

CANADIAN MENNONITE

November 8, 2021 Volume 25 Number 23

Focus on Books & Resources

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EDITORIAL

A new call for MC Canada

BY VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER
Executive Editor



The Earth is in trouble. As I write, international leaders, scientists and activists are meeting in Glasgow, Scotland, for COP26, a forum discussing actions the worldwide community must take to address the ongoing effects of climate change, effects that threaten every creature on our planet.

Even as world continues to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, right now we're focusing our attention on another crisis, what many are calling a climate emergency.

In our confession of faith, Mennonites acknowledge, "Human beings have been made for relationship with God, to live in peace with each other, and to take care of the rest of creation" (*Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, Article 6).

For decades, we have addressed the question of creation care through official statements, education, and through individual and congregational actions. There is the Creation Care Task Force, a cooperative effort among the members of Mennonite World Conference. There are the contributions of Mennonite Creation Care Network, with representatives from both Canada and the U.S. The recently created Sustainability Leadership Group was commissioned to work on behalf of Mennonite Church Canada. This magazine pays attention to the work of these groups as well as to other accounts about people taking concrete actions for creation care, particularly within Canada.

But for some in the Mennonite family, the denominational statements, the educational resources, and even congregational actions are not enough. They are calling our church to do more—right now. A new grassroots effort, 7 Calls to Action for Mennonite Church Canada, was launched on Oct. 31 and calls for our denomination to make a more drastic response.

"We are now in an emergency situation, facing an existential threat to humanity," the group states on its website. "Our common home is literally on fire. We cannot afford years of further conversation with little, and sometimes, no action. We need ambitious, commensurate-to-the-crisis response, facilitated by courageous leadership. And we need it as soon as possible."

The group calls for Mennonite Church Canada to "respond with bold urgency to our climate emergency" and to create a "Climate Emergency Mobilization Ministry" within our denomination to spur "vulnerable and risk-taking collaborative action transformation" of energy systems based on fossil fuels. There is a call to pay special attention to issues of justice for vulnerable populations like Indigenous communities.

The group calls the denomination to divest from companies based on fossil-fuel production and to offer an official affirmation of nonviolent civil disobedience "as an expression of Christian discipleship."

This group has delivered their message

directly to Doug Klassen, executive minister of MC Canada, but these kinds of action need the approval of the Joint Council, the representatives of MC Canada's regional churches who make decisions on their behalf.

The 7 Calls to Action website (7callsto-climateaction.com) suggests donations and fasting as ways to support the effort. It includes a place for individuals to sign their names in support of these calls. As I write, the list includes almost 100 names from five provinces, several U.S. states and the Philippines. There are younger signatories from ages 11 to 16.

"Time is running out," the group writes. "We are calling on Mennonite Church Canada, our beloved faith community, to do its part. We are in a crisis, and we must boldly act to help save what God so loves. We believe we can do it!"

How do we respond to these seven calls? We can listen carefully to those who are already invested in this effort, and we can have conversation with those who make decisions on behalf of our denomination. We can prayerfully discern what God is leading us to do as caretakers of this fragile planet. And we can summon the courage to take next steps, with the Creator's help.

Farewell

In this issue, you will see two articles written by Donna Schulz, *CM's* Saskatchewan correspondent (pages 16 and 17). These are Donna's last articles, as she is stepping down from that role. She has been with *Canadian Mennonite* since 2013, faithfully reporting about the events and people of that province. She's found interesting stories in many places and has written about them with care and sensitivity. We offer thanks for Donna's valuable contributions and wish her well as she moves on to other ventures. ☸



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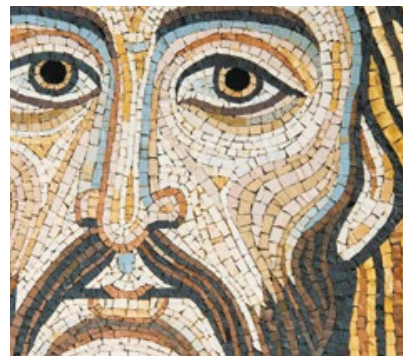
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FEATURE

Advent and idolatry

A sermon for the first Sunday of Advent, Nov. 28, 2021

By Chris K. Huebner

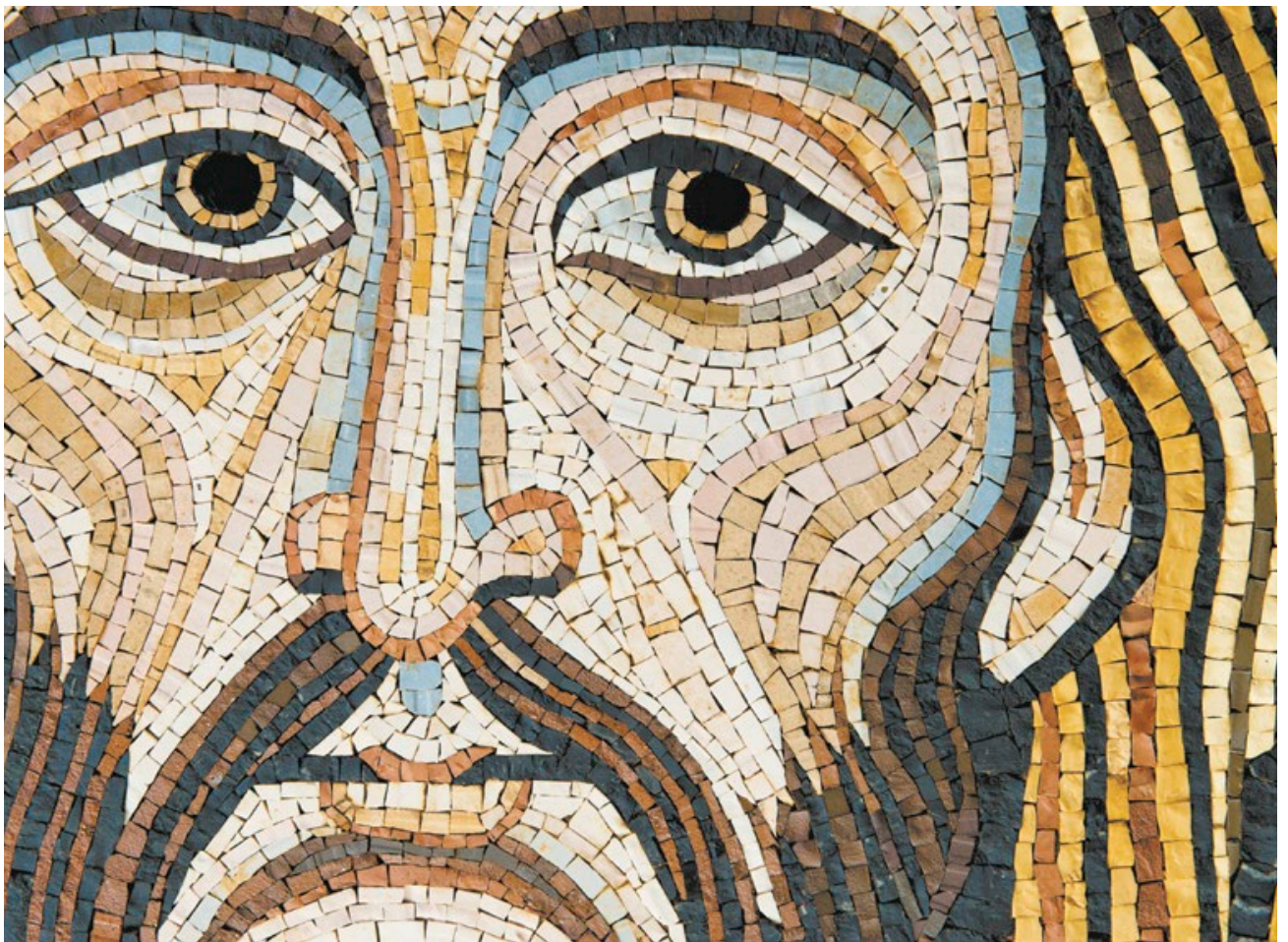


PHOTO © ISTOCK.COM/FAUK74

The first Sunday of Advent marks the beginning of the Christian year, so it would be appropriate to greet each other with the recognition that a new year has begun.

Advent is the most Jewish of Christian seasons. Yet we are accustomed to approaching Advent in a way that strips it of its Jewish character, and we

end up with a version of Christianity that is somehow fundamentally at odds with itself.

A church that has lost a sense of the Jewish character of Advent loses the ability to wrestle with a particular set of tensions and ambiguities essential to its being the church. When Christianity came to define itself over against Judaism, more than anything else, it

lost a robust sense of the messianic. Christianity's identification of Jesus as the Messiah has all too often had the effect of initiating an erasure of the very concept of messiah. By messianic, I mean to point to a sense of radical interruption—an inversion of the “laws” of history, a revolutionary change that undoes and transforms the ways we have become accustomed to thinking and acting.

What are we waiting for?

We think of Advent as a season of waiting. We speak of it by invoking notions of preparation and expectation, of anticipation and longing. This is appropriate: Advent names an expectation of an event that is to come. It is a preparation for an arrival that we are still waiting for. But things start to get interesting and difficult when we ask questions like these: What are we waiting for, and why do we wait? How are we to prepare for this event that is to come? What sort of posture does this waiting require?

The starting point from which we must attempt to answer these questions is, of course, the recognition that Advent is a time of preparation and waiting for Jesus, the Messiah. But I'm struck by how easy it is to think about this season in ways that minimize, even cancel out, a sense of the messianic character that is necessary if Jesus is to be what we Christians confess him to be. We cancel out the logic of the messianic when we think of preparation and expectation in terms of one coming who is known in advance of his arrival. We cancel out the logic of the messianic when we think of the Messiah as someone we will surely recognize. And we cancel out the logic of the messianic when we think of Advent as preparing for something that we are striving for, a longing for something that we are responsible to bring about.

But this approach is exactly what some Advent texts warn us against. They plead with God not to be angry—even though God has every right to be

angry. The psalmist asks, “O Lord God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?” (80:4).

Isaiah appeals to God: “Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity forever” (64:9).

These texts involve confession: “We have sinned.” They turn on a recognition of Israel's transgression and need for restoration.

Why are the people in need of restoration?

Why is God angry? Why are the people of Israel in need of restoration? They need restoration because they have taken their future into their own hands. They have tried to reach God. They have become impatient. They have forgotten that their very existence rests on their being chosen, called out from the nations. They have forgotten that God comes to God's people, not the other way around. They have, in short, failed to let God be God.

Isaiah is clear about this reality. He

Advent reminds us that we have made Jesus all too familiar. It reorients us to his profound strangeness.

emphasizes the fact that God arrives in ways we do not expect: “When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him” (64:3-4).

God's deeds are unexpected. God comes down. God works for those who wait. We cannot see or hear any god but God. Or rather, when we try to see or hear God, we can be confident that it is not God whom we will see or hear. This is why we are to wait for God to come to us: If we rush to meet God, we invariably find something other than God.

Paul's letter to the Corinthians

echoes a similar theme: “God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Corinthians 1:9).

And Mark also reflects this conviction: “But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come” (13:32–33).

The danger is us

Do we see Advent as a dangerous time? I suspect most of us do not. But here we are being told to beware, keep alert and be watchful. Apparently, danger is lurking. And it seems that the danger is us, and it is linked to the fact that our knowledge is not nearly as secure as we think it is. More than anything else, we are confronted with our intractable human capacity for self-deception.

As we enter into the time of expectation that is Advent, we are confronted with our sinfulness: We yearn for a messiah whom we will recognize. We want a messiah who reflects what we

would identify as best about ourselves. We long for a messiah who seems familiar, someone we feel like we know. But Advent biblical passages seem to cut in the opposite direction. This is why Advent is dangerous: It all too easily turns into a longing for and anticipation of the Jesus we think we've got figured out. It is exactly for this reason that we are called to beware, remain watchful and keep alert.

