

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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EDITORIAL

Canadians need stake in new media merger

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Canadians have every right to ask questions about the merger of Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN), with offices in Waterloo, Ont., and Scottsdale, Pa., and Third Way Media, located in Harrisonburg, Va.

It is not that anyone is against the creation of a “dynamic, innovative, fully integrated multimedia” enterprise (the “spin” courtesy of an MPN/Third Way press release) combining the expertise and resources of an historic publishing arm of the binational Mennonite church with that of a U.S. based electronic media ministry.

Nor is anyone here opposed to both struggling organizations finding their legs in a fast-moving information age.

It is that bringing the two North American bodies together—one more than three times the size of the other (855 congregations in the U.S. to 230 in Canada)—brings to mind former prime minister Pierre Trudeau’s apt metaphor that living next to the U.S. feels like “sleeping with an elephant.”

The back story here is important and should be a part of the deliberations. It shouldn’t be forgotten that only eight years ago MPN had to be rescued from near-bankruptcy by a series of restructuring moves, several paid consultants and a “barn-raising” fundraising effort to pay off \$2.4 million worth of debenture

notes from individuals, congregations and denominational agencies.

And while Ron Rempel, the present executive director, his board and staff have given the new publishing entity financial stability in the last half-decade, it had a budget shortfall this year of \$149,000. Collateral assets are not strong, given an empty printing facility in Scottsdale with a dubious market value of less than \$200,000. And Rempel is retiring next summer.

Third Way Media, likewise, is not in a strong financial position. Supported almost entirely by \$500,000 in annual funding from Mennonite Mission Network, Elkhart, Ind., over recent years, it has now been cut back to \$194,000 per year for the next five years due to declining overall support for missions efforts in the U.S.

Historically, Third Way Media was a resource to congregations attempting to self-identify Anabaptist core beliefs at the community level and, more recently, produced television documentaries on the themes of peacemaking, forgiveness, mental health and now Christian-Muslim relations for the national U.S. TV, none of which provided self-sustaining income. The organization is under the direction of interim co-directors Sheri Hartzler and Lowell Hertzler, after Burton Buller, with Canadian roots, recently resigned.

Which is to say, this new merger brings



neither the strength of financial resources nor in-place leadership. The proposal on the table now calls for a new CEO to be named for the new organization located in Harrisonburg, which does have a valuable asset in the form of a building that has a sound studio and warehouse space valued at \$1 million.

At the more subjective level, it must be acknowledged by our U.S. counterpart, that old feelings don’t die easily. There are still echoes of resentment about what was then Mennonite Publishing House’s closing of the Kitchener, Ont., Provident bookstore in the late 1980s, in a move to economize by getting out of the bookstore business.

And with the denominational merger in 2002 of the General Conference (GC) and Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A. and the ensuing closing of the GC-sponsored Faith and Life Publishing in Newton, Kan., much of the Russian Mennonite interest in, and purchasing of, church curricula/books/DVDs from the newly-formed MPN diminished.

In light of these historical perspectives, MC Canada, through its Formation Council recommendation on the new merger, should ask for no less than significant input as to who is the new CEO for the new Harrisonburg entity, to insist that one of the staff be Canadian, to set up a structure where the intellectual resources (writers/media producers) of our Canadian Mennonite universities (Conrad Grebel, Waterloo, Ont.; Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Man., and Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C.) are intentionally tapped and used in the production of new media.

And the formation of a new governing board would be a good idea, rather than keeping the present MPN board in place.

Read “Canadians feeling ‘blindsided’ in media merger” as a related story in NEWS UPDATE, a category under “Browse” on Canadian Mennonite’s newly re-designed website at canadianmennonite.org.

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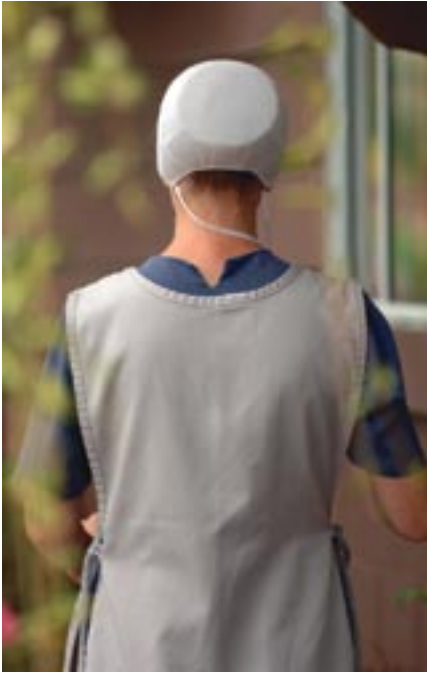
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[at canadianmennonite.org/blog/](http://canadianmennonite.org/blog/)

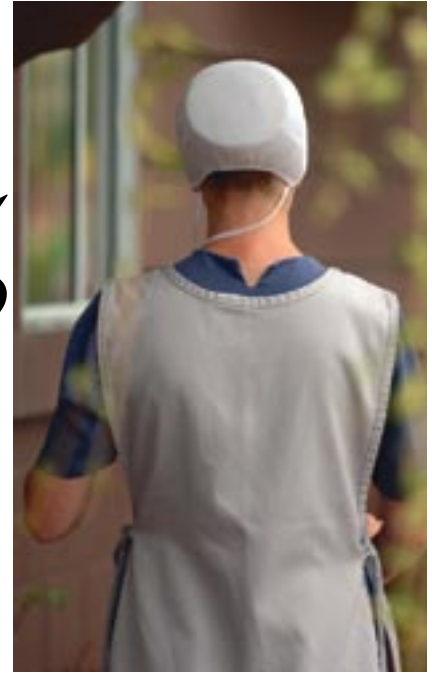
Leaf blowers: **PAUL LOEWEN**

Franklin, my dear . . . : **WILL LOEWEN**





Peeking under the bonnet



'As far as romance novels go, you're likely to get more sparks by rubbing two Amish quilts together': Anonymous blogger

