

CANADIAN MENNONITE

April 21, 2023 Volume 27 Number 8



Old doctrines,
new discoveries

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A centuries-old offer of peace

JONATHAN NEUFELD
Guest Editorial

CM asked Jonathan Neufeld to offer a guest editorial on the Doctrine of Discovery. Neufeld is the Indigenous relations coordinator for Mennonite Church Canada and co-chair of the steering committee of the U.S.-based Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery.

During the Papal visit to Canada in the summer of 2022, observers and news-watchers likely caught glimpses of banners and heard chants to reject or repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery. For some, this may have been a first introduction to the Doctrine; for others it represented decades of work to bring the Doctrine out of the shadows and into the light.

Then in Holy Week of 2023 came an announcement from the Vatican responding to this long-standing call. The Vatican said the concepts undergirding the Doctrine of Discovery “have never been considered expressions of the Catholic faith,” but the “Church is also aware that the contents of these [papal] documents were manipulated for political purposes by competing colonial powers in order to justify immoral acts against Indigenous peoples that were carried out, at times, without opposition from ecclesiastical authorities.”

In 2016, Mennonite Church Canada delegates, in line with many other denominations and congregations before and after them, passed a resolution to “repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery as it is fundamentally opposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ and our understanding of the inherent dignity and rights that individuals and peoples have received from God.”

This is a good and important naming of what we reject, but what then are we



for? What opportunity do we have to dismantle the Doctrine’s legal and institutional enmeshment of “superiority” in Canadian and global society, as described by Dave Scott in the feature starting on page 4.

Now that the Doctrine has come into the light of awareness for a broader public, what role does the church have in undoing in the name of Christ, what was done in the name of Christ.

During a webinar of Indigenous people and ecumenical allies in 2019, I shared an idea that I had heard often. The idea is that the future of relations between Indigenous peoples and their many neighbours is like science fiction work. We don’t have a right relationship to return to in the long history of colonization; we cannot retrace our steps or walk back time. We are invited to create a new and previously

unimagined future together as neighbours.

A Haudenosaunee elder called me out! How dare I ignore what has been on offer from Indigenous peoples from day one—the Wampum offered to European newcomers as a bond of peace. In other areas, similar bonds of peace and sharing were called treaties. It is not Indigenous communities of Turtle Island that bear any responsibility for the table of peace not being offered; it is the generations of settlers who ignored, forgot or were never told about these promises. It is they who need reminding of what has been on offer and understood as the good way from time immemorial.

Distrust and fear is not the table of peace. Hoarding resources is not the table of peace. Failure to respect and honour commitments is not the table of peace.

What then might we be for? We are for being good, honest and generous neighbours. We are for everyone having enough food, justice, safety, respect, warmth, clean water and meaningful vocation. What would need to be addressed, undone or built up to find our way back to the deep promise of peace? May God so inspire and lead us beyond repudiation to the building of peace. ✎



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FEATURE

An assumption of grace

The Doctrine of Discovery in 2023

By Will Braun

After the Vatican's recent repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery, I spent two hours speaking with three Indigenous people about the 500-year-old church doctrine that is as much the bedrock of Canada as the Canadian Shield.

I asked about its relevance, the potential of its undoing, and a question I had never asked before. Those discussions left me feeling both low-level dread and an almost irresistible sense of the possibility of grace. First, what is the Doctrine of Discovery?



PHOTO BY ROBYN WIEBE, COURTESY OF PEMBINAVALLEYONLINE.COM.

Dave Scott poses with Brandon Burley, mayor of Morden, Man., left, and Cameron Friesen, MLA for Morden-Winkler, at a public event in Morden last summer.

“The story of the Doctrine is the story of how you can obtain other people’s land by magic,” retired judge Harry LaForme told *The Globe and Mail* in 2022. “You just sprinkle these papal bulls and you get it.”

A few documents issued by popes—primarily “papal bulls” from 1452, 1455 and 1493—solidified the notion among European powers that if you land on a distant shore and plant a flag before your competitors, then it’s yours. The bull from 1452 granted “full and free permission to invade, search out, capture and subjugate the Saracens and pagans and any other unbelievers and enemies of Christ wherever they may be . . . and to reduce their persons into perpetual servitude.”

On what grounds would that pope have assumed the right to hand out such permission? It seems the height of presumption, but I confess that, as a schoolboy, the notion of planting a flag and claiming the land is one I never questioned.

Law of the land

In the 2022 *Globe and Mail* article, eminent Métis lawyer Bruce McIvor said European countries essentially agreed on colonial rules: “show up, usurp Indigenous sovereignty, assert sovereignty” and add it to your empire.

“The very legitimacy of Canada is based on this principle,” McIvor said. “Every time someone in Canada sells property and wrings their hands in glee over all the money they’ve made, they are participating in the Doctrine of Discovery. Every resource development, every pipeline—that’s all based on the Doctrine of Discovery.”

It’s more complicated, with contradictory legal declarations and caveats in different jurisdictions over the centuries, but one thing is clear: Europeans took over.

On the website of the legal firm McIvor heads, he explains that, “the often-used phrase ‘assertion of Crown sovereignty’ is a Canadian

euphemism for the Doctrine of Discovery.” The phrase appears in recent Supreme Court decisions. The U.S. Supreme Court does not bother with euphemism; it has used “Doctrine of Discovery” as recently as 2005.

The Doctrine is the legal ground we walk on.

The Vatican stands down

Many people were baffled that Pope Francis offered no repudiation of the Doctrine during his trip to Canada last July. But on March 30, the Vatican issued a formal 800-word statement: “The Catholic Church . . . repudiates those concepts that fail to recognize the inherent human rights of Indigenous peoples, including what has become known as the legal and political ‘doctrine of discovery.’”

It also noted that, “Pope Francis has urged: ‘Never again can the Christian

community allow itself to be infected by the idea that one culture is superior to others.’”

Ambassador Scott

Just a day before the statement came out, Dave Scott stopped by my southern Manitoba farmyard. He lives 85 kilometres to the west at Swan Lake First Nation. Among other topics, we chatted about the Doctrine, the missing church repudiation and the greater need for governments to walk back the Doctrine.

Scott has worked on various issues with First Nations from coast to coast. The Assembly of First Nations brings him to Ottawa somewhat regularly for consultations. Scott, whom I got to know a decade ago through my work with northern First Nations, is also an ambassador. He knows the neighbouring farmers, works with schools, speaks at church events, visits Hutterite colonies and is well known to municipal leaders who, I suspect, both like and fear him, depending on the circumstances.

After the repudiation, we spoke by phone. The Doctrine is a “mechanism of superiority,” he said. It says that one religion is “superior to all other belief systems.” In the ways he was taught, no belief system or group is superior.

Cree deacon

Harry Lafond also speaks plainly about superiority. Lafond served as chief of the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation north of Saskatoon for 10 years and as executive director of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner for 12 years. Currently, he is an Indigenous education scholar at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon and a deacon in the Catholic Church. Lafond has interacted with Mennonites and participated in Mennonite events for many years.

He said the Doctrine, which “permeates everything of who we are as Canadians,” also “implies a superiority of race.” He’s talking



CM FILE PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Harry Lafond addresses the Mennonite Church Canada assembly in Saskatoon in 2016.



PHOTO BY WILL BRAUN

Les Dysart on Southern Indian Lake in northern Manitoba.

church, governments and the public, both past and present. He talked about the assumptions that need to be dealt with in public engagement work—“one being that [non-Indigenous people] come from a better society.”

Another being around land. “It is unfinished business,” Lafond said of land questions.

Ownership

Non-Indigenous people tend to avoid or dance around the question of land ownership. Scott and Lafond talk about it freely, though both are uncomfortable with the concept of ownership per se.

“That’s not our way of understanding our place in the world,” said Scott, regarding the notion of land and

everything on it being “subservient” to the owners. They use terms like access, responsibility and sharing.

The gist is unquestionable: “There’s no way to undo the Doctrine of Discovery without non-Indigenous Canadians giving up significant rights and benefits and land,” said Scott. Indigenous people need enough land to be viable and we all need lands to be managed to ensure current and future health.

Lafond and Scott are both concerned about agricultural practices that impact Indigenous lands and waters where they live. These include drainage and use of toxic farm inputs.

Both men walk a line between stating that far-reaching change is required and offering assurances that change can

happen slowly and collaboratively.

It’s not about “giving back all the land or anything like that,” Scott said, “but we have to correct the relationship.” He’s firm and gracious: “[It] doesn’t have to be adversarial. . . . It’s not about overpowering one another, but recognizing that any laws that we create must be created together.”

Scott recognizes the “uneasiness” around this subject and acknowledges that dealing with land ownership is “a scary, scary thought.”

It will not be resolved quickly. “We have to think about it as a generational process,” said Lafond.

Last question

I left one question for the end of each

interview. I was hesitant. I believe many non-Indigenous Canadians have a deep disquiet about the historical, legal and moral basis of our existence on this side of the Atlantic. On some level, people worry they are not welcome here.

The danger in asking about welcome is that it implicitly questions Indigenous hospitality, generosity and friendship, values Indigenous people have unquestionably demonstrated for 500 years. Still, I felt I needed to ask, wanting people to have a clear answer to any doubts they may harbour. I also want to address conversation-killing comments like: “We can’t just give all the land back,” or, “What are we supposed to do, go back to Europe?”

So, given that “decolonization,” in literal terms, would require non-Indigenous people to vacate the continent, is that the ultimate solution? (I did not ask it quite that directly.)

“Absolutely not. That goes against our belief system,” said Scott. “It’s not about getting rid of people, having our own world here. From our belief system it could never be like that.”

Lafond’s response is similar. “When I look back to the stories of my grandfather and great-grandfather, they were very, very open to having neighbours,” he said. “The issue is, if we’re going to be neighbours, we need to act like neighbours and feel that we can trust each other. . . . My understanding from the old people [is that we] should constantly be working toward harmony and peace amongst ourselves.”

The goal is for people to come closer, not the opposite. Scott often returns to the first law of his people, which he translates as “treat every person like a human being first.” Notably, during the times of early contact with settlers, including Mennonites, his people resisted calls from other Indigenous leaders to respond with violence.

Practical grace

Les Dysart, a friend from South Indian Lake in northern Manitoba, called on the same day I spoke with Scott and Lafond. Dysart is a fisher and a justice warrior for his people and lands. We

talked about the Doctrine and the fundamental questions it raises.

“Nobody’s going anywhere,” he said. “We’re neighbours.” But the “one-sided outcomes” need to be balanced out. Scott says the world “has a huge debt to pay” to Indigenous people.

Dysart’s work involves addressing the disastrous impacts of hydro-electric projects. “I want to change [Manitoba] Hydro,” he said, but he’s clear that his goal is not to get rid of the company. Big change is needed, but he envisions a “positive future for both.”

I’m in no way off the hook, but I can proceed with my head held high and my heart invigorated by a friendship more powerful than fear.

Lafond, who has twice travelled to Rome to hear Pope Francis speak, said the Pope’s simple words about “walking with people” resonate with him. The Doctrine has never been about walking with people, he said. That needs to change.

“What does it mean for Mennonites in Canada to walk with Indigenous people?” he wondered.

