

CANADIAN MENNONITE

April 18, 2022 Volume 26 Number 8

A small regional church with big impact

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EDITORIAL

Steps on the path

BY VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER
Executive editor

On April 1, 2022, the world witnessed a remarkable event. On that day Pope Francis addressed a group of Indigenous people with the words, “I am very sorry.”

Representatives of the Inuit, Metis and First Nations communities had come from Canada to Rome, meeting in smaller groups with representatives of the Vatican and sharing stories about the abuses suffered at residential schools run by the Catholic church. That final meeting included greetings, prayers, music, the exchange of gifts and an invitation for the Pope to visit Canada. There, he expressed sorrow and shame for the harmful actions members of the Catholic church had taken toward Indigenous people.

What does this have to do with Mennonites? As members of the larger Christian Church, Mennonites can see these meetings as an opportunity to watch, listen and learn—both about the wrongs Christians committed against the Indigenous community and about possible steps toward a better future.

While the Mennonite influence on residential schools in Canada was a lot less than the Catholics’, a handful of schools had Mennonite oversight or volunteers. These schools were part of the historical efforts of colonization by the larger Christian church. As part of that institution, we Mennonites have more work to do.

Mennonite Church Canada heads up the church’s nationwide Indigenous-settler Relations program, which offers a variety of resources for study and action.



In various regions, Mennonites participate in efforts to advance toward justice and reconciliation.

In MC British Columbia, a nine-member Indigenous Relations Task Group is “committed to creative redemptive relationships between settler Mennonites and their Indigenous neighbours.” They identify three aspects to their efforts: listening, learning and advocacy. Elizabeth Epp, a member of group, says, “Reconciliation is hard work, and it begins by being honest and looking at our own histories and ways in which we have not lived fully into the calling that we have received as Jesus’ people and have been blind to some of our own shortcomings, recognizing how we too have participated in a mindset of colonization.”

The regional church includes a land acknowledgement on its website and in newsletters. The website includes practical help for how others might go about creating their own land acknowledgments.

In Manitoba, the Mennonite Coalition for Indigenous Solidarity, a partnership between MC Manitoba and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Manitoba, aims to help churches engage with Indigenous communities. The regional church has also participated in a broader cooperation with other Christians groups and Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba to organize “We Are All Treaty People” celebrations.

For several years, Mennonites in Saskatchewan have collaborated with local Indigenous groups to hold friendship events that include food, music and

dance. They see them as a way to build relationships of respect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

They’re also working to identify and protect sites that have connection to Indigenous presence and history. A new film production is nearing completion and focuses on the Ancient Echoes Interpretive Centre near Herschel, Sask.

In Ontario, the MC Eastern Canada Truth and Reconciliation Working Group organized an online video series, “Treaty as Sacred Covenant,” still available for viewing through the website mcec.ca. Members of individual congregations offer support to 1492 Land Back Lane, a protest against development of Six Nations land near Caledonia, Ont.

In May Conrad Grebel University College will host a four-day conference, “Indigenous-Mennonite Encounters in Time and Place: A Gathering of Body, Mind and Spirit.” Sponsored jointly with MCC and the Institute of Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies, the event intends to “advance understanding on the part of Mennonites and other interested participants of their colonial histories, and is an effort to advance reconciliation and bring justice to Indigenous-settler relations.” (More information is at bit.ly/2UhmHnHu.)

“There are still many steps to take to fix the relationship with the church,” said Phil Fontaine, an Indigenous leader and member of the delegation to Rome. The depth of pain and the long-lasting consequences of the church’s past actions require acts of justice and deep reconciliation. They require humility and courage on the part of all who commit to this path.

How will Mennonites continue to respond to the Calls to Action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission? How will we live out Jesus’ message of good news as we walk alongside our Indigenous neighbours? ❧



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FEATURE

A small regional church with big impact

Meet the hosts of Gathering 2022

By Donita Wiebe-Neufeld
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

PHOTO BY LEN FRANZ

You are easily forgiven for not knowing that Edmonton is a beach city. In spite of its northern location and prairie landscape, sandcastles and sunbathers began appearing along a bank of the North Saskatchewan river in 2017.

This so-called Accidental Beach emerged when upstream construction subtly changed the waterflow, exposing and enlarging a beautiful sand bar. Ever since then, crowds flock to the area to enjoy the sun and sand.

The surprising new recreation option is wonderful; however, it also creates parking, garbage and hygiene challenges that need to be overcome. It's fascinating to see the possibilities and challenges that a small change upstream has created, and to ponder what the future might have in store when the waters change again.

Accidental Beach is a useful local metaphor for describing the five Mennonite Church Alberta congregations

currently active in Edmonton. As Mennonite Church Alberta prepares to host the MC Canada national gathering from July 29 to Aug. 1, it is fascinating to consider how a small regional church body affects the flow of city life, its development and the surprises and challenges that emerge.

In the early 1950s, young, rural Mennonites began moving to the city for education and work. Bible study and discussion groups formed in homes, and new urban Mennonite congregations began to grow in Edmonton.

Three churches emerged from three separate Mennonite conferences: First Mennonite Church, then a General Conference congregation, now part of MC Alberta; Holyrood Mennonite Church, originally a member of the Northwest Conference; and Lendrum Mennonite Church, a Mennonite Brethren congregation.

While all three functioned on their own, the overall Mennonite presence in Edmonton was small, and working

together often made sense. The churches have a long history of co-operation. They have shared a ministerial group, worked together with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) on various projects, and held joint Good Friday services. This co-operation increased the ability of Mennonites to have an impact beyond what might be expected.

Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

A good example of how these few churches have shaped the city is the existence of the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers. The organization, now well known, is a go-to source for news media whenever there are stories about refugee resettlement and related issues.

The centre began when Mennonites saw, and responded to, the wave of Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian refugees fleeing war in the late 1970s. Many of those who responded were first- or second-generation immigrants themselves, and family stories of loss and struggle informed their compassionate response.

First, Holyrood and Lendrum, representing the three conferences respectively, worked together to help newcomers successfully settle in Edmonton. Utilizing former MCC worker Anne Falk's experience and knowledge of the Vietnamese language and culture, the churches began organizing more than a crisis response, setting up ways to provide ongoing help for newcomers.

From an initial full-time staff complement of 1.5 in 1980, the centre now has a staff of approximately 230 people working to assist up to 17,000 newcomers each year. The organization provides language training, job skills, and other resettlement services. While it still retains the Mennonite name and representation on its board, it is now largely government funded and operated.

North Edmonton Ministry

Another project with surprising results is the North Edmonton Ministry. Spearheaded by MC Alberta and supported by

MCC Alberta, the project aimed to build bridges between Christians (mostly Mennonites) and Muslims through the 2010s.

Donna Entz was hired to lead the work. Through personal relationships she and her husband Lorne built in the community and through spearheading interfaith dialogue events, trust grew between Mennonite and Muslim leaders.

When the 2016 Syrian crisis hit, Mennonites and Muslims in Edmonton were ready and able to work well together to provide a warm welcome for the refugees. Since then, similar interfaith dialogues have begun in Calgary.

In 2021, MC Alberta decided to continue the work, hiring Suzanne Gross to explore the possibilities of what this might look like into a new decade.

Other significant projects

There have been many other significant projects through the years, including introducing the fair trade movement to Edmonton through Ten Thousand Villages (now Village Goods), restorative justice work with young offenders, prison visitation, support for families of prisoners, an MCC Thrift store, and recycling initiatives.

Some projects have come and gone, while others have adapted to changing levels of support from both churches and governments. In addition, there are many significant but less measurable contributions made to the city by MC Alberta churches.

Adela Wedler, a lay leader at First Mennonite Church, writes: "We are involved in various Edmonton projects such as the Mustard Seed (providing meals), and Meals on Wheels (a pickup depot). We are a place where a local Christian [Alcoholics Anonymous] group meets, and we run a not-for-profit day care. Providing worship at a rehab hospital. Our welcoming presence is becoming more known and we hope to provide a place where everyone feels comfortable and welcome to worship!"

Mennonite churches are a source of many volunteers whose contributions to the city are difficult to quantify.

The Edmonton Christian Life

Community Church, for example, has played an important role in helping Cantonese speakers adjust and adapt to Edmonton. Teaching English through the use of Bible stories, and computer classes are just two of the services the church has gifted to the city.

The changing face of MC Alberta in Edmonton

The face of MC Alberta in Edmonton is, like the river that flows through it, dynamic and always changing. Congregations have come and gone, such as Faith Mennonite (1980-1996) and the Vietnamese Mennonite Church (1995-2017).

In the last 10 years, three of the five churches in the city have become predominantly African. Sunday worship services are conducted in Nuer, Amharic, Cantonese and English.

Executive minister Tim Wiebe-Neufeld says that he likes to relate to these different groups and experience their perspectives on faith. "People newer to the Mennonite faith, or who choose it, remind me about what is exciting and important about my faith."

The struggles faced by newcomer churches today echo issues that faced the original Mennonite churches. Recent family stories of forced migration and trauma, urbanization and increased education of the younger generations, adapting to a new culture, and language of worship, are all live issues alongside the difficulties of resettlement.

Being a peace church in the recent aftermath of war is an important consideration for MC Alberta's newest churches.

When South Sudanese Mennonite Church joined the regional church, it clearly stated a desire to be a peace church and to help others. Past experiences with MCC and the work of the newcomers centre were important in their decision to join MC Alberta.

Another issue shared across the years is concern for youth and the effective passing on of faith through the generations amidst change.

Pastor Mezgebu Tucho of the Bethel International Oromo Congregation, told Wiebe-Neufeld that it is difficult for the

MC Alberta congregations in Edmonton

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

- **Holyrood Mennonite Church** began in the 1950s with young people from the Northwest Conference (Swiss Mennonite background) moving into the city for education and work. It formally organized as a congregation in 1957. In about 2000, the congregation joined Mennonite Church Alberta. Over the next decade, a significant number of new immigrants, mainly from Liberia, made Holyrood their home church, and the congregation has worked intentionally to become an intercultural church.

- **First Mennonite Church** has roots in the late 1940s and early '50s when young people from rural Mennonite congregations like Tofield Mennonite began moving to the city to attend university and for work. Professor John Unrau and his wife Mary invited students into their home for regular Bible studies and discussion. With pastoral support from the Tofield congregation, First Mennonite grew in independence when

it officially joined the Alberta Mennonite Conference in 1959.

- **Edmonton Christian Life Community Church**, formerly Edmonton Chinese Mennonite Church, began services in September 1989. The congregation was made up of Chinese people who came to Canada in the 1980s. The three Mennonite denominations in the city—Mennonite Church Alberta (General Conference), Mennonite Brethren and the Northwest Mennonite Conference—cooperated to support the new church whose vision was to “help meet the spiritual needs of



CM FIFE PHOTO BY JOANNE DE JONG

The Holyrood Mennonite Church Girls Club learns to make traditional food (spätzle) from Mennonite Voluntary Service members. Pictured from left to right: Venissa Tumbay, Marie Bickensdoerfer, Malin Huber, Nina Schulze and Tarnisha Snogba.

the new immigrants at the Mennonite Centre for Newcomers.”

- **South Sudanese Mennonite Church** began when leaders in the community wanted to form a church where their families could grow spiritually, worship in their Nuer language and help others. Most were newcomers to Canada and knew Mennonites from the work of MCC in Sudan and from interactions at the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers. Several families attended First Mennonite for over a year as they began forming the basis for their own congregation. In 2014, the South Sudanese church joined MC Alberta.

