boundaries. The unclean had no place in their presence, or in the family of God for that matter.

Luke 15:1 shows us that Jesus crossed the boundary and was hanging out with the kinds of people that the religious leaders considered lost. How is this possible? Doesn't Jesus know that these

people are "out" and not worth the time?

The Pharisees started to sulk. If Jesus truly was someone special sent from God, shouldn't he be hanging out with them? Jesus saved his harshest criticism for the religious leaders of his day, showing them that they were actually the lost, because of the boundaries they had set up.

Whenever we think we are right and that God is on our side, we need to remember that Jesus doesn't take sides. He came to seek and to save the lost. Sooner or later, we'll need to learn that we, too, are part of the lost.

As soon as we try to convince ourselves that we are "in" and others are "out," may we remember that Jesus calls us to a radical love that bridges boundaries and never counts anyone as too far gone. ❧

*Moses Falco is the pastor of Sterling Mennonite Fellowship in Winnipeg. This article originally appeared in a longer format on his blog at [mosesfalco.com](http://mosesfalco.com).*



PHOTO BY AARON EPP

*Avoidance may temporarily decrease your stressor, but it doesn't solve the actual problem.*

## Avoiding avoidance

*Three ways to cope when you feel like hiding*

BY LAURA ABRAHAM

Special to Young Voices

**D**o you ever find yourself starting something and not completing it? If so, then you're familiar with avoidance behaviours.

Avoidance is the set of things we do to distract ourselves from the current task—the one that really needs doing. Perhaps your form of avoidance is cleaning your room, going out with friends, looking at social media or pretending your problem doesn't exist. Typically, we use avoidance not only to avoid the task but also the emotions associated with it: fear, worry, anxiety or panic.

Avoidance is a negative coping mechanism that creates an unhelpful, self-reinforcing pattern of thinking. It may temporarily decrease your stressor, but it doesn't solve the actual problem. Classic

example: Your mountain of homework is too stressful to think about, so you spend the evening watching Netflix instead. It feels good in the moment, but you regret it later when your homework problem is still staring at you.

Avoidance may even make your problem larger. While you are avoiding the negative feeling caused by the stressor, the stressor does not disappear.

Maybe you've just started college or university and feel overwhelmed. You stop checking emails, you ignore payment deadlines and pretend that everything is fine. This creates negative reinforcement: You ignore what you do not want to face and then you are no longer stressed by it (temporarily, at least). Then someone talks to you about your lack of response,

you suddenly have late fees, marks are deducted or you miss an important meeting. Avoidance has created a bigger problem that you now have to face, bringing with it all the previous emotions you were ignoring.

Avoidance is a negative contributor to mental health, but there are strategies you can implement that are positive contributors to mental health.

### **Strategy 1: Instead of ignoring, try problem-solving**

Problem-solving is something you already do every day. This can be a great tool to replace avoidance behaviours.

Back to that mountain of homework. It's stressing you out, and you're tempted to ignore it. Instead, do a little problem-solving. How could you break the mountain down into manageable chunks? You could come up with a plan:

1. **I'M GOING** to write down all of my assignments and their due dates.
2. **I'LL DECIDE** on the three pieces that should be my highest priority.
3. **I'LL MAKE** a list of next steps for each piece (go to the library? read the chapter? schedule an interview/meeting?).
4. **I'LL SPEND** three hours this evening making progress on at least one of those steps.

Problem-solving doesn't mean you've accomplished everything. What it does mean is that you've stopped pretending the issue doesn't exist and you're deciding on the best ways to take action.

### **Strategy 2: Think long term instead of short term**

Future-thinking is another helpful way to move past avoidance. When you notice yourself avoiding a task, intentionally take a few minutes to think through how this could affect your future. If you're tempted to delay paying a bill, think about what will happen long term. You could be de-registered from classes, end up with bad credit or need to pay lots of extra interest charges. If you avoid answering a certain email, you might create a negative impression on the other person. Not handing in an assignment on time will lower your grade.

Are these fun things to think about? No. They may even feel stressful! But by taking the time to think about the consequences, there's a good chance you'll discover the inner motivation to push past your avoidance and tackle what needs doing. You'll remember how worthwhile it will be!