BY BETH E. GRAYBILL

A few years ago, when conducting research for my Ph.D. on Amish women in business, I visited a gift shop and noticed a rack of romance novels with pictures of Amish women on the cover. I asked the Amish business owner, "Do you sell a lot of these?"

"Yes," she said. "The tourists like them."

"Do Amish buy them?" I inquired.

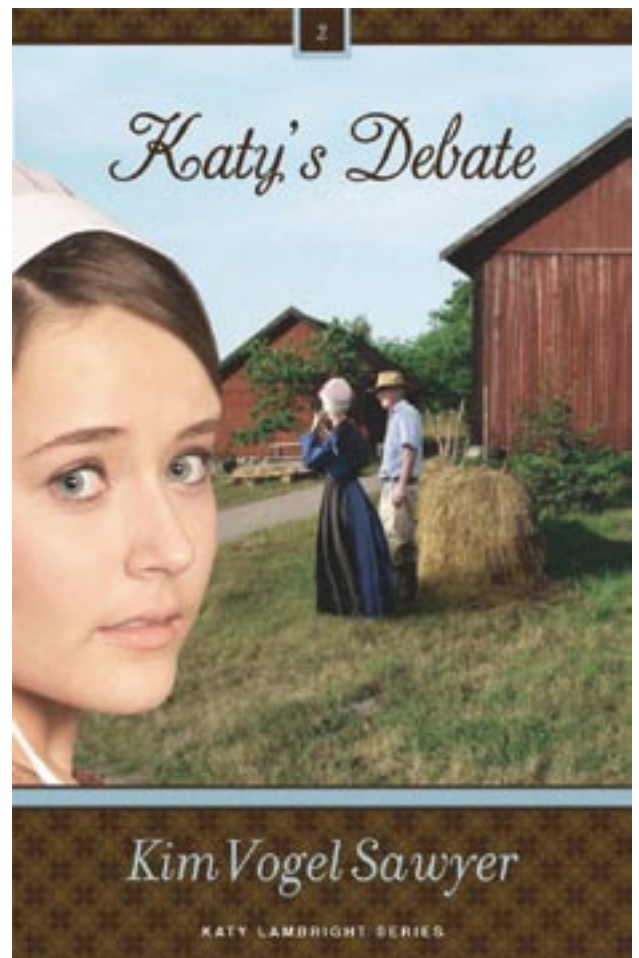
"Well," she said, "a lot of people read them."

Later, an Amish grandfather admitted to me, "We would have some of these books in our homes."

The genre is called "bonnet fiction," described by one blogger as "Harlequin meets *Little House on the Prairie*, except Christian. All sanitized so as not to possibly offend any 'weaker brethren' and/or the 'church lady.'"

A lot of people read bonnet fiction. Three bonnet-romance writers—Beverly Lewis, Wanda Brunstetter and Cindy Woodsmall—are *New York Times* best-selling authors. Ten of the top 25 Christian fiction books in 2009 were Amish romances, according to ChristianBooks.com, one of three major Christian book retailers.

And it is a rapidly growing sector. An April 27, 2009, *Time* magazine article noted that "romance fiction, of which Amish-themed novels command a growing share, generates nearly \$1.4





billion [US] in sales each year, and that number is rising." According to a July 2009 ABC/Associated Press (AP) news story, although net sales for Christian retailers were down almost 11 percent in 2008, Amish fiction is "the undisputed industry leader."

'My greatest desire is to craft a truly inspirational story that spurs readers on to further heights of victorious Christian living and ministry for the glory of God.'
(Author Beverly Lewis)



Who writes bonnet fiction?

Interestingly, the social location of most of the Amish romance writers is quite similar. While difficult to keep track of—since new writers join the genre each month—the authors are mainly white evangelical women of middle age, which is also the demographic for readers of Amish romance fiction. Most include some Christian credentials; some self-identify as a minister's daughter (Lewis), minister's wife (Brunstetter), or Sunday school teacher (Kim Vogel Sawyer). Others include a statement of Christian identity: "Gayle [Roper] is a convinced believer in Jesus as the Son of God and our Saviour."

Jerry Eicher, a male author of Amish romance fiction who grew up in the Amish faith, is an exception. A part-time writer who runs a construction business in Virginia, Eicher's website describes him as "an Amish insider." His books

include the "Adam's County Trilogy" (known as the "Rebecca" series), set in southwestern Ohio, and the "Hannah" series, set in northern Indiana and Montana.

The two writers of bonnet fiction who have been working in the genre the longest—and who have stayed almost entirely within it—genuinely view their writing as evangelistic outreach and include on their websites self-conscious statements about writing to strengthen Christian faith.

"My greatest desire is to craft a truly inspirational story that spurs readers on to further heights of victorious Christian living and ministry for the glory of God," writes Lewis.