Of course, the Doctrine is about more than what individuals do or what churches say. The essential legal regime of Canada needs to be revisited, starting with the Indian Act. But perhaps the groundwork on all levels involves examining assumptions. Do we assume adversarial postures? Do we assume superiority? Do we proceed with courage or hold to fear? Do we envision loss or friendship?

Lafond’s desire is to make his neighbours “aware that they can be part of the solution.” Can we see a rearrangement of the status quo as a solution? Can we see the letting go of our doctrinal benefits as the simultaneous discovery of mutual healing and liberation? The deeper the change, the deeper the realization of grace.

After speaking with Scott for most of an hour, he asked: “Have I scared you?”

“Absolutely,” I said. My wife and I own three hectares and stand to inherit much more. There’s no way that the sort of change he speaks of would not be scary, I told him, “but talking to you is not.” ❧

/// For discussion

1. What does land ownership mean to you, whether or not you currently own land? What are your questions about the fundamental legality of how responsibility for lands and waters has been handled in Canada?
2. How is planting a flag on the moon the same or different from Europeans landing on a distant shore and claiming the territory?
3. What aspects of undoing the Doctrine of Discovery scare you? What aspects excite you?
4. Dave Scott and Harry Lafond say that the Doctrine of Discovery implies superiority of religion and race. What evidence of these attitudes exist in ourselves, our churches and our governments?
5. How can Mennonites in Canada proceed with courage in walking with Indigenous people?

—CM Staff

See related resources at
www.commonword.ca/go/1511

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OPINION

/// Readers write

Be in Touch

- Send letters to letters@canadianmennonite.org. Our mailing address is on page 3.
- Please keep it concise and respectful. Any substantial edits to letters will be done in consultation with the writer.
- If you have feedback not intended for publication, please contact editor@canadianmennonite.org or at 1-800-378-2524 ext 5.

✉ The religion of peace

The week the F-35 fighter jet was on the cover (Jan. 30), I had pulled an antique book of sermons off the shelf that my wife had from her grandmother. Published in 1896, it is titled *The Message of Peace* by R.W. Church. It was written within memory of the U.S. Civil War but prior to the First World War.

The following quote gives what is likely a common view of many Christians: “Christianity is a religion of peace. . . . You say that you cannot make the world other than it is . . . [but] you can prevent yourself from being like the world in its evil. . . . It would be an evil day when a Christian became deaf to the public call on his manliness, his courage, his daring, his self devotion. There are solemn times when he has not only to die, but fight and make others die. There are times when, for the sake of his brethren, for the sake of truth, for the sake of his master, he must resist evil, falsehood, disobedience, wrong. Yet for all this . . . Christ’s religion is the religion of peace.”

There is more that is very thoughtful and really fun to read out loud. But it’s such an irony that your cover and my reading came together in this way.

ELTON KAUFFMAN, BLUESKY, ALTA.

✉ Don’t deny who we are

After reading Kevin Barkowsky’s March 24 article, “What is a Mennonite?” I would like to commend him for urging Mennonites to think more inclusively about who is a Mennonite. Unfortunately, it seems that he weakens his important point by overstating it.

He writes that if “someone asks me if my three grandparents’ last names, ‘Regier, Friesen and Doerksen,’ are Mennonite, the new answer is no.” May I suggest that he is incorrect? Just because the new names “Choi, Pham, Hoajaca or Abebe” are now also Mennonite, does not change the fact that Regier, Friesen and Doerksen are, and will remain, Mennonite. Even as we welcome others into our family of faith, those of us with traditional Mennonite names retain our identity.

He also writes, “Are rollkuchen, watermelon and farmer sausage Mennonite food?” His assertion is an unqualified

“No.” Again, these traditional Mennonite foods do not cease to be traditional Mennonite foods simply because “kimchi, tacos, pho, nasi goreng and injera” are added.

I do not read his assertions as merely using the literary technique of exaggeration. He seems to be expressing his belief.

For me, the fundamental theological and logical truth is that we should not and, in fact, cannot with integrity, deny who we are in order to welcome and affirm people of other races, ethnicities or traditions. We are all made in the image of God, and are mandated to love and affirm one another.

JOHN H. REDEKOP, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Berger—Elizabeth Rose (b. Oct. 3, 2022), to Alyssa and Jorden Berger, Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man.

Pavilonis—Peter Thomas (b. March 30, 2023), to Andrew and Jessica Pavilonis, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

Visch—Theodore (b. March 26, 2023), to Kyle and Bethany Visch, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Deaths

Bueckert—Susan, 97 (b. July 15, 1925; d. March 27, 2023), Osler Mennonite, Sask.

Cressman—Ronald, 82 (b. June 3, 1940; d. Feb. 27, 2023), Elmira Mennonite, Ont.

Dick—Herm W, 94 (b. May 17, 1925; d. March 28, 2023), North Leamington United Church, Leamington, Ont.

Dyck—Irene (Loewen), 86 (b. Sept. 4, 1936; d. March 26, 2023), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Gingerich—Ralph, 74 (b. March 12, 1948; d. Dec. 21, 2022), Bethel Mennonite, Elora, Ont.

Hildebrandt—John, 94 (b. March 19, 1928; d. Feb. 26, 2023), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Sawatzky—John, 92 (b. July 20, 1930; d. March 15, 2023), Grace Mennonite, St. Catharines, Ont.

Schachowskoj—Konstantin, 91 (b. Sept. 3, 1931; d. March 18, 2023), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Siemens—Frank, 89 (b. Jan. 19, 1934; d. March 15, 2023), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Willms—Ronald, 69 (b. Jan. 1, 1954; d. March 22, 2023), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

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.

FROM OUR LEADERS

Jesus and the 4 Cs

Ann L. Schultz

Have you ever heard of the 4 Cs? In education, the 4 Cs refer to 21st century learning skills including critical thinking, creative thinking, communicating and collaborating. In my role now, I have been thinking about how Jesus connects to the 4 Cs, and how they can connect to our work in the church and the world around us.

Jesus was a critical thinker

While he is often regarded as the Healer, the Messiah and the Redeemer, he was also a person who engaged his listeners and desired that they reach conclusions on their own. This was a strategic way for him to engage with his audience and have them dialogue with him about their learnings. The Gospels present many examples of how Jesus used his critical thinking skills, often through story, to inspire and teach his listeners. He was a true intellect!

Jesus was creative

His teaching, problem solving and mentoring skills consistently demonstrated outside-the-box, fascinating and forward-thinking strategies. *“Jesus spoke*

all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable” (Matthew 13:34). Speaking in parables was not a normal nor familiar teaching strategy during his time, yet this method was highly creative.

Speaking in parables was not a normal nor familiar teaching strategy during his time, yet this method was highly creative.

Jesus was a communicator

He did not stick to one form of messaging; he varied his words and his ways to deliver them. In addition to asking questions, telling stories and parables, he was also regarded as a person who spoke the truth. Think of Jesus’ response to the woman at the well, or his words in Luke 18:17, when he says: *“Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all.”* Jesus was

also not afraid to be quiet or ponder the thoughts of others. This is evident in Matthew 27 when Jesus was questioned by the priests, elders and Pilate; he sat in silence and chose to say nothing. Clearly, Jesus’s varied forms of communication drew people in!

Jesus was a collaborator

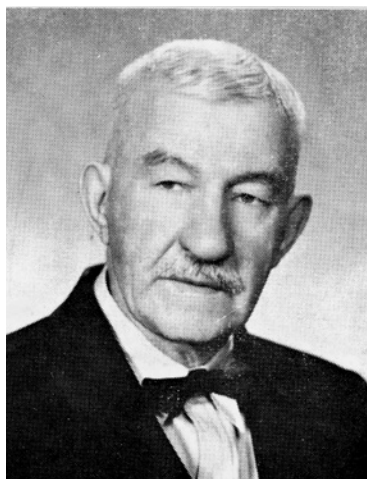
His most consistent team of collaborators were his disciples, who went everywhere with him. Jesus was intentional about spending time with them, and was committed to listening and learning from them. As Jesus’s life evolved, he nurtured his relationships with others as well. *“He invites those with heavy burdens to come and receive rest”* (Matthew 11:28). Jesus figured out early on that significant work can be accomplished when people work together. His collaboration with his disciples positioned them to become the primary teachers of the Gospel message of Jesus: to proclaim the Good News.

Indeed Jesus would be an exceptional 21st-century teacher. May Jesus inspire us all to think critically, be creative, communicate and collaborate. ☺



Ann L. Schultz is Mennonite Church Eastern Canada’s executive team leader.

A moment from yesterday



In 2023, the Mennonite Heritage Archives celebrates 90 years of service to the Mennonite community. It can trace its roots to the Conference of Mennonites in Canada’s annual sessions held June 26-28, 1933, in Gnadenthal (near Plum Coulee, Man.), when Bernhard Schellenberg (1879-1966) was appointed archivist. Schellenberg advocated for the creation of the archive, citing the confiscation of the Mennonite Archives in Ukraine by the Bolsheviks in 1929 and the need to start over. He captured the spirit of the sessions, saying that forgetting our past is a sign of being ungrateful to God for what he has done for us. Throughout his time as archivist (1933-1941) Schellenberg worked at collecting historical documents and books and promoting the archival program through articles in *Der Bote*. Today the Mennonite Heritage Archives has more than 600 metres of paper, 40,000 photographs and more than 5,000 hours of audio recordings.

Text: Conrad Stoesz
Photo: Mennonite Heritage Archives



archives.mhsc.ca

IN THE IMAGE

‘An old nose’

Ed Olfert

A recent weekend was exhausting, delightful, enlightening, hilarious, touching . . . and exhausting.

The stars lined up in such a way that we kept our youngest grandchild, seven-year-old Jaxon, here for the weekend. Usually when he’s here, he is accompanied by his two older brothers, but they were busy doing other things.

“Excitedly” is the operative word for the weekend. How that much energy, impishness and creativity can be packed into Jaxon’s wiry frame astounds me. I now have a greater understanding of the weariness that I see on his parents’ faces.

A saying learned from parents, translated from Low German, suggests that someone who assumes they know all manner of things is referred to as “an old nose.” It’s a teasing, light-hearted term. It’s been used to describe Jaxon a time or two.

When we picked up Jaxon, it seemed good to head to the Saskatoon Family Fun Expo. Once there, the huge crowds were a bit overwhelming until we found the bouncy castle. Each circuit he stripped off another layer of clothing and tossed it to me. Still his face grew redder and sweatier.

Every time he slid down the chute that marked the exit, he made quick eye contact to assure himself that opa was still present and in he charged again. To see our beautiful fair-haired boy in this massive crush of children of every hue and ethnicity was touching and delightful.

To help Jaxon pass time at a restaurant a little later, I gave him my phone to play with, and he quickly found his way to the Kijiji site, and started his teasing about the green tractors that he loves, and the red ones that I am historically connected with. That’s been ongoing since he was three.

When we finally arrived at our home, Jaxon defined to us which bags we would carry into the house, and which he would drag in. He chose the toys. A farm was created, with several yards placed in different rooms. He pointed out to me, only a little condescendingly, that he had brought one red tractor among many green ones. We struggle a little to communicate. I need to read lips, while Jaxon’s lips move an average of a metre between words.

The teachings of Jesus make it clear that there are important spiritual learnings to be gleaned from children. I try to hold that in the back of my

consciousness as I relate to this vortex of energy. There is a freshness, a trust, an honesty that knows no bounds in a young one raised in a good place. There is courage to explore new experiences, to offer outrageous observations, to insert wisdom untainted by historical agenda. If you aren’t comfortable with honesty, better not spend time with this boy!