We tend to think of Advent as a time when we gradually come closer to God, a God who comes to us in human form in Jesus. But Advent begins by confronting us with the anger of God. If these passages underscore anything, it is God's distance or difference from us. The emphasis is not on a God with whom we are becoming increasingly

familiar, but on a God who remains exceedingly strange.

It is in a spirit of confession that we come to this season. Advent is a time of preparation that requires us to confess our tendency to forget God, or to turn God into something familiar. Advent brings us face to face with our insatiable desire to erect idols. It reminds us that our expectations will not be straightforwardly satisfied; we will not get the messiah we think we are waiting for. It emphasizes that God remains beyond our knowledge. It reflects a longing that in some sense remains frustrated and endlessly deferred.

We often think of Advent as a sort of bridge we must traverse in order to arrive at that site of holiness called Christmas. We see Advent as a time when we move ever nearer to the presence of God; the direction of movement is from us to God. But this view gets it exactly the wrong way around. It turns the logic of the messianic inside out. The Scriptures suggest that God is not something we reach, even when we do our best to get things right, even when we strive to be our holiest. Rather, the idea of the messianic is that God comes to us—and, in so doing, radically transforms our way of being and thinking. Here Advent names a divine movement that interrupts and reorients us. If it names an expectation, it is of an event that will be explosive and disruptive—and thus profoundly unexpected.

How do we prepare for this kind of Advent?

An Advent like this seems to require a change in how we think about preparation. We often think of preparation as a gradual filling up, a process of addition or accumulation, a progressive unfolding that moves ever forward. Here is a different image of preparation. It is not so much a filling up, as an emptying. It is a matter not of addition, but of subtraction. It is a negative moment more than one that is positive or progressive, because the Messiah

comes as much to defy our expectations as to satisfy them.

Advent reminds us that we have made Jesus all too familiar. It reorients us to his profound strangeness.

North American Christians tend to approach Advent from the perspective of Christmas. We think that the point of Advent is to focus our gaze on the event of Jesus' arrival. This is no doubt because our lives are governed so much by metaphors of progress and accumulation. But Advent ceases to be Advent when it is overdetermined by Christmas; the meaning of Advent requires us to turn our gaze the other way around. The peculiarly Jewish character of Advent that we are wont to forget reminds us that we must unlearn the Jesus we think we know so that Jesus can come to us as Messiah.

The season of Advent has as much to do with the Second Coming of Jesus as with his birth in Bethlehem. Let us

reimagine Advent as a kind of self-emptying, a hollowing out, so that we can become ready to receive the gift that Christmas has to give—the unexpected gift of a Messiah who comes to save us from the temptation that we must somehow save ourselves. ❧



Chris K. Huebner is associate professor of theology and philosophy at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg. This is adapted

from a sermon by the same name, published in Vision: A Journal for Church Theology 12, no. 1 (2011) and is used with permission of the Institute of Mennonite Studies. The sermon is reprinted in Huebner's book Suffering the Truth: Occasional Sermons and Reflections, published by CMU Press.

❧ For discussion

1. What images or activities do you associate with Advent? What is the Christian church waiting for in this season? When it comes to remembering the life of Jesus, how helpful do you find the annual church calendar (Christmas, Easter, Advent)? Do you think there is danger in having annual rituals becoming too tame and predictable?
2. Chris K. Huebner writes that we think we want a messiah who seems well-known and familiar. Do you agree? How is Immanuel or the baby Jesus portrayed in Advent and Christmas songs?
3. Huebner writes, "Advent brings us face to face with our insatiable desire to erect idols," and "we will not get the messiah we think we are waiting for." Why is it dangerous to expect a messiah we think we have figured out? What does it mean for God to be beyond our knowledge?
4. "God arrives in ways we do not expect," says Huebner. Do you agree? Can you think of times when God did unexpected things in your life? When Jesus began his ministry, what are some unexpected things he did?
5. What will it mean for you to wait for God this Advent season?

—By Barb Draper

See related resources at
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/// Readers write

✉ Readers respond to 'living simply'

Re: "What is enough?" Sept. 13, page 11.

Randy Haluza-DeLay beautifully draws our attention to a way of life marked by enough—sufficiency. Without discerning what is a need and what is a want, we will never have a sense of sufficiency, and thus no sense of abundance either! Thanks.

I would add: We also need to work for reform of our socio-economic system and structures, reforms and changes that invite people to discern enough, to detect true needs from never-ending wants. Working for such systemic changes is also a holy calling for Christians.

JOHN HIEMSTRA (ONLINE COMMENT)

Perhaps the question should not be how much income is enough, but instead how much security is enough? In a world of inflation (or maybe deflation), retirement systems that transfer all the risk to the retiree and potential for massive disruption in the economy, no one can easily define "enough."

GORDON GILBERTSON (ONLINE COMMENT)

Thanks for picking up this important thread of our tradition. A bit frayed perhaps, but still woven through history back to Jesus himself. I believe what is key today is presenting simplicity not as giving up a whole lot (although there is an element of that), but rather a stepping into a more connected, more fulfilling way of life.

For most of us, it cannot be done alone—we need a community to accompany us on this journey. Compulsive consumption attempts to fill a void left by the loss of culture and the omnipresence of capitalism, but in the end leaves us empty. Slowly we can replace that compulsiveness with connection to each other; time in nature; more music, more reading; growing and preparing food; making art; and prayer, meditation and all the other things in life that bring joy without exacting a price on ourselves or the planet. Shalom!

RON BEREZAN (ONLINE COMMENT)

✉ Two calls to vaccination

The resistance by Mennonites to the vaccinations for COVID-19 goes against the belief in conscientious objection and pacifism. We will not go to war and kill people.

But by being unvaccinated, we are in danger of

infecting others and potentially causing them to die. It is almost as if we carry a lethal weapon to cause harm to others.

Please consider and get vaccinated.

JOHN KLASSEN, PICTON, ONT.

People need to remember that God, in his wisdom, decided to give humans extra resources (a bigger brain) with the intension that they use it. And, of course, with extra talents, people also have extra responsibilities.

It states very clearly in II Timothy 1:7: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

Please remember this when deciding whether or not to take advantage of the many God-given brains that have gone into developing vaccines to help us continue the good work of the Lord.

RICHARD PENNER, SASKATOON

✉ Cookbook article shouldn't compare apples to oranges

Re: "Whatever happened to simple living: Part 1,?" Sept. 27, page 14.

I felt that Will Braun's article comparing *More-with-Less Cookbook* and *Mennonite Girls Can Cook* wasn't quite fair. The two books were created at different times, with different purposes in mind.

As Braun points out, *More-with-Less* was very intentionally created to encourage readers to "eat better and consume less of the world's resources."

Mennonite Girls Can Cook began as a blog that was driven by the requests for traditional Russian Mennonite recipes from the authors' children. For 10 years, the authors took turns posting a daily recipe, more than 3,000 recipes in that timespan. Sunday posts were dedicated to devotionals.

Their blog enjoyed more than 10,000 page views on any given day. The blog, their two cookbooks and their devotional book, *Bread for the Journey*, raised tens of thousands of dollars for The Good Shepherd Shelter in Ukraine and clean water projects in Kenya with Mennonite Central Committee.

Their cookbooks may not have sold as many copies as *More-with-Less* but, in a way, that's comparing apples and oranges. *More-with-Less* was created in a time when most cooks purchased print cookbooks, a time before blogs were even a concept. Many cooks today never use a cookbook, preferring to use online recipes from blogs just like *Mennonite Girls Can Cook*.

This article seems to imply that, because the *Mennonite Girls Can Cook* cookbook is beautiful and has colour photos on glossy paper, this somehow

makes it less virtuous than the plainer, no-photo cookbook that is *More-with-Less Cookbook*.

The cookbooks do indeed have different emphases, but why do they have to be presented as competing? I argue that both books and their authors encourage simple living by virtue of encouraging people to cook meals that bring people together at the table. Both cookbooks and all the authors sought to do a good thing with their books, and succeeded. Shouldn't we celebrate that?

ANGELIKA DAWSON, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

✉ **Setting cookbooks against each other is a 'false dichotomy'**

Re: "Whatever happened to simple living? Part 1," Sept. 27, page 14.

I have and love both the *More-with-Less cookbook* and *Mennonite Girls Can Cook*, and probably use them equally, but I use another Mennonite Central Committee cookbook, *Simply in Season*, most of all.

I wouldn't say *Mennonite Girls Can Cook* is necessarily "lavish," even if it includes "comfort foods" and beautiful photography. It also includes a number of spiritual reflections which showcase spiritual simplicity. And it has recipes for some Russian Mennonite standards (*platz, wareniki, portzelky*) that I wouldn't otherwise have.

I agree that we can live more simply than most of us in North America do, but I think setting these two against each other is a bit of a false dichotomy.
ELIN GOULDEN (FACEBOOK COMMENT)

✉ **Fancy food 'doesn't make my faith any less Mennonite'**

Re: "Whatever happened to simple living? Part 1," Sept. 27, page 14.

I would argue that the root is still to be humble and generous with what you have, but one shouldn't be judged or criticized for enjoying "less simple" living as a Mennonite. Wealth and success—and, in this case, creating a beautiful meal with more than lentils—should not be considered indulgent, wasteful or non-Mennonite.

I would caution comparisons on living simply versus those who, in Will Braun's definition, do not. I love creating a beautiful, non-simple meal or dessert. That doesn't make my faith any less Mennonite.

I respect when people do choose that path, but not everybody lives that way, and they should not feel judged for those decisions based on their faith heritage.
NICOLE TIESSEN (FACEBOOK COMMENT)

✉ **More 'virtue signalling than common sense'**

Re: "Defund the police?" Sept. 27, page 4.

Curious, I thought that "Defund the police?" was a topic worthy of *Canadian Mennonite's* front page as well as four pages within. So, I read it.

What came across was more self-righteous virtue signalling than common sense. For example, academics claiming "there is no relationship between police funding and crime rates."

So what? Let them lobby the city to shut down all crime investigating units for a month, never responding to any calls about stabbings, shootings, abduction, robbery, home invasions or human trafficking, so they can enjoy the improvement in justice and peace.

JOHN HILDEBRAND, MISSISSAUGA, ONT.

✉ **Reader thankful for quick police response**

Re: "Defund the police?" Sept. 27, page 4.

I don't have all the answers, but I was extremely grateful for the police this summer when an individual violently tried to enter my home in the middle of the night, terrifying my family. I fully believe that, without their help, it would have been fatal.

DALE FRIESEN (ONLINE COMMENT)

✉ **Police job descriptions need to be rewritten, not defunded**

Re: "Defund the police?" Sept. 27, page 4.

My approach to the topic of police services comes out of more than 25 years of working as a chaplain with Correctional Service Canada in several institutions in Quebec.

This feature has highlighted several problems with the present structures of policing.

Police officers, as employees of the government, are provided with a job description which they are responsible to fulfil. Their authority and ethical conduct expectations are all described in detail in their job description.

My questions relate to the job description and what is discerned as a breach of ethical conduct. Are there serious discrepancies in the attitudes and expectations of the general public toward police?

I believe that, rather than defunding the police departments, we need to re-evaluate their job descriptions. Perhaps there are too many officers responding in the same basic way to all the problems.

Perhaps there are officers who would prefer to

respond differently—in a moral way—but they are not able to because their job descriptions determine their response.

I do not believe that we should defund the police departments of our country. We should rather rewrite their job descriptions so that their gifts and qualifications can be practised and appreciated by both the offender and the offended.