Brunstetter—less well-known but almost as prolific as Lewis, with her "Daughters of Lancaster County" series, "Brides of Lancaster County" series, "Sisters of Holmes County" series, and two more recent Amish novels—writes:

“My goal is to help readers of my books know God on a more personal level, and to offer them encouragement and hope during difficult times.”

Odd Amish depictions

All Amish romance authors write out of, and to, a particular evangelical Christian subculture. This can lead to some odd depictions of Amish faith. Amish protagonists often agonize about finding God’s will for their lives. In many, Jesus comes to them personally through sign or vision. In Woodsmall’s *The Hope of Refuge*, when Cara is stranded during a late-night lightning storm and flood, she is saved by a vision of Jesus. In Lewis’s series, “Amish Country Crossroads,” Rachel surrenders her will at the cross of Jesus.

According to reporter Ann Rodgers, who studied Amish fiction for a 2009 story in the Pittsburgh, Pa., *Post Gazette*, the biggest criticism noted by her sources was that characters in these novels think and talk too much like standard evangelicals, whose understanding of God’s will tends to be individualistic, rather than communal.

Regardless, virtually all of these writers appeal to a level of authenticity to legitimize their depictions of Amish life, which may or may not be completely accurate.

Lewis’s book, *The Shunning*, which she says was based loosely on her grandmother, was widely criticized for its inaccurate depiction of shunning. Of her Plain heritage, Lewis says that her maternal grandmother, Ada Ranck Buckwalter, was raised “horse-and-buggy Mennonite, which is just a step away from Amish,” and that she “left her Old Order Mennonite upbringing to marry a Bible college student.”

Similarly, Brunstetter reports on her website, “Ever since I married my husband, who grew up in a Mennonite church in Pennsylvania, I have had an

interest in the Plain people. Four of my sister-in-laws [sic] are Mennonite, and I now have several Mennonite and Amish friends, as well.”

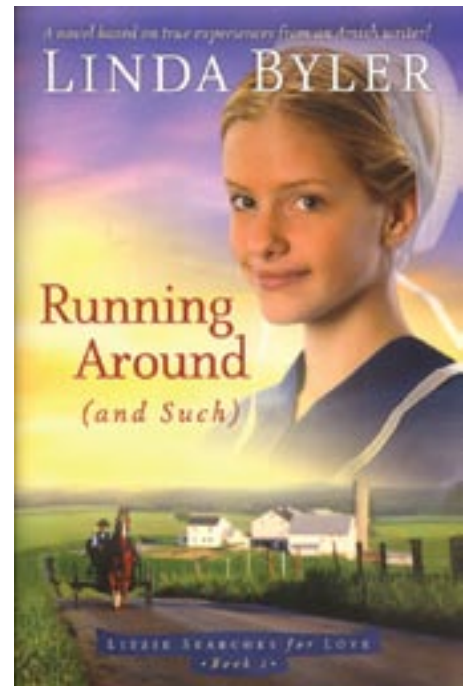
To be fair, many of these writers do try, in fact, to get their facts right in relation to the Amish characters they are depicting. Moreover, as Lewis once pointed out in conversation about the subplot of her series, “The Courtship of Nellie Fisher,” which includes the unlikely scenario of an Amish family giving their new baby to an infertile Amish couple, what could happen—and thus make a good story—is different from what has or has not actually happened in an Amish community.

Authenticity in the genre

Were we to look for genuine authenticity, however, we could turn to the works of Linda Byler of Franklin County, Pa., an Old Order Amish writer. An outspoken scribe for the weekly Amish newspaper, *Die Botschaft*, Byler turned to writing after the bankruptcy of her husband’s business. Facing huge debt, she put to use her most marketable skill, writing. “I couldn’t make the kind of money we needed cleaning houses,” she said. Byler decided to write about her growing-up years, “because I always liked the Laura Ingalls [Wilder] books.”

Her first book, *Lizzie*, was published in 2003. Byler has authored and self-published seven books in her “Buggy Spoke” series, loosely based on her childhood from age five to her early married life.

Byler still composes by hand, writing thoughts in pencil in composition books. Her prose is candid, humorous and true to her life as an Old Order Amish woman in more isolated Pennsylvania communities—although not without some internal censoring. She told a public gathering of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society that she writes “with an Amish bishop sitting on my shoulder” as her



guide, adding, “It’s a bit unhandy.”

Interestingly, Byler’s writing may challenge some of the stereotypical, better-behaved Amish heroines that populate the books of other Amish romance writers and that readers may have been conditioned to expect.

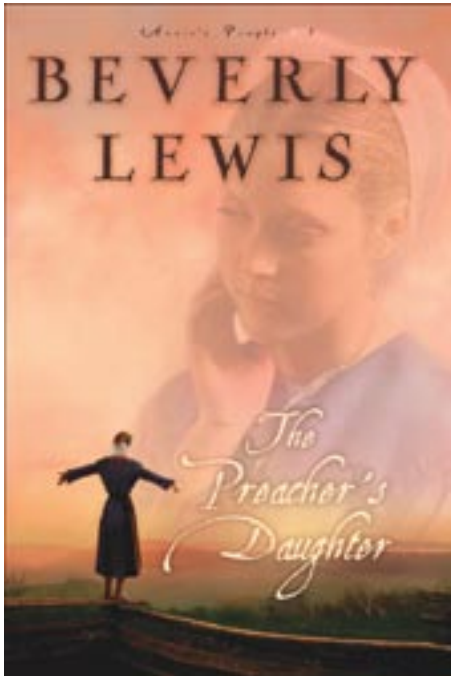
As one blogger wrote: “I finished [*Running Around (And Such)*] published by Good Books] last night. Thoroughly enjoyed a view of a very different Amish main character. Lizzie is 14 to 16 through this book and likes things in a most un-Amish way—food, going fast in the buggy, etc. She doesn’t like being overweight, most chores, babies, sewing and so on.”