- **Bethel International Oromo Congregation** is the newest MC Alberta congregation in Edmonton, having joined in 2018. Pastor Mezgebu Tucho's work with the Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia led him to seek affiliation with the Mennonite church. Worship services are conducted in Amharic.



CM FILE PHOTO BY JOANNE DE JONG

Bethel International Church Edmonton Oromo Congregation families are pictured at the front of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Edmonton, where they meet for services.

A few facts about Edmonton

- **Edmonton is located** on Treaty 6 (1876) land and is the traditional home of the Blackfoot, Cree, Dene, Nakoda and Métis people.
- **Population: city—1,010,899; metropolitan area—1,418,118.** It is the fifth largest city in Canada, and the northernmost city of more than a million people in North America. It is the capital city of Alberta.
- **A “Gateway to the North,”** Edmonton is a staging area for oilsands projects and diamond mining in the Northwest Territories. Economic activity is varied. Energy, research and education opportunities draw people to the city.
- **Nicknamed “Festival City,”** Edmonton hosts a variety of events year-round. K-Days, the Heritage Festival, and Taste of Edmonton are concurrent with the gathering.

—COMPILED BY DONITA WIEBE NEUFELD

adults to know how to speak to youth about faith because the North American context and culture is different from what it was in Ethiopia.

Pastor Rueben Tut of the South Sudanese Mennonite Church says his church is young and energetic. In contrast to the aging and shrinking established congregations, the Tut's congregation has large families and many young people. When the church joined MC Alberta, he says they were “looking for where we can worship, looking for a [church] to be a part of something.”

The synergies and opportunities that exist between Edmonton's established churches and new congregations seem obvious, and the contributions to the city continue to change and grow.

Holyrood Mennonite church has evolved into a largely Liberian congregation. Interim pastor Patrick Kukanu says: “Because Edmonton is growing diversely, the experience of Holyrood is valuable in sharing light on cross-cultural engagements—the strengths and challenges.”

In light of a few difficult years, lay

leader Margot Brunn is hopeful for the congregation's future, saying; “Over the years, many members who had been displaced by war and discrimination enriched its worship and prayerful sharing. The tree of Holyrood has deep roots, ready to support a congregational renewal after the pandemic drought.”

Tut emphasizes the need for the extended Mennonite church family to put effort into developing and keeping relationships with each other strong. He wants other MC Canada churches to know that South Sudanese Mennonite Church is part of them. “We are Mennonite and part of the family of Mennonites. We want to have strong connections with MC Canada.”

Like the construction that created Accidental Beach, Mennonites have, and will continue to have, a surprising and ever changing influence on the character of the city of Edmonton. ❧

The Mennonites of Edmonton will host the nationwide church at Gathering



PHOTO BY LEN FRANZ

The face of Mennonite Church Alberta in Edmonton is like the river that flows through it, dynamic and always changing. Congregations have come and gone, such as Faith Mennonite (1980-1996) and the Vietnamese Mennonite Church (1995-2017). In the last 10 years, three of the five churches in the city have become predominantly African.

2022 on July 29 to Aug. 1. Camp Valaqua, in Water Valley, will host youth for Amplify! July 31 to Aug. 4. To view an invitational video, go to bit.ly/3uSFB4u. Registration for both events opened on April 13. For more information, visit mennonitechurch.ca/gathering2022 and mennonitechurch.ca/amplify.



❧ For discussion

1. How often is your congregation mentioned by local news outlets? Can you think of specific church activities that have been featured in a local newspaper or community website? What impact do the churches in your area have in the community?
2. Donita Wiebe-Neufeld writes, “The struggles faced by newcomer churches today echo issues that faced the original Mennonite churches.” What are some of the issues that newcomers struggle with as they get settled in Canada? What are some of the synergies and blessings that newcomer congregations offer to the wider church?
3. Do you think the changes seen by Edmonton Mennonites in the last 20 years are representative of changes in Mennonite churches across Canada? What are the signs of hope for the future as Mennonite Church Canada gathers in Edmonton this summer?

—By Barb Draper

See related “Church Identity/Vision” resources at www.commonword.ca/go/2941

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OPINION

/// Readers write

✉ Reader objects to terms used in *Canadian Mennonite*

In the last few years there has been a marked increase of “coded language” in *Canadian Mennonite*. By this I mean terms which have ideological implications beyond their dictionary meanings.

For example, back in the 1950s and '60s the buzzword was “change.” Everybody jumped on the bandwagon, especially educators: “Yeah! I’m all for change! Bring it on!”

Most people did not get the full ideological implications of the term, namely, that “change” meant a quick march towards a more Marxist, post-revolutionary and post-Christian society.

Nowadays, the dominant buzzwords are “racism” or “systemic racism.” These terms are widely used to refer to anything related to European society, culture, heritage or ancestry.

When such words become part of our everyday language, they work to prejudice our thoughts, emotions and opinions.

It is fairly simple for interested parties to use coded language to replace plain language. For

example, instead of talking about Natives and non-Natives, we can refer to people as “Indigenous” and “settlers.”

This prejudices any discussion by privileging the claims of the former as having value, and dismisses any value pertaining to the latter.

Why doesn’t the writer or commentator just say that he or she believes that all Native claims are valid, and all non-Native claims are not? After all, even in Canada, the government allows a partial measure of freedom of speech.

Writers and editors might feel themselves liberated by being free to say what they really mean. It will at least free your readers from seeking to decode every ideologically charged term which they might run across while perusing your pages.

KEVIN MCCABE, ST. CATHARINES, ONT.

The writer is a member of Grace Mennonite Church, St. Catharines, Ont.

✉ Reader calls climate-change letter misleading

Re: “Fight climate change by shipping liquid natural gas overseas” letter, March 21, page 8.

This letter reflects the public’s generally poor understanding of both the climate crisis and energy options that has resulted from the media listening too much to vested fossil interests. Therefore, no doubt with impeccable intentions, the letter writer misleads:

- **On personal responsibility** for the climate crisis. Yes, it’s important that we each look to what we can do ourselves. But, in the writer’s heavily polluting province of Alberta—exceeded worldwide in per capita greenhouse gas emissions only by my own province of Saskatchewan and a couple of American states—about 79 percent of the emissions are the direct responsibility of heavy industry. Even of the remaining emissions that can be ascribed to individuals, small businesses and farms, significant reductions cannot be achieved without changes to government policy in electricity generation, transport infrastructure, planning, building codes and retrofit financing.
- **On solar and wind.** European jurisdictions that started the transition earlier are avoiding the problems seen in Alberta. Electric grids need to be reconfigured to take advantage of variable renewables. (National Grid in Britain is currently midway through a five-year process.) It’s no surprise that the Alberta grid, until recently heavily

July 31 – August 4, 2022
Camp Valaqua, Alberta

Amplify!
Youth Gathering 2022
giving voice to what we've seen & heard

A Nationwide Youth Gathering!

For youth ages 12-18. Visit the website below for the latest information and updates as the Youth Gathering takes shape. Contact youth@mennonitechurch.ca for more details. Register now!

mennonitechurch.ca/amplify

Camp Valaqua

Mennonite Church Canada
Our nationwide community of faith

dependent on burning coal, has not yet made all the necessary changes.

- **On liquid natural gas (LNG).** LNG is a more emissions-intensive technology than its promoters claim. Multiple lines of research show methane emissions from fracking operations to be much higher than reported, to the extent that the lifecycle climate impact of fracked gas is similar to that of coal. Then add the emissions from liquefaction and transportation.

The big picture from peer-reviewed science says that, to avoid catastrophe, all fossil fuels must be phased out within decades.

MARK BIGLAND-PRITCHARD (ONLINE COMMENT)

✉ 'Almighty God is masculine and feminine'

Re: "Reader says his Bible has no feminine references to God or Holy Spirit" letter, March 7, page 8.

I have at least nine different versions of the Bible on my bookshelves (and countless more on my phone), and in none of them can I get past the first page of the first chapter of the first book without coming across the idea that humanity is defined as created in God's image.

And what is God's image? "*Male and female created he them*" (Genesis 1:27). Both genders are required to represent the image of God. Can't get much clearer than that.

Feel free to refer to God as a "he" for convenience, but recognize the limitations of human language. Almighty God is masculine and feminine in all his divine boundless and eternal love. At least that's what my Bible tells me.

GORD WILLMS (ONLINE COMMENT)

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.

/// Milestones

Deaths

Brown—Ronald, 74 (b. June 30, 1947; d. Jan. 14, 2022), Rockway Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Epp—Ewald, 86 (b. May 20, 1935; d. March 15, 2022), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Harder—Eleanor (Koop), 71 (b. April 19, 1950; d. Jan. 31, 2022), Rockway Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Kathler—Fred, 93 (b. Oct. 21, 1928; d. Feb. 23, 2022), Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Kathler—Sue, 93 (b. Nov. 19, 1928; d. Feb. 14, 2022), Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Klippenstein—Lawrence, 91 (b. July 16, 1930; d. March 18, 2022), Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Redekop—John, 89 (b. Nov. 12, 1932; d. Nov. 30, 2021), Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Schonwetter—Jurgen, 83 (b. Feb. 3, 1938; d. Dec. 23, 2021), Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Yamasaki—Gary, 65 (b. June 13, 1956; d. Feb. 19, 2022), Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

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

/// Paid Obituary

Deborah Lynn Sprunger, 71, of Lancaster, Pa., passed away on March 27, 2022, at Lancaster General Hospital surrounded by her loving family. Deborah was the loving wife of Rev. JW Sprunger.

She was born in Presque Isle, Maine, on April 17, 1950, to Clayton and Lynette Coffin.

Deborah and JW attended Scottdale and Akron Mennonite Church for many years, and most recently Parkesburg Mennonite Church, where JW is pastor. Deborah was actively involved in the church, working on several committees, worship leading and music.

Deborah worked as a dental assistant, oral maxillofacial surgical assistant, administrative assistant at Lancaster Mennonite High School, and director of operations at Conestoga Valley Christian Community Services.

Deborah loved gardening, art, sewing, music, playing the piano, travelling, and laughing with friends and family. Her biggest passion was helping others.

She is survived by her husband JW, children Nathan, Rachel, Matthew and daughter-in-law Amanda.

Relatives and friends are respectfully invited to attend a Memorial Service at Akron Mennonite on May 14, 2022, at 2 p.m. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in her memory to: Alpha-1 Foundation (www.alpha1.org).



FROM OUR LEADERS

Listen, debate, decide

Darnell Barkman

In a few months Garry Janzen, the executive minister of Mennonite Church B.C. will retire. He's served MC B.C. for 14 years in that role.

When he informed MC B.C. leadership about his upcoming retirement, we gathered to create a hiring process.

How will we discern God's will for a future candidate?

This isn't just a hiring process; this is discerning God's guidance for his church.

MC B.C. practises team leadership, and the executive minister is our public, identifiable leader, representing our connection to God and one another as a regional body. The executive minister is a leader who reminds us of how we interpret and embody God's will by looking back to the past and walking forward into our future.

We crafted a task group to discern candidates. We tapped leaders that represented men and women, global perspectives and human resources backgrounds, and we started to practise community discernment. The theological name for it is "the priesthood of all believers."