I sit at my laptop, writing a column. Jaxon asks what I’m doing, then gets excited. He’s sure he can write stories for money as well. And when he sits at the keyboard, his two-second attention span stretches to 45 minutes.

There is wisdom, certainly, in the call to “become like children.” In the innocence there are gifts of truth, energy, creativity and trust. These gifts are connected to children being raised in a community of care, of affirmation. I have responsibilities here. It is almost frightening what the sponges in those small brains do soak in. But it’s a good fright, a fright that encourages us to live openly and honestly. I wonder how this old opa can take on some of those qualities that Jesus suggests are key to living faithfully. Those qualities appear to include energy, hope, joy and, just perhaps, a little mischief. ☺



Ed Olfert (p2peho@gmail.com) ponders becoming like a child.

Et cetera

Ultraviolet scripture

Scientists have discovered what they claim to be a “hidden chapter” of the Gospel of Matthew. Using ultraviolet light to examine a manuscript in the Vatican Library, they found layers of writing that had previously been erased. The discovery adds detail to portions of Matthew 11 and 12.

Source: *Relevant Magazine*

Photo by Traci from flickr.com



VOICES AND STORIES

Dandelions for the Gospel

Randolph Haluza-DeLay

A dandelion tattoo festoons my left forearm, a puffball ready to launch its wispy seeds. Asked to speak at one of our congregations one Sunday, I intended to start the children's feature by showing the tattoo.

"Can you do that?" a friend asked. "Can you show a tattoo in church?"

That exchange is object lesson No. 1, and I will let you decide what to take from it.

The dandelion is object lesson No. 2. As I told the children, dandelions remind me of my faith, and I want every one of them to think of their faith every time they see a dandelion. Reckon they'd be thinking of God a lot then!

"In other words, thou shalt not 'weedkill' the dandelions, for then thou hinder the Lord your God from communicating with thee."

I say that in jest. But dandelions are hard to stamp out, just as God will find a way around human efforts to avoid or suppress God. The more effort we put into fighting, the more vigorous means God will use to "weedkill" the sin in our ears and lives. Maybe that analogy is a bit strong. Still, both God and dandelions are stubborn, persistent, a bit wild and outside our control.

Like the chickadee—that

oh-so-common bird that is among my favourites—the even-more-common dandelion ranks high among my favourite flowers.

What do you see when you think of dandelions? Weed? Food? Nuisance? Beauty? Green leaves suddenly bursting with yellow transforming later to white? Seedy puffballs upon which some of us make wishes and others assign enmity? Since we have just passed through Easter and the stories are still fresh, doesn't that last bit sound like Jesus?

The dandelion is a source of wonder; its seeds can float eight kilometres! Every part of it is edible. Salad greens, roasted roots, dandelion tea and wine. Dandelions are full of vitamins and nutrients, with antioxidants and compounds that can reduce inflammation and blood pressure, and possibly other health problems. They are herbs misclassified as weeds. Dandelions are useful, even as they are undervalued and even despised.

A few years ago, Kevin Derksen combined the parable of seed and sower (Matthew 13) with a reflection on dandelions. It is a "wild and stubborn counterculture in a world of domesticated lawns," he wrote in the June 3, 2020, issue of *Canadian Mennonite*. The

gospel of dandelions contrasts with polite and domesticated forms of Christian faith. Dandelions are feral. They will always escape our control.

Maybe that is part of why they are labelled "weeds." The label illustrates the command-and-control attitudes of modernity; human egotism; and forms of science and technology that manipulate, subjugate or eliminate that which is determined to be unregulated or in need of discipline. Science and technology have many benefits but they can also be used for dominion and domination. Think eugenics.

But notions like "weeds" or "invasive species"—things that are wild, undesirable or out-of-place—have been applied to humans, especially of various immigration statuses or ethno-racial categories. It is a way of enforcing exclusivity.

And so we go back to dandelions. Are they an apt metaphor for the Gospel?

Perhaps, instead we should be like the dandelion—unapologetic, growing wild but as beautiful flowers—brilliant yellow amidst the green but sterile lawns. Useful, too, if our gifts are valued. And, although some will be annoyed by you, others will take delight, making wishes and blowing seeds into the wind. ❧



When Randy Haluza-DeLay owned a house with a yard, it was an interesting source of discussion with neighbours.

Et cetera

Nancy Pelosi and Archbishop spar

Nancy Pelosi, former speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, publicly rebuked the Catholic archbishop of her home archdiocese of San Francisco. The archbishop had barred Pelosi—a Catholic—from receiving the Eucharist in churches under his jurisdiction because of her support for abortion rights. In 2021, when a similar ban was considered for President Biden, 60 Catholic Democrats in the House, not including Pelosi, wrote a letter calling on church leaders not to "weaponize" the Eucharist.

Source: NPR / Religion News Service



U.S. GOVERNMENT PHOTO

TALES FROM THE UNENDING STORY

What more could I want?

Joshua Penfold

“The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want” (Psalm 23:1).

Despite regular self-reminders of my abundance, I want.

Despite the ongoing conversations with my children about our relative wealth, they want.

Despite overflowing shelves of books and games, and complaining about lack of storage space, and instruments that barely see the light of day, I want.

Despite a fridge, freezer and pantry full of food, even if they cost a bit more these days, I want.

Despite the comfort of our more-than-adequate house, we want.

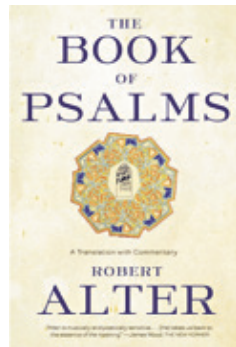
Despite vacations and Netflix and just-because purchases, we want.

Despite exposure to countless songs, sermons and scriptures revealing our safety, salvation and shalom in God, we want.

It really is amazing—perhaps disturbing—how ill-content I am. I sometimes can scarcely sit for a few minutes without feeling restless. So often I’m unable to be present and embrace the moment. In the quiet I need music or a podcast, and in a short moment of downtime my hands jitter to check my

phone.

There are so many things and people vying for my attention. The never-ending emails and notifications, and then the advertisements are everywhere: billboards, commercials, in-game or in-podcast ads, the logos and brands we wear, drive, consume, enjoy.



Despite a fridge, freezer and pantry full of food, even if they cost a bit more these days, I want.

There is a surround-sound bombardment prophesying solutions to our problem of want. A problem that they created. They’ve infected us with dissatisfaction and now want to sell us the solution: more, newer, faster, shinier, trendier. But we all know, deep down, it doesn’t satisfy or cure the sickness.

But there’s another voice. An often-still, small voice. The voice of a shepherd quietly and persistently bidding the

sheep to listen carefully. This voice doesn’t offer anything flashy or entertaining, but if you can tune out and escape the many other louder and obnoxious voices, the shepherd’s voice bids you come and offers something the others cannot fathom, something the others actually despise. The shepherd

offers something that is both medicine and weapon. It is better than anything offered by anyone else. It is more powerful, but it is cloaked in humility. It is more satisfying, but it is cloaked in vulnerability. It is more liberating, but it is cloaked in dependence.

The shepherd is quietly offering this “wantlessness.” He offers himself, which is everything. And if one has everything, how can you want for anything?

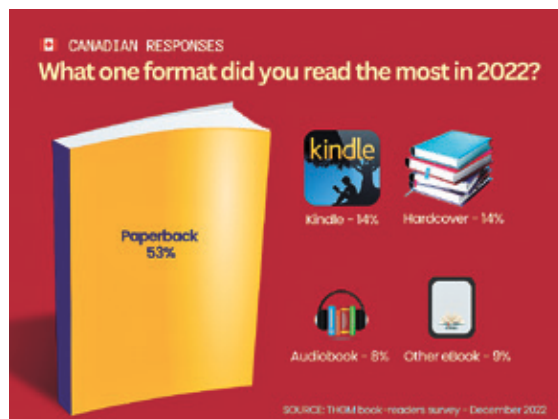
“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

What more could one want, really? ❧



Joshua Penfold
(penfoldjoshua@gmail.com)
would recommend Robert Alter’s *The Book of Psalms: A Translation with Commentary*.

Et cetera



Canadians still read paper books

An online survey in December asked 144 Canadian readers what type of books they read in 2022 and what they planned to read in 2023. The results showed that 6 percent read no books, but 23 percent read more than 20 books. The survey found that 67 percent of Canadians mostly read paper books, 10 percent higher than the global average, while 31 percent read mostly ebooks.

To see the full survey, visit: bit.ly/3KLZBxE

Source: THGM Blog

School's out

Members of the Class of 2023 reflect on their time at Mennonite post-secondary schools

By Aaron Epp
Senior Writer

Hundreds of students are preparing to graduate this month from post-secondary institutions supported by Mennonite Church Canada and its regional churches.

Canadian Mennonite spoke with five students about their experiences studying at Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford, B.C., Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg and Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont.

Columbia Bible College

Around 130 students are set to graduate during a ceremony that will take place on campus on April 22.

• Katie Rempel

Katie Rempel is making history. She is the first person to graduate from a pilot program of Columbia and Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Ind.

The program allows students to study the Bible and theology at the college while taking courses in other subjects at

the university. Rempel will graduate with two degrees: a bachelor of arts in practical theology and a bachelor of science in business management.

"I've come away with a diverse selection of knowledge in practical, biblical and managerial subjects, all of which can ultimately help me succeed in my career, ministry and lifestyle pursuits," says Rempel, 22, who is from Courtenay, B.C.

Since the Indiana university offers a variety of online options, Rempel never had to leave Columbia. That meant she could stay involved as a student leader and further develop the friendships she's made.

Rempel's studies have convinced her that faith and everyday life are inextricably linked: "Our lives should reflect the truth and character of Christ so that others may come to recognize and know him by our words and actions. This is how I view business and entrepreneurial pursuits in the secular world—as an opportunity for me to utilize my strengths in creativity, entrepreneurship and leadership for furthering



Katie Rempel

the Kingdom of God . . . as well as being his light in everyday situations."

Conrad Grebel University College

Grebel will celebrate 101 undergraduate students and 29 graduate students during a convocation service on campus on April 23.

• Hayden Epp

After graduating from UMEI High School in Leamington, Ont. in 2018, Hayden Epp thought he was finished living and studying in a close-knit Mennonite community. For his first year studying at the University of Waterloo, he decided against living at Grebel.

It ended up being a difficult year. He didn't like the residence and made almost no friends. So he reached out to Grebel and inquired about moving to its residence, located on the UWaterloo campus, for his second year.

"Coming here may be the best thing I've ever done," says Epp, 22. "I just feel I belong around here."

While numerous student leadership experiences have made his Grebel experience meaningful, some of his favourite memories are of impromptu get-togethers with peers.

This past year, he lived in an apartment with three friends. One of those friends organized an occasional gathering called Brendan's Books Before Bedtime, during which he read a children's story to any students that wanted to stop by.

"People I normally wouldn't hang out with were in my living room," Epp recalls. "It was fun."

Epp's passion for spending time outdoors

(Continued on page 14)



PHOTO COURTESY OF CMU

Graduating students make their way across campus to the ceremony at CMU in 2019.