DAVID SHANTZ (ONLINE COMMENT)

✉ Ethical funds article appreciated by reader

Re: “Are ethical funds really ethical?” Sept. 13, page 33.

I’ve been looking for this kind of information! We need to start having these conversations in our churches.

KEVIN GUENTHER TRAUTWEIN (FACEBOOK COMMENT)

✉ Sunshine blessed ‘this sacred event’

Re: “Outdoor MCC festival fundraiser a success,” Oct. 11, page 16.

My brother and I took Mom to the annual in-person Mennonite Central Committee Festival for World Relief. It was great. The sun indeed came out, as if to bless this sacred event. And the *vereniki* were good, too.

HORST UNGER (ONLINE COMMENT)

✉ Thanks for the reminder to be ‘the same person’

Re: “The misplaced pursuit of authenticity,” Sept. 27, page 12.

I was captivated by this column. While I get Troy Watson’s point, I also think that consistency without authenticity is not the goal, which I suspect he would agree with.

It reminded me of a commitment I made

We welcome your comments and publish most letters from subscribers. Letters, to be kept to 300 words or less, are the opinion of the writer only and are not to be taken as endorsed by this magazine or the church. Please address issues rather than individuals; personal attacks will not appear in print or online. All letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines. Send them to letters@canadianmennonite.org and include the author’s contact information and mailing address. Preference is given to letters from MC Canada congregants.

mid-career, when I decided I wanted to “be the same person” whether at home with my wife and teenage children, at my place of work in an executive/ leadership capacity, or as a church elder in a diverse and growing congregation. This was a self-imposed challenge that was ongoing, acting as a constant reminder to me.

Now, many years later, I find this challenge has followed me into my advanced years of retirement; in my relationship in a sixty-plus-year marriage, relating to my grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and in my volunteer, community and church relationships.

JOHN KONRAD, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

✦ Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Martin—Xavier Steven (b. Aug. 14, 2021), to Josh and Krista Martin, Community Mennonite, Drayton, Ont.

Thiessen—Jack Epp (b. Oct. 4, 2021), to Danika and Nolan Thiessen, Rosthern Mennonite, Sask., in Altona, Man.

Weber—Hans David Theodore (b. Sept. 19, 2021), to Travis and Jessica Weber, Community Mennonite, Drayton, Ont.

Weddings

Guest/Hirtle—Angela Guest and Isaac Hirtle, Community Mennonite, Drayton, Ont., in Brussels, Ont.

Klassen/Momose—Esther Marie Klassen (Northgate Anabaptist, Dawson Creek, B.C.) and Matthew Stephen Momose of Fleetwood, Pa., at Stone Springs Farm, Hamburg, Pa.

Deaths

Dyck—Bernard (Ben), 93 (b. March 9, 1928; d. Oct. 10, 2021), Carman Mennonite, Man.

Dyck—Mary, 95 (b. Aug. 14, 1926; d. Sept. 19, 2021), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Friesen—David, 100 (b. April 12, 1921; d. Sept. 18, 2021), First Mennonite, Edmonton.

Friesen—Harry, 91 (b. Nov. 28, 1929; d. Oct. 17, 2021), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Rempel—Louise, 96 (b. Sept. 10, 1924; d. July 20, 2021), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Riediger—Agatha (nee Unger), 90 (b. Sept. 25, 1930; d. Aug. 29, 2021), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Tiessen—Margaret A. (Wiens), 90 (b. June 11, 1931; d. Oct. 14, 2021), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Toews—Cornelius (Neil), 92 (b. April 29, 1929; d. Sept. 12, 2021), First Mennonite, Edmonton.

Wahl—Nettie (nee Regier), 85 (b. May 23, 1936; d. Oct. 9, 2021), Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon.

FROM OUR LEADERS

We are a global family of faith every day

Jeanette Hanson

I remember a conversation with my mom when I was a child.

“Why is there a Mother’s Day and a Father’s Day, but no Children’s Day?” I asked.

My mom’s answer was rather predictable, “Every day is Children’s Day!”

Across Canada, on Oct. 24, we celebrated Mennonite Church Canada’s International Witness Sunday. This was a joyful acknowledgement of the partners and programs we support in our global family of faith. As I reflect on taking this one Sunday a year to focus on these relationships, a similar question comes to my mind: Should this be a once-a-year event? How do we daily view ourselves as a church?

Core to Anabaptist teaching is the focus on community as the centre of our lives. The congregation is the locus of our worship, teaching and service. We live faith together, not as individuals. There is strength and a rootedness that come from that. But is this the extent of the coming kingdom that we long for and pray for?

I recently received confirmation that I will be attending the Global Mission Fellowship gathering at Mennonite

World Conference (MWC) Assembly in Indonesia next July. Having never attended an MWC gathering before, I am excited to meet with our global faith family, gathering with people representing 2.13 million baptized believers in 86 countries.

In a 2017 interview with Will Braun for *Canadian Mennonite*, César García, MWC’s general secretary, stressed the importance of being a church of many nations: “Our Anabaptist ecclesiology emphasizes the local congregation till the point of losing a biblical view of God’s vision: ‘A multicultural global community made up from people from every nation.’ That is everywhere in the Scripture. . . .

“An alternative community to the political powers of today requires a transnational, cross-cultural, global community that lives out the Christian values of interdependency, love and equality. That kind of community is the only way of showing the world that it is possible to overcome nationalisms and ethnocentrism.”

This biblical vision is, indeed, everywhere in the Scripture. One of

my favourite examples is in Isaiah 2, describing the nations streaming to the mountain of the Lord’s Temple, many peoples together, beating their swords into ploughshares.

This is the vision of who we are and what we are doing as we worship and serve in our local congregations. Our prayers join with those of an Ethiopian mother praying for peace in her land, a Colombian youth crying to God for justice, a Chinese grandfather blessing his children and praying that they will be faithful, a Chin family praying as they flee their homes in Myanmar looking for safety. Their songs of praise join with ours to glorify God together.

Every day is a day that we are part of a global family of faith, sharing resources and building relationships, as we long for the coming fulfilment of God’s vision. ❧



Jeanette Hanson (*jhanson@mennonitechurch.ca*) is director of International Witness for MC Canada.

A moment from yesterday



“Gluten free” proclaims the sign on one of these desserts at a Waterloo North Mennonite Church potluck in 2011. How have the offerings at your congregational potluck changed over the years? What traditions have endured? If you could convey the history of your congregation through a potluck table, what dishes would be on it?

Text: Laureen Harder-Gissing
Photo: Waterloo North Mennonite Church /
Mennonite Archives of Ontario



archives.mhsc.ca

IN THE IMAGE

But then there's those snakes

Ed Olfert

Our lives—Holly's and mine, that is—changed to a significant degree. Our oldest granddaughter, Maeve, who is 19, has moved into our home. Maeve comes to us from Ontario, where she left her family behind to begin the next portion of her life.

And it is good. Maeve is interesting, passionate, stubborn and opinionated. Yes, she has all the important family genes. She is also gifted in many areas. She is searching for the employment opportunity that can allow her to develop those gifts.

Maeve also comes with a menagerie. That involves multiple snakes, a lizard and a cat. Several weeks ago, we travelled to Regina to claim a rescue dog. Our house now pretty much breathes in and out.

Keep in mind that, until this summer, I have never lived in a house where there are non-human beings. Now, I've become a minority. I feel relief when I'm fed.

My father loved his cows and delighted in walking through his herd, speaking to them by name. But then, Pa also attributed emotions to his tractors. I remember him coming in late from the field, commenting, "The WD-9 was sure feeling good tonight."

The new dog is Bran, a little over a year old, with a border collie profile to him. The story we were told was that he was captured as a stray with a snout full of porcupine quills. Dealing with that was almost fatal, but Bran is now in good health.

On his first full day here, I decided that Bran would join me on my hour-long walk in the country. I kept him leashed, and he loved being out in the fields. By the second day, he was off the leash once we got out of the village, and the giggling began.

Bran has this thing when we're walking the backroads. He runs ahead, flattens himself in the road, the field and the hay in the ditch, and convinces himself that I can't see him, then suddenly leaps up and charges toward me. I'm told that dogs do not possess facial muscles that allow them to grin, but when Bran lunges toward me, tongue and tail flapping behind, I am seeing joy in his features.

Not so much on Holly's features, perhaps, when the dust of the road and fields are deposited on the floor.

The walking regimen may need some variation, as last week Bran found something really dead and really smelly to roll in, so, with Maeve taking the lead, I participated in my first dog bath.

As an energetic youngster, Bran also loves to play games in the house. With me, that often involves chewing on my arm, and I'm intrigued, just after I jerk away, how those powerful jaws that can destroy most toys can stop just before I begin to bleed. How does Bran know that? Why does he care?

Maeve, however, with something of a "whisperer" in her, teaches Bran commands in a quiet voice. When he brings her a ball, he drops it at her feet and then sits patiently for her command. For me, the ball is hidden between his paws, and he gnaws on me when I reach for it.

I've decided that there are lessons of God in the nature of this beast that has claimed a space in our lives and our emotions. Bran's willingness to trust, to give and receive affection, to adjust quickly to the rhythm of the household, to offer the same faithfulness and trust on each day, no matter how our lives and emotions are unfolding that day, those have lessons to teach me about the perfection of God's creation. He gives without expecting, except for when it's time, with some urgency, to head outside.

Perhaps the lessons of God perfection, God's faithfulness, can be learned from every piece of God's creation.

But then there's those snakes. ☸



Ed Olfert (p2peho@gmail.com) gives thanks for beasts.

Et cetera

New novel by Miriam Toews

Miriam Toews's new novel, *Fight Night*, has been short-listed for the Scotiabank Giller Prize that recognizes excellence in Canadian fiction. In some of her earlier novels, such as *A Complicated Kindness* and *Women Talking*, Toews explores Mennonite themes.

Source: Scotiabank Giller Prize



MIND AND SOUL

Reading is (mostly) good

Randolph Haluza-DeLay

What is the most dangerous place in your community? The speaker at a large gathering of Christian university students queried us. “It is the library!” he answered.

Not the power plant or the open construction sites or the places where nasty things happen? Libraries are full of books, the speaker explained. Books are full of ideas, and people live and die for ideas. Reading and thinking are subversive!

As you can tell from this column, I read a lot. It’s a delight to get the periodic email asking about the book to which a past column referred. Like the book on “majority world theology,” written from places where the majority of the world’s Christians live (which is no longer in North America nor Europe). Or the book by an Indigenous scholar asking us to extend the notion of shalom-making beyond the human community to the entire community of creation.

I have never written a book, but I have edited a couple. In both cases, the books were on topics that I thought needed more exposure.

That might represent one of the key characteristics in the books I choose to read. I read to open myself up to the ex-

periences and knowledge of those who are not like me. I do not want my own perspectives reinforced. I need to be challenged. But not just any challenge will suffice.

For a long time I deliberately subscribed to and read periodicals from different positions on the ideological spectrum. I have reduced that practice somewhat because there is a type of anti-intellectualism in some of those positions that is problematic. Our minds are part of the process of testing to see what is good (I Thessalonians 5:20-21), and by which we can be transformed (Romans 12:1-2).

Using our minds in support of our souls means discerning what books and resources are good, true, noble, beautiful—and accurate. This column will be published during COP26 in Glasgow, the annual United Nations negotiations on climate change. Maybe our collective church reading should be the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report published a few months ago. This report presents the physical science indicating “code red” for God’s planetary creation. The social science shows that the climate emergency will most greatly affect the marginalized of the world.

When the last IPCC report was published six years ago, someone handed me another book—by the so-called NIPCC. This “Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change” was actually three scientists funded by a well-known denialist organization, trying to cast doubt on the climate science produced by the thousands involved in the IPCC. They had produced a publication that closely mimicked the graphics of the official IPCC reports. It was deliberately confusing and required more diligence to evaluate than most people have time or capacity for. So not all reading is equal.