So far in the process, we've:

1. **Listened to God** in Scripture and prayer.
2. **Surveyed MC B.C.**, looking for priorities.
3. **Listened to respected** and wise leaders from the past generation.
4. **Listened to people** in positional leadership.
5. **Consulted MC Canada** resources.
6. **Reflected on** our founding documents and priorities.
7. **Spoken with** the broader church.

The process reminds me of the early church in Acts 15. They had a big decision to make about the future of the church. They did it by reminding one another of how God had moved in the past through the law, and how God revealed himself to the church through the Holy Spirit, and that they would listen to one another to complete the process.

The Acts church debated and, with wisdom from God, the elders listened intently to how God was moving among them. Then they made a decision.

My prayer for MC B.C.'s executive ministerial search, and all similar discernment processes and searches in MC Canada, is that we continue to work

to discern as a body:

1. **Listening to the Spirit and Scripture.**
2. **Listening to the church body.**
3. **Moving forward in faith** towards the conclusion and confession of the Jerusalem Council: "The Holy Spirit has led us to the decision . . ."

I believe that future participation in our congregations, our regional churches and our nationwide body will be directly related to Jesus followers' learning to listen to one another. We need to grow in learning to discuss openly and to have honest and mature conflict in decision-making processes. Christ's peace is not silence; it is a trusting process with truth and honesty in love.

Mature conflict isn't easy in our time or any time. Polarization and division are big global problems, but we are Jesus' good news people. We are Christ's body. The church will look and smell like Jesus in our world as we grow into disciples who can have healthy discussions in a trusting community while making important decisions together.

Please pray for us as we continue the executive ministerial search process in MC B.C. ☿



Darnell Barkman pastors Yarrow United Mennonite Church, an MC B.C. congregation.

A moment from yesterday



What would you carry if you emigrated to another country? Twenty-three-year-old Anna Neufeld wore this locket in 1917 when her fiancé, Cornelius Tiessen, left, and brother Peter, both pictured in their Red Cross uniforms, served on medical trains during the First World War. Anna lived near present-day Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine, now site of another war. Anna would marry Cornelius in 1918. Sadly, Peter died in 1919. Anna cherished the locket all her life, bringing it with her to Canada in 1925.

Text: Lauren Harder-Gissing
Photo: Mennonite Archives of Ontario



archives.mhsc.ca

IN THE IMAGE

'A striking lesson in hope'

Ed Olfert

I continue to wander roads surrounding Laird, Sask., with my faithful hound, Bran. These spring days, as the snow slowly recedes, I have discovered a bonanza. Cans and bottles wait to be scooped up! I expect the dollar value of my recent retrievals possibly lies somewhere north of \$2! Added to that, the prayers, sermons and columns formulated during this solitude probably equals that sum again!

I offer the most recent ruminations.

In I Corinthians 13:13, when Paul speaks of *"the most excellent way,"* he ends with, *"These three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."*

I won't argue with Paul, but I recall a striking lesson in hope.

When I started in formal ministry, Mary was part of the congregation. She was elderly, a widow and she used a wheelchair. A friend picked her up at her condo and brought her to church.

I decided that a legitimate pastoral activity might well be to go visit her. Being new to the work and utterly inexperienced, I floundered a bit, then I asked Mary to tell me about her deceased husband. Her face lit up, and she offered with some passion, "He loved me very much!"

I can't imagine a better icebreaker. We became good friends and we delighted in our times together.

There was the story of Mary's grandson, a snowmobile racer. His racing competition happened on the river ice, and Mary's condo looked down on the site. She told me with great glee how she had wheeled herself to the window and cheered loudly all afternoon.

Then, races complete, the grandson came up to visit her, and her eyes sparkled as she told me that she had immediately recognized by his racing leathers that she had been cheering for the wrong guy! It was a great joke on Mary, and we roared in laughter together.

Another day, Mary didn't show up to church, and it was announced that she had fallen the previous evening and had spent the night on her floor. Later, I phoned her number, expecting to talk to caregivers. Mary answered, and insisted that I come at once, as she had this marvellous new adventure to share with me!

The lesson of hope was underlined most significantly on another visit. Circling around her living space was a sideboard, and propped on this shelf

were pictures of her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. On this day, Mary would point to a picture, I would hand it to her, and she would tell me the story of that person.

A photo of a young girl stopped her, as the child had died accidentally. The tears ran down Mary's face as she shared that tragedy. We sat quietly. After a time, she handed back the photo, and indicated the next one. The stories went on.

That simple moment was hugely transformative for me. The hard stories in our lives, Mary taught me that day, are deeply important and need to be honoured, grieved and given their time. But they are not the only stories that form us. The hope that Mary held allowed her to embrace all of her journey.

I'm thinking that's a lesson of God. Who knew that the roads of Laird offer this wisdom? ☸



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

Et cetera

Shipment to Ukraine

In March, volunteers at the Southwestern Ontario Gleaners (SWO) in Leamington, Ont., were busy preparing 14 skids of dried soup mix to be given to Loads of Love Humanitarian and Aid Society, to be distributed in Poland and Ukraine. This is more than 500,000 servings of dried vegetable soup mix that will help to feed refugees.

Source: Southwestern Ontario Gleaners



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SWO GLEANERS

MIND AND SOUL

Mission for now

Randolph Haluza-DeLay

Since this is the Spring Books and Resources issue of *Canadian Mennonite*, let me recommend a book that speaks directly to some of the headline news of the past few weeks. No, it's not something on Ukraine. It's a book on mission.

A monster challenge is how institutions respond to issues of social injustice and oppression in which an institution is deeply involved. Churches in North America and elsewhere have been heavily, and rightfully, criticized for their roles in colonialism. Indigenous-settler relations in Canada took an interesting turn earlier this month with an apology from the Vatican for the "deplorable abuses" at residential schools.

I hope that we are past the time when Mennonites feel they didn't have a part in, and do not benefit from, those injustices. In *The Land is Not Empty*, author Sarah Augustine—committed both to her Christian faith and her Indigenous heritage—challenges Christians of all denominations to "dismantle" the 500-year-old Doctrine of Discovery that forms a crucial legal and cultural foundation in settler-colonial countries.

As Augustine explains, "The Doctrine of Discovery is a theological,

philosophical and legal framework dating to the 15th century that gave Christian governments moral and legal rights to invade and seize Indigenous lands and dominate Indigenous Peoples." (Ever wonder why so much of Canada is called "Crown land"?)

Laws and social norms gave flesh to the doctrine. Territory newly "discovered" was now available for morally "good" uses of "empty land"; that is, for settlement and resource extraction. While it is usually discussed in the past tense, it is not a relic of history.

Augustine argues forcefully that the Doctrine benefits each one of us. She challenges herself, too, even describing her own family's efforts to eliminate involvement in a system that she sees as deeply exploitative. We are all part of, and have our money in, systems that profit at the expense of marginalized peoples.

For example, Canada's laws allow Canadian mining companies to follow weaker rules on human rights and environmental protection outside of the country. Augustine's solutions to "dismantling" are not only about changing some laws or issuing an apology. Dismantling the doctrine follows Jesus, such as in the parable of

the rich man who asked what more he should do, and was told to "sell all you have and [really] follow me."

Near the end of the book, Augustine asks what would it look like for Indigenous Peoples to send missions to mainstream Canadian society, to Wall Street, and to fossil-fuel and mining companies. Drawing on Indigenous cosmologies present in her own Tewa culture, and among the people of Suriname, where she did environmental-health work, she describes the mission as one about restoration of creation, renewed focus on relationships, reduction of corporate capitalism, less individualism and more community. Sound like shalom?

A core scriptural basis of the Doctrine of Discovery is the Israelite conquest of Canaan after the escape from Egypt. An alternative form of the Christian message is about a Jesus who taught and lived for liberation for the oppressed in the here and now. The struggle is to repudiate the first form of Christian mission and internalize the latter. That must go beyond symbolic forms of solidarity. May God help us to humbly, but deliberately, challenge each other as Jesus-followers and churches to put money and lives in line with beliefs and talk. ❧



Randolph Haluza-DeLay lives in Toronto, on the land of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinabeg, Wendat, and Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

Et cetera

'A peaceful solution is in your hands alone'

In a March 23 letter to Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, president of the Russian Federation, and Volodymyr Oleksandrovych Zelensky, president of Ukraine, the World Council of Churches (WCC) acting general secretary, Rev. Ioan Sauca, urged the leaders to listen to the cries of their own faithful people. "I hear in the words of the First Lady of Ukraine the weeping of the Ukrainian mothers who lost their children, of the families who lost their dear ones, the despair of those under the ruins of bombed houses, of those dehydrated and starving without hope of escape in the absence of secure humanitarian corridors," Sauca wrote. "But I also hear the pain and suffering of Russian mothers, wives, children and parents who receive their dear ones in a coffin, from this illogical fratricidal war." He added: "You are two nations with two internationally recognized independent lands. Yet, you are and will always be sister nations."

Source: World Conference of Churches



WCC PHOTO BY ALBIN HILLERT

A young refugee boy from Ukraine pushes a carriage towards a road in Milișăuți, Romania.

TALES FROM THE UNENDING STORY

Becoming the enemy you hate

Joshua Penfold

The story of Israel warns us of how easily we can become the very thing we hate.

The Hebrews were slaves in Egypt, oppressed by Pharaoh and forced into slave labour to perpetuate the greatness of the kingdom. They suffered under oppression and longed to be freed from it. God heard their cry and set them free.

Second Chronicles 2 is a clear picture of what can so easily happen to us if we aren't careful. The same Israelites who praised their God for delivering them from captivity, worshipped Yahweh for setting them free from bondage to their oppressors, and eventually became the very oppressors they hated.

At first, you read the chapter and it says that Solomon *"conscripted seventy thousand men and carriers and eighty thousand as stonecutters in the hills and thirty-six hundred as foremen over them."* A total of 153,600 men. Doesn't seem too bad. So a bunch of Israelites were enrolled to help build the temple. So what? Every great project requires manpower, right?

But the end of the chapter helps to flesh out who exactly was going to be doing the work. It says, *"Solomon took a census of all the aliens who were in Israel*

... and they were found to be 153,600." So Solomon's entire building crew consisted of the non-Israelite aliens in the land.

The English word "conscripted" from the beginning of the chapter, which basically means "drafted" or "compulsory enrolment," is a bit more forceful than the original Hebrew word *sapar*, which meant "to tell, declare, count or number."

But I think the translators have intentionally strengthened the severity of the word. When the aliens in the land are "told" to work by the king, it is forced slave labour.

Second Chronicles will later admit without innuendo to this reality. When Solomon "tells" all those in his land who are not citizens, it is exactly what Egypt did to the Hebrew people. Solomon is the new Pharaoh and Israel is the new Egypt, becoming the very oppressors they desperately sought to be free from.

It makes you appreciate all the more when God warned Israel against having a king. The days of the judges were no picnic, let's be clear, but they didn't become an oppressive empire under one ruler bent on grandiosity, even if that grandiosity was to build something magnificent for the glory of God. Can it

really be glorious if it's built on the backs of slaves?

As we all continue to navigate increasingly politicized, polarized and religionized views of the pandemic and vaccines amid everything else we seem to be able to disagree on, let us not become the very things we say we hate about whoever we've decided is our enemy. Let us not become intolerant of the intolerant, judge the judgmental or hate the haters.

If you find someone's view offensive or oppressive, be careful not to simply replicate that posture from a different position. Don't become the Pharaoh you wish to be freed from.