Another blogger described Byler’s book as “fun and quirky. It does not portray the Amish as just pure goody-goody. Lizzie is young, hard-headed and totally different than most girls portrayed in Amish-based books. I look forward to reading what becomes of her.”

Standard bonnet fiction plotlines

That the actual character in an Amish memoir is seen as so different from standard portrayals of Amish protagonists suggests some of the stereotypic and exaggerated themes in much Amish romance fiction. Plotlines may include a preoccupation with personal salvation

Plotlines may include a preoccupation with personal salvation or heartfelt piety (often hidden) of the Amish heroine, which, if known, could create problems for her in the more staid Amish community.



Also in keeping with readers' expectations, farming is the main livelihood for the Amish in most books' peaceful rural settings, although that does not reflect current Amish reality in many of North America's biggest settlements.

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Action in many Amish romances revolves around four main themes, which, although they may occur in actual Amish life, are far less common than the novels would lead readers to believe:

• **OUTSIDERS BECOMING AMISH.**

This is an extremely rare phenomenon, according to researcher Stephen Scott of the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College, Pa. Serious impediments, such as learning the Pennsylvania German dialect and giving up technology, are glossed over in these stories by the outsider's love for an Amish protagonist or attraction to the bucolic rural life.

• **TRAGIC ACCIDENTS.** These can be buggy accidents (*A Merry Heart* by Brunstetter and *The Crossing* by Lewis), fires (*Forgiven* by Shelley Shepard Gray),

or accidental drowning (*The Parting* by Lewis), to name a few. Fathers, husbands and boyfriends often die tragically; their widows, fiancées or girlfriends are always young, beautiful and certain they can never find love again. Abandonment also occurs in these books, in which case the cheating spouse ultimately dies tragically, in order to sidestep the problem of divorce for the remaining spouse.

• **ADOPTION.** This often happens in secret and is revealed later in life. In Lewis's *The Shunning*, a baby is adopted and raised by an Amish couple; as an adult who leaves the community, she comes to understand why she "never felt Amish," and "always loved fancy things." In *Bishop's Daughter* and *Storekeeper's Daughter*, both by Brunstetter, a kidnapped Amish baby is inextricably drawn back to the Amish community as an adult and discovers his true roots.

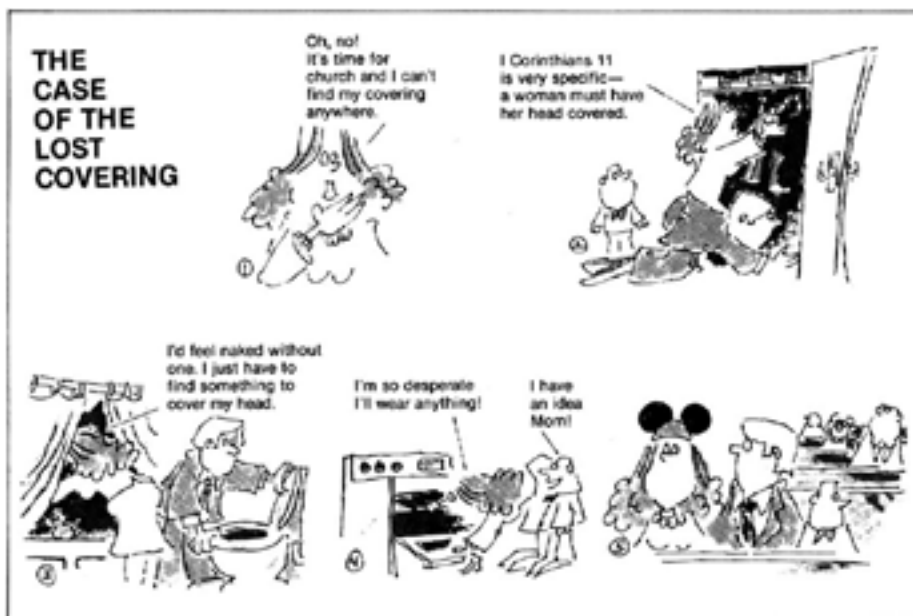
• **THE EXCESSES OF AMISH RUMSPRINGE**—the indiscretions during the Amish adolescent "running-around" period. In Lewis's "Abram's Daughters" series, not one but two characters have *rumspinges* in which they get pregnant by "English" boyfriends, hide their condition from everyone in the family, secretly give birth out of wedlock, and have the babies adopted by other Amish families. In Marta Perry's *Anna's Return*, the protagonist returns with a baby born out of wedlock during her *rumspinge*, which is almost unheard of among the Amish, since unwed parents usually marry.

These exaggerated plotlines lend dramatic tension to what are essentially G-rated romances, often marketed with the word "wholesome." Last year, an ABC news article compared bonnet fiction to Victorian novels, in that just a brief moment of holding hands can mean ecstasy or unleash a flood of inner turmoil.