Books are dangerous; reading requires discernment. It is difficult to know how to judge what we read in this “post-truth” era. A key principle I use is to lean towards those perspectives that are from, or that promote, the flourishing of the unfairly marginalized peoples of the world rather than perspectives that reproduce the positions of the already advantaged. Learning from those considered “the least of these” in the world’s eyes, is one means to extend beyond my own limited experience in a way that seems most congruent with the gospel. That seems like Jesus’ way. ❧



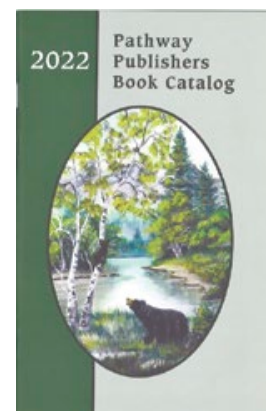
Randolph Haluza-DeLay orders books from local, independent bookstores.

Et cetera

Pathway Publishers releases 2022 catalogue

Pathway Publishers was begun by two Amish farmers near Aylmer, Ont., in 1964. As well as publishing three periodicals, it publishes books by Amish and plain Mennonite authors, some classic Anabaptist literature and other resources, including the Pathway Reading series designed for Amish and Mennonite parochial schools. The 2022 catalogue has 64 pages, with a wide variety of religious and educational material, history, fiction, biographies, children’s books and songbooks, as well as school readers. Although printing is done in Canada, most sales are in the United States and titles can only be ordered from the warehouse in Michigan.

Source: Pathway Publishers



TALES FROM THE UNENDING STORY

Remembrance, regret, resolution

Joshua Penfold

miss my Opa.

A few years ago, my daughter Ellie had a school assignment for Remembrance Day to write about someone she remembered that served in the armed forces. She wrote about her great-grandfather (Opa). Helping her write a few short sentences about his life made me realize just how little I knew about his story, specifically his time in the war.

Like most kids growing up, Opa's life was only as significant as it pertained to me, to our games of chess, our bowling outings, our summer sleepovers, and the strong, loving, clenching hugs he gave.

Choosing a picture for Ellie's project, I had to resist the oncoming tears so we could quickly finish the project.

In that moment, along with others over the last few years since his passing, I lamented the stories I didn't take enough interest in to ask about; the wisdom that he has taken with him that I was too busy, too young, too self-absorbed, too naive to attempt to glean from him; not to mention my Oma (grandmother), my great-aunts and uncles no longer alive. That generation of my family survived a world war before travelling across the ocean in pursuit of



a new life, and I lost the chance to know more of their incredible story.

As I've attended each of their funerals, the few obituary details and memories shared by family members create pangs of regret that I didn't ask more questions.

In my reading of Jeremiah, he is nearly put to death because the priests, prophets and officials didn't like his pronouncements of destruction when a few old guys come to save him. *"Some of the elders of the land stepped forward and said to the entire assembly of people. . . . We are about to bring a terrible disaster on ourselves"* (Jeremiah 26:17-19). If it wasn't for the wisdom of the elders who remembered what had happened in the past, who had experienced this similar situation before, Jeremiah would likely

have not survived the day.

I have been thinking about how disconnected I am from the elders in my life: my wife's two remaining grandmothers and the many elders in my congregation. They have stories to tell, wisdom to share, the kind that may prevent me from making deadly mistakes, or at least help me to make better and wiser choices.

Today's culture tends to hallow whatever is new and recent and forgets the deep well of wisdom and experience in our elders, to our own detriment.

I know it's not the New Year yet, but I think I need to make a resolution to start doing some gleaning; start asking more questions; start making space for the elders in my life to share their story and their wisdom; recognizing they have had more encounters with God, more struggles to learn from, more experiences like the ones I'm currently going through. They might just be the answers to my prayers. ✎

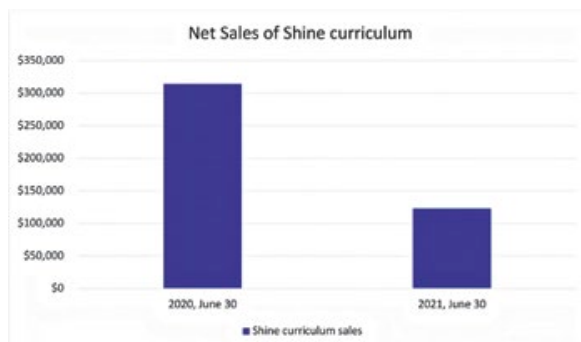


Joshua Penfold
(penfoldjoshua@gmail.com) wishes he had more to remember.

Et cetera

MennoMedia survives pandemic

Mennonite publisher MennoMedia ended its 2021 fiscal year on June 30 in a positive financial position. The *Voices Together* hymnal and Herald Press book sales did very well, with Herald Press sales surpassing US\$1 million for the first time since 2011. Hardest hit by the pandemic was the Shine children's curriculum, as many churches cancelled Sunday school. From the fall of 2019 to fall 2020, Shine sales dropped 60 percent and are not yet increasing significantly. Meanwhile, the *Rejoice* daily devotional and *Salt & Light* adult curriculum sales continue to be solid.



Shine sales in 2020: \$314,371; in 2021: \$123,061.

NEWS

Young people's choir is 'a hit'

Two Vancouver churches revitalize through music

Story and Screenshot by Amy Rinner Waddell
B.C. Correspondent

A church choir is a rarity these days when worship teams predominate; even more rare is one made up entirely of members under age 30 from two different congregations. But singing in a choir is exactly what young people ranging in age from 14 to their mid-20s, from Vancouver's Chinatown Peace Church and Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship, are doing.

Youth groups from both churches have already been taking part in various activities together funded through Mennonite Church B.C.'s Revitalization Fund.

Chan Yang, a member of Point Grey and one of two interns at Chinatown Peace sponsored by the fund, is responsible for coordinating activities such as camping trips in the youth/young-adult age group.

With the encouragement of Tim Kuepfer, who pastors at Chinatown Peace and was thinking of other activities the joint youth groups could do, Yang started a choir last year shortly before the pandemic hit. Plans were put on hold then, but now regular Friday rehearsals have resumed.

"It was a hit," Yang reports of the musical get-togethers and says some are bringing



SCREENSHOT BY AMY RINNER WADDELL

A joint youth/young-adult choir performs at the baptismal service on Oct. 24 for Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship, which took place at Sherbrooke Mennonite Church in Vancouver.

their friends to rehearsals too.

Although Yang does not claim to be a professional musician, he says, "I like to sing. I grew up in a musical family and play drums and sax. Many of the members do have musical backgrounds." The group is small enough to sing as an ensemble rather than as a choir with a director.

The singers don't have access to a music library for their selections, so they take a collaborative approach to choosing their repertoire. Everyone contributes ideas for what they want to sing, listen to the music

together, then Yang finds sheet music for those pieces.

"We've tried to be inclusive of everything," he says. "We've done 'Top of the World,' 'Because He Lives,' and 'Baba Yetu' [a Swahili version of the Lord's Prayer], as well as barbershop and jazz."

The group plans to sing in both congregations as the year progresses, with possibly other locations to come. They felt privileged to sing at a baptismal service for Point Grey on Oct. 24, at which Yang's sister was baptized. Singing at a joint

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Christmas Eve service is also planned.

Kuepfer says he hopes this fledgling choir can participate in Chinatown's thriving arts community and perhaps even host events for a growing number of arts groups in the neighbourhood. As

Chinatown Peace plans to create a "living room for Chinatown" with the property it has purchased on Main Street, opportunities for the choir to perform may increase.

"It's been a real pleasure to meet with the group and talk about what it means to be a

church in Vancouver and love our neighbours," Yang says. "Creating something new altogether [when we sing]—that's very Anabaptist." ❧

/// **News brief**

MCC lists Winnipeg offices for sale

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) announced in October that its two Winnipeg offices are on the market. The property at 134 Plaza Drive, that is jointly owned by MCC Manitoba and MCC Canada, includes a warehouse and offices for MCC Canada staff and about half of MCC Manitoba's staff. MCC Manitoba's building at 159 Henderson Highway houses offices for the other half of the provincial organization's staff and Sam's Place, a cafe and used bookstore that provides youth with work experience and community. MCC decided to explore selling and moving because of a change in physical space needs brought about by the closing of the Ten Thousand Villages store on Plaza Drive and the rise of the hybrid work model during the pandemic. It has also been over a decade since MCC Manitoba staff have worked all together in one office and they wanted a single location for the whole team. "I think there's strong anticipation that colleagues can connect



MCC PHOTO BY MATTHEW SAWATZKY

Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba's property on Henderson Highway in Winnipeg.

and work together and collaborate more closely," says Valorie Block, director of communications and donor relations for MCC Manitoba. Both organizations have committed to staying in Winnipeg. The Material Resource Centre will move from Plaza Dr. to MCC Manitoba's new campus and the intention is to continue operating Sam's Place and its youth-engagement program. "We look forward to continuing to welcome volunteers, donors, visitors and other members of the public to any new space in the event of a move," Block says.

—BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE



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Gleaning a harvest for the hungry

Saskatchewan Mennonites volunteer with Okanagan Gleaners

By Donna Schulz
Saskatchewan Correspondent
ROSTHERN, SASK.

A small group of volunteers from Rosthern Mennonite Church spent five days in September chopping and dehydrating vegetables at Okanagan Gleaners near Oliver, B.C. Among them were Larry and Denise Epp.

“Both Larry and I were amazed at how much produce is wasted because it doesn’t meet the standards of the consumers or doesn’t even make it to market when it’s past prime,” says Denise. “And those foodstuffs can, in just a few hours of

work by a group of people, transform the leftovers or left-behind produce into multitudes of meals for the hungry.” She adds, “The transformation from spoiling vegetables to dehydrated soup mix was systematic and efficient.”

Okanagan Gleaners was established in 1994 by a small group of Christians living in the Okanagan Valley who were concerned by media images of starving people in other countries and by the produce that was going to waste in their area. They developed a vision for harvesting and dehydrating vegetables to feed hungry people around the globe. According to the organization’s



Members of Rosthern (Sask.) Mennonite Church volunteered with Okanagan Gleaners for five days in September. Pictured from left to right, they are Denise Epp, Larry Epp, Delilah Roth, Brian Roth, Bev Epp, Ralph Epp, Judy Epp, Cheryl Schmidt and Lloyd Schmidt.



Delilah and Brian Roth peel and chop onions at Okanagan Gleaners.

website, Okanagan Gleaners produces six million servings of food for distribution each year. ☺

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PERSONAL REFLECTION

Seeing God in the lives of others

Saskatchewan correspondent reflects on eight years of telling other people's stories

By Donna Schulz

Saskatchewan Correspondent
ROSTHERN, SASK.

Eight years ago, I received an e-mail from then editor Dick Benner, asking me whether I'd consider being *Canadian Mennonite's* Saskatchewan correspondent.

It sounds trite to say that I felt God calling me to take this job, but that's exactly how I felt. My years as a homeschooling mom had come to an end when my youngest began high school, and I'd been praying that God would open the door to some meaningful work. The door opened when I opened that e-mail.

It also sounds trite to say that a whole new world opened up for me, but this, too, was the case. As a regional correspondent, I attended all sorts of events I wouldn't otherwise have attended, from annual general meetings, pastoral gatherings and book launches, to cake auctions, folk festivals and fashion shows. If the event was sponsored by Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, or in some way involved the good people of my regional church, I was there with my notebook and camera

in hand, taking notes, taking pictures and taking it all in.