Let us respond with the fruit of another kind: *"with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, goodness, gentleness and self-control, because there is no law against these things."*

As a kind of conclusion or benediction, I offer the final lines from the brilliant song, "Citizens," by Jon Guerra: "Is there a way to love always? / Living in enemy hallways / Don't know my foes from my friends and / Don't know my friends anymore / Power has several prizes / Handcuffs can come in all sizes / Love has a million disguises / But winning is simply not one." ❧



Joshua Penfold (penfoldjoshua@gmail.com) is bewildered by the beauty and blunder in the Bible.

Et cetera

Top bestselling Canadian books of 2021

1. *Five Little Indians* by Michelle Good
2. *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act* by Bob Joseph
3. *Finding the Mother Tree* by Suzanne Simard
4. *The Madness of Crowds* by Louise Penny
5. *Jonny Appleseed* by Joshua Whitehead
6. *State of Terror* by Louise Penny and Hillary Rodham Clinton
7. *The Marrow Thieves* by Cherie Dimaline
8. *Fight Night* by Miriam Toews

Source: CBC



NEWS

Boy's bake sale raises funds for Ukraine

Story and Photo by Jessica Evans
Alberta Correspondent

Cliff Gusztak is a little boy with a big heart. An idea for a small cupcake stand evolved into a fundraising campaign that raised a total of \$7,150 for Mennonite Central Committee's Ukraine emergency response.

"I was maybe thinking that we could stop the war," he said innocently but sincerely of his efforts.

The nine-year-old, who attends Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary, recently learned from his parents that he is more than half-Ukrainian. He also learned that he had relatives who had to flee the conflict, refugees the family is planning on supporting to come to Canada.

"That just made me really sad and the whole idea just popped into my head," said Cliff. "Then dad got involved and it turned into something bigger."

Cliff's dad is a chef at one of Calgary's highly rated restaurants, NOtable. Together, father and son baked 800 mini cupcakes for the bake sale.

"Dad did the baking and I put the dough in and put the icing on top," said Cliff excitedly.

With many family members and friends in different provinces, Cliff's mom Ashley started a gofundme fundraiser so people could contribute from afar. The total from the gofundme campaign was \$2,577 of their \$5,000 goal.

Cliff and his mom reached out to friends from Sunday school and their families, as well as church members. The call-out resulted in approximately six tables displaying baked goods.

The bake sale was held on March 27 at Foothills, after the morning service. The basement was bustling with buyers and, along with Cliff's cupcakes, there were cookies, pies, candy boxes and even handmade keychains of the Ukrainian flag.

During the event, Cliff stood proudly behind his cupcake table talking to buyers about his story and dream behind the event, while attendees dropped cash and coins into a large jar. Cliff was excited to be able to hand the jar over to MCC representatives himself.

Linda Dickinson, material resources coordinator for MCC Alberta, was in attendance at the event. She explained how the donations will be used: "We have 12 partners in Ukraine and we are supporting them with money. They are still on the ground doing the work they were doing. It may have changed in scope or ability, but the work is ongoing."

MCC has approved several smaller-scale, emergency-response projects as it makes plans for longer-term work. These projects include providing lodging, meals, basic medications, fuel and food items for internally displaced people in the city of Uman and in the Cherkasy region.

An MCC partner is delivering food baskets to the homes of individuals with disabilities in the city of Zaporizhzhia. In the city of Avdiivka, an MCC partner is providing families that are sheltering in place with enough food and funds to cover basic needs for two weeks.

Another partner is developing plans to support members of the Roma community displaced from Eastern Ukraine.

The effort will include emergency shelter; water, sanitation and hygiene products; and food needs, as well as informal education and children's programming.

MCC is also developing a response that is longer-term, including psychosocial support, trauma healing, temporary housing, and distribution of locally purchased supplies such as blankets and food packages. MCC also plans to resume shipments of material resources once in-country conditions are stable enough.

"This idea started as a little cupcake stand in our front yard, to being a community event that could not have happened without the help from our church, all Cliff's Sunday school friends and families, and from everyone that donated to his gofundme," said Ashley. "Thank you for making a boy's big dream a reality and for showing him that his ideas do make a difference, and that he can help people who truly need it right now." ❧



Cliff Gusztak with his mom Ashley hand over baked goods at his bake sale at Foothills Mennonite Church on March 27.

Live theatre returns to Rockway with *Anne of Green Gables*

By Kara Cornies

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
KITCHENER, ONT.

After a two-year hiatus, students at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, in Kitchener, were thrilled to perform *Anne of Green Gables*. The two-hour play was mounted by a cast and crew spanning grades 7 to 12, with people from every grade enthusiastically contributing. Six performances ran from March 30 to April 2.

The play was directed by Alan Sapp, with Aaron Balzer as production manager. Kira Andres played Anne Shirley, Marcus Dion played Matthew Cuthbert and Rebecca Janzen-Martin played Marilla.

Anne of Green Gables, adapted from L.M. Montgomery's novel by Joseph Robinette, is the story of a red-headed orphan girl named Anne Shirley who is adopted by siblings Matthew and Marilla Cuthbert. They live at Green Gables, in a little village called Avonlea, in Prince Edward Island. The play narrates the joys and sorrows of the heroine's first few years at home.

Putting on a play requires a lot of effort and dedication. The cast and crew created lasting friendships as a result of working to depict Anne's story. A highlight for many was finding community with each other in the midst of the production.

"It's been so wonderful to bond with the cast and connect with such an amazing group of people while rehearsing and performing *Anne of Green Gables*," says Rebecca Janzen-Martin.

Performance arts can bring so much joy, and this was much needed after two challenging years of the COVID-19 pandemic. The immersive experience of producing a play can build community among everyone involved and provide an emotional outlet that is tremendously beneficial.

These things have all been sorely missed in the past few years, as Elaine Ranney, Rockway's new principal, noted in her



PHOTOS BY TRACEY MATTHEWS

Anne Shirley, centre, played by Kira Andres, pleads with Marilla Cuthbert, left, played by Rebecca Janzen-Martin, to be allowed to stay at Green Gables, as Matthew Cuthbert, played by Marcus Dion looks on.

speech preceding each performance. She also mentioned the excitement of having a live audience. Those who might otherwise have been unable to attend benefitted from the flexibility of having a livestreamed performance.

Anne of Green Gables is Rockway's first production since May 2019. To follow public health guidelines and keep the cast and crew healthy, the play was rehearsed in a modified format. Rehearsals began online in January during lockdown, when school was online. The first week of rehearsals happened over Zoom, moving to in-person practices once school resumed in the building. Protocol dictated that masks be worn and physical distancing occur during rehearsals until shortly before the start of the show, when actors needed to practise conveying expression and emotion with their faces and body language.

The excitement of returning to a live



In a fit of temper, Anne, right, played by Kira Andres, breaks a slate over the head of Gilbert, played by Leo Schellenberger.

production was evident in the sold-out performances and the enthusiasm of the audience after each performance. ❧

Making comforters for Ukraine refugees a community effort

By Maria H. Klassen
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

Niagara United Mennonite Church called its congregants and neighbourhood community together to tie comforters in the church basement on March 26. Advertisements in the local newspapers and in church bulletins invited anyone interested to gather for the morning.

Emily Fieguth worked together with the church's Women in Service volunteers to set up 10 quilting frames in the basement, with four to six people working at each comforter.

"The women have a room at the church with lots of pre-assembled quilt tops and bottoms ready for tying," she said, which were used up during the daylong event.

Inspiration came from several sources:

- **Two years** ago, the Great Winter Warm-up initiated by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) produced 9,400 comforters, with people working in more than a hundred locations, in commemoration of the beginning of MCC in 1920.
- **The needs** of the more than four million refugees currently fleeing Ukraine. Many members of the Niagara-on-the-Lake congregations had families that fled Ukraine during the past century, many of whom had had been helped by MCC.

A blanket was on display in the basement that had been given to a young woman through MCC in 1947, as she was on her way to Paraguay. This elderly woman, now in her 90s, has many stories to tell about the experiences of her quilt.

About 75 people came out to tie comforters, with two-thirds of them coming from the community; 20 blankets were completed by the end of the day. A couple with two young children were there with their mother and grandmother. Several high school students came at the invitation from their Sunday school



PHOTOS BY EMILY FIEGUTH

Mother and daughter Marion and Irene Griese work together at a comforter at Niagara United Mennonite Church on March 26.

teacher. A grandmother brought her grandsons. No prior experience was necessary to take part.

Moses Moini, migration and resettlement program coordinator in the St. Catharines MCC office, has lived through two wars in South Sudan. Of the situation in Ukraine, he says, "I have never seen anything of this magnitude of destruction in such a short time before." He thanked everyone for coming out to give of their time and said the comforters would be going to the Ukraine.

Fieguth shared that a couple from the community, who had owned a quilt store, had been holding onto their supplies, waiting for the right place to donate them to. After seeing the article in the paper about the March 26 event, they brought finished quilts, finished quilt pieces and rolls of fabric to the church.

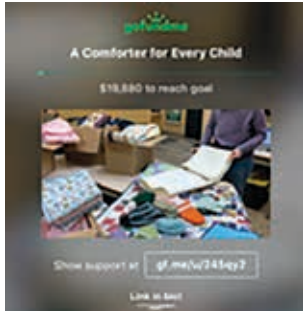


Women from the Westview Centre4Women work on the comforters.

Four other people from the community returned the following week to continue tying, after participating in the March 26 event. ☸

News brief

Supporting comforter makers across Saskatchewan



SCREENSHOT BY CHARLOTTE BUECKERT

A screenshot from 'A Comforter for Every Child Go Fund Me' page.

For many Mennonite volunteers in Saskatchewan, quilting and making comforters is both a ministry and passion. One woman is trying to ensure that these volunteers are equipped with what they need for this ministry. Charlotte Bueckert of Dalmeny, Sask., has started a GoFundMe page to provide supplies to material-resource volunteers across the province. According to Bueckert, the idea for the fundraiser grew out of a very simple challenge: "The desire from volunteers to provide warmth for children through the Prince Albert Literacy Network in Saskatchewan was becoming greater than the funds available to do the task. The volunteerism outgrew the financial resources. so the logical step was to broaden the base of financial supporters through a GoFundMe page, in order to keep this volunteer group equipped with materials and supplies. The act of 'comforting' by an ecumenical group of quilters from Langham, Sask., quickly became part of this broad vision, expanding the scope to include purchasing materials needed for the making of comforters to be shipped by Mennonite Central Committee to international distribution partners." As funds come in, the money will be distributed to volunteer groups who have needs. More information about the project can be found at <https://bit.ly/3r5tMqk>.

—By EMILY SUMMACH



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'Our blood can change things in your country'

Disarmed: The Radical Life and Legacy of Michael 'MJ' Sharp.
By Marshall King. Herald Press, 2022, 255 pages.