Hayden Epp



Sneha Praveen



Lyn Hildebrand

(Continued from page 13)

led him to study science. He'll graduate with an honours degree specializing in environmental biology.

He's thankful that he connected to Grebel. "It feels like a really significant choice I made, and I think my life is better for it."

• Sneha Praveen

Sneha Praveen has been concerned about climate change ever since she was a child researching the ways increasingly warmer temperatures are impacting polar bears. Now the 22-year-old is preparing to graduate from the University of Waterloo with an honours degree in environmental studies.

Praveen lived at Grebel on and off throughout her degree. During her time at the college, she played Chip the teacup in a production of *Beauty and the Beast*, worked as a social media assistant at the Centre for Peace Advancement, was part of the student leadership team and co-led Tuesday night worship gatherings.

Being part of the Grebel community has impacted her faith and life "in so many ways," she says.

"The people at Grebel really showed me a portion of what it means to experience God's love, and everyone was very accepting of who I was, even though I was a bit hard-set [in my beliefs] at the start."

As Praveen looks ahead, the warming planet is still on her mind. In the fall, she will enter the University of Waterloo's

master of climate change program.

"I really care about the environment, but I also really care about people," she says. "At the end of the day, climate change isn't just an environmental problem; it's a social problem. That's the approach I'm walking into my master's with."

Canadian Mennonite University

Ninety-six undergraduates and 10 graduate students will receive their degrees when CMU hosts its annual convocation service at Bethel Mennonite Church on April 29. During the service, CMU's president, Cheryl Pauls, will present the university's PAX Award to César García, Mennonite World Conference's general secretary. The award honours people who lead exemplary lives of service, leadership and reconciliation in church and society.

• Lyn Hildebrand

Lyn Hildebrand's family has a history of attending CMU and one of its founding colleges, Canadian Mennonite Bible College, where her parents met in the 1980s.

"CMU's been a part of my life forever," says Hildebrand, 21, who grew up in Rosthern, Sask.

While earning her English degree, Hildebrand studied everything from Ancient Greek classics to early 20th-century literature. Along the way, she took journalism classes and a few peace and conflict transformation courses—something she never thought she would do.

"I don't know if I've taken a bad class," she says.

This past year, Hildebrand joined CMU Singers, the university's 80-member, mixed-voice choir. That led to one of the most memorable experiences of her four years at CMU—performing at Canadian Foodgrains Bank fundraisers in Winnipeg and Winkler.

"It was really cool to see how people reacted to us as a group, and feeling that connection to other CMU students off campus was really fun," she says.

Another memory that stands out is participating in the global climate strike in 2019. She was heartened to see how many students, faculty and staff attended the event at Manitoba's legislature.

"We're not just here to take classes and go home at the end of the day," she says. "There's so much more that we do as a community."

• Jubilee Dueck Thiessen

Jubilee Dueck Thiessen, 22, is thankful for the way her studies at CMU have refined her critical-thinking and writing skills.

During her first year, she placed third in a binational speech contest administered by Mennonite Central Committee, delivering an address that explored caring for creation with joy. In her third year, she hosted an hour of conversation about gendered spaces and language on campus and, this past year, she wrote a letter to the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, of which her church is a member, advocating



Jubilee Dueck Thiessen

diagnosed with cancer in the summer of 2020—but she says those challenges have taught her important lessons about honouring one’s capacity and focusing on relationships instead of being productive and striving for excellence at all costs.

“I’m sure there are things I missed out on [because of the pandemic],” she says,

“but I think it also made room for unique moments of intentional relationship and tenderness toward experiences of pain.” ❧

—With files from Columbia Bible College.

for LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Being able to bring theological perspectives into all of her courses has helped integrate faith into the rest of her school-work and life, says Dueck Thiessen, who is graduating with an English degree with minors in theology and philosophy. “It’s been a really holistic experience.”

Dueck Thiessen’s student leadership involvement included serving two years as external vice-president on the student council. She also worked with the school’s maintenance and student life departments to provide free disposable menstrual products in student bathrooms, and helped to establish a food bank for students.

Being a student during the pandemic was difficult at times—an experience that was exacerbated when her brother was

NIH RESEARCH STUDY

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First Enneagram Prison Project launches in Saskatchewan

By Emily Summach
Saskatchewan Correspondent

These days, if someone asks, “What number are you?” they are likely not asking your age. The Enneagram, a personality typing system based on nine types, has exploded in popularity over the last 20 years. Now Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Saskatchewan is helping to bring the Enneagram into correctional facilities.

The Enneagram Prison Project (EPP) was launched in the United States in 2009, when EPP’s founder, Susan Olesek, introduced the concepts of the Enneagram and the personal compassion it promoted to a small prison in Texas. The healing fruits of that first experiment were so bountiful that Olesek brought the program back to her home state of California. In 2013, EPP became a national non-profit. Ten years later, the Canadian branch of EPP was founded.

Two women from Saskatchewan, Leanne Schellenberg and Amanda Dodge, have now brought the program into a Saskatchewan correctional facility. (Government rules prevent *Canadian Mennonite* from naming the institution.) This is the first time the program has run in Canada. Dodge is MCC Saskatchewan’s program director and Schellenberg has done volunteer work in correctional centres for the past four years.

Schellenberg describes the Enneagram as “a personality typing system that helps us understand why we do what we do in a way that leads to wholeness and healing.” While the Enneagram is not Christian per se, she says that, for her personally, “it’s a tool for how to develop an intimate relationship with God.”

For MCC Saskatchewan, partnering with Schellenberg to bring EPP into Saskatchewan correctional centres was an easy choice.

Dodge says: “It fits within the scope of the restorative justice work we’ve been

doing for decades, with MCC’s concern for people who harm and are harmed, and to support healing, especially for those who have experienced trauma. For us, it’s about healing and the restoration of relationships.”

When EPP is brought to a correctional facility, two facilitators, called guides, go in and host an eight-module course that

others.

Dodge and Schellenberg say the autobiographical sharing is powerful. Each participant’s biography is shared with an EPP guide from EPP’s Global Guiding Community. The guide writes a compassionate, personal response to the participant. “Having participants read that response is so powerful, just knowing that



PHOTO BY LAURA HOOPER

Amanda Dodge, centre, and Leanne Schellenberg, right pose with EPP lead guide Laura Hooper.

involves 24 hours of programming. In Saskatchewan, that looks like doing four days of programming over the course of three weeks. At the end of the first week, participants are invited to write their autobiography in as much or as little detail as they wish. The second week, a sharing circle is held, at which participants read their autobiographies to the group and are encouraged to practise radical compassion for their own stories and the stories of

someone is seeing you, and holding your story compassionately,” says Dodge.

The radical compassion for self and others is at the heart of the program and its transformational power.

“For me, working with EPP’s compassionate curriculum has been a giant journey, to shift my attention to what’s right about me rather than what’s wrong,” says Schellenberg. “This feels both countercultural and counterintuitive. The

work that EPP invites participants to enter into is dismantling and relieving, as we asked them to consider what happened to them rather than what's wrong with them."

Dodge echoes Schellenberg's response, saying that the EPP program becomes "an engraved invitation to compassion."

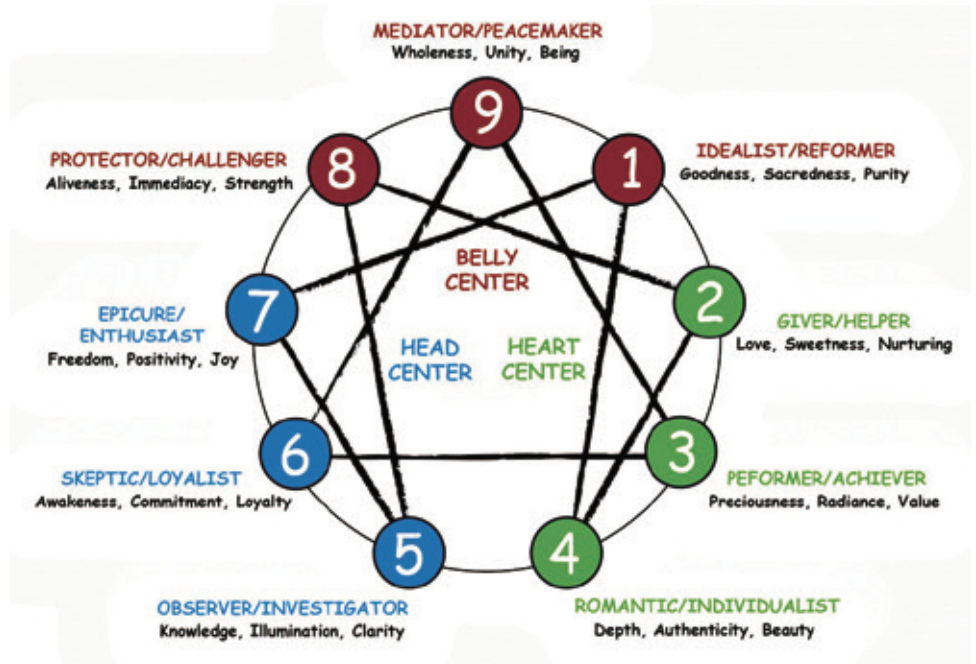
Schellenberg recounts an example of the effect of this invitation: "At our first program there was a participant who just wanted to sink into the back wall. You know, hair over their face like they didn't want to exist. When we held our autobiography sharing circle, the participant was already mourning a loss, so we took a moment for their tears. And then this person just began to share about this profound, profound tragedy that had happened to them as a little person, and we made space to hear and hold their story. And in the group there was this beautiful receiving, a mirroring back to them that, 'It's not okay what happened to you.' After that sharing circle, their whole countenance changed. It's like someone just entered their body. 'Wow! Here you are!'"

Dodge says about the courage she has witnessed: "One of our participants was a type six on the Enneagram, and generally, that's the type that struggles the most with anxiety. When it was time for a type exploration interview, most of the sixes in the room were not interested, but this one participant said, 'I'll go,' and they were quite literally shaking in their boots, but they went. Their pain was so close to the surface and raw. I was able to witness just pure courage."

Currently, Dodge and Schellenberg are the only certified EPP guides in Canada. Schellenberg ran the first course last September. Dodge joined her for another in March, and a third one is planned for June.

The hope is to recruit and train more guides to bring this program to other facilities in other provinces.

Dodge encourages people to consult the EPP Canada website (enneagramprisonproject.ca) or look up its podcast that is on the website. "And please pray for us



ENNEAGRAMPRISONPROJECT.CA DIAGRAM

'The Enneagram is a widely used, comprehensive, broad based personality theory that has been utilized and studied in contemporary psychology and psychiatry,' according to EPP Canada's website.

and our participants," she says. "We see lots of trauma, which leads to conflict, and now there's this chance, really, to tell their story, and to do this hard work."

Schellenberg encourages everyone to apply the principles of the Enneagram and radical compassion to marginalized people in their world. "I'd invite people to do the courageous work of questioning their biases toward those who are incarcerated," she says. "We're all fellow humans

that suffer. It's not 'You've done this, and I've done this.' We all have a story. When the truth of our stories shows up in the room, it is beautiful, warm, human; there's no dividing line. Ideas like unworthy, forgotten, dangerous—that's not in the room. These are folks who want healing. We don't change until the pain of staying the same becomes too great." ❧

/// News brief

Grebel now offers MTS-MDiv sequential degree

WATERLOO, ONT.—Conrad Grebel University College has partnered with two Mennonite institutions to provide an opportunity for sequential degrees. With this arrangement, master of theological studies (MTS) students at Grebel can transfer their credits and proceed to complete a master of divinity (MDiv) degree at either Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind., or Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg. The MTS is a two-year degree program offered jointly by the University of Waterloo and Grebel. After completion of the MTS program, students can transfer up to 16 courses to AMBS or CMU to complete an MDiv degree. To learn more, visit <https://bit.ly/3UzLj0b>.

—CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Nurse practitioner begins theological studies

By Madalene Arias
Eastern Canada Correspondent

Although Wendy Dunn had long felt a nudge to pursue theological studies, she never did so until COVID lockdowns at the care home where she worked as a nurse practitioner led her to provide spiritual care in ways she had never expected.

Dunn, 52, was born and raised in the Mennonite town of Poole near Milverton, Ont. In addition to serving as the designated piano player at Poole Mennonite Church, she works as a nurse practitioner at Greenwood Court, a care facility for seniors and people with disabilities in Stratford. Now she is also a student in the master of theological studies program at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo.

When Greenwood locked down after its first outbreak of COVID, Dunn and fellow staff hauled pianos into various positions throughout the facility where they had never been before. By this time, rules prohibited residents from leaving their rooms. Staff wanted to ensure the music would carry down the hallways and reach residents as they listened in their rooms.

Through the doors and walls, voices of seniors came through and accompanied Dunn as she played from the old red and blue Mennonite hymnals.

“It’s amazing what people with dementia will remember,” says Dunn. “Music is often the last thing to go.”

By November 2020, as reports indicated 62 percent of COVID deaths in Ontario were among residents of long-term care facilities, the Ontario government devised a plan to build what it called an “iron ring” around these homes. Families of residents could no longer visit, with only rare exceptions. The new rules also barred providers of spiritual care unless a resident was near death.

Dunn says that Greenwood faced staffing shortages even before the spread

of COVID. “We were just getting by in terms of staffing and providing their care needs,” she says.

When workers and residents began to fall ill with the new virus, the facility lost about 30 percent of its staff. This figure included personal support workers, nurses and some administrators.

“All around, you just felt like you were abandoned,” says Dunn, who recruited people for roles left vacant, including her own children, who served as screeners.

Like other frontline staff in various health-care settings, Dunn found herself performing tasks that were otherwise outside her scope of care. With family members unable to visit, and a shortage of personal support workers, there were days when she fed residents and helped them use the washroom. On other days she helped with laundry.

Through the hard times, staff at Greenwood—which is operated by Tri-County Mennonite Homes—would often pray together.

After Chaplain Elaine Clark Siberry shared the following prayer during the first two weeks of the lockdown, it became Dunn’s daily prayer: “Merciful God, open my heart and mind to be fully present to those I interact with throughout the day. Allow me to listen to others without

passing judgment or haste to solve what I cannot change. Give me patience and understanding, and grant me grace in my shortcomings. Be with me in times of fatigue and lift me up with the strength to carry out your compassionate love to all those I meet. Amen.”

During outbreaks, Public Health Ontario required health care providers to swab residents and staff once every three days, if not daily. Dunn took charge of this task since her schedule permitted more flexibility than other nurses on the floors.

The prospect of having a 15-centimetre cotton swab inserted a couple centimetres



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Wendy Dunn (left) with Ann Albrecht, a resident of Knollcrest Lodge.

up one nostril, and then waiting for results, made residents uneasy.

One day she arrived at a room shared by two women with dementia, one at a more progressed stage than the other, who had been crying and calling out in distress long enough to upset the other woman, who had no choice but to remain in the same room.

"I walked into the room and there was a lot of anxiety that couldn't be controlled because nobody could leave that space," Dunn says. "I just looked at her and said, 'I can't fix this. Do you want to pray together?' She said 'yes.' It made me cry."

The resident asked to pray for strength and patience. They both felt calmer after praying and were able to move on.

On another day during the lockdown, Dunn came to the aid of a resident as she lay dying from COVID. In accordance with the wishes of the resident's family, the facility allowed a Catholic priest to enter to perform the sacrament of the sick.

Too uncomfortable to enter the room, the priest remained in the doorway as he provided Dunn with instructions. As he read through the liturgy, he told her when to place the cross on the resident. Eventually, Dunn spread ashes on the resident's forehead.

"It was very important for the family that that happened," she says.

Through her years as a caregiver—she began nursing in 1994—Dunn has watched spirituality gain importance and emerge as a source of sustenance for those whose cognitive and physical bodies have begun to fail.

"I think I saw that in more of a real way with the pandemic," she says.

So, in September 2022, she began to work part time toward a master of theological studies degree at Grebel while continuing her nursing work at the same time.

Thinking of the time she assisted the Catholic priest, she says she has most enjoyed learning the different ways in which people worship and adopting an openness to understanding what could be significant in certain rituals.

"I hope I can keep integrating that into my work because we do a lot of end-of-life work in palliative and long-term care." ❧

Cape Breton homeowners await return of MDS volunteers

Story and Photo by John Longhurst
Mennonite Disaster Service

Jessica Reid-Lynk knew something was wrong when she heard the shingles on her roof flapping.

"I got up and looked outside, and there were shingles everywhere," says the mother of three young children about the damage caused when Hurricane Fiona hit Cape Breton on Sept. 24, 2022.

With the roof damaged, the rain started pouring into her home in Sydney Mines. "We were bailing buckets of water," she says. "Bailing and bailing."

When the storm was over, Reid-Lynk and her partner, Michael, surveyed the large hole in the ceiling of her living room, and water damage throughout the walls and basement.

"I struggle with depression and anxiety normally," she says. "But after that, I was defeated and hopeless."

Reid-Lynk is feeling more hopeful today now that Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) Canada volunteers have put a new roof on her house. And more will be coming soon to make her home livable again.

The family is among 14 homeowners in Cape Breton whom MDS is planning to help after last year's hurricane.

Also on the list is James Towers and his partner, also of Sydney Mines. The storm tore a big hole in the roof, into which the rain later poured, damaging the ceilings in the second floor and seeping into the walls.

Knowing MDS volunteers will be coming to repair the house fills him with hope, too.

"I can hardly believe there are people like that who will come help us," he says. "We are so grateful. This is our home. We could never afford to fix it ourselves. We can hardly wait to get back in."

For Roman Heuft, response coordinator for Cape Breton, people like Reid-Lynk and Towers are why he serves with MDS.

"So many people here are struggling with the effects of the hurricane," he says. "The storm really set them back. Our job is to get them back on their feet again."

Already, more than 200 people have signed up to volunteer in Cape Breton between March and October. But more are needed, Heuft says. ❧

Those who want to serve can contact Clara Flores at cflores@mds.org or visit mds.org for more information. Travel subsidies are available.



James Towers surveys Hurricane Fiona damage inside his home in Cape Breton.

Colony Mennonites threaten Indigenous lands

By Emma Siemens
CM Intern

For many Latin American colony Mennonites, a life of isolation, farming and family is the fulfilment of God's will, but for others, it is the destruction of sacred lands.

Various Mennonite colonies in different parts of Latin America have been accused of deforestation and unlawful encroachment by local Indigenous peoples in recent years. Three colonies in the municipality of Puerto Gaitán in central Colombia are among those accused.

The three colonies, established in 2015, are some of the more recent of the many Mennonite colonies established in Latin America since the start of the 20th century. The colonies established more than 100 years ago have grown in both population and land mass. With increasing population, colonies split, expand and relocate.

According to a study published in a 2021 issue of the *Journal of Land Science*, there are 214 Mennonite colonies in nine Latin American countries. These colonies take up an estimated 3.9 million hectares of land, an area larger than the Netherlands. Yann le Polain de Waroux, a geography professor at McGill University in Montreal, served as the lead author of the study, entitled, "Pious pioneers: The expansion of Mennonite colonies in Latin America."

The study found that, because of the remote areas that colony Mennonites choose to settle, and because of their farming systems, they have had a unique and significant impact on the agricultural life of the continent.

Like Latin American peasant farmers, their farms are often small and are managed by families, but, like large-scale farmers, they build roads to access their remote settlements and move their acquired capital and knowledge to new locations throughout Latin America.

Their preference for settling remote



PHOTO COURTESY OF SEBASTIAN VARGAS
Land burned by colony Mennonites in Colombia.

locations is based on a religiously inspired desire to remain as separate as possible from the outside world. Their road-building and farming methods, which require tree cutting, greatly alter the landscapes on which they settle, and make it possible for other farmers with similar methods to also use this land.

The arrival of new farmers, and thus the loss of physical separation from those outside their colony, often prompts the relocation of a colony to a new remote territory.

An investigation carried out by Mongabay, and fellow conservation organizations Rutas del Conflicto and El Deber, found evidence of Mennonite colonies in Bolivia, Colombia, Mexico, Paraguay and Peru logging forests without authorization, occupying Indigenous community territories, trafficking land and issuing threats.

In Paraguay, for example, Mennonite colony machinery cleared out three hectares of forest and demolished an estuary in the Pindo'i community reserve, according to a lawsuit filed by a local Indigenous person.

The acquisition of land by a Mennonite colony in Tiruntán, Peru, was revealed to have included land trafficking, and meetings between colony leaders and

lawyers in upper political spheres legalizing their occupation.

And while Mennonites in the Meta department of Colombia committed to recovering the forests they have logged, the Sikauni Indigenous communities that first issued this claim, said this deforestation hasn't ended.

Corporación Claretiana Norman Pérez Bello (CCNPB), an organization that works to defend the human rights of Indigenous and peasant communities in the Orinoquía region, or eastern plains, of Colombia, has raised concerns about the Mennonite colonies settled in Puerto Gaitán specifically.

During a video call convened in March by the U.S.-based, Mennonite-rooted Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery, CCNPB's Sebastian Vargas said the idea these Mennonites have acquired and treated the land in a way that respects Colombian law is a "fictional argument."

According to Vargas, while each of the individual families of one colony do indeed own a legal amount of land, they all contribute to the agricultural production of the same colony, with this colony therefore operating as a company with multiple times the amount of land any one party can legally own.

According to Indigenous representatives on the call, the Mennonite colonies in Puerto Gaitán have begun monoculture farming, impeding upon Indigenous farming methods, and have illegally burned portions of this land. They have also reportedly begun preparing land beyond what they own for farming.

As tensions rise between these Mennonite colonies and the local Indigenous peoples hoping to protect and return to their traditional land, Mennonite colony members have reportedly told Indigenous peoples they will send armed people to remove them from the area.

To Vargas, the Mennonite colonies' settlement in Puerto Gaitán eight years ago, and their treatment of the land since then, makes them part of the area's long

history of Indigenous displacement, and now land mistreatment.

In a subsequent email, Vargas said Mennonite agricultural activity has

damaged aquifers. He also noted that, while colonies have the means to import equipment, they do not share or collaborate with Indigenous communities. ❧

Graphic design and cooking pave the way to emotional resiliency

Story and Photo by Rachel Watson
Mennonite Central Committee

What do cooking and graphic design have in common? For Adi Nugroho, it's never been about mastering either of these skills. Technical skills are simply the backdrop for developing emotional tools and creating a space for connection, even across cultures.

When Nugroho's host mom, Angela Opimi, was asked if she would like to open her home up to a participant of the Young Anabaptist Mennonite Exchange Network (YAMEN) program, she was reluctant at first.