My favourite story subjects, however, were not events, but people—women and men of all ages, interests and perspectives living out their faith to the best of their abilities in their own particular contexts:

- **One of the first individuals** I wrote about was Ric Driediger. When I spoke with him at his home in Rosthern in 2014, he told me that he believes in the power of encountering God in the wilderness. As owner of Churchill River Canoe Outfitters in Missinipe, he said he often hears people reflect on the spiritual nature of their canoeing experiences.

"I believe God reveals himself through nature," said Driediger. "Millennia before the Bible came to be, that's how people found out about God. They looked,"

- **God revealed himself** to Wayne and Carry Dueck through the 32-hectare parcel of land they purchased in the early 1980s. In 2019, I spent a wondrous morning with them at the property northwest of Duck Lake known to them simply as "The Land."

When the Duecks bought the land, they intended to preserve its natural state but also add trees. In the years that followed, Wayne, their sons and many friends planted thousands of coniferous trees.

Carry told me that she sees "planting trees as a route to reparation, a way of making amends for the damage we have dealt to the natural world."

Planting trees is not a quick way of making amends. It takes time and patience to see one's efforts come to fruition. This is also true of human relationships. Making amends for damage done in people's lives also takes time and patience.

- **Leonard Doell** is someone who seems to embody this kind of patience. For many years, Doell served as Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan's Indigenous Neighbours Program coordinator, and he is known in Saskatchewan for his long-standing relationship with the Young Chippewyan people. I spoke with him following his retirement in 2020.

"Efforts toward reconciliation can be very messy and complex," he said. "Many times we didn't get things right." But he



(PHOTO COURTESY OF RIC DRIEDIGER)

Ric Driediger is pictured in his office at Churchill River Canoe Outfitters, where he loves to hear about people's encounters with God while canoeing.



(PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ)

Wayne and Carry Dueck, pictured in 2019, enjoy the fruits of their labours on 'The Land,' where they planted thousands of coniferous trees over the years.



(PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ)

Leonard Doell, right, converses with Chief Sylvia Weenie at the 140th anniversary of the signing of Treaty Six, held at Stoney Knoll in 2016.

had the patience and took the time to make things right. Reflecting on those years, he said, "I often felt in over my head, but I trusted that God had brought me there for a purpose." Doell's patience and faith in God inspire me.



(PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ)

Wes Neepin places bag lunches in the pantry box in front of Grace Mennonite Church in Prince Albert in 2017.

- **Wes Neepin's** faith also inspires me. I met Neepin for the first time when I preached at Grace Mennonite Church in Prince Albert in 2017. He was putting brown-bag lunches into the pantry box in front of the church. He told me that he made sandwiches for hungry people every day because he remembered what it felt like to be hungry.

I wrote Neepin's faith story for *CM* in 2019, when he was 86 years old. "God can help me every day as long as I'm willing to believe in him," Neepin said. "And I pray every night and every morning for guidance."

- **Like Neepin,** Elaine Presnell also relied on God every day. I spoke with her in 2019 at Mourning Glory Funeral Services in Saskatoon, where she worked as a funeral officiant. At that time, Presnell had presided at more than 600 funerals, offering the gift of non-judgmental listening to families who often didn't have a church community.

"I'll get a call about some family . . . and



(PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ)

Elaine Presnell is pictured at her workplace, Mourning Glory Funeral Services, in Saskatoon, in 2019.

I'll just say to God, 'I don't know what this family needs, but you do.'" Presnell told me. "I totally rely on God's guidance."

I agree with Driediger that God reveals himself in nature, but I also see God revealed in the lives of God's people: people like Driediger, Wayne and Carry Dueck, Leonard Doell, Wes Neepin, and Elaine Presnell. It has been a privilege and a joy to share their stories, and so many more, with you these past eight years. ✎



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Digging into the past

Retired church workers archive MC Canada history

Story and Photo by Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe

Manitoba Correspondent

WINNIPEG

Thousands of files languish in the basement of Mennonite Church Canada's Winnipeg office, holding decades of history but forgotten by many. Irene and Jack Suderman are bringing these records to light, reviewing and organizing them to be stored in the Mennonite Heritage Archives (MHA).

The Sudermans live in Ontario, where they attend First Mennonite Church in Kitchener, but they came all the way to Winnipeg to participate in the two-month project. Since Sept. 30, the couple has been moving materials from filing cabinets to boxes, from binders to folders, sorting, labelling and summarizing the contents.

The key is to organize the files according to the administrative structure of the organization, Jack says. As former general secretary of MC Canada, his knowledge of the system assisted the process.

"When a system is under stress, the first thing that suffers is record keeping," says Conrad Stoesz, archivist at the MHA, who is working with the Sudermans on the project. When MC Canada underwent a major downsizing in 2017, many staff didn't have time to clean up their files, which were added to decades of other unprocessed records, he says.

It is a huge project and it would take Stoesz years to work through the records in addition to his regular workload. The archivist is grateful to the Sudermans for volunteering their time. Jack and Irene have worked in the Mennonite church for almost all of the 56 years they have been married, so they come to the task with extensive knowledge of the church's inner workings. In addition to Jack working in conference leadership, they served with the General Conference's Commission on Overseas Mission in South and Central America between 1980 and 1996. In 2017, they did a similar archival project with

Mennonite Central Committee Bolivia.

Despite their familiarity with church history, they are learning new things with each box they open. The other day, Jack unearthed a complete hand-written Chinese translation of John Howard Yoder's *The Politics of Jesus* from 1988. They also discovered a Korean translation of an Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary leadership curriculum. Both were copy ready but may have never been printed.

They found dozens of resources on calling pastors, leadership-training programs and church-planting initiatives. While many of the initiatives didn't necessarily last long, Jack says it was encouraging to be reminded of the church's capacity. "These signals of a church very alive, a church that is creative and alive and energized," he says. "It's quite inspiring to see what all was tested."

Irene says these valuable resources are languishing, neglected, when there is still so much of them that could be of use. "We only need to access them to help us understand where the conversations were then and how they can help us today in a very different context," she says.

It's also important to make this information accessible so that people, especially seniors, can access it for research and use it to document their own stories "and help us to make history come alive," she adds. "Both of us really feel that we have so much to learn from what has been and how can that inspiration continue to guide us and shape us as a church."

"We're not only interested in what happened in the past, we're interested



Thousands of files languish in the basement of Mennonite Church Canada's Winnipeg office, holding decades of history but forgotten by many. Jack, left, and Irene Suderman are bringing these records to light, reviewing and organizing them to be stored in the Mennonite Heritage Archives.

in what's happening now," Jack says. "But very often what's happening now can only be explained by what was. You can't really understand what is happening now without seeing how we got there. That's a key piece of archival work."

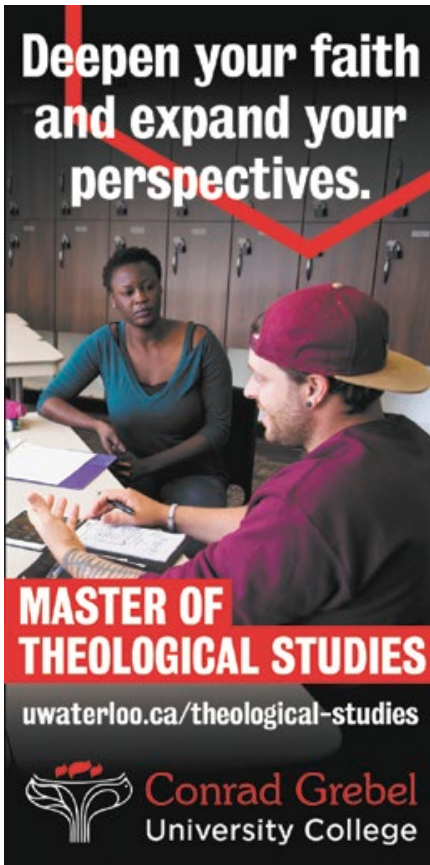
After sorting and naming every file, the Sudermans will summarize the contents of each box, noting who created the material and why they did it. Stoesz will digitize that information and enter it into the MHA's online system, so the material is searchable.

"We talk about how God is moving within congregations and within conferences, within people's lives here and where mission workers are working," Stoesz says. "We talk about how society has changed and the pressures on the church and denominations. Over time, those pressures change and that's all reflected in those records. For the church, history is necessarily theology. By keeping this stuff we are documenting God's work in the world." ❧

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

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In addition to its academic degree programs, Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) offers various continuing education resources to help people deepen their faith and strengthen their leadership skills, from wherever they may be located:

- **Pastors & Leaders | Deep Faith 2022:** Formed in the Wilderness, Leading in Hope, from Feb. 21 to 24. What can we learn from leaders who were formed in the “wilderness” for the struggles we face today? Participants in this conference will draw insight from the late Alan Kreider’s book, *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church: The Improbable Rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire* (Baker Academic, 2016), as they seek guidance and inspiration to lead the church with hope through the challenges of the present day. This joint conference of AMBS and Mennonite Church U.S.A.’s Office of Faith Formation will be held in person, with livestreaming and Zoom connections also available for those at a distance. For more information, visit ambs.ca/pastorsandleaders.

- **Invite AMBS:** AMBS faculty and staff are available to interact with congregations and organizations via videoconference on topics such as trauma-informed caregiving, intercultural competence, undoing racism, leadership for God’s reconciling mission in today’s world, and more. Speakers can be requested online at ambs.ca/invite.

- **Online Anabaptist Short Courses:** What does it mean to read the Bible like an Anabaptist? Why does Anabaptist history matter at all today? What does it mean to worship like an Anabaptist? Through forum discussions, participants in these six-week, online, noncredit courses deepen their understanding of Anabaptist history, thought and witness, and explore Anabaptist resources as a source of inspiration



AMBS PHOTO BY PETER RINGENBERG

Nekeisha Alayna Alexis, intercultural competence and undoing racism coordinator at AMBS, pictured at a pre-COVID event, is available through the Invite AMBS program to engage with congregations and organizations via videoconference on intercultural competence and undoing racism.

and guidance for their life and ministry. Some courses include optional weekly video conversations with professors in real time. For more information, visit ambs.ca/shortcourses.

- **Journey:** A Missional Leadership Development Program: AMBS’s distance-friendly, nondegree Journey program supports learners as they explore spiritual leadership in their local churches and communities, and deepen their understanding of Anabaptist theology and ministry with a dedicated mentor. A discount of US\$100 is available for those who register by Dec. 14 for Winter 2022 session. For more information, visit ambs.ca/journey.

- **Spiritual direction seminars:** Participants can grow in confidence and competence in offering spiritual direction through AMBS’s distance-friendly, supervised spiritual direction program led by Dan Schrock. For more information, visit ambs.ca/seminars. ❧

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

BOOK REVIEW

Writer's struggles offers reassurance to young mothers

Peanut Butter and Dragon Wings: A Mother's Search for Grace.
Shari Zook. Herald Press, 2021, 232 pages.

Reviewed by Barb Draper
Books & Resources Editor

When it comes to motherhood, Shari Zook asks, "Why don't we get more training for the hardest job of our lives? Why do we feel that we have to do it alone?"

Because she is so open and honest about the challenges of raising young children, this book can provide comfort and reassurance for others who are feeling inadequate.

In *Peanut Butter and Dragon Wings*, Zook reflects on her life, especially those years when her children were young. She invites readers to also consider their own lives, with questions for reflection at the end of each chapter. She admits her own mistakes and her own struggles, writing with warmth and empathy so that readers should feel encouraged to also forgive themselves and accept God's grace.

Raised in a Mennonite home and married to a pastor, Zook always tried to live up to the ideals of the church. She wonders about her own mother, who "birthed and raised a whole houseful without breaking a sweat."

Although Zook's faith is strong, she finds it a struggle when things get very difficult, writing, "It has taken me forever to learn that brokenness and need are the believer's intended posture." She is honest about her occasional doubts and her need for grace. She ends her book with the statement: "To be honest, from this side of the story I think it best to crack as early and as wide as we can, and let the grace in."