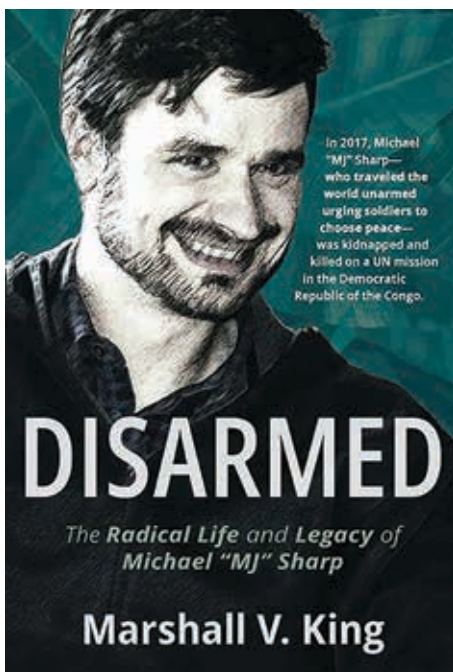
Reviewed by Barb Draper
Books & Resources Editor

MJ Sharp, a young Mennonite peacemaker from the United States, was killed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo five years ago. This book by Marshall King explains not only how and why he died, but it also tells the story of his remarkable life.

Although Sharp was not working for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) at the time of his death, he was familiar with that remote area of the Congo specifically because of his MCC assignment there. Between 2012 and 2015, Sharp coordinated MCC's work in the eastern Congo, working through the Congolese Protestant Council of Churches, primarily helping displaced people, supporting victims of violence and encouraging armed groups to demobilize.

Sharp was very effective in his work, and during his years in the Congo MCC exponentially increased its funding. He was highly respected by the local people; he worked hard to speak their language and he never asked for special favours as an expat. He ate what the locals ate and lived as they did. He found ways to listen and talk to warlords, never hesitating to ride a motorcycle on bad roads to do so.

An American diplomat working in eastern Congo came to realize that Sharp had a unique and valuable perspective on the conflict in that remote part of the world. When group leaders sat down together, Sharp's experience meant that he understood the cultural differences between the various groups. He became highly



respected not only by diplomats, but also by representatives of the UN Security Council.

Marshall King writes, "MJ was a calming force, interpreting and communicating to bring the groups together. He knew the nuances."

It was Sharp's experience in talking to rebel groups that made him invaluable to the UN Security Council. At the time of his death, he was working as part of the UN Group of Experts investigating crimes and human rights abuses. Although there is no concrete proof, Sharp's biographer strongly suggests that his death was orchestrated by Congolese government forces, perhaps to hide what he was investigating.

A young Swedish woman, part of the investigation team, was travelling with Sharp and was also killed. One chapter of the book tells her story.

Sharp had deep Mennonite roots. He was born in Indiana while his father was studying at the Mennonite seminary in Elkhart, and his mother worked for the Mennonite Board of Missions. He grew up in Scottsdale, Pa., where his father was a pastor, and he studied at a Mennonite high school in Indiana and a Mennonite university in Virginia.

Intrigued by gadgets and technology, Sharp valued having a powerful computer and fast internet connection. He was intelligent and articulate, and some of his friends believed he could talk his way out of anything. As well as English, he was fluent in Spanish, German and French, and he was working on Swahili at the time of his death.

After living an adventurous life in Costa Rica, Germany and the Congo, Sharp found it difficult to find his feet while living in the U.S. He preferred to live in a remote part of the world where he could make a difference by reducing violence. He told a Congolese friend, "If they kill us, which can also happen, no problem. Our blood can change things in your country."

The author, who is an adjunct professor of communication at Goshen (Ind.) College, interviewed more than 100 people to collect the information for this biography. He presents Sharp as an unconventional but very charming person who followed his passion for peacemaking. ❧

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

BOOK REVIEW

Not just a book of big ideas

Shelterbelts.
Jonathan Dyck. Conundrum Press, 248 pages, 2022.

Reviewed by Nathan Dueck
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

Four panels on page 108 of Jonathan Dyck's graphic novel *Shelterbelts* are stuck in my mind.

I've studied these black-and-white images so closely that they appear something like a photo negative when I close my eyes. The first is a wide shot of poplar trees in a field of grass; the second is a medium shot of a sky with a few leaves falling off of branches; the third shot pulls out to show wildflowers leading from a line of birches; and the fourth shot zooms in to waving tall grass. Between the panels, three speech bubbles say: "This place. / I feel like I know it. / Like it knows me."

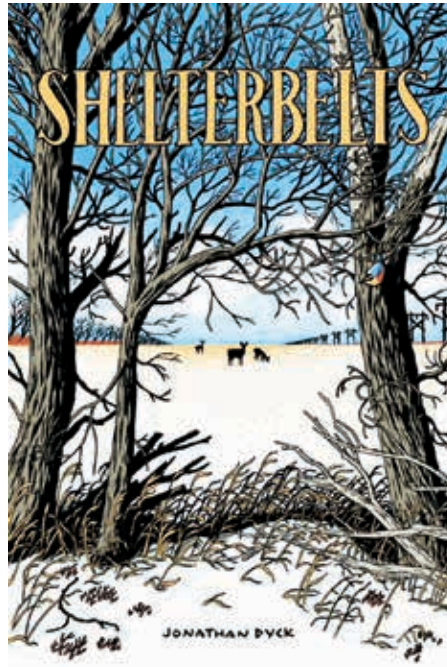
That description, though, doesn't quite capture why I find those four panels so affecting. There's something about the integration of Dyck's words and pictures that strikes me as simultaneously mournful and hopeful.

I felt the need to stare at so many pictures in *Shelterbelts*—not because they aren't clear, but because they are almost too clear. That clarity not only shows a little about how southern Manitoba works, it shows a little about how my relationship to my own Mennonite identity works. Until I read this book, I didn't know that anyone saw my hometown the way I do. But Dyck does. And he sees much more than that. In a way, he sees me.

With an episodic narrative—*Shelterbelts* reads like a collection of interconnected short stories—Dyck considers what it means to love your neighbours in a small, rural, predominantly Mennonite town. Each short story takes up a crucial issue: What does it



Self-portrait of Jonathan Dyck.



mean to love your neighbour who permits the Armed Forces to recruit at the high school? What does it mean to love your neighbour who denies rights to people who are LGBTQ+? What does it mean to love your neighbour who supports oil pipelines? That is not to

suggest this is just book of big ideas.

Dyck presents your neighbours through a series of people who feel more than a little familiar. In the first chapter, you meet the pastor of a Mennonite assembly that is losing members since he's decided to preach a message of inclusion, you meet the daughter of that pastor whose decision to leave that assembly influenced her father's decision, and you meet that pastor's high-school-teacher friend who decides to demonstrate based on his religious convictions. Oh, and you also meet the pastor of an evangelical fellowship who's decided to focus his message on church growth.

And there are 16 other main characters. All within a tight 248 pages!

Beneath the four panels I described above, two panels show Rebecca walking with her partner Jason through a landscape that they both fondly call their own. Rebecca was raised on the land, so it's her home, but Jason's ancestors had the land taken from them, so it's also his home. The images are wordless, but the characters exchange a look of longing that shows all you need to know.

Dyck knows that if I, Mennonite by birth and by choice, truly want to understand myself, I must do the work to reconcile with the past. *Shelterbelts* shows that the past is simultaneously personal and political. ☸

Nathan Dueck teaches creative writing in Cranbrook, B.C. His most recent poetry collection, A Very Special Episode, was published in 2019.

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

Overcoming the fear of not being believed

Guide for responding to congregational sexual abuse aims to resource church

By Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe
Manitoba Correspondent

Five years ago, a congregant of First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg asked David Driedger about church policy addressing sexual abuse and harassment between members of a congregation, following an incident with another congregant.



David Driedger

Driedger, leading minister of First Mennonite, began searching for resources, but “quickly found out this was a gap.” He could not find any policies for this context, even across denominations and organizations.



Jaymie Friesen

So he reached out to Jaymie Friesen, coordinator of the abuse response and prevention program for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Manitoba. Friesen leads workshops on topics like intimate-partner violence and healthy pastoral boundaries. She supports congregations, develops resources and advocates for victims.

Together they wrote a policy guide, which was published by MCC in November 2021. “A Guide for Responding to Congregational Sexual Harassment and Abuse” is a 32-page document built on a model of survivor-centred care that provides education and guidance on everything from receiving a disclosure to making a report.

People may be inclined to say that sexual abuse doesn’t happen in their own congregations, but Friesen says that’s unlikely to be true.

“That’s not necessarily a sign that a community’s healthy,” she says. “It probably means that people don’t feel safe actually talking about things they’re experiencing. . . . We probably have 25 to 50 percent of

people in our church who’ve been impacted by sexual harm in some aspect of their life.”

She receives many phone calls and has listened to a multitude of experiences, not only from within the Mennonite constituency, but also beyond. “People are scared either that nothing will happen or that an over-the-top response will happen,” she says. Fears of not being believed, creating conflict and facing retaliation can make it difficult to come forward.

The guide aims to break down some of those fears by making it clear to people experiencing harm, whether in the church or a different context entirely, what their options are and how they can get help.

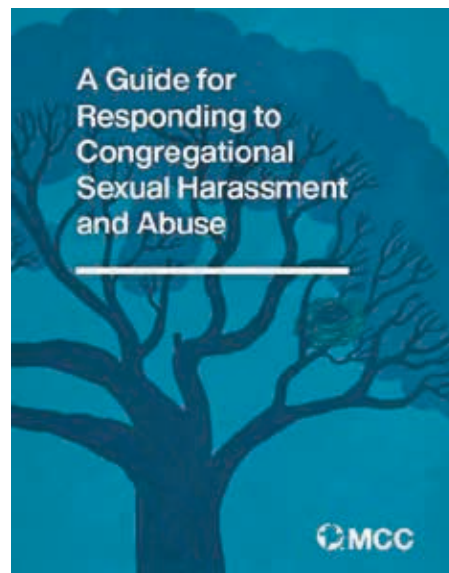
Policies are often written in administrative jargon, which makes the information less accessible. In contrast, this document was created for community, to be accessed and worked through at the congregational level.

The resource is helpful on its own but most valuable when paired with a broader shift in church culture and practice.

“I feel like a lot of the work of making our churches safe places and healthy places is preventative stuff,” Friesen says, pointing to steps like training, exploring the topic of abuse in other areas of church life, and appointing a safe church coordinator.

In this era of #MeToo and #ChurchToo movements, it might seem like everyone is empowered to speak up and challenge systems of power. However, Friesen says, “There’s still so many people who really doubt their experience still. . . . The reality is that there’s still so many barriers.”

While some people are fearful that others will misuse these policies, Friesen believes that would be the exception, not the rule. The risk is worth it for the people who need a guide like this. As it states, “Anything you saw or experienced that did



not feel right is worth talking about with someone you trust.”

Friesen and Driedger don’t know if any congregations have used the guide yet, since the resource is still relatively new. However, numerous churches were eager to acquire the guide and begin to explore it. A webinar about the guide that Friesen led on March 16 was well received, with about 20 people from several provinces in attendance.

“A Guide for Responding to Congregational Sexual Harassment and Abuse” is available for free download at <https://bit.ly/3ud84CO>.



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FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

Upside-Down Apocalypse

A Q&A with author Jeremy Duncan

MennoMedia

Menno Media: Jeremy, your book *Upside-Down Apocalypse* is being referred to as a peacemaker's guide to the Book of Revelation. What prompted you to write about Revelation?

Jeremy Duncan: I have always been drawn to the nonviolence of Jesus. The way that he is able to address complex and volatile situations without capitulating to the status quo or to the pull of violent imitation has been formative in my journey. That's a model I want to follow.

However, too often, there is a disconnect between the Jesus of the gospels and the popular Christian imagination of Jesus in the future. Sure, Jesus was peaceful and nonviolent when he came the first time, but next time, look out, no more "Mr. Nice Guy." That's, unfortunately, a sermon I've actually heard before.