Opimi has been connected to the Mennonite church for years, and she now acts as vice-president of the Evangelical Mennonite Church Bolivia and is a member of the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) Deacons Commission. But despite those strong church ties, having someone live in her home felt like a big step. Her biggest fear in hosting? Preparing food.

She remembers telling Nugroho about her fears around cooking when he first arrived. He assured her that, "as long as there's rice to cook, I'll be fine."

To Opimi's surprise, the kitchen has become a place where they have built a friendship, shared jokes and, for Nugroho, learned a new language. In the beginning, Opimi didn't know any Spanish, so the words they had to communicate were limited. But in the kitchen, his relationship with his host mom and his comfort in Spanish grew.

When he heard about YAMEN, a one-year service term co-sponsored by MWC and Mennonite Central Committee for young adults outside of Canada and the United States, he knew that going to

Bolivia would be different than his home country in Indonesia.

Nugroho arrived in Bolivia with an openness to see how his experience in graphic design could be used at Talita Cumi, a home for orphaned and at-risk children and youth.

For traumatized youth, qualities like time management, patience and teamwork have often taken a back seat to other family priorities. After a few months of building relationships with the children, Nugroho realized that, while teaching a hard skill like graphic design would be fun, it could also be an opportunity to teach emotional development in an indirect way.

He used the example of developing confidence, saying that many kids don't have much confidence in their abilities. They might draw something in his class, but would quickly scribble on top of it if anyone looked at it. However, once they saw their own posters hanging in the halls of Talita Cumi, they thought, "Wow this is my project!" It built confidence. They can picture a future for themselves that they couldn't imagine before, he says.

His experience with YAMEN has pushed Nugroho to practise the emotional skills he was teaching. "When I first came here everything was hard," he says. "The culture was difficult to adapt to, and the language made everything harder."

Rice, a staple food in Indonesia, was prepared differently in Bolivia. But after a long day, Nugroho and Opimi would meet in the kitchen to cook a simple meal. He shared some of his favourite recipes from Indonesia and she shared easy Bolivian



Adi Nugroho, left, and Angela Opimi stand by a mural at Talita Cumi, a home for orphaned children and youth, and a partner of Mennonite Central Committee.

dishes.

While he is building skills while cooking with Opimi, he is also expanding his ideas about how food can be prepared and building a relationship along the way.

"I enjoy spending time with him in the kitchen because he doesn't just wait for food to appear," Opimi says. "He says, 'Let's make it together and we can make it faster.' I've remained an independent person, but he's not a stranger in my home, he's more like a nephew."

Maybe Nugroho and Opimi won't become master chefs. Maybe the children at Talita Cumi won't want to continue in a career with graphic design, but the emotional tools that they carry with them as they interact with other people and cultures will last a lifetime. ❧

Mennonite leader offers approaches to polarization

Stuck Together: The Hope of Christian Witness in a Polarized World.
J. Nelson Kraybill. Herald Press, 2023, 240 pages.

Reviewed by Barb Draper
Books & Resources Editor

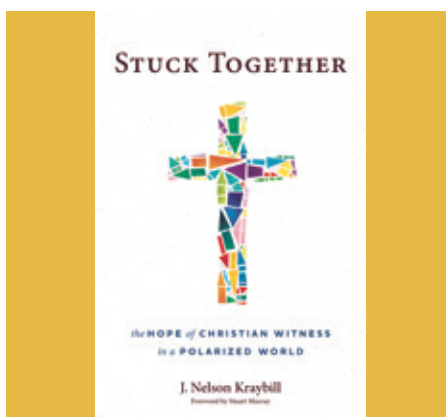
J. Nelson Kraybill bluntly states that his book has no special formula that will save the church or the world from destructive polarization. Instead, it offers guidance on how individuals and congregations can navigate in the midst of conflict, using Jesus as the prime example.

Kraybill is a highly respected leader in the Mennonite church. As well as being a former pastor, he is the past president of Mennonite World Conference. From 1997 to 2009, he was president of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, and program director of the London Mennonite Centre in England before that. Currently teaching and writing in Israel and Palestine, he leads tours to biblical sites in the Holy Land.

“The world should know Christians by our gracious hope, not judgmentalism or sarcasm,” writes Kraybill. “If Christians do no more than engage those with whom we disagree with gentleness and reverence, it will make a difference in the world.”

He points out that Jesus also lived in a polarized world in which conflict was common. Jesus was known to argue, and even rebuke, but he did so with respect and love. He taught forbearance and the importance of relationships. Our goal should be to follow Jesus’ example.

At the same time, there are tensions and ambiguities within the Bible. Kraybill explains how the Apostle Paul and John of Patmos had very different views of the Roman government, resulting in very different ethical and theological understandings. We should not be surprised that people disagree about how to interpret the biblical text. Kraybill writes, “Do not be disheartened by diversity in scripture;



it is a gift.”

This diversity in scripture can also be a challenge, as there are times when theological or ethical disputes can threaten the foundations of a faith community. When it comes to matters of church discipline and accountability, we need careful discernment, and we need to expect that not all faith communities will agree on how or where to draw the boundaries.

“In polarized groups or communities, the most common problem is the failure to listen well,” writes Kraybill. We need to pay close attention and convey respect when listening to those with whom we disagree. The goal is to understand another’s point of view without negative judgment. He gives specific suggestions of how to listen well when relationships are strained.

Kraybill reviews the story in Acts when the Jerusalem Council dealt with a contentious issue, saying that the church leaders compromised and reached consensus. An important part of the process was gaining new insight into scripture after listening to each other tell stories about life-changing

experiences with the Spirit of God. The church today should follow that pattern where discernment rests on tradition, scripture and experience taken together.

“If we let go of the idea that God’s people must always agree, we can rest in the confidence that God’s Spirit will continue to guide,” Kraybill writes. And over the centuries there are examples where the church has shifted its view on issues, often over a long period of time.

Kraybill encourages Christians to be respectful and gracious with others, saying, “Christians should be slow to judge or condemn.” Although firm convictions about faith and practice are appropriate, “perhaps we can relax a bit about relating to others who disagree with us; perhaps we can be willing to learn.”

The title, *Stuck Together*, refers to the need for Christian unity in spite of differences. This idea is reinforced by the symbol on the cover—a cross made up of various colours, shapes and sizes, all stuck together with decoupage.

Although it is not a serious flaw, in some places the book feels a bit stuck together and would have been improved with a tighter structure. Each of the 12 chapters ends with thoughtful questions, making the book a possible resource for discussion groups.

Kraybill offers no easy answers, but his book reminds Christians not to be defensive. We should always be ready to listen to how others experience God and be open to God’s leading. Anyone who feels unsure of how to deal with destructive polarization should find this book helpful. ✎

BOOK REVIEW

Experiences of violence to be overtly named and resisted

Resistance: Confronting Violence, Power, and Abuse within Peace Churches.
Carol Penner and Cameron Altaras, eds. Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2022, 480 pages.

Reviewed by Susanne Guenther Loewen
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

Over the past several decades, a particularly painful and dissonant question has arisen within the Mennonite church: What is a faithful response to violence perpetrated by the church, especially one that professes to be a peace church?

This diverse collection of essays, poetry and personal reflections helpfully grapples with this question from

multiple angles and perspectives, with a focus on the violence of colonialism, racism, homophobia/(hetero)sexism (Part 1), and sexual violence and abuse (Part 2).

Editors Altaras and Penner frame this conversation in terms of a shift in the guiding metaphor of Anabaptist-Mennonite peace theology and practice, so that the traditional emphasis on nonresistance to violence (based on the Sermon on the Mount, Matt. 5:39) becomes one of resistance.

In their words: “We use resistance in our title to pay tribute to the power of survivors of evil and immoral acts of violence, abuse and betrayal. It is not a rejection of nonresistance, but a hope of creative interaction with the tradition. . . . What might it mean, therefore, to practise love for one’s enemy and at the same time resist evil and seek healing for those affected by the resultant harm?”

The strengths of this collection lie in the rich diversity of perspectives and experiences to which it gives voice, centring those—queer, female, Indigenous, people



of colour—who have long been on the “underside” of the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition.

Highlights for me were the moving personal conversation between Lydia Neufeld Harder and Ingrid Bettina Wolfear regarding the Sixties Scoop; Pieter Niemeyer’s account of resisting “erasure” as a queer Mennonite pastor; and Ruth Krall and Lisa Schirch’s

respective chapters on the circles of harm and re-traumatization caused when the community or institution fails to believe and support a victim-survivor of abuse, which provide crucial insights for congregations and church institutions.

Several chapters helpfully complicate key narratives that shape Anabaptist-Mennonite understandings of abuse, from the reification of self-sacrificial enemy-love in the story of 16th-century Anabaptist martyr Dirk Willems (Kimberly Schmidt), to the belief that all broken relationships can and should be mended (Elsie Goerzen), and to the assumption that Mennonite communities are “power-neutral and therefore incapable of abusing power” (Kimberly Penner).

Sarah Ann Bixler’s exploration of the (short) history of Mennonite women’s head coverings as a symbol of women’s submission and their quiet fall into disuse was also noteworthy. What emerges from this diversity is a sense of the multi-faceted nature of this issue, the need for truth-telling and a recognition of the church as

it is rather than only as we envision it theologically, and the need for this work of resistance and healing to be engaged from multiple angles.

Precisely because of its diversity and length, the collection would have been strengthened by being organized into more specific topics or sub-headings. Also, although several of the chapters point beyond individual, church or institutional experience alone, a more thorough look at restorative justice practices, the double-edged relationship between victim-survivors of abuse and law enforcement, and socio-political engagement and advocacy for survivors of abuse, would have enriched the collection further.

The book is pre-eminently practical and ready for church groups, university and MDiv students, and pastors to apply to their own contexts, including poetry and prayers for reflection and worship. I find it significant that as I write this, Sarah Polley’s screenplay adaptation of Miriam Toews’s novel, *Women Talking*, which likewise delves into themes of sexual abuse, faith and peace in Mennonite communities, has received an Academy Award and numerous accolades. This suggests a deep hunger within and beyond Anabaptist-Mennonite communities for these experiences of violence to be overtly named and resisted.

Resistance is a welcome contribution to this ongoing conversation and peace practice. ☸

Susanne Guenther Loewen is a Mennonite pastor-theologian and university instructor in peace studies.

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES



Spring List of Books & Resources

Theology, Spirituality

All Our Grievs to Bear: Responding with Resilience After Collective Trauma. Joni Sancken. Herald Press, 2022, 200 pages.

In a world traumatized by a pandemic, racial trauma and economic uncertainty, Sancken explores how churches can respond. After considering the meaning of collective trauma, she suggests ways to lament, tell stories and find blessing.

Anabaptist Meditations: Thirty Days of Biblical Reflection from the Founders of the Tradition. Colin Godwin. Pandora Press, 2022, 156 pages.

Influenced by Anabaptist writings, the author reflects on Anabaptist teachings based on the themes of voluntarism, discipleship, Christian community, nonresistance and mission. Each entry

has a biblical passage, a meditation, quotation from an Anabaptist writer, reflection questions and a prayer.

Ecumenism and Peace: From Theory and Practice to Pilgrimage and Companionship. Fernando Enns, Gelasenheit Publications, 2022, 340 pages.