### **Strategy 3: Instead of distracting yourself, try connection**

Avoidance can be embarrassing. Your friend asks how you're doing, and you answer vaguely, "Pretty good. Feeling a bit overwhelmed about \_\_\_\_." It's tough to admit that you've been ignoring something. So you change the subject and try to focus on fun together.

Community can make a huge impact on your life. Get involved on campus, make friends and find social support. Try tapping into the power of vulnerability and positive peer pressure. Instead of ditching homework together, ask your friends if they're willing to help you solve your problem instead of avoiding it. Talk to your classmates about the paper you have due, and plan a brainstorming session so you can decide the best ways to get it done. The stronger your social support network, the better you will be at problem-solving and coping.

Also, remember that the staff, faculty and counsellors where you go to school are human beings who have been where you are. They are full of advice and ideas for moving past avoidance and making progress on your priorities. It's a great idea to ask for help!

Facings your fears and stressors with these three coping strategies will better your life. Not only will you benefit, the people around you will benefit, too. ☺

*Laura Abraham is a school counsellor at Mennonite Educational Institute in Abbotsford, B.C., as well as a registered clinical counsellor in private practice. This article originally appeared in a longer format on Columbia Bible College's website. Visit [lauraabraham.ca](http://lauraabraham.ca).*

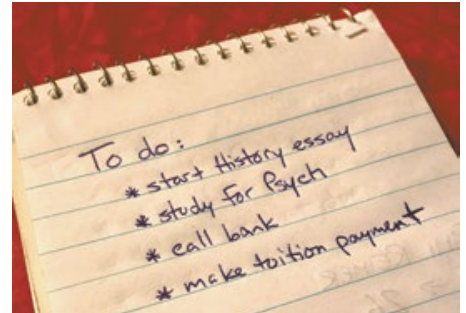



PHOTO BY AARON EPP

*There are strategies you can use to help when you feel overwhelmed.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF LAURA ABRAHAM

*Facings your fears and stressors will better your life, Laura Abraham writes.*



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To learn more and to apply, call 604 850 6608 or visit [CommunitasCare.com/careers](http://CommunitasCare.com/careers)

## Calendar

### British Columbia

**Dec. 1,2:** Advent Vespers with Abendmusik Choir, at 7:30 p.m. both nights: (1) at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford; (2) at St. Philip's Anglican Church, Vancouver.

**Feb. 22, 2019:** LEAD conference, at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond.

**Feb. 23, 2019:** MC B.C. annual general meeting, at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond.

**June 28-July 1, 2019:** "Igniting the imagination of the church" MC Canada delegate assembly, at the Quality Hotel and Conference Centre, Abbotsford: (28) leaders assembly; (29) business/ delegate meeting; (29-1) inspirational conference. Special events for youth and children.

### Alberta

**Nov. 24:** Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta fall conference, at Lendrum Mennonite Church, Edmonton; from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Keynote speaker: Dr. Tim Janzen. Theme: "DNA and

genealogy." For more information, call 780-218-7411.

**March 15-16, 2019:** MC Alberta annual delegate sessions, at Bergthal Mennonite Church, Didsbury. Theme: "Vision 2020: God's leading."

### Saskatchewan

**Nov. 24:** MC Saskatchewan fall leadership assembly.

**Dec. 19:** RJC Christmas concert, at Knox United Church, Saskatoon.

**Dec. 21:** RJC Christmas concert, at RJC gymnasium, at 7 p.m.

**Jan. 18, 2019:** RJC open house and Friday Night Live youth event.

**March 8-9, 2019:** MC Saskatchewan annual delegate sessions, at Zoar Mennonite Church, Waldheim.

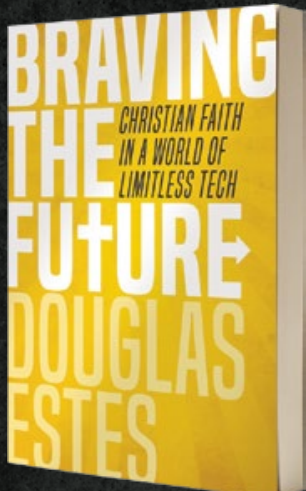
**March 22-23, 2019:** Women's retreat at Shekinah.