And that's a problem, because, if the Jesus of our future hope bears little resemblance to the Jesus we meet in the gospels, we have to ask who it is we really worship. For many, Revelation is the chance to remake Jesus in the model of John Wick.

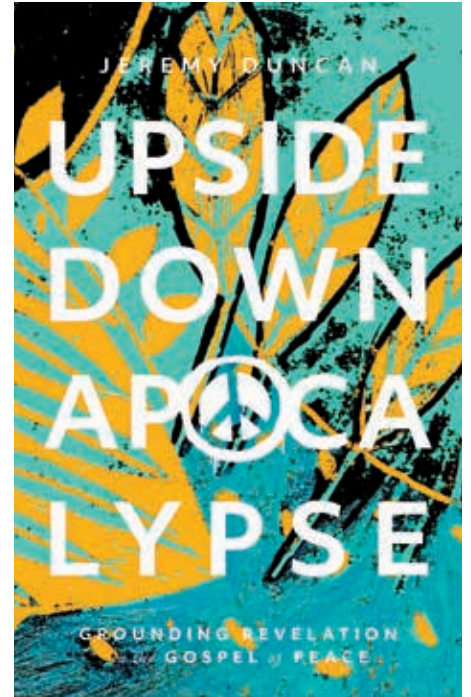
But if Jesus really is the revelation of God, then there should be a way to read

Revelation through Jesus. That conviction led me into my graduate research and a thesis on nonviolent interpretations of apocalyptic literature, and I came out of that work even more convinced that the canon of Scripture backs up what is revealed in the life of Jesus.

MM: Why write this book right now?

JD: There have always been unhelpful interpretations of Revelation. But recently, the rise of populist and nationalist political movements coinciding with the emergence of the worldwide COVID pandemic has created a new marketplace for conspiracy theories. Sadly, a lot of those conspiracies have been rooted in a mishandling of the Christian Bible, particularly Revelation. The thing is, Revelation is so inscrutable that it can be hard to counter some of the claims that are out there.

With my background in researching nonviolent interpretations of Revelation and my work as a local pastor, I felt like I could help bridge the divide between good scholarly biblical studies and an accessible way to think about, and approach, the text of Revelation. This book is a Jesus-first



reading of Revelation grounded in the gospels' presentation of Jesus. A book that works to return us to the peaceful way of the Jesus we first fell in love with. ☸

Jeremy Duncan is the author of *Upside-Down Apocalypse: Grounding Revelation in the Gospel of Peace*, available from Herald Press in July 2022. Pre-order at commonword.ca.



Laughs at book launch

Daily Bonnet author faces appreciative audience

By Robert Martens

Special to Canadian Mennonite
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

After several years of pandemic-induced Zoom book launches in B.C., satirist Andrew Unger winged his way to Abbotsford to face a living, breathing audience at the Mennonite Heritage Museum on April 2.

Unger is the writer of *The Daily Bonnet*,

an immensely popular online column that has spawned a print book, *The Best of the Bonnet*, and of a satirical novel, *Once Removed*. Both books are published by Winnipeg's Turnstone Press.

Considering that he gently mocks Mennonites and their ways, would

Abbotsford Mennonites now become the butt of his humour? "You absorb things," he said, "and I've got some ideas already."

Unger was introduced by Richard Thiessen, the museum's director, who noted that the author was both a direct descendant of Kleine Gemeinde founder

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

Klaas Reimer, and his own seventh cousin, once removed. That was enough to get the laughter rolling.

Unger noted at one point that he sometimes wonders how Manitoba-centric his columns are. He need not have worried. Over the course of the book launch, giggles evolved into guffaws.

Unger reads well—he has a lively and quirky personality—but the most animated part of the book launch may have been the give-and-take of the Q&A session:

- **How often** does he write? Every day, he replied, and he tries to create a stockpile of columns for future use.
- **Where does** he find inspiration? He said he is “literally never consciously watching people and taking notes.” Rather, he waits for ideas to come to him, and in a sense is “everything.”
- **Has he** been criticized for crossing a line? In the first months of *The Daily*



PHOTO BY WENDIE NICKEL

Manitoba humorist/author Andrew Unger introduced and signed books at an April 2 event at Abbotsford, B.C.'s, Mennonite Heritage Museum.

Bonnet, yes, he said, when readers may not have yet realized he was writing satire, not a blow-by-blow account of reality. On the other hand, he said, “For myself, none of this is edgy,” but he does on occasion hold back material that might, for some, cause offence.

- **Does he** think *Plautdietsch* (Low German) will survive? “I hope so,” he said, adding that one of the concerns in his novel is loss of language.

Unger’s material has changed since he began writing the *Bonnet* in 2016. After satirizing Mennonite stereotypes during the first months, he needed to move on. His focus is now more on current events.

Unger’s name has changed as well. Initially, he published as Andrew Bergman, over privacy concerns, but also to honour his mother (Bergman was her unmarried name) and his Grandfather Bergman, an “amateur poet.” The pen name eventually became “too much of a hassle,” he said, over inconveniences such as an uncashable cheque made out to Andrew Bergman. No Mennonite could tolerate that.

Lineups to purchase Unger’s books were long, in spite of Unger’s advice that customers might just “wait till they’re 25 cents at MCC.” ☞

DIGITAL  CORNER

- **Transmission Indonesia 2021.**

In this 10-minute video, two young adults explore their Anabaptist faith and interfaith dialogue in Indonesia and the Netherlands. This is the second in a series leading up to the 500-year celebration of the Anabaptist movement. Versions in English, Spanish, French, German, Bahasa Indonesia, and with Dutch subtitles, along with an English study guide, are available at online at commonword.ca/ResourceView/82/25309.



- **MissionWary?**

Service, calling, colonialism, pain. The word “mission” can bring forth a wide range of reactions. This podcast features conversations and interviews with pastors, thought leaders and partners around the world about the concept of Christian mission. Produced by Mennonite Mission Network. On podcast platforms and at mennonitemission.net/podcasts/missionwary.



- **Relief, Development and Podcast**

Produced by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), episodes feature stories and conversations highlighting the MCC people and programs making an impact around the world. On podcast platforms and at reliefdevelopmentpodcast.libsyn.com.



- **Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery**

In this podcast, an Indigenous woman and a white settler woman—both Anabaptists—uncover the deep structure of colonization that systematically deprives Indigenous peoples of their human rights today. The podcast is produced in partnership with the Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery Coalition and *Anabaptist World*. On podcast platforms and at anabaptistworld.org/podcast-latest/dismantling-the-doctrine-of-discovery-podcast.



—COMPILED BY VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

'I wanted to know more about it'

Pursuit of family information results in history book about undertakers

By Barb Draper
Books & Resources Editor

When Marion Roes began researching her family history, she came across some surprises connected to her family's business. Intrigued, she tried to find out more about local undertakers, but there was almost no material available. So she began collecting information and doing interviews. Her book, *Death as Life's Work: Waterloo Region Undertakers and Funeral Businesses Illustrated Histories 1850 to 2020*, was published last November.

Roes's great-grandfather, Christian Dreisinger, began Dreisinger Funeral Home in Elmira, Ont., in 1904 and it remained in the family for more than a century. The photo that caused her to dig more deeply showed a funeral home sign that read, "Letter's and Dreisinger's Undertaking."

"I didn't know that Christian Dreisinger was in business in Waterloo," says Roes. "I wanted to know more about it."

She discovered that her great-grandfather was in partnership with more than one funeral home in the Kitchener-Waterloo area.

"When motor hearses came in, they were expensive, and a business starting out would not have been able to provide them," says Roes, speculating that Dreisinger's involvement was primarily a financial partnership and that he was helping other undertakers get established.

When Roes was growing up, Dreisinger



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARION ROES

This hearse, acquired by Chris Dreisinger about 1915, was the first motorized funeral vehicle in the area.

Funeral Home was run by her uncle and her mother. Not only was her mother a licensed funeral director, Roes's sister joined the business and has been a funeral director in Elmira for more than 50 years. These connections were helpful when contacting people for interviews.

In 2014, Roes received a research grant from a local museum with the expectation that she would give a presentation at the end of a year. It was at that point that she began researching and doing interviews in earnest, with the goal of publishing a book. Her first interview was with her sister, but most of the 30 people she interviewed were men.

Those who stay in the funeral business do not see their work as a job, rather it is a calling, she discovered. Many of the funeral directors commented that, when they were young, there was a death in the family that affected them. They see themselves as called to play an important role in the community as they help people through their worst times.

Because Waterloo Region includes a variety of traditionalist Mennonite and Amish groups, Roes also did research into their funeral and burial traditions.

"That was going to be a chapter in the book, but I realized it was too big a topic," she says. At that point, she took a year off from her primary research and put together a separate, smaller book, *Mennonite Funeral and Burial Traditions*, in 2019. She commented, "It was easy to get interviews for Mennonite funeral and burial traditions because many of the people knew my sister at the funeral home."

For this book, Roes generally did not ask about funeral practices, concentrating on business histories. Many early undertakers did this work as a sideline. Some were cabinetmakers who manufactured coffins and then began offering other services.

Some undertakers served groups of a



PHOTO BY BARB DRAPER

Marion Roes's book tells the history of funeral businesses in Ontario's Waterloo Region.

particular religion or nationality. Roes was intrigued to find that an undertaker in St. Clements, a small town in the heart of a Catholic community, not only made coffins, but specialized in church furniture. His intricately carved altars and other items were sold to Catholic churches locally and across Canada.

Often the early funeral businesses were family affairs, with the wife working in the background, doing bookkeeping and helping with visitation. One wife kept track of all the funerals done by other funeral homes. Sometimes these women were licensed and helped with embalming, but usually a man was the public face of the company.

Although this coffee-table-sized book, with more than 500 photos, is interesting reading for those familiar with the area, it is designed to be used by researchers.

"It is 548 pages of good stuff," says Roes. ☘

Copies are available by emailing Marion Roes at mlroes@sympatico.ca.

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES



Spring 2022 Book List

Theology, Spirituality

And If I Don't: Reimagining the Single Life. April Klassen. Schleithem Press, Kelowna, B.C., 2021, 130 pages.

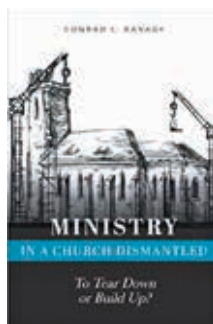
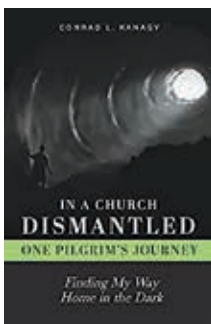
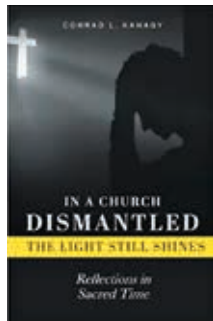
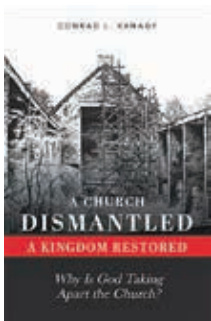
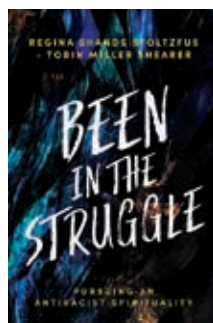
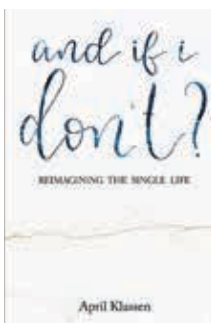
With frankness and honesty, the author explores what it means to be single in today's culture, and what the Bible has to say about marriage. Although she values marriage, Klassen suggests that it is not necessarily in the cards for everyone.