As well as the challenges of being a mother of four children, Zook also reflects on her struggles with being a foster parent, her miscarriages, her occasional bouts of depression, and the anguish of dealing

with a child who is particularly difficult. In each case, she identifies her feelings about the situation and her prayers. She gives a very personal perspective; this is not a simple chronicle of events.

Zook also invites the reader to personal reflection. The questions are probing, but gentle, giving a sense of encouragement. At the end of the chapter in which she writes about her postpartum depression and seasonal affective disorder, she lists her personal strategies for coping with depression as possible tips for readers.

The title of the book is never directly explained, but Zook finds herself licking peanut butter as a way of getting physical nourishment while rethinking the relationship between spirituality and the physical body. She sometimes wraps herself in a special scarf that reminds her of a dragon's wing. "When it is on my shoulders, I can feel [God's] provision," she writes. The peanut butter is a reminder that the mundane is sacred, while the scarf is a tangible reminder of God's presence.

Peanut Butter and Dragon Wings is a kind of devotional book, in that it explores a mother's spiritual journey. But it also tells a story. The writing style includes many questions that flit through the mind of a young mother and lots of self-reflection. Readers looking for an exciting narrative would probably not find this book appealing, but stressed young mothers should feel encouraged with the sense that others have experienced similar struggles. ✎

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FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

‘Doing justice to their story’

Undercurrents podcast creator shares insights into his craft

By Janet Bauman

Eastern Canada Correspondent

KITCHENER, ONT.

Ken Ogasawara counts it a “sacred gift” when he is trusted with another person’s story. As he shapes that into a podcast episode, he is mindful of “doing justice to their story.”

Ogasawara, who works on the community engagement team at Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario, is the producer and host of *Undercurrents*, a podcast series that tells stories of “pain, redemption, challenge and hope.” The stories come primarily from MCC Ontario’s program staff and community partners.

He pitched the idea of starting a podcast in the interview for his current job, which he has held for five years. He values this medium because it allows him to quote the storyteller at length, saying it is a way to “let them tell their own story in their own voice.”

The beauty of podcasts, which Ogasawara calls audio documentaries, is that they are relatively simple to make and easy to digest, meaning people can listen as they do other things.

While *Undercurrents* is his first podcast, Ogasawara does have eight years of experience in filmmaking with a friend, but he says he was “never part of the visual side.” Instead, his interest was always in listening to the story, and “getting the story down to its essentials.”

His love of writing began when he participated in MCC’s Serving and Learning Together (SALT) program as a young adult. With no internet in Uganda, where he lived for a year, he composed long, handwritten letters to his parents, who typed them and sent them out to friends and family in a mass email. He calls that an early form of blogging.

In September, MCC Ontario launched the second season of *Undercurrents*, with plans to produce seven episodes, including

stories about refugee resettlement, restorative justice and living wages. There is also an episode on Palestine and Israel, as there was in the first season, the only international story addressed so far. There were six episodes in the first season, including one about “what it takes to be a bridge from prison to community.”

the second season is “a lot richer and a lot deeper in terms of diving into people’s stories.”

The name *Undercurrents* is about telling the “underlying story behind a surface observation,” says Ogasawara. A whole lot of assumptions go into people’s impressions of someone who is homeless

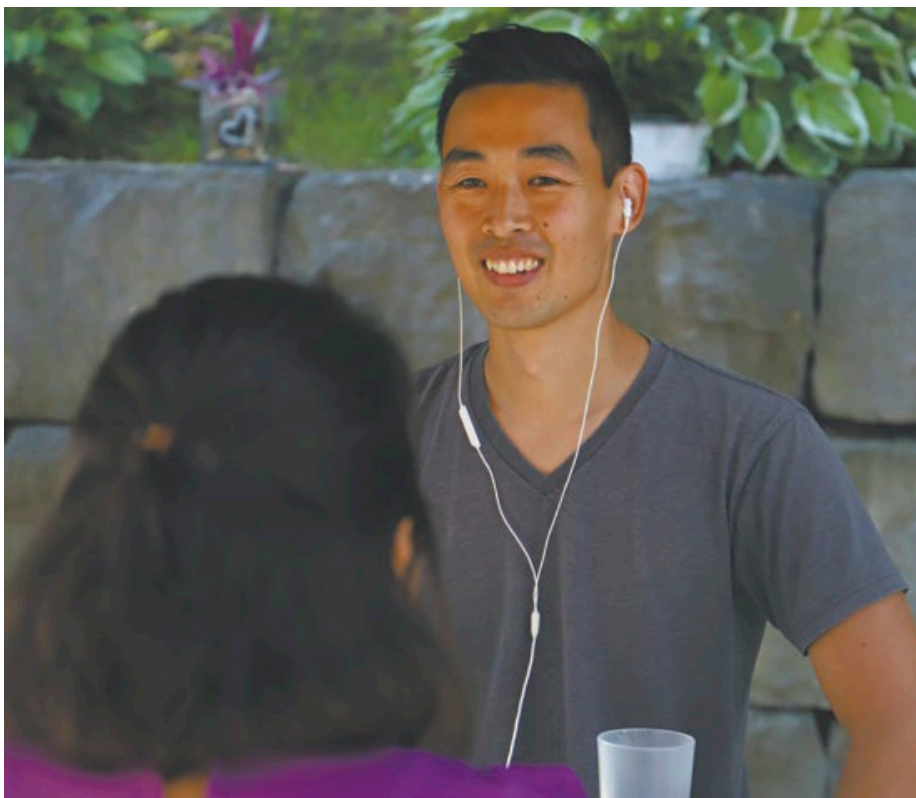


PHOTO COURTESY OF KEN OGASAWARA

Ken Ogasawara (facing camera), the producer and host of the podcast *Undercurrents*, interviews Ly Vang for Episode 10, which was just recently released.

One episode in the new season features the story of a man who worked at an Indigenous residential school when he was a young man and how he “spent the rest of his life trying to hold himself accountable” for that. According to Ogasawara,

or imprisoned, for example, but *Undercurrents* goes deeper, getting at their backstory and exploring the life circumstances that put them where they are.

Ogasawara’s interviews may take up to an hour-and-a-half, but he uses only

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

roughly twenty minutes of that content. His job is to summarize and trim it down. “Where is the core of the story?” he asks, acknowledging that “what gets left out is as important as what is included.”

Ogasawara makes sure that anyone he interviews, and the program staff they relate to, get to hear the completed podcast before he publishes it. He says it is a “sacred gift” to be trusted with someone’s story.

To create an episode, Ogasawara layers five or six tracks, including the subject’s audio, his narration, a musical score, and sometimes sound effects, if they can help to “put the listener in a scene.”

Some of the stories can be pretty heavy in terms of their subject matter, with lots of complexities and a strong “emotional impact,” but Ogasawara says he tries to focus on the “human, hopeful part.”

He hopes that *Undercurrents*’ listeners will gain a new perspective on the stories they hear, and on their own life. “They are compelling stories, but what are we compelled to do?” he asks. He hopes listeners might become motivated to volunteer in MCC’s programs, advocate for others in need, and take these stories



SCREENSHOT BY KEN OGASAWARA

A screenshot of Ken Ogasawara’s timeline, in the middle of editing an episode of the podcast *Undercurrents*, which he hosts and produces as part of his communications role at MCC Ontario.

to their churches for discussion.

Ogasawara says that reaction to the first season of *Undercurrents* has been overwhelmingly positive. Episodes are being used by Sunday school classes, pastors, and a professor who has made the podcast mandatory listening for social-work classes. Ogasawara intends to produce a resource guide with discussion questions that could go out with each episode.

He says he does intend to offer “some

lighter fare,” like an episode about the New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale, or the heifer sale, to reflect the different communities that support MCC.

He is particularly grateful for the support of sponsor Kindred Credit Union, which he describes as a “very supportive” partner, providing funds for assistance in editing and research. ☿

Books from **CMU PRESS**



Suffering the Truth: Occasional Sermons and Reflections
Chris K. Huebner
CMU Press, 2020
ISBN 9781987986075
\$19.99
Provocative explorations, structured around the liturgical calendar, on inhabiting truthfully the strange new life into which God calls us.



The Challenge is in the Naming: A Theological Journey
Lydia Neufeld Harder
CMU Press, 2018
ISBN 9781987986044
\$20.00
A rich blend of personal, church, and academic reflections from the director of Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre in the 1990s.



Necessary Idealism: A History of Westgate Mennonite Collegiate
Janis Thiessen
CMU Press, 2018
ISBN 9781987986068
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FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

Cheers to that

New book mixes Mennonite history with cocktail recipes

By Aaron Epp
Online Media Manager

There are countless Mennonite cookbooks, but last month saw the debut of what is likely the world's very first Mennonite cocktail book.

Menno-Nightcaps: Cocktails Inspired by that Odd Ethno-Religious Group You Keep Mistaking for the Amish, Quakers or Mormons arrived on bookshelves on Oct. 12 via B.C.-based publisher Touchwood Editions. Written by Sherri Klassen, the book includes cocktail recipes accompanied by trivia on Mennonite faith and cultural practices.

Mixing alcohol and Anabaptist info isn't new for Klassen. In 2013, she began a Mennonite humour and cocktail blog called *The Drunken Mennonite* at sklassen.com. At the time, she was writing a novel and found herself editing out the funny parts. *The Drunken Mennonite* became her outlet for exploring the humorous aspects of being Mennonite.

One of Klassen's daughters told her about the comedy television series "Drunk History," in which an inebriated narrator recounts a historical event while actors enact the anecdotes and lip sync the dialogue. Inspired by the show's title, Klassen decided she would be the *Drunken Mennonite*.

"I had also, at the same time, discovered cocktail blogs, and I just thought they were very earnest and esoteric," Klassen explains via Zoom from her home in Toronto. "In 2013, the only things on [the internet about Mennonites] were earnest and esoteric, and I thought, wouldn't it be funny to pull those two things together?"

Klassen, who has a doctorate in history and works at the University of Toronto, has no training as a mixologist and barely drank cocktails prior to starting the blog. She trained herself by reading the cocktail blogs she had discovered.

"I never really thought at first that people would make the cocktail recipes

[on *The Drunken Mennonite*], but they did, so I thought I should start making them better," says Klassen, who attends Toronto United Mennonite Church.

Although she has a presence on a handful of social-media platforms, Klassen is best known on Twitter, where she employs her dry wit to comment on Mennonite news and interact with people tweeting about Mennonite culture. A few people on Twitter suggested that she write a book, an idea she started to take more seriously when people in her offline social network started encouraging her to do it.

After putting together a book proposal, Klassen received a contract from Touchwood in April 2020. She submitted her manuscript six months later. The 77 cocktails in the book have names like Menno Sidecar, Conrad Grebellini, Thumbscrew Driver, Bloody Martyr, Four-Part Sangria, Holde-manhattan, Thrift Store Sour, Plautdietsch Punch, Shoofly Rye and More-with-Lillet.

A list of substitutions makes it easy to create non-alcoholic versions of the beverages for children and teetotalers to enjoy.

Each recipe includes a short anecdote drawn from Mennonite history.

"For Mennonite readers, I hope they'll get a laugh and be reintroduced to some little tidbits of history and their faith and culture," Klassen says. "I hope it will lead them to explore further some of these topics. For non-Mennonites who read it, I hope they learn a little about Mennonites and also enjoy it, and that it will shatter some of their stereotypes."

Ultimately, Klassen hopes that exploring



PHOTO: EMMA KLASSEN-BRULÉ

Amateur mixologist Sherri Klassen is the author of *Menno-Nightcaps*.

the book is a joyful experience for readers. When asked what impact writing the blog and interacting with others on Twitter has had on her faith, she says that it has led her "to have a more expansive faith with a greater openness to joy."