The World Council of Churches has moved the Christian church toward greater unity through its pursuit of justice and peace in the Decade to Overcome Violence, says Enns. The author, a leader of Mennonite churches in Germany, teaches theology at universities in the Netherlands and Germany.

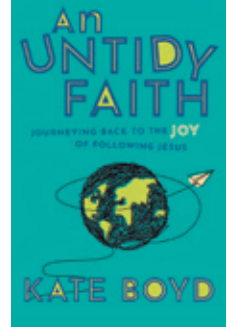
Living that Matters: Honest Conversations for Men of Faith. Steve Thomas and Don Neufeld. Herald Press, 2023, 256 pages.

Written by the coordinators of

STUCK TOGETHER



THE HOPE OF CHRISTIAN WITNESS
IN A POLARIZED WORLD
J. Nelson Kraybill
Herald Press



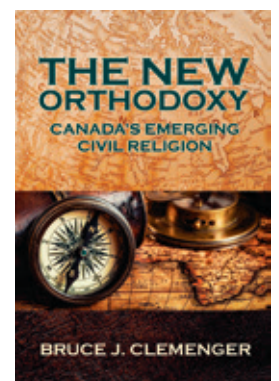
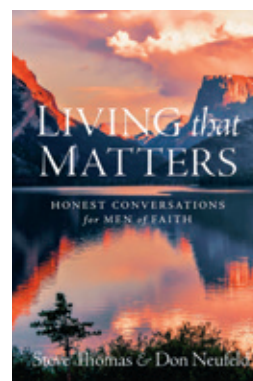
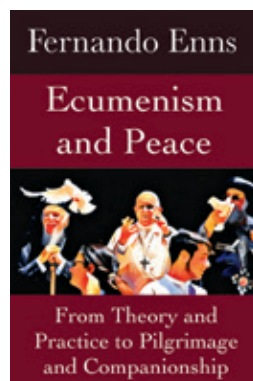
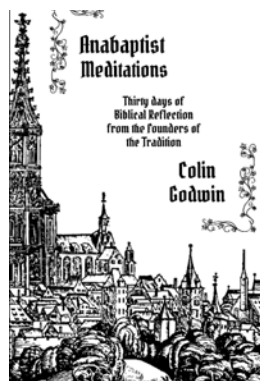
Mennonite Men in Canada and the United States, this book is designed to be used as a resource for men's groups in the church. It encourages men to have honest conversations and to express healthy masculinity.

The New Orthodoxy: Canada's Emerging Civil Religion. Bruce Clemenger. Castle Quay Books, 2022, 136 pages.

Clemenger, past president of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, examines how liberalism has affected Canadian politics and the role of the church. He is concerned that sectarian liberalism is becoming Canada's civil religion.

Stuck Together: The Hope of Christian Witness in a Polarized World. J. Nelson Kraybill. Herald Press, 2023, 240 pages.

The Christian church and the world are polarized, says Kraybill, and no human strategy can prevent that. We need to use the biblical text and Jesus' actions to show us how to maintain relationships in spite of disagreements. (See review on page 22.)



FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

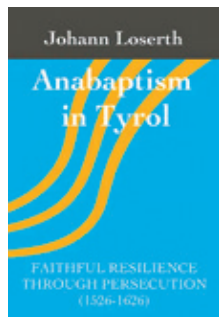
An Untidy Faith: Journeying Back to the Joy of Following Jesus. Kate Boyd. Herald Press, 2023, 224 pages.

Boyd grew up as an evangelical Christian in North America, but came to see that the church has often misinterpreted Jesus. Recognizing that faith can be untidy, she takes a fresh look at what Jesus taught. The book is easy reading, as she writes from her own experience.

History

Anabaptism in Tyrol: Faithful Resilience Through Persecution, 1526-1626. Johann Loserth, translated by H. Hugo Brinkmann. Gelassenheit Publications, 2022, 282 pages.

Now available in English, this manuscript was first published in the German language in 1892-93. Based on a large collection of archival material, it describes the first hundred years of Anabaptism in Tyrol.



A Conspiracy of Chickens: A Memoir. David Waltner-Toews. Wolsak & Wynn, 2022, 300 pages.

A writer and veterinarian, Waltner-Toews is a bit tongue-in-cheek as he reflects on life and chickens, and describes his adventures with his own backyard flock.



East of Liberal: Notes on the Land. Raylene Hinz-Penner. Cascadia Publishing House, 2022, 206 pages.

Hinz-Penner reflects on her personal history, (Continued on page 26)

Interest in women's stories leads to novel about Mary

By Amy Rinner Waddell
B.C. Correspondent

Getting into the mind of Jesus' mother inspired a retired psychiatrist to write a novel about what Mary might have experienced during her son's life.

Lorne Brandt, who attends Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, has always had an interest in women's issues and women's theology. *A Sword Shall Pierce Your Soul* is his first novel, self-published through FriesenPress's office in Victoria, B.C.

"I do refer to it as a novel," says Brandt, "but in the sense that it is very much based on what we have written in the Bible, as well as my own knowledge gained from wider learning about the culture of the time, as well as what I learned on two trips to the Holy Land some years back. As such, it really fits in the biblical or historical-fiction genres."

The idea for the book came about when Brandt began reflecting some years ago about the resurgence of interest in sermons on biblical stories rather than topics, and how people encounter different characters from the Bible.

"I preached my first sermon on the role of women at Easter back in 1967, having just graduated from Canadian Mennonite Bible College," he recalls. "The occasion was the church of which I was a member then having a vote to allow women to vote, or not, at what used to be called 'brotherhood meetings.'" The vote was favourable, he says.

Brandt started studying women of the Bible, such as Tamar, Rahab and Bathsheba.

"From there, or maybe even before that, the idea of writing something based on one whom I would call the most important woman in the Bible occurred to me," he says. "Part of my motivation for reading about women such as this is that I hope it inspires women in our day to see the role women did play in the Bible and early church, and how that should encourage

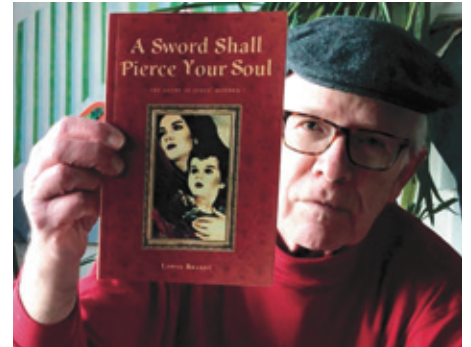


PHOTO COURTESY OF LORNE BRANDT

Lorne Brandt has authored a book on Mary, the mother of Jesus, entitled *A Sword Shall Pierce Your Soul*.

them for today."

The title—which refers to Simeon's words to Mary in Luke 2, when Jesus' parents dedicated him at the temple—relates to the plot, which has some Anabaptist theology worked into the outcome.

"The sword in the Bible often means the Word of God," he says. "The Word of God piercing your soul, that's where the Anabaptist part comes in. It's something that, in my imagination, haunted Mary through her life. When she saw Jesus on the cross, that would have pierced her soul too. [In the book] I have Jesus visiting his mother after the resurrection. What son would not visit his mother?"

As for future writing projects, Brandt says, "I have actually begun to work pretty far into a sequel, but just need to use more self-discipline and motivation to complete it!" ❧

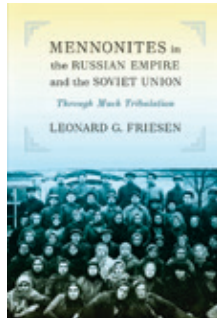
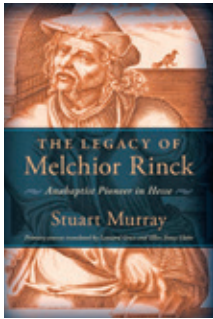
A Sword Shall Pierce Your Soul can be obtained through CommonWord.ca or FriesenPress. Brandt also looks forward to promoting his book at a "Borscht and Books" event at the Mennonite Heritage Museum in Abbotsford on May 18. To watch an interview with the author, visit bit.ly/417WVRJ.



FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

(Continued from page 25)

growing up in a Mennonite farm community in Oklahoma in the 1950s. She also considers the land itself and those who lived there long before her people came. This book is part of Cascadia's *Dreamseeker Memoir Series 2*.



The Legacy of Melchior Rinck: Anabaptist Pioneer in Hesse. Stuart Murray. Herald Press, 2022, 400 pages.

Melchior Rinck was a 16th-century Anabaptist who wanted to see reform in the church and society. This first full study of his life, ministry and legacy includes some previously untranslated writings. It is the most recent publication of the Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History series.

Mennonites in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union: Through Much Tribulation. Leonard G. Friesen. University of Toronto Press, 2022, 401 pages.

Friesen traces the history of Mennonites from the beginning through migrations to Poland and Prussia, and then two centuries of settlement in the Russian Empire and Soviet Union. He explores Mennonite self-understanding within the context of the larger world.

North Wind Man. Clarence Cachagee and Seth Ratzlaff. Gelassenheit Publications, 2023, 268 pages.

In this co-authored biography, Cachagee describes his life journey that includes foster care in a Mennonite family, struggles with addiction, broken relationships and then a reconnection with his Indigenous spiritual heritage. He is now executive director of Crow Shield Lodge, which focuses on land-based healing.

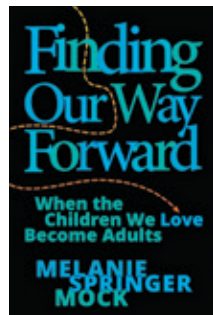
Other Books

Amish Voices, Volume 2: In Their Own Words, 1993-2020. Brad Igou, ed. Herald Press, 2023, 256 pages.

Family Life is an Amish magazine widely distributed to traditionalist groups in North America. This book gives a glimpse of Amish and Old Order Mennonite life, using excerpts from letters and articles published in *Family Life*.

Finding Our Way Forward: When the Children We Love Become Adults. Melanie Springer Mock. Herald Press, 2023, 208 pages.

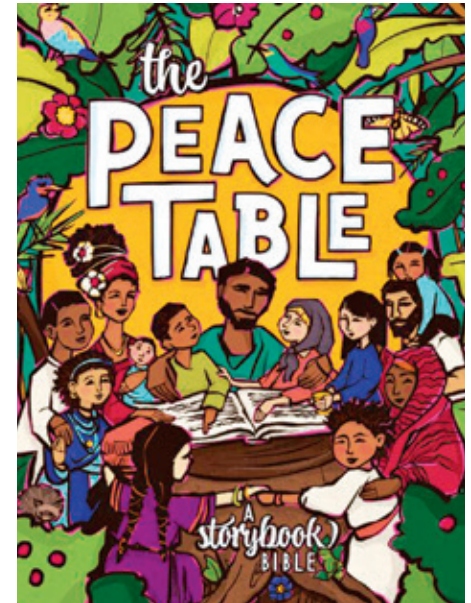
Writing partly from personal experiences, the author reflects on the challenges of parenting, especially as children become more independent and leave the nest. She offers advice for struggling parents and reflection questions at the end of each chapter.



Goods & Effects. Al Schnupp. Golden Antelope Press, 2021, 176 pages.

Al Schnupp, who was raised in a strict Mennonite community in Pennsylvania, explores what happens when someone needs to leave the "tribe." In the novel, Hannah examines her faith when her

church refuses to bury her husband's body in the cemetery.