Been in the Struggle: Pursuing an Antiracist Spirituality. Regina Shands Stoltzfus, Tobin Miller Shearer. Herald Press, 2021, 204 pages.

Racism is pervasive in our society, say the authors who have worked on anti-racism in Mennonite circles for many years. They reflect on what they have learned over the years and encourage readers to reflect on their own spirituality and racial attitudes.

- *A Church Dismantled—A Kingdom Restored: Why Is God Taking Apart the Church?*
- *Ministry in a Church Dismantled: To Tear Down or Build Up?*
- *In a Church Dismantled, the Light Still Shines: Reflections in Sacred Time.*
- *In a Church Dismantled, One Pilgrim's Journey: Finding My Way Home in the Dark.* Conrad L. Kanagy. Masthof Press, 2021.

This series of four books by a Mennonite pastor and sociologist grew out of 240



pandemic. Using many touching personal stories, Kanagy reflects on the state of the Mennonite church and believes God is at work in the church today. More information at achurchdismantled.com.

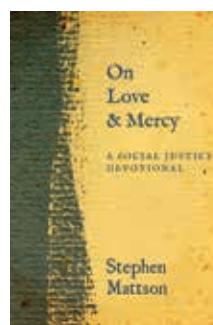


Fight Like Jesus: How Jesus Waged Peace Throughout Holy Week. Jason Porterfield. Herald Press, 2022, 216 pages.

Using the stories of Jesus during Holy Week, Porterfield interprets these passages in light of Jesus' commitment to peace, saying Christians have often misunderstood Jesus' words. The book provides discussion questions for each of the eight chapters, making it useful for Bible study during Lent or any time.

On Love and Mercy: A Social Justice Devotional. Stephen Mattson. Herald Press, 2021, 300 pages.

This book offers 60 short devotionals relating to social justice. Each one has a scripture passage, a reflection, meditation and prayer, and is designed for daily use. They could also be used in a group setting. It is available in hardcover or as an ebook.

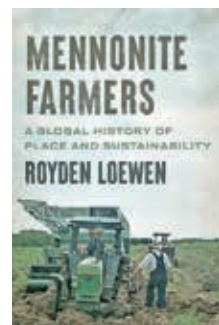
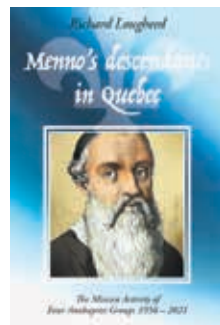
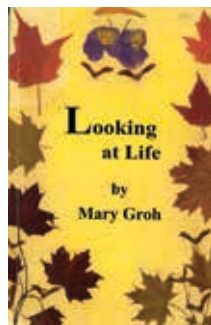
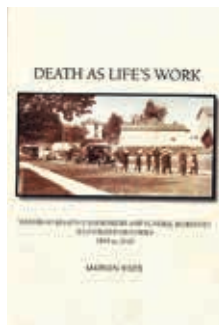


To Be Made Well: An Invitation to Wholeness, Healing, and Hope. Amy Julia Becker. Herald Press, 2022, 208 pages.

Using the stories of Jesus' ministry and her own experiences, the author reflects on what it means to be healed. Suggesting that there is an important connection between body, soul and spirit, she speaks with compassion to those who struggle with pain and negative emotions.

podcasts broadcast during the COVID-19

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES



History

The Blistering Morning Mist: A Memoir. Kathleen Weaver Kurtz. Resource Publications (Wipf and Stock), 2021, 230 pages.

This memoir provides lots of detail of what it was like to grow up in the Mennonite church in Virginia in the 1950s and '60s. Kurtz also explores the challenges of her life and the blossoming of her self-confidence as she has taken on new roles in the church.

Death as Life's Work: Waterloo Region Undertakers and Funeral Businesses Illustrated Histories 1850 to 2020. Marion Roes. Self-published, 2021, 535 pages.

Using interviews, historical records and more than 500 photos, Roes has put together a detailed history of all the undertakers and funeral businesses of Waterloo Region, Ont. The most detail is given to the Dreisinger Funeral Home, which was owned by Roes's family for over 100 years.

Guiding Diverse Flocks: Tales of a Rural Mennonite Pastor. Ernie Hildebrand. Privately published with FriesenPress, 2021, 216 pages.

This memoir begins on a farm on the Prairies in the 1940s. After beginning as a farmer, Hildebrand moved to a career in church ministry and later returned to farming. The book is available in hardcover, paperback or Kindle editions.

Looking at Life. Mary Groh. Privately published, 2022, 236 pages.

To celebrate her 90th birthday, Mary Groh put together this autobiography and reflection on her life experiences, presenting a portrait of Mennonite life in the latter 20th century. Born and raised in Toronto, she now lives in Kitchener, Ont. Copies are available by emailing: marygroh05@gmail.com.

Menno's Descendants in Quebec: The Mission Activity of Four Anabaptist Groups 1956-2021. Richard Lougheed. Pandora Press, 2022, 255 pages.

Lougheed, who teaches Protestant church history in Montreal, provides a comprehensive history of Mennonites in Quebec. The groups include Mennonite Brethren, Mennonite Church Canada, Brethren in Christ and Church of God in Christ (Mennonite), also known as Holdeman Mennonites. He provides good insight into the state of the church up to the present.

Mennonite Farmers: A Global History of Place and Sustainability. Royden Loewen. University of Manitoba Press, 2021, 352 pages.

This book examines how Mennonite farmers around the world till the soil in very different ways depending on climate

News brief

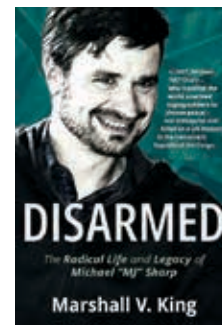
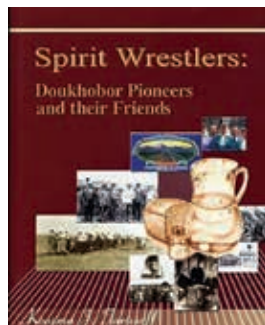
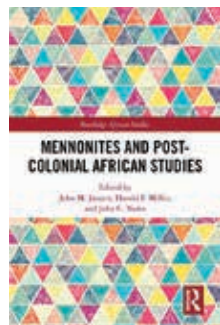
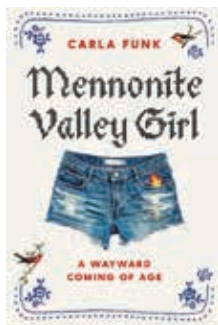
New digital resources for *Peaceful at Heart*

Peaceful at Heart was released in 2019 to present a vision of peaceful living as an alternative to the expectations for masculinity widely held by society. The goal has been to engage as many men as possible in this important conversation. To that end, Mennonite Men, in collaboration with the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario office, has created an audiobook, study guide and a podcast/video interview series with the book's contributors. These written, audio and video materials will assist in individual or group engagement of these critical ideas. The interview series includes the personalities and passions of each of the contributors as they are interviewed about their chapters. Cedric Martin of Ontario-based Theatre of the Beat hosts the interviews and performs the audiobook. Retired professor Dan Epp-Tiessen walks leaders through a series of 11 sessions in the written study guide, providing suggestions for facilitating group conversations including questions to get men thinking and sharing. From the hard stuff of abuse to a vision for living life with a peaceful heart, covering a broad reach of masculinities, *Peaceful at Heart* challenges men's ideas of what it means to be men of God. Financial support from Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, Be In Christ Canada and MC Canada as partners with Mennonite Men and MCC Ontario has allowed these materials, to be made available free of charge, with the exception of the commercially published book edition. To order these resources, visit commonword.ca/ResourceView/83/25300.

—MENNONITE MEN



FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES



and faith perspectives. It focuses on individual farmers in Canada, Bolivia, Indonesia, the Netherlands, Russia, the United States and Zimbabwe. The author is the former Chair of Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg.

Mennonite Valley Girl: A Wayward Coming of Age. Carla Funk. Greystone Books, 2021, 280 pages.

Carla Funk tells the story of her adolescent years in Vanderhoof, a Low German-speaking community in central B.C. She provides a critique of this traditionalist Mennonite community of the 1980s.

Mennonites and Post-Colonial African Studies. John M. Janzen, Harold F. Miller, John C. Yoder, eds. Routledge, 2021, 298 pages.

This book has a variety of Mennonite academics reflecting on the work of missionaries and Mennonite Central Committee in Africa from the 1960s to the present. Many of the writers use their own experiences in their analyses.

Spirit Wrestlers: Doukhobor Pioneers

and Their Friends. Koozma J. Tarasoff. Spirit Wrestlers Publishing, 2022, 460 pages.

This book is a supplement to the 2002 volume of biographies of Doukhobor pioneers, providing 33 more biographies, including scholars and researchers. More information is available at spirit-wrestlers.com/2022.

Other books



Benchmark: Countering Covid Through Painting and Poetry. Susan Moore and Mary Reimer. Self-published, 2021, 118 pages.

During the difficult time of the COVID-19 pandemic, the authors

regularly sat down together on benches throughout Winnipeg, where they chatted and then sketched and wrote poetry. This collection explores friendship and deep emotions.

The Best of the Bonnet. Andrew Unger. Turnstone Press, 2021, 256 pages.

This collection of short stories is gathered from “The Daily Bonnet,” Andrew Unger’s website of Mennonite satire. Unger is also the author of *Once Removed*.

The Canada Coat. Louise Bergen Price. Mennonite Museum Society, B.C., 2022.

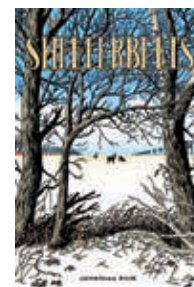
This historical novel is written for adolescents. The story is based on the true story of the difficult life of the author’s mother, who grew up in Stalinist Russia. This is the first book published by the Mennonite Museum Society.

Disarmed: The Radical Life and Legacy of Michael ‘MJ’ Sharp. Marshall V. King. Herald Press, 2022, 255 pages.

MJ Sharp, a 34-year-old Mennonite peacemaker, was killed while working in a remote part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2017. In telling the story of Sharp’s life and the context of his death, Marshall King explores the complexities of peacemaking.

Shelterbelts. Jonathan Dyck. Conundrum Press, 240 pages, 2022.

This graphic novel is set in southern Manitoba, where a rural Mennonite community struggles to make sense of



(Continued on page 28)

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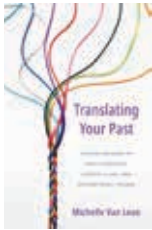
(Continued from page 29)

how religious traditions fit into today's world.



To Antoine. E. J. Wiens. Gelassenheit Publications, 2022, 404 pages.

In this historical novel, the narrator is a retired teacher in Canada facing judgment as a war criminal. Erwin Wiens explores some ethical questions about the experience of Mennonites that includes the Stalinist terrors in Russia, the Nazi occupation, refugee years in Germany and settlement in Canada.



Translating Your Past: Finding Meaning in Family Ancestry, Genetic Clues, and Generational Trauma. Michelle Van Loon. Herald Press, 2022, 208 pages.