One blogger described the genre this way: "As far as romance novels go, you're

or heartfelt piety (often hidden) of the Amish heroine, which, if known, could create problems for her in the more staid Amish community. But in some plots this actually leads to a softening of the stern bishop's heart.

In some books—Lewis's "Annie's People" series and Woodsmall's "Sisters of the Quilt" series, for example—this tension is resolved by having the main character be helped by, or marry, a conservative Mennonite, whose faith is portrayed as more evangelically minded



likely to get more sparks by rubbing two Amish quilts together. The novels feature chaste love, family values and biblical virtue with a decidedly Protestant mind frame. . . . These novels aren't working out a character's sexual identity, marital infidelities or teenage 'sexting' and binge drinking. I get that, I totally do; and if I can't live the agrarian life, reading about it is the next best thing."

Chasing the bonnet

To this subject of bonnet fiction I bring my own disciplinary bias. Trained as an American studies scholar and analyst of contemporary pop culture, I understand that this genre is important as a field of study because of its very popularity. The question I ask of bonnet fiction novels is not, "Are these great works of fiction?" Rather, I question, "Why are they popular and what can we learn from these works?"

The popularity of Amish romance

writing among women corresponds with the reader-response research described by Janet Radway in her book, *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature*. Radway conducted interviews in a midwestern town with readers of Harlequin romances. She found that these women read for escape, for education about places that are foreign to them, and for pleasure.

As in Radway's research, three out of four Christian fiction readers are women, according to research published in an

What's really under the bonnet?

New book introduces Amish spirituality and religious beliefs, while downplaying their outward cultural characteristics as 'incidental'

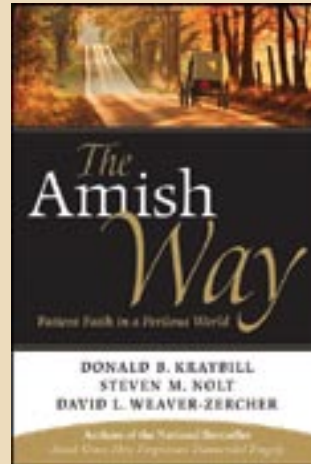
Goshen College Release
GOSHEN, IND.

On Oct. 2, 2006, the world was stunned by the killing of five Amish schoolgirls in a small schoolhouse in Nickel Mines, Pa. Within hours, the Amish community forgave the gunman and rallied around his family. It was an act of compassion and forgiveness so powerful, so unbelievable, and, for many, so questionable, that it led three authors who know the Amish well to write a book about the role of forgiveness in Amish culture: *Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy*.

Those three authors—Donald Kraybill, a senior fellow at the Young Center of Elizabethtown (Pa.) College; David Weaver-Zercher, professor of American religious history at Messiah College, Grantham, Pa.; and Goshen College history professor Steve Nolt—have released a new book, *The Amish Way: Patient Faith in a Perilous World*, from publisher Jossey-Bass. The first book ever about Amish spirituality and practice, it offers a rare inside look at how Amish Christian beliefs and practices inform every aspect of Amish daily life, and explains, for example, why they shun cars, have no electricity in their homes and stop formal education at Grade 8.

On some levels, the Amish and their countercultural ways offend the typical American's individualist sensibilities, but this window into Amish religious beliefs may challenge—and even change—some of those perceptions. After all, the tight-knit Amish community fosters a genuine sense of belonging. Each day, these people choose to live out their core values of submission, obedience and patience, and to adhere to strict community rules, according to the authors.

The Amish Way is the story of the Amish religious



experience, told through the Amish cultural lens by three scholars whom the Amish have come to trust as interpreters of their way of life. The authors explain how Amish faith is intertwined with community and commitment, child-rearing, home life, material possessions, the natural world, evil and sorrow.

Amish faith is engaging, mind-boggling at times and may prove problematic for some. But it may also serve as a challenge to people of faith, many of whom struggle daily to live out the tenets of their own faith in a world full of distractions. The book explores the complicated question: "Is there anything the Amish can teach the rest of us about living meaningfully in the modern world?"

In a review, *Publishers Weekly* writes, "Refreshingly, this study makes a point of focusing on the spiritual and theological aspects of their world, rather than simply cataloguing the outward cultural characteristics. Horse-drawn transportation and simple clothing do make their appearances, but they are revealed to be simply incidental to a deeply felt faith, rather than something to gawk at."

AP/ABC news article last year, and they read for many of the same reasons that Radway articulated. Bonnet fiction, according to the article, is “a surprise hit with evangelical women attracted by a simpler time, curiosity about cloistered communities, and admiration for the strong, traditional faith of the Amish.”

A recent blog, typical of many, articulates the appeal of bonnet fiction: “This is an easy read that goes really fast and is very educational about other cultures. It does not have a complicated plot, nor does it go on ad nauseum in regards to details, etc. It is relaxing and a very enjoyable book. Left me with a happy feeling.”

According to Barbara Scott, senior acquisitions editor for fiction at Abingdon Press, an imprint of the United Methodist Publishing House, “Romance in any form dominates sales, and since ‘bonnet fiction’ by its nature is a clean read, it remains quite popular in Christian markets.”

Finally, the question of what accounts for the premise and popularity of Amish fiction needs to take into account what I call “tourism of the imagination.” Last year, Woodsmall described the appeal of bonnet fiction to readers: “[The books] are rooted in faith, family and community.”

Amish romance writers capitalize on these positive values associated with the Amish and with readers’ desire to visit Amish country, at least virtually, if not in actual fact.