"I have learned, too, that having a joyful faith does not mean pulling away from critiques, or recognizing when institutions or power structures do damage," she says. "But it means learning to laugh at our follies that might be embedded in pain or in our desperate efforts to be less imperfect than we are." ❧

To read more from Canadian Mennonite's interview with Klassen, including questions posed by Twitter users, visit canadianmennonite.org/drunken.



FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

Pandora Press appoints new academic editor

Pandora Press
KITCHENER, ONT.

Maxwell Kennel has taken over the role of academic editor at Pandora Press beginning in the fall of 2021, and he will also become director of the publishing company beginning in early 2022.



Maxwell Kennel

Pandora Press was founded in the early 1990s by C. Arnold Snyder, now professor emeritus of history at Conrad Grebel University College. Among the titles published by Pandora Press are Snyder's *Anabaptist History and Theology* and A. James Reimer's *Mennonites and Classical Theology*. The press has also published popular books such as *The Vegan Mennonite Kitchen* by Jo Snyder in 2020.

Early on, Pandora Press defined its work as "a small independently owned press dedicated to making available modestly priced books that deal with Anabaptist,

Mennonite and Believers Church topics, both historical and theological."

Kennel is excited to carrying forward Pandora's legacy of publishing historical and theological works while expanding into new philosophical, political, literary and social scientific directions.

About his new role, Kennel says: "I am looking forward to bringing new energy to Pandora Press by seeking out scholarly works that challenge existing disciplinary divisions and take Mennonite studies in new and exciting directions. At the same time, I plan to make available the many titles on Pandora Press's backlist in new and more accessible print and digital formats. I am also eager to restructure the press's editorial board and social media

presence to broaden its public reach."

Kennel is currently a postdoctoral fellow in the Department for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto, and an alumnus of McMaster University in Hamilton, Ont., where he earned a doctorate in 2021, and Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., where he earned a master of theological studies degree in 2015.

Forthcoming Pandora Press titles include an edition of Cornelius J. Dyck's unpublished study of the Dutch Anabaptist figure Hans de Ries, and the next anthology from the long-standing Bridgefolk conference series.

Pandora Press is actively seeking out high-quality works in and around Anabaptist and Mennonite studies. Inquiries can be directed to max@pandorapress.com. //

// News brief

'Slow living in fast times' highlights 2021 issue of *Mennonite Life*

The annual issue of Bethel College's journal *Mennonite Life* is now live for 2021. Leading off the issue is a collection of reflections by recent Bethel graduates about what it has meant to consider "slow time" over the past 12 to 18 months, forced by the realities of a pandemic. Bethel senior Bethany Powls, an English and history major, served as a student intern for this issue, soliciting and editing four essays, plus contributing one of her own for a section entitled "Scribing slowness: An ode to slow living in fast times." Darrin Snyder-Belousek meditates on his lifelong love of hymns, in particular Christmas hymns, and how his understanding and attitude toward what makes a "theologically sound" hymn has changed as he has grown older. Mark Jantzen, Bethel's professor of history, returns to a topic that has been one of his research favorites over the years, the 19th-century German novelist Theodor Fontane and his "Mennonite novel," *Quitt*, a significant part of which is set among Mennonites at the Darlington mission station in what is now the state of Oklahoma. This essay looks at how C.H. Wedel, Bethel's first president, reviewed the novel and unpacks why Wedel might have taken the

decidedly negative tone he did. The 2021 issue also has reviews of eight recent books that range from Mennonites vis-à-vis the arts, to Mennonites, African studies and colonialism, to "Mennoncostals" (Mennonite and Pentecostal Christians). The current issue of the online-only journal can be viewed at:

ml.bethelks.edu/.

—BETHEL COLLEGE



PHOTO COURTESY OF BETHEL COLLEGE

C.H. Wedel, the first president of Bethel College, and Susanna Richert Wedel, circa 1905.

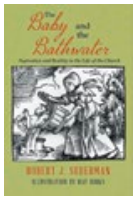
FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

PHOTO: FLICKR.COM/TRAVIS_SIMON



2021 Fall list of Books & Resources

Theology, Spirituality



The Baby and the Bathwater: Aspiration and Reality in the Life of the Church. Robert J. Suderman. Privately published with Tellwell, 2021, 120 pages.

In this little book, Suderman speaks to concerns about the future of the church. He examines what the church is meant to be, saying we must be careful not to discard what is crucial for Christian life in our attempt to be relevant in today's world. Illustrations are by Ray Dirks.

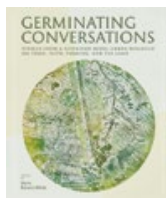
Dear White Peacemakers: Dismantling Racism with Grit and Grace. Osheta Moore. Herald Press, 2021, 248 pages.



Osheta Moore writes about racism from her personal perspective, addressing issues of white supremacy with directness and flamboyance but most of all with love. She has a deep desire that anti-racism should follow the teachings of Jesus, leading to peace.

Entertaining Angels Unaware: Welcoming the Immigrant Other. Philip A. Gottschalk. Cascade Books, 2021, 246 pages.

Gottschalk examines current attitudes toward strangers and foreigners, especially in the United States. He writes that the appropriate Christian response to refugees and immigrants is to welcome them.



Germinating Conversations: Stories From a Sustained Rural-Urban Dialogue on Food, Faith, Farming and the Land. Marta Bunnett Wiebe,

ed. Published by Canadian Foodgrains Bank,

MCC Manitoba, A Rocha and Canadian Mennonite University, 2021, 248 pages.

For several years, food growers and eaters in Manitoba have been sharing stories and listening to each other, exploring relationships between faith, food and farming. The 30 contributors in this book provide a variety of perspectives.



How to Have an Enemy: Righteous Anger and the Work of Peace. Melissa Florer-Bixler. Herald Press, 2021, 250 pages.

This book examines the biblical concept of enemies in order to address the question of how to deal with injustice. Florer-Bixler is pastor of Raleigh Mennonite Church in North Carolina.

Leaving Violence: Sexualized Violence, the Bible and Standing with Survivors. Susannah Larry. Herald Press, 2021, 240 pages.

Written by an assistant professor of biblical studies at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, these six chapters explore stories of sexualized violence in the Bible and their implications for today. A study guide is available to download from Herald Press.

Let the Light In: Healing From Distorted Images of God. Colin J. McCartney. Herald Press, 2021, 304 pages.

Using easy-to-access language and images, McCartney examines perplexing questions about God and the Bible. If God is love, he asks, why is there so much violence in the Bible? How do we understand things such as suffering, end times and hell? He says we need a Jesus lens rather than a flat Bible.

Peanut Butter and Dragon Wings: A Mother's Search for Grace. Shari Zook. Herald Press, 2021, 232 pages.

Writing with a touch of humour, but most of all with honesty, Shari Zook acknowledges that she cannot be a supermom, and that life is challenging for

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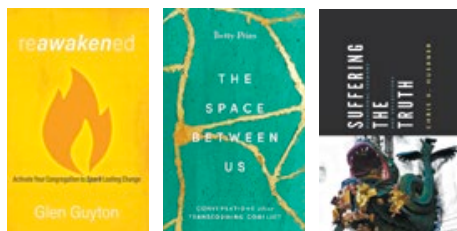
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young mothers. She invites the reader to join her in accepting God's grace and to reflect deeply on what that means.



Reawakened: Activate Your Congregation to Spark Lasting Change. Glen Guyton. Herald Press, 2021, 216 pages.

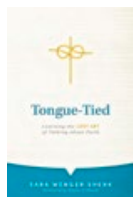
Glen Guyton, executive director of Mennonite Church U.S.A., encourages congregational leaders to think about how to reawaken their churches, making them relevant in today's world. Using specific questions and practical suggestions, he identifies eight characteristics of activated churches.

The Space Between Us: Conversations About Transforming Conflict. Betty Pries. Herald Press, 232 pages.

Betty Pries is experienced in helping congregations and faith-based institutions deal with conflict. She explains why conflict occurs between people and suggests how it can be overcome. The key is to see oneself clearly.

Suffering the Truth: Occasional Sermons and Reflections. Chris K. Huebner. CMU Press, 2020, 124 pages.

This collection of sermons and reflections provides fresh perspectives on yearly celebrations in the Christian calendar. Associate professor of theology and philosophy at Canadian Mennonite University, Huebner writes with vivid imagery and a readable style.

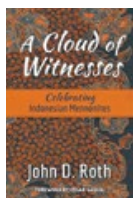


Tongue-Tied: Learning the Lost Art of Talking About Faith. Sara Wenger Shenk. Herald Press, 2021, 256 pages.

Shenk, the former president of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, asks why many Christians today are reluctant to talk about their faith. She explores how the church has come to this

point and she has suggestions of how to speak about faith with integrity.

History



A Cloud of Witnesses: Celebrating Indonesian Mennonites. John D. Roth. Herald Press, 200 pages.

This overview and history of the Mennonite churches in Indonesia is intended as preparation for those travelling to Semarang, Indonesia, for Mennonite World Conference's assembly in 2022. It also includes some practical travel tips.

Exile. Waltraut Wiens with Elisabeth Wiens. Privately published with Friesen Press, 2021, 270 pages.

This book is told from the perspective of two Wiens women who fled their homes in West Prussia at the end of the Second World War as the Russian army invaded. After years of tragedy, they rebuilt their lives in Canada and Uruguay.

A Gentle Boldness: Sharing the Peace of Jesus in a Multi-Faith World. David W. Shenk. Herald Press, 2021, 240 pages.

David Shenk is known for his work in promoting peace and understanding between Christians and Muslims. This autobiography describes his childhood days in Africa, his service with Eastern Mennonite Missions, and his joy in sharing the peace of Christ with other faiths.

Hardship, Resistance, Collaboration: Essays on Dutch Mennonites During World War II and Its Aftermath. Alle G. Hoekema and Gabe G. Hoekema. AMBS Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2021, 216 pages.

This collection of essays, available in English for the first time, explores the different ways that Dutch Mennonites reacted to German occupation during and after the war. This is part of the Occasional Papers series of Anabaptist Mennonite

Biblical Seminary.



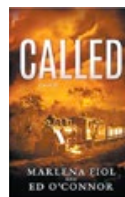
Mennonite Brethren Bible College: A History of Competing Visions. Abe J. Dueck. Kindred Productions, 2021, 220 pages.

Mennonite Brethren Bible College was an important part of the Mennonite Brethren conference in Canada, from its beginning in 1944 until it became Concord College in 1992. The close ties between the school and the church did not always run smoothly.

We Would Like You to Design a Better Hand Pump. George Klassen. Privately published, available at Lulu.com, 2020, 110 pages.

While serving with Mennonite Central Committee in the late 1970s, the author designed a hand pump to make irrigation possible in rural Bangladesh. This is the story of how he developed this appropriate technology that was simple and effective, and successfully used by many Bangladeshi farmers.

Other books



Called. Marlena Fiol and Ed O'Connor. JRS Books, 2021, 375 pages.

Although the cover lists it as a novel, this book is based on the true story of John and Clara Schmidt, who founded the leprosy medical centre at Km 81 in Paraguay. This interesting story gives a glimpse into the work of MCC and the history of Mennonites in Paraguay. It is available at www.calledanovel.com.



Cattail Skyline. Joanne Epp. Turnstone Press, 2021, 120 pages.

This is Joanne Epp's second collection of poetry. Born in Saskatchewan, she spent some years in

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Ontario and now lives in Winnipeg. These poems are set in a wide variety of locations and draw attention to intricate details and changing seasons.



Dear Peter, Dear Ulla. Barbara Nickel. ThistleDown Press, 2021, 350 pages.