### Manitoba


**Nov. 24:** Christmas at CMU concerts, Winnipeg, at 2 and 7 p.m.

**Nov. 26:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate annual general meeting, at 7 p.m.

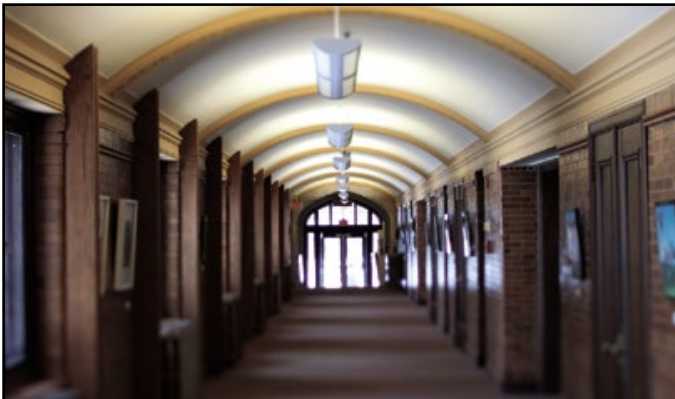
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**Dec. 2:** Winnipeg First Mennonite Church Choir, with orchestra and soloists, presents Mozart's "Te Deum" and Vivaldi's "Magnificat," among other works, at the church, at 7 p.m.

**Dec. 8:** CMU Festival Chorus and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra perform Handel's "Messiah," at the Centennial Concert Hall, Winnipeg, at 8 p.m.

**Dec. 10:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Christmas concert, at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

**Dec. 15, 16:** Faith and Life Choirs' Christmas concerts: (15) at Springfield Heights Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.; (16) at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m.

**Jan. 17, 2019:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate open house, at 7 p.m.

**Jan. 25, 2019:** Exhibitions by Winnipeg artists Anita Kroeger and Michael Boss open at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg. Runs until March 9.

**Jan. 31-Feb. 1:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate presents three one-act plays by its junior-high students; at Franco-Manitoban Cultural Centre, Winnipeg.

**Feb. 7, 2019:** Opera workshop, at CMU's Laudamus Auditorium, at 7 p.m.

**Feb. 11, 2019:** "A matter of life and death," a Face2Face discussion at CMU's Marpeck Commons, at 7 p.m.

**Feb. 12-13, 2019:** ReNew 2019: Resourcing pastors for ministry (Death, funerals and the Christian Hope), at CMU, Winnipeg. Keynote speaker: Thomas Long.

**Feb. 13, 2019:** Verna Mae Janzen Music Competition, at CMU's Laudamus Auditorium, at 7 p.m.

**March 1, 2019:** Music Therapy coffeehouse, at CMU's Marpeck Commons, at 7 p.m.

## Ontario

**Until May 2019:** Sites of Nonresistance: Ontario Mennonites and the First World War exhibit of letters, photographs and documents from the Mennonite Archives of Ontario, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

**Nov. 13:** Theatre of the Beat presents "#ChurchToo," at North Leamington United Mennonite Church, at 7 p.m.

**Nov. 14-15:** "Leading the church through times of conflict" event, at Conrad Grebel University College.

Facilitator: Betty Pries. To register, call Sue Baker at 519-885-0220 ext. 24254.

**Nov. 15:** "Aging as a natural monastery: Spirituality in later life," with Bill Randall, at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, at 4 p.m., followed by supper. For more information, email jane.kuepfer@uwaterloo.ca.

**Nov. 16:** "Spirituality, aging and narrative: The sacred art of story listening," with Bill Randall, in the Conrad Grebel University College Great Hall, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. For more information, email jane.kuepfer@uwaterloo.ca.

**Nov. 16-17:** Annual Spirit of Christmas live music and craft show, at Nairn Mennonite Church, Ailsa Craig: (16) from 6:30 to 9 p.m., (17) from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Featuring juried crafts, Ten Thousand Villages, baking, chocolate, greeting cards and a tea room. For more information, visit nairnmennonite.weebly.com

**Nov. 17:** Nithview Community Auxiliary Christmas Bazaar, in New Hamburg, from 2 to 4 p.m. Includes bake sale, silent auction, community vendors and a tearoom.

**Nov. 17:** Fairview seniors community, Cambridge, holds its annual handicraft sale, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Includes Christmas decorations, knitting, woodworking, used books and baking for sale. Tea room and lunch available from the Fairview Auxiliary.