In a variety of ways, bonnet fiction writers seek to capitalize on Amish “tourism of the imagination” and on nostalgia for a simpler bygone way of life. Websites of Marta Perry and Lewis include Pennsylvania Dutch recipes, Woodsmall’s website hosts a quilt auction, and Suzanne Woods Fisher has a weekly radio program, *Amish Wisdom*.

In March, *Publisher’s Weekly* printed an article, “Christian fiction editors talk trends: Bonnets multiply; goodbye, chick lit.” In reference to Christian Booksellers of America (CBA), the largest Christian book retailer, an editor from Zondervan noted that “35 percent of the February CBA list was bonnet fiction [and] I don’t

see the market slowing down soon.”

Not if Christian authors like Beth Wiseman, Kathleen Fuller, Barbara Cameron and Amy Clipston have anything to do about it. Their joint AmishHearts.com website notes that between the four of them they will release

some 20 Amish romance novels within the next two years.

And Beth Wiseman is forthright on her website about her desire to continue chasing the bonnet’s pot of gold as well: “The success of the Amish sub-genre suggests that I will be writing them for a long time.” ❧

*‘These novels aren’t working out a character’s sexual identity, marital infidelities or teenage ‘sexting’ and binge drinking. I get that, I totally do; and if I can’t live the agrarian life, reading about it is the next best thing.’
(Anonymous blogger)*

Beth E. Graybill lives in Lancaster, Pa., and attends Community Mennonite Church there. She earned a Ph.D. in American studies from the University of Maryland in 2009. She was director of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society from 2005-10 and is the former chair of the historical committee of Mennonite Church U.S.A. Originally published in a longer form by the Center for Mennonite Writing (www.mennonitewriting.org); the centre is sponsored by the Goshen (Ind.) College English Department.



/// For discussion

1. How many bonnet fiction books are in your church library? Who enjoys this type of book? Do you agree with Beth Graybill that women read this type of fiction “for escape, for education about places that are foreign to them, and for pleasure”? How much Christian fiction should be in our church libraries?
2. Amish-based fiction seems to be a growing trend. What other types of fiction are fashionable now or have gone out of fashion? Why might bonnet fiction be more popular today than 20 years ago? If some women read Amish novels, what do other people choose for an easy read?
3. Graybill suggests that not all writers paint a realistic picture of the Amish way of life. Does it matter if the characters do not think or behave like typical Amish? How do you think the Amish view these books?
4. Some of the writers of bonnet fiction hope that they are fostering faith in their readers. How much influence do books have on our lives? Should we encourage each other to read only wholesome books? Is reading for escape a good use of time?

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

We welcome your comments and publish most letters sent by subscribers intended for publication. Respecting our theology of the priesthood of all believers and of the importance of the faith community discernment process, this section is a largely open forum for the sharing of views. Letters are the opinion of the writer only—publication does not mean endorsement by the magazine or the church. Letters should be brief and address issues rather than individuals.

Please send letters to be considered for publication to letters@canadianmennonite.org or by postal mail or fax, marked "Attn: Readers Write" (our address is on page 3). Letters should include the author's contact information and mailing address. Letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines.

✉ No comparison between Mennonite and Tamil refugees: Bartel, Ens, Neufeld

I READ YOUR "Let them stay" column by Edmund Pries, Sept. 20, page 14, comparing Mennonites and the Tamil arrival here in British Columbia this summer. Since I was one of those Mennonite refugees that arrived here in Canada in 1951, it hit a very sour note with me.

Let us be absolutely clear on the fact that these people arrived here with no previous permission to immigrate to Canada. Let us also note that there are thousands of people around the world who would love to come to Canada, but they wait and apply through regular channels.

I would also remind Pries that before we arrived here we spent one week in a camp in Gronau, Germany, to be examined mentally and physically, and to be questioned about our past history regarding our

FROM OUR LEADERS

Sharing with each other

WILLARD METZGER

In a world rich with Christian resources, the Anabaptist perspective offers a prophetic voice that is both refreshing and disturbing. It can challenge and it can affirm. It can create a platform for greater dialogue, but it can also serve to limit broader discussion if it is offered in isolation.

Denominational offices across Canada face the difficult task of providing resources that reflect their distinctives to congregations whose lives are becoming increasingly unaligned to denominational identities. They are challenged with marketing something of diminishing interest to a declining audience. This challenge may be even more difficult for Mennonites, whose historical identity is closely entwined with the Radical Reformation and the prophetic voices of our past.

So how do we provide the wider church with resources relevant for today's reality?

Anabaptist principles are incredibly relevant to a church world ready

to accept a more serious embrace of discipleship, especially as it relates to such themes as poverty and social justice. Lifestyles that are attainable for everyone and sustainable in a weary world are important ingredients of spiritual worship, and they have integrity. Young people today increasingly view the connection between the two as nonnegotiable for defining a faithful church.

To concentrate on only providing resources to ourselves is to overlook an opportunity to share what we have learned with others. As an integral part of the body of Christ, the voice of Anabaptists must faithfully and joyfully join the global conversation of faith and discipleship. Our task, then, is to be a resource to the broader family of faith.

Conversely, we must accept resources from outside the Mennonite world. The church is much larger than Anabaptism. Just as Anabaptists provide an important emphasis for the wider church family, so, too, do other denominations.



While it may be important to apply our Anabaptist grid to various theological perspectives and worship encounters, it is also important to allow the Spirit of God to challenge us through other prophetic voices.