Although this story is fiction, it explores how Mennonite communities were affected by the Second World War and is told from a pre-teen perspective. Peter, a farm boy in Saskatchewan corresponds with his cousin Ulla, who lives in Danzig. Adults will appreciate the story as well as children.

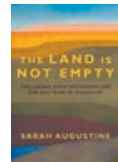
Every Home Needs an Elephant. Jane Heinrichs. Orca Book Publishers, 2021, 160 pages.

This illustrated chapter book has lots of visuals and is suitable for children learning

to read longer books. The characters are quirky and the elephant is loveable in spite of the challenges it brings. Heinrichs is also the author of *Magic at the Museum*.

Growing a Generous Church: A Year in the Life of Peach Blossom Church. Lori Guenther Reesor, Privately published, 2021, 222 pages.

A healthy and financially sound congregation fosters generosity, writes the author, using a creative non-fiction genre. Her characters discuss a church's real-life problems and solutions, providing suggestions for congregations to improve their conversations about generosity. Discussion questions are included.



The Land is Not Empty: Following Jesus in Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery. Sarah Augustine. Herald Press, 2021.

The author is a co-founder of the Anabaptist group Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery Coalition. She lives in Washington state and is of Pueblo

descent. Augustine believes the church has a responsibility to actively work for justice, especially when it comes to the extraction industry that affects Indigenous peoples all around the world.



Lost on the Prairie. MaryLou Driedger. Heritage House Publishing, 2021, 224 pages.

This novel, set in 1907, is based on a true event for which there are few known details. A young boy is separated from his family while on their big move from Kansas to Saskatchewan. It is designed for younger readers.

Menno-Nightcaps: Cocktails Inspired by that Odd Ethno-Religious Group You Keep Mistaking for the Amish, Quakers or Mormons. S.L. Klassen. Touchwood Editions, 2021, 176 pages.

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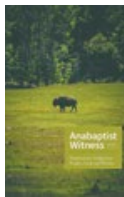
FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

With lots of wit and satire, Sherri Klassen of the *Drunken Mennonite* blog has put together 77 cocktail recipes with amusing connections to Mennonite history, faith and culture.

Not Quite Fine: Mental Health, Faith, and Showing Up for One Another. Carlene Hill Byron, Herald Press, 2021, 206 pages.

This book provides up-to-date information about mental health and the role the church can play in supporting those who suffer. It includes practical suggestions of how to help and how to cope. The writer has long experience with depression and bipolar disorder.

Resources



Anabaptist Witness. Recent topics:

“Displacement: Indigenous Peoples, Land and Mission,” Jamie Pitts, ed., November 2020, and “Worship and Witness,” Katie Graber, Anneli Loepp Thiessen, eds., April 2021.

This journal focuses on mission studies and is published by Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Mennonite Church Canada, Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Central Committee Canada and MCC U.S.A. It is available online at CommonWord.ca.

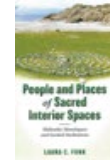
I Am A Mennonite. Paul Plett. Ode Productions, 2021, 59 minutes.

In this documentary, Plett explores the question of what it means to be a Mennonite, not only personally, but also as part of a larger story. He travels around the world and asks many different Mennonites about their experiences.

Laboring Toward Wholeness: A Training on Dismantling Patriarchy. Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz, Jenny Castro, Erica Littlewolf, Chantelle Todman Moore, Linda Gehman Peachey, Regina Shands Stoltzfus.

Mennonite Church U.S.A., 2020.

This curriculum is available to download at mennoniteusa.org. The nine sessions dealing with issues of oppression relating to gender and race are designed to be used by women’s groups. A related webinar on YouTube is also available.



People and Places of Sacred Interior Spaces: Midrashic Monologues and Guided Meditations. Laura C. Funk. Privately published with FriesenPress, 2021, 144 pages.

This book invites the reader to use imaginative situations to explore personal emotions and be guided toward peace and love. It also imagines the thoughts and feelings of biblical characters as they relate to Jesus. The book can be used for individuals or a group.



Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology. “Health, Healing and Hope.” Karl Koop, guest ed. Spring 2021. “Reading the Bible (Continued on page 30)

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FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

**ONLINE NOW!**at canadianmennonite.org**Creation care resource a timely tool**

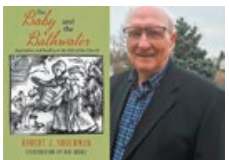
Environmental students in Edmonton have compiled a creation care resource for Mennonite Church Canada congregations.

canadianmennonite.org/greenchurch

**The story behind a 500-year-old book**

The oldest book at the Mennonite Library and Archives at Bethel College in Kansas celebrates its 500th birthday in 2022.

canadianmennonite.org/erasmus

**New book explores God's vision for the church**

Robert J. Suderman, former general secretary for Mennonite Church Canada, has a new book that's available now.

canadianmennonite.org/rjsbook

**Imaginative meditations and monologues**

Laura Funk, spiritual director in residence for Mennonite Church Manitoba, talks about her new book in this Q&A.

canadianmennonite.org/funkbook

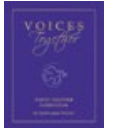
(Continued from page 29)

as if our Lives Depend on it." Fall, 2021.

Writers for the spring issue describe their personal struggles with illness, their experiences as caregivers, and their encounters in pastoral or chaplaincy care. Writers for the fall issue reflect on what it means to read the Bible. The journal is published by Canadian Mennonite University and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

Voices Together Curriculum.

Anneli Loepp Thiessen. MennoMedia, 25 pages, free download at voicestogetherhymnal.org/resources/.



This five-session intergenerational curriculum introduces the new hymnal, giving information on choices of hymns and the origin of materials.

Voices Together Worship Leader Edition Curriculum.

Sarah Kathleen Johnson.

MennoMedia, 2020, 17 pages, free download at voicestogetherhymnal.org/resources/.



This four-session adult faith formation curriculum explores themes of worship and how the hymnal can be used in worship.

Expansive Language in Voices Together: Gendered Images of God and Guide to Contemporary Worship Music in Voices Together. Mennonite Worship and Song Committee, 2020, 8 and 7 pages, free download at voicestogetherhymnal.org/resources/.

These resources provide the theological foundations and practical considerations regarding the language for God in the hymnal, and they explore questions about contemporary worship music. ❧

Many of the featured titles on the book list are available for purchase or to borrow from CommonWord Book Store and Resource Centre in Winnipeg. For more information, see commonword.ca or call 204-594-0527 or 1-877-846-1593.

Canadian Mennonite's goal is not to tell you the answers but to help work through the questions.

With your support we can continue to do that. We want to keep talking together, in this magazine and on your social media feeds.

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Calendar

British Columbia

Dec. 4-5: Advent Vespers with the Abendmusik Choir: (4) at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford; (5) at St. Philip's Anglican Church, Vancouver; both events at 7:30 p.m. Admission by donation to the Menno Hall project at the University of British Columbia.

Saskatchewan

Nov. 15-19: "21st-century preaching," a one-week intensive course with Meghan Good. This course will examine methods for doing exegesis for preaching that are realistic in the busyness of ministry and keep pastors' own hearing of God's words fresh and living. For more information, or to register, visit

<https://mcsask.ca/event/10691>.

Manitoba

Nov. 18: CMU Graduate School of Theology and Ministry webinar: "Expand your horizons for learning, vocation and leadership." At 7 p.m. online. For more information or to register, visit <https://bit.ly/3pu43YZ>.

Ontario

Nov. 18: "Life Upstairs: Digital Exhibit" launch, online through Zoom at 7 p.m. This digital exhibit tells the story of Waterloo's Brubacher House's unique history of live-in hosts through personal stories, photos and videos from past and present hosts. To learn more about the exhibit and register for the launch event, visit lifeupstairs.ca.

Nov. 19-20: MCC Ontario virtual peace conference, Reconciliation in Action. Visit mcc.org.


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

canadianmennonite.org. For more Calendar listings online, visit canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar.



Classifieds

Employment Opportunities



**Employment Opportunity
Principal**

Westgate Mennonite Collegiate is seeking a Principal to join our dynamic and dedicated team to lead our Mennonite faith-based independent school, to replace our current Principal who is retiring at the end of the year. Westgate provides the requisite Manitoba curriculum to grades 6 through 12 with an emphasis on nurturing students' spiritual growth in a Mennonite context.

Reporting directly to the Board, the Principal is responsible for providing overall leadership and direction to the staff in carrying out the mission of the school. This includes communicating the school's vision to the church community and beyond, maintaining support from the church constituency, supervising staff, and overall fiscal planning and management. The successful candidate must be a certified teacher in Manitoba and a person committed to Christ and active in a Mennonite congregation. A Master's degree in education or related field is preferred.

Full job description at westgatemennonite.ca.

Applications must be submitted by **November 30, 2021** to pknyoman@shaw.ca. Anticipated start date is **September 6, 2022**.

**Employment Opportunity
CO-PASTOR (1.0 FTE)**

Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Winkler, Manitoba, is searching for a full-time Co-pastor whose primary responsibilities will be in the areas of worship and community life. Emmanuel Mennonite Church is grounded in an Anabaptist tradition and is a member of Mennonite Church Manitoba.

Interested candidates are asked to please contact **Rick Neufeld**, director of leadership Ministry at Mennonite Church Manitoba (rneufeld@mennochurch.mb.ca), for further information and to apply. This position is open until filled.




**Employment Opportunities
Project Director
Managing Editor**

The 500th anniversary of the Anabaptist movement in 2025 provides a remarkable opportunity for Anabaptist Christians to reflect on their faith.

MennoMedia seeks to hire a **full-time project director** and a **full-time managing editor** to oversee publication of a suite of products that invite Anabaptists and those interested in Anabaptism to consider the history and future of this movement.

Find out more at
www.mennomedia.org/job-openings/.



**Employment opportunity
Lead Pastor
Calgary, Alberta**

Foothills MC is a multigenerational urban church of 169 members. The fellowship was established in 1956 and is a member of Mennonite Church Alberta and MCCanada.

A Lead Pastor is sought to guide the congregation after an 18-month interim ministry following our Lead Pastor's 20-year pastorate. Meet us by going to www.foothillsmennonite.ca. Foothills MC is an Anabaptist faith community that desires to embody, share and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Calgary is a large, modern city with excellent educational opportunities and ready access to Canada's national mountain parks.

Please direct inquiries to: office@foothillsmennonite.ca, Attention of the Chair, Search Committee.

UMEI students ‘sleep out’ to support The Bridge

By Charleen Jongejan Harder
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

Instead of sleeping in their cozy beds on Oct. 1, students at UMEI Christian High School in Leamington, Ont., slept outdoors to raise awareness and funds for The Bridge, a local outreach for homeless youth.

“Even though it was only one night, it gave us a taste of what experiencing homelessness is like,” said student Raylene Shartner. “We planned for this night days ahead and brought layers upon layers of clothing. My friends and I were given one-inch-thick cardboard thanks to the generosity of Highbury Canco, and what we created for the night was like a small castle. We had a very strong sense of community around the property.

... These are things that a youth experiencing homelessness could not do.”

Greg Wiens, operations manager at The Bridge, was delighted “Over the past two years, we have had over 20 youth enter our supportive-housing facility because they had no other place to go. Awareness of these facts is very important, and the support that we, as an organization, received from UMEI through our ‘sleeping out’ event was huge. The \$8,000 that was raised by the UMEI team achieved the results that we, as an organization, had hoped for: awareness and the funds to make a difference.”



PHOTO BY MEGAN SNIPPE

Instead of sleeping in their cozy beds on Oct. 1, students at UMEI Christian High School in Leamington, Ont., slept outdoors to raise awareness and funds for The Bridge, a local outreach for homeless youth.