Using examples from her own life, the author reflects on how individuals are

affected by their family's stories, including dysfunction, trauma and secrets. This is not a resource for finding ancestor stories; rather it offers a way to reflect on the meaning of such stories.

Resources



Diversity: God's Design. Mennonite Church U.S.A. Multimedia study in four sessions of 45 to 60 minutes, 2022.

This four-week curriculum for young adults explores cultural diversity within the church from a biblical perspective and includes video clips of personal experience from different racial, ethnic and gender groups. Free downloads are available at mennoniteusa.org.

A Guide For Responding to Congregational Sexual Harassment and Abuse. David Driedger and Jaymie Friesen. Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba, 2021, 32 pages.



This booklet offers resources for those who have experienced sexual harassment or abuse and also provides guidelines for congregational response. It is available for download at CommonWord.ca.

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 www.commonword.ca or call 204-594-0527 or 1-877-846-1593.

COMPILED BY BARB DRAPER, BOOKS & RESOURCES EDITOR

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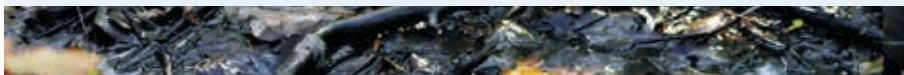
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UPCOMING

A lot of work, a lot of fun

By Ken Ogasawara

New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale
NEW HAMBURG, ONT.

For the first time in three years, the New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale will once again be alive with the sounds of deep fryers, sizzling grills, the calls of the auctioneers, and friends reuniting.

“We’re looking forward to being back at the sale,” says Ly Vang of First Hmong Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont. “We’ve been doing spring rolls at the relief sale for over 20 years. It’s a lot of work but a lot of fun.”

The relief sale has nearly two dozen food vendors set up at the sprawling New Hamburg fairgrounds every year, providing a menu that represents the diversity of the global Mennonite family. Spring rolls, rollkuchen, tea balls, papusas, fresh fruit pies and many more delicacies are sold in all their mouth-watering goodness every year.

Vang is one of hundreds of volunteers, mostly from area churches, who dedicate countless hours for every sale to the preparation, creation and selling of their delicious products.

One high-profile volunteer is Gary Jantzi, an auctioneer who is part of a rotation of auctioneers who donate their time to sell quilts, antique tractors and other donated items.

“I’ve been working the relief sale for 25



MCC PHOTO BY SHOUA VANG

Ly Vang is leading the group at First Hmong who plan to make 5,000 spring rolls for this year’s in-person sale.

years or so,” he says. “I miss the in-person auctions—the buzz of the crowd and the whole atmosphere.”

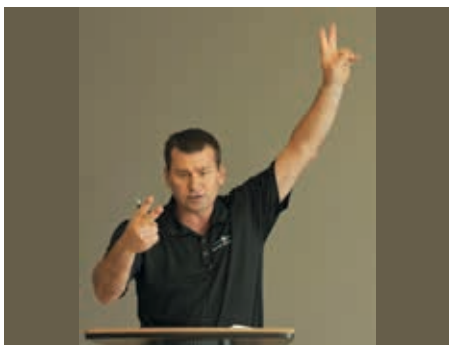
Jantzi can be heard sharing about one memorable relief sale auction in the newest episode of *Undercurrents*, the podcast from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario.

A few highlights that will make their relief sale debut this year will include a hymn sing in the grandstand on the evening of May 27, as well as therapy dogs from St. John’s Ambulance service.

Long-standing relief sale traditions like the annual Run for Relief are also back. (See more online at nhmrs.com/run-for-relief).

“We are very much looking forward to welcoming everybody back,” says John Reimer, the relief sale’s chair. “I’m so grateful for everyone working at making this a successful, safe, and enjoyable sale.”

This year being the first since the start of the pandemic, there is even more behind-the-scenes work to be done. There is an urgent need for volunteers for a variety of tasks, so those who are willing and able to volunteer time and energy to a worthy and fun cause are invited to reach out to John Reimer at johnreimer@nhmrs.com and 519-498-3620. ❧



MCC PHOTO BY KEN OGASAWARA

Gary Jantzi, during the 2020 online quilt auction, missed the buzz of the crowd.

UpComing

Volunteers sought to rebuild houses in rural B.C.

With all the attention on the severe flooding that hit British Columbia last November, it is easy to forget about those who lost their homes to last summer’s wildfires in that province. But Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) Canada hasn’t forgotten. In May, the organization will begin rebuilding homes in Monte Lake, located about 50 kilometres from Kamloops in the B.C. interior, where 28 structures were destroyed by the White Rock fire that displaced thousands of people in the area. MDS Canada, working in partnership with its B.C. unit, will build up to five new homes in the community over the summer and into the fall. “These people lost everything,” says Ross Penner, director of Canadian operations, noting that one family of four has been living in a small camper since losing their home last August. Insurance can be hard to get in remote areas like Monte Lake or is prohibitively expensive, leaving some people uninsured or under-insured. “The people we are helping fall into those categories,” Penner says. The 2021 wildfire season in B.C. was the third worst on record, with more than 1,600 fires burning nearly 8,700 square kilometres of land. Those who want to volunteer can contact MDS Canada online at mds.org or by calling toll-free 1-866-261-1274.

—Mennonite Disaster Service



PHOTO BY KYLE GRYTE

The Monte Lake fire destroyed 28 structures in the B.C. interior last summer. MDS seeks volunteers to build up to five new homes over the spring and summer.

Calendar

Nationwide

July 29-Aug. 1: MC Canada Gathering 2022, in Edmonton. Theme: "We declare what we have seen and heard." Information about Gathering 2022 will be regularly updated at mennonitechurch.ca/gathering2022.

July 31-Aug. 4: MC Canada National Youth Gathering at Camp Valaqua, Water Valley, Alta. Theme: "Amplify! Giving voice to what we have seen and heard." For more information, or to register online, visit mennonitechurch.ca/amplify.

British Columbia

May 7: MC B.C. Women's Day, at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Speaker: Tammy Roy, author of "Nudges from Heaven."

Saskatchewan

May 13-14: This year's MC Saskatchewan women's retreat, "The Divine Spark," will be held at the Shekinah Retreat Centre. Speaker: Valerie Wiebe. To register, visit mcsask.ca/event/10899. Open to all ladies 16 years of age and older.

June 11: MCC Saskatchewan Relief Sale and Auction with drive-through lunch and online

auction. Auction items will be on display from May 23 to June 11.

Manitoba

May 27-29: Camps with Meaning's 20th annual Manitoba birding retreat, at Turtle Mountain Bible Camp. Speakers: Paul Epp and Dan Epp-Tiessen. To register, visit <https://bit.ly/3qSSSt9v>. For more information, email Gordon Janzen at gordonjanzen@gmail.com.

Ontario

April 29-30: MC Eastern Canada hybrid annual church gathering (on Zoom and in person at Redeemer University, Ancaster). Reflection on the parable of the mustard seed in Luke 13. (29) worship celebration from 7 to 9 p.m. (30) church business including the regional church's updated identity and mission statements, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. To register for the in-person event, visit <https://bit.ly/mcec-in-person>; to register for the Zoom event, visit <https://bit.ly/mcec-zoom>.

May 12-15: "Indigenous-Mennonite encounters in time and place" academic conference and community education event, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. The event will include academic presentations, community storytelling, artistic offerings, and both Indigenous and Mennonite

ceremonies. For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/2UhmHnHu>.

May 13: Menno Singers presents the "Schubert Mass in G," at First United Church, Waterloo, at 6:30 p.m.; with guest soprano Joanna Loepp Thiessen, the Abner Martin Scholarship winner. This is Menno Singers' first in-person concert since the pandemic. To order tickets, visit mennosingers.com.

May 26-29: "Cahoots Festival of Faith, Justice and D.I.Y." meets in person for the first time since 2019 at Pierce Williams Christian Camp, Finegal. The ecumenical family-friendly gathering, allows participants to share skills and stories to create the world God envisions. (Event organizers include several members of MC Eastern Canada congregations.) For more information, or to register, visit www.cahootsfest.ca.

May 27, 28: New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale, in person at the New Hamburg (Ont.) Fairgrounds. For updates sign up at nhms.com/subscribe.

International

May 20: Mennonite World Conference online Zoom prayer hour,

at 9 a.m. Central Daylight Savings Time. Join Anabaptist-Mennonites from Indonesia to Peru in an hour of prayer in English, Spanish, French, Hindi and Indonesian. To register, visit <https://bit.ly/3wQ01xF>.

July 1-4: Mennonite World Conference's Global Youth Summit, in Salatiga, Indonesia. Theme: "Life in the Spirit: Learn. Serve. Worship." To learn more, visit mwc-cmm.org/gys.

July 5-10: Mennonite World Conference's global assembly, in Semarang, Indonesia. Theme: "Following Jesus together across barriers." For more information, visit mwc-cmm.org/assembly/indonesia-2022.

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



Classifieds

Employment Opportunities



Employment Opportunity
**Pastor of Faith
and Community**

Osler Mennonite Church, in Osler, SK, seeks a **Pastor of Faith and Community** (0.75 FTE) with a youth/intergenerational focus and worship participation.

Applications due June 15, 2022, with job start July 15, 2022. Contact Ben Buhler, chair, blbuhler@hotmail.com, 306-239-4706.

Job description available at
www.oslermennonitechurch.org.



Employment
Opportunity
Executive Minister

Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, a regional church of MC Canada, comprised of 22 congregations in covenant with each other, invites applications for an Executive Minister.

Those called to lead the church into the 21st century with its growing diversity and change are sought for this position.

Gifts of a pastoral nature and leadership skills are valuable attributes for those applying.

The ability to reach out in support of pastors, in both rural and urban congregations, is an important component of the position.

For the Executive Minister job description, with preferred qualifications and current responsibilities, visit www.mcsask.ca or contact Andrea Enns-Gooding at searchcommittee@mcsask.ca. We will acknowledge receipt of all applications.

Youths volunteer with MDS over spring break

By Amy Rinner Waddell
B.C. Correspondent

Several young people from Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, B.C., volunteered with Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) during spring break to help victims of last year's massive flood.

Family pastor Rachel Navarro, who had heard about relief projects with MDS in Princeton following the floods last November, learned about the project in nearby Arnold on Sumas Prairie in early March.

"At the time, we were waiting to hear back if we'd be approved for the summer MDS trip program, so I thought this would be a fun way for the students to get a taste of what it's like!" says Navarro. "I also had a connection with the organizer, Shelley Dueck, who works at [Mennonite Central Committee] in church relations."

Navarro took three middle- and high-school students to one of three houses MDS is currently restoring in Arnold, just across the street from Arnold Community Church. They spent a full day, March 23, painting interior doors;

spackling, sanding and painting trim; and installing doors.

"Our crew leader was a former high school shop teacher named Gerald, who

gave us all a super thorough orientation and was with us every step of the way. He even taught me how to use a drill!" reports Navarro. ☸



PHOTOS COURTESY OF RACHEL NAVARRO

Naomi Cheny, left, and Olivia Jesse paint a house damaged by the B.C. flood as part of a church youth group work day in March.

Gerald Dyck, left, led a group from Emmanuel Mennonite Church in restoring a house damaged by last November's floods. Also pictured, from left to right: Rachel Navarro, Emmanuel's family pastor; Olivia Jesse; Naomi Cheny; and Isaac Boynton.