If we preach only to ourselves, we miss out on the opportunity to be blessed by the gifts of others. As an integral part of the body of Christ, Anabaptists must enthusiastically receive from other parts of the body what God has prepared for us.

As a national church, it is a joyful privilege to offer our best to one another, confident in the good gifts provided to us by God for the strengthening of the church. Across Canada, we have all that we need to prosper and grow as a church that will be embraced by our children and grandchildren, our neighbours and co-workers. But in like manner, as a national church it is a joyful privilege to offer our best to the broader kingdom of God, confident in the good gifts that God has given us to share with others and in the good gifts that they have to share with us.

As of Nov. 1, Willard Metzger became Mennonite Church Canada's new general secretary.

parents' involvement in World War II. We then had to find sponsors here in Canada that guaranteed that we would not become a burden to the Canadian taxpayer. Canadian Pacific Railway provided transportation and we paid it back from our first pay cheque.

These Tamil people just arrived here with the docks lined with lawyers to argue their cause. Canadian

citizens were sent home from a Victoria hospital to make room in case some needed hospitalization upon arrival. It is estimated it will cost us taxpayers about \$100,000 per claimant to have them settle here or be sent home again.

Are they terrorists? Certainly their history of behaviour would indicate that there is a good likelihood they are.

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Buyer beware . . . especially at church

MIKE STRATHDEE

“Christians are particularly vulnerable to con artists,” a retired Ontario accountant says.

Sadly, Bruce Karcher's comment is more than just speculation. For the past five years, he has walked with scores of people who have lost tens of millions of dollars to smooth-talking salespeople. In almost every case, the victims were Christians, taken in by someone who claimed to be a believer, often touting a scheme that purported to have a “charitable” intent. This affinity fraud is often a result of “misplaced or blind trust,” Karcher says.

Victims take the advice of someone in their church who has dealt with the con artist, or see the con artist attending their congregation, and don't check to ensure the proposed “in-

vestment” is legitimate. The first person to become involved with the scheme becomes an unaware salesperson when his/her positive experience is held up to lure others in. A clever con artist ensures that the first person gets what was promised, and has a good experience—repaid with funds put in by subsequent investors.

Faith-based communities are in many cases less suspicious than secular society. Victims fail to verify whether their new adviser is properly registered and legitimate. A common thread in these scams

is a promise of worthwhile or charitable activity, to be funnelled through foundations that later are discovered to be unregistered or illicit. More sophisticated, leveraged schemes hold out the promise of giving donors a receipt or other benefit greater than the “donation” they have made.

“Churches aren't speaking out on this problem, often because many aren't even addressing the basics of financial stewardship,” Karcher says.

Even prominent Christians fall victim to scammers. Several leading members of the family that puts on the *100 Huntley Street* TV series had to step down from their jobs after convincing family mem-



Don't release personal financial information over the phone or e-mail to someone you don't know.

bers and friends to invest in a fraudulent investment. Ron Mainse, former host of the show, lost his investment and had to pay fines to the Ontario Securities Commission.

How do you avoid becoming the next victim? Here are a few tips:

- Don't release personal financial information over the phone or e-mail to someone you don't know.
- Don't send money—often called a processing or handling fee—to someone promising to give you a percentage of an

offshore investment, inheritance or lottery, or offering a new job.

- Don't believe anyone who promises a higher-than-average return on an investment that is described as being low- or no-risk. Greed can be costly.
- Don't be pressured into acting quickly.
- Don't think the courts will solve the problem. Police or government regulators usually can't make things right in fraud situations.
- Does the person trying to sell you the investment hold a recognized professional designation, such as a CFP or CLU? Is the accreditation still valid?
- Is the salesperson properly registered to sell stocks, mutual funds or insurance? There are regulatory bodies you can check with. Don't sign anything until you have checked it out.
- Is the salesperson associated with a reputable firm that has a compliance department?

Even if you have heard good things about a particular advisor or product,

you still need to do your own research. Get as much information as possible, preferably from sources other than the person who is trying to sell you the product.

Mike Strathdee is a stewardship consultant at the Kitchener, Ont., office of Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC). For stewardship education and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit MennoFoundation.ca.

Finally, Pries argues that somehow we are responsible for their predicament by choosing “good” or “terrorist.” Our generation is falling all over itself to apologize for the sins of our fathers, and I guess I will leave it to my grandchildren to carry on the tradition of taking blame for all the past wrongdoings.

FRED BARTEL, RICHMOND, B.C.

WHAT EDMUND PRIES neglects to mention is that our Mennonite ancestors who immigrated to Canada did not arrive illegally. The Mennonite arrivals of the 1920s and '40s had permission to enter Canada as refugees.

Most reasonable Canadians, including Mennonites, have no problem accepting legitimate refugees into

Canada. Canada admits thousands of them every year.

But when questionable refugees jump the queue and arrive illegally without permission, we should be concerned. The Tamils should follow the “normal process” for obtaining refugee status like everyone else.

All potential refugees should be treated equally.
ALF ENS, WATERLOO, ONT.

EDMUND PRIES SEEKS to draw a parallel between Tamil asylum-seekers and the experiences of Mennonites coming to Canada, but he overlooks one important fact: Russian Mennonites coming to Canada were processed by Canadian officials in Europe before leaving for Canada. They arrived here legally as landed immigrants, as did the “boat people”

FROM OUR LEADERS

Being the global church

BARRY LESSER

I was privileged to participate in the 2010 International Mennonite Pastors Coming Together (IMPACT) program this year in British Columbia. It proved to be a very valuable experience in learning and building relationships with other pastors from Asian countries. Four Mennonite Church British Columbia pastors hosted four international pastors from China, Macau and the Philippines.