**Nov. 17:** Theatre of the Beat presents "#ChurchToo," at Toronto United Mennonite Church, at 7 p.m.

**Nov. 18:** "Restored and forgiven: The power of restorative justice" event, at Conrad Grebel University College's Great Hall, Waterloo, at 7 p.m. Speakers: Ray and Vi Donovan, whose 18-year-old son was murdered 16 years ago. For more information, visit mcco.ca/restored-and-forgiven.

**Nov. 18:** Theatre of the Beat presents "#ChurchToo," at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, at 7 p.m.

**Nov. 22:** Theatre of the Beat presents "#ChurchToo," at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, at 7 p.m.

**Nov. 23:** Theatre of the Beat presents "#ChurchToo," at Hamilton Mennonite Church, at 7 p.m.

**Nov. 24:** Theatre of the Beat presents

"#ChurchToo," at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, at 7 p.m.

**Nov. 24, 25:** Soli Deo Gloria Singers present their fall concert, "To Everything There is a Season;" (24) at UMEI, Leamington, at 7:30 p.m., (25) at Leamington United Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m. Tickets available by phone at 519-326-7448.

**Nov. 25:** "A Celtic frontier Christmas," traditional folk music from Scotland, England and Ireland, with the Fair Wind, at Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call Sam Steiner at 519-884-1040.

**Nov. 30-Dec. 2:** Theatre of the Beat presents "#ChurchToo," at the Assembly Theatre, Toronto, at 7 p.m. each evening.

**Dec. 8:** The Grand Philharmonic Choir, Kitchener Waterloo Symphony, and soloists perform Handel's "Messiah," at the Centre in the Square in Kitchener, at 7:30 p.m. For more information, email info@grandphilchoir.com.

## Classifieds

### Travel

Women's only Textile Tour in Kenya Feb 9-19, 2019. Room for three more! Hosted by MCC alum Carla Unger. Meet, support, quilt, knit, screenprint and weave alongside artisan women's cooperatives. No experience necessary, just a desire to connect! Top it off with a two-night safari near Masai Mara. E-mail Carla Unger at [carlawaithe@gmail.com](mailto:carlawaithe@gmail.com) to inquire. The full itinerary and pricing can be found at <http://www.srsafaris.com/safaris/kenya-the-textile-safari/>.

### Employment Opportunities



Employment opportunity  
Assistant Professor of Biology

Canadian Mennonite University invites applications for a full-time, three-year contract faculty position. The successful candidate will work with other faculty to develop a growing undergraduate science program and will teach introductory biology, genetics and cell biology, and have opportunity to develop complementary courses.

For full job description and to apply, visit:  
[www.cmu.ca/employment](http://www.cmu.ca/employment)

**Dec. 12:** Menno Singers present "Incarnation," a concert celebrating the birth of Christ, at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, at 3 p.m.

**Dec. 16:** Menno Singers present "Sing-a-long Messiah," at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m.

**Dec. 16:** Pax Christi Chorale presents England's Golden Age, featuring acapella works from the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, at Grace Church on-the-Hill, Toronto, at 3 p.m.

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



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# ***In spirit and in truth***

*Intercultural worship service brings diverse Christians together in praise of God*

**By LISA WILLIAMS**

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

KITCHENER, ONT.

**I**t was a rich night of worship as a diverse group of people gathered at the third annual intercultural worship service at Kitchener First Mennonite Church on Oct. 20.

Yoel Masyawong, the regional church's mission associate and pastor at Grace Lao Mennonite Church, also in Kitchener, guided participants as they feasted on a smorgasbord of worship, dance and song. Chin, Laotian, Hispanic, Ethiopian, Hmong, Béninois and Caucasian raised their voices and clapped their hands as hearts understood each other and worshipped God together.

This event has been one of the best-kept secrets in Waterloo Region, but word is out and many are anxiously waiting for next year. ☘



PHOTO BY MIKE STRATHDEE

*The beautiful colours of the Salvadoran dancers from First Mennonite Church began the intercultural worship service. Each tap of their feet or swoop of the dancers' dresses was done in praise to God and was a magnificent offering of worship.*



PHOTO BY ARLI KLASSEN

*The heartfelt songs of praise raised by Meheret Evangelical Church filled the Kitchener First Mennonite Church sanctuary with adoration of God. With eyes closed and hands raised, and even a few tears, the Ethiopian Christians led the gathering in worship.*