The Peace Table: A Storybook Bible. Chrissie Muecke, Jasmin Pittman Morrell and Teresa Kim Pecinovskiy. Herald Press, 2023, 384 pages.

This storybook, designed for children aged 5 to 11, retells 140 stories from the Bible with lots of artwork. It includes prayer prompts, questions and action ideas to guide family reflection and conversation. Beginning in 2023, the *Shine* curriculum will use Bible stories from this book for elementary classes.



The Russian Daughter. Sarah Klassen. CMU Press, 2022, 265 pages.

Set in a Mennonite community in what is now Ukraine, this novel explores one family's challenges, including the relationship between Mennonites and Ukrainians, during the Russian

(Continued on page 27)

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

News brief

More than 500 study groups contributing to new Anabaptist Bible

The Anabaptism at 500 Project has exceeded its goal of 500 study groups contributing to the Anabaptist Community Bible from around the world.

Study groups from 16 countries and 58 Anabaptist-Mennonite denominations and church bodies registered. The reflections and questions they generate will appear as marginal notes in the new Bible. The project will reflect the thoughts of the Anabaptist community and provide a valuable resource for anyone interested in exploring the Anabaptist tradition.

Anabaptism at 500 is a project of MennoMedia, the publishing ministry of Mennonite Church U.S.A. and MC Canada.

To learn how individuals and congregations can be involved in Anabaptism at 500, visit AnabaptismAt500.com.

—MENNOMEDIA

(Continued from page 26)
 Revolution and the 1920s.

The Sweetest Dance on Earth: New and Selected Poems. Di Brandt. Turnstone Press, 2022, 240 pages.

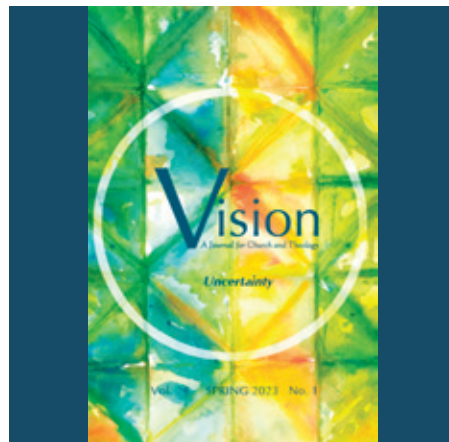
Di Brandt, now living in Winnipeg, has been writing poetry for many years and has received numerous awards. This collection includes both old and new poems, often from a feminist perspective and sometimes reflecting her Mennonite childhood on the Prairies.

Thriving Families: A Trauma-Informed Guidebook for the Foster and Adoptive Journey. Jenn Ranter Hook and Joshua Hook. Herald Press, 2023, 248 pages.

Written by a trauma therapist and a

clinical psychologist, this book provides practical advice for foster and adoptive parents. While it is challenging to parent through adoption and foster care, the authors say it is holy work that is close to the heart of God.

Resources



Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology. “Uncertainty,” Karl Koop, ed. Spring 2023.

The writers of this issue explore how we respond to uncertainty as a society and as individuals, and how we are affected by ecological and biblical uncertainty.

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

—COMPILED BY BARB DRAPER,
 BOOKS & RESOURCES EDITOR



Our finest writers



Return Stroke: essays & memoir
 Dora Dueck

“Surely one of Canada’s finest writers of both fiction and creative non-fiction.”
 —Magdalene Redekop

The Russian Daughter
 Sarah Klassen



“Everything is satisfying: the story itself, the beautifully managed pace & rhythm of the prose, the distinctive, memorable characters.”
 —Hildi Froese Tiessen

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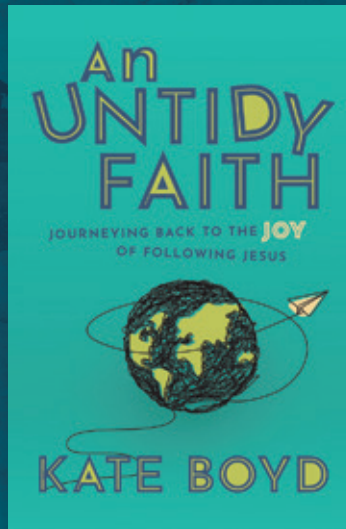
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FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

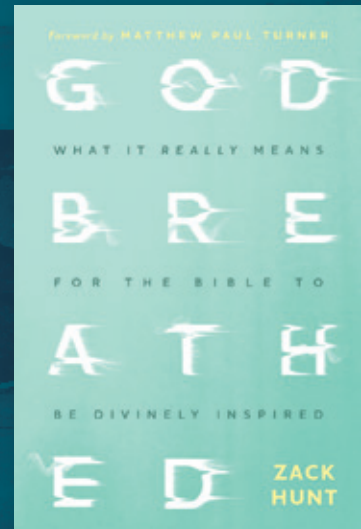
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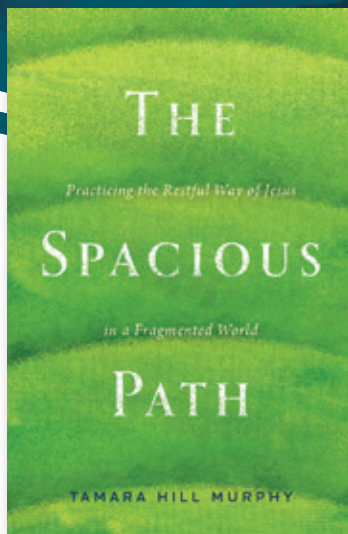
Stuck Together
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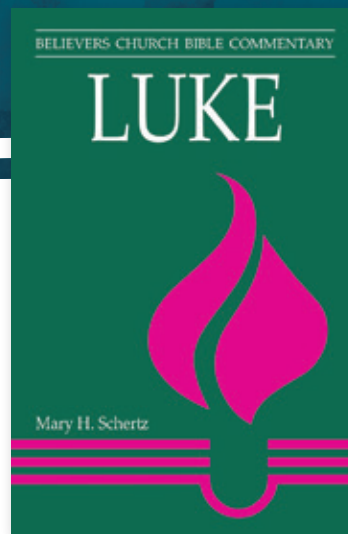
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Calendar

British Columbia

May 21: MC B.C. arts fundraiser for Indigenous relations, at Heritage Hall, Vancouver.

Alberta

June 10-11: Camp Valaqua hike-a-thon and garden party.

Manitoba

June 2-4: 21st annual Manitoba birding retreat, at Camp Arnes. For more information, visit www.campswithmeaning.org/birding-retreat.

July 14-15: The Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies and the University of Manitoba present "The Russlaender Mennonites: War dislocation and new beginnings"

centenary conference to mark the arrival of Russlaender from the Soviet Union to Canada.
July 15: "Singing our Journey: Sangerfest 2023," at the Manitoba Centennial Concert Hall. Sign up to sing in the mass choir celebrating the centenary of the Russlaender immigration to Canada. For more information, visit mhsc.ca/soj.

Ontario

April 28-29: MC Eastern Canada annual church gathering, at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, in English and French. Learn more at mcec.ca/events.

May 6: Menno Singers presents its "Spring Concert," at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, at 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit www.mennosingers.com.

May 5-7: Theatre of the Beat presents "I Love You and it

Hurts," three short plays on elder abuse, healthy masculinity, and intimate-partner violence, at the Kitchener Public Library; (5,6) at 7 p.m., and (6,7) at 2 p.m. For more information about tickets, email cedric@theatreofthebeat.ca.
May 6: "War in Ukraine: When peace cannot be won on the battlefield," a talk by Ernie Regher, cofounder and former executive director of Project Ploughshares, followed by a focused discussion, at Grace Mennonite Church, St. Catharines, at 2 p.m.
May 11: MC Eastern Canada presents "Becoming a restorative church: Embodying our safe church policy." A hybrid event, in English and French, at 50 Kent Avenue, Kitchener, and on Zoom, from 7 to 9 p.m. Learn more at mcec.ca/events.
June 3: MC Eastern Canada presents "Being a restorative church: Creating brave and accessible space." A hybrid event, at Shantz Mennonite Church, Baden, with French on Zoom, from 8:30 a.m. to noon. Learn more at mcec.ca/events.

June 4-7: "Tenth International Conference on Aging and Spirituality," at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. To learn more, visit <https://uwaterloo.ca/ageing-spirituality/>.
July 10: "The Place of Memory: Reflections on the Russlaender Centenary," at Knox Presbyterian Church, Waterloo; at 7:30 p.m. The program of music, singing, reading and reflection features the premiere of "The Place of Memory" composed by Leonard Enns and performed by the DaCapo Choir. For more information, visit uwaterloo.ca/grebel/place-of-memory.

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 visit, canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar.




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July 28	July 19
Aug. 11 <i>Digital Issue</i>	Aug. 2
Aug. 25	Aug. 16
Sept. 8 <i>Digital Issue</i>	Aug. 30
Sept. 22	Sept. 13
Oct. 6	Sept. 27
Oct. 20 <i>Focus on Education</i>	Oct. 11
Nov. 3	Oct. 25
Nov. 17 <i>Focus on Books & Resources</i>	Nov. 8
Dec. 1	Nov. 22
Dec. 15	Dec. 6
Dec. 29 <i>Digital Issue</i>	Dec. 20



The GSTM program at CMU afforded me such flexibility in pursuing my degree, both in terms of my course options and timeline, that it allowed me to carve out and pursue my desired area of study, all while having a job on the side. Rather than prescribing a degree with rigid requirements, it let me ask myself what I wanted out of my studies, and then helped me develop the tools to accomplish it.


- Andrew Klassen Brown, GSTM Graduate


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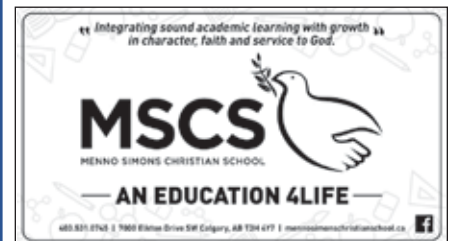
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Schools Directory featuring Canadian Mennonite University

Breaking barriers

CMU alumnus dives into disability theology

By Myles Tiessen
Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg

Daniel Rempel is smiling from ear to ear. He successfully defended his doctoral dissertation on the often-overlooked field of disability theology at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland just a few weeks ago.

Rempel graduated with a master of arts degree in theological studies from the Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) graduate school of theology and ministry (GSTM) in 2019. He carried that momentum with him through his three-and-a-half-year journey that he says “really set me up for success in the PhD program and beyond.”

Disability theology, as Rempel explains it, looks at “why, from a theological perspective, we should view people with disabilities as having inherent worth and value.”

Paul Doerksen, associate professor of theology and Anabaptist studies at CMU, teaches in the GSTM program and also serves on the L’Arche Winnipeg board with Rempel. Doerksen says, “It’s exciting to see this combination of first-rate academic work combined with direct involvement, in Daniel’s case.”

Doerksen says he’s increasingly turning to disability theology for the courses he delivers at CMU: “I think disability theology, taken seriously, presses the church to consider whether we are acting like the Body of Christ in our practices and attitudes. It has to be



Daniel Rempel

able to include people with disabilities if it’s to be fully Christian.”

“I’m very thankful for the people at CMU and for what I’ve learned there,” Rempel says, as he reflects on his studies at CMU’s Graduate School of Theology and Ministry.

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

See pages 22-28