North American planning and scheduling was put to the test before the two-week experience began. Due to difficulties in obtaining visas to come to Canada, the original roster of invited pastors needed to change. Our first lesson of IMPACT was learning to be patient, and also to be flexible, both qualities which we in our schedule- and productivity-oriented society find very difficult. Being patient allows us to take the time to build relationships and learn from one another.

My reflections on the experience of IMPACT focus on two personal lessons I learned:

- First, that our lifestyle in Canada isolates us from the daily realities that

our global church partners face. We are privileged to be able to travel around the country and to many places around the world with relative ease. Canadian Christians need to exercise understanding and grace towards the difficulties global partners experience just to come to our country.

As the privileged part of the global church, we have a responsibility to keep informing ourselves of the situation of



I learned that we need to ... tell our stories more personally and less factually.

the global church community, and this perspective needs to come from the global partners themselves. People from non-Canadian countries can help us to see the world from their point of view. Through inviting an assessment of our Canadian lifestyle and our ministry efforts, we can learn that what we intend with our good will may not be what is experienced by those who are the recipients of it.

- Second, I learned that we need to both give and receive words of

encouragement, and to tell our stories more personally and less factually. In the many conversations I had with my IMPACT partner, Mariano Apilado from the Philippines, I was invited to share my story of who I was as a person within the story of Mennonites in Canada. I could tell the factual Mennonite story, but I was challenged to be alive in the story.

That caused me to dig deep into my personal life story in a way that was different from the way I usually spoke of who we are as Mennonites. That pattern was to speak collectively, and I became lost in the collective “we” of our history. And yet the exchange of personal stories were the ones that inspired and encour-

aged my guest the most. The personal stories of some of my church members did the same.

We have begun a valuable relationship, personally and in our congregation, with a member of the global church beyond Canada. Now it is up to us to build that relationship, and to be inspired and excited by our global brothers and sisters to be the global church.

Barry Lesser is pastor of Yarrow United Mennonite Church, Chilliwack, B.C.

of the 1970s and '80s. The Tamils were not processed by Canadian immigration before leaving; they arrived here illegally, hoping to stay. They jumped the queue.

The Tamils paid thousands of dollars to get here. They had money or access to it, so we Canadians are assisting people with means. At the same time, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, our world has 8.4 million people in refugee camps and another 6.6 million people internally displaced in their

own countries due to conflict.

Mennonite Central Committee and Canada, in addition to assisting Tamils, should be accepting refugees (often women and children) from camps who don't have access to money to get here.

By all means, let's help refugees, preferably with informed compassion.

HENRY NEUFELD, DELTA, B.C.

FAMILY TIES

Life with a 'boomerang' child

MELISSA MILLER

Up until a few days ago, there were three different kinds of toothpaste in our bathroom, one belonging to each of the three people living in our home. My husband and I have long agreed on different brands; having two kinds seems to be better than complaining about each other's preferences. The third tube belonged to our son, who was back "at home" for a short time. The extra tube of toothpaste was a visual reminder of our altered household.

Like many young adults, our son returned to the family nest after experiencing the freedom and responsibility of living independently. As summer ended, he found himself to be temporarily homeless when his best efforts to find a suitable apartment were unsuccessful. He asked to live with us briefly, and we readily agreed. We love our son, and we want to provide for him.

At the same time, I was a little anxious about it. For starters, our basement was under renovation, so our son would need to use the guest room just beside our bedroom, making us all a little cozy. The same applied to the house's only bathroom. Would the cosiness become cramped? Would we get irritated with the unfamiliar closeness?

Furthermore, middle-aged people can get quite set in their ways; at least the two that live in my house are so inclined. How flexible could we be in accommodating our son's interests, friends and activities? He was used to living free from parental observation; how would he adjust to our presence in his daily life? What about his independence, such an important value in our culture? Does living at home delay



The kinds of things that make relationships work... were in ample supply.

or prevent him from fully becoming an adult? Are there psychological consequences for young adults still living at home?

What about the parent-child dance? Could we treat each other as relatively equal housemates, or would we fall back into family interactions more appropriate to other stages of life? Would I be unable to hold back from reminding my son to put on his coat when he went out? Would he feel the need to be oppositional or defensive, just to assert his independence? The Bible doesn't readily answer these questions, given the differences between family life thousands of years ago and family life in Canada today. Psalm 37's injunction, "do not fret"—repeated three

times—could be a starting point.

Other families find themselves in the same situation. Many adult children return home, and they and their parents ask the questions I asked. It's a phenomenon known as "boomeranging," as the children who appear to be launched return to their parental home, often for multiple times.

Our boomerang experience was a success. As planned, our son soon found an affordable apartment; six weeks after he moved in with us, he was gone. The time we'd had together was pleasant, with none of my worries coming true. The kinds of things that make relationships work—respectful communication, flexibility and clear expectations—were in

ample supply. Mutual affection and spontaneous play were the icing on the cake. Our cheerful temporary arrangement felt like an unexpected and delightful gift.

Of course, there was the empty space left behind when our son moved out. One woman says she feels like her womb makes an adjustment, stretching and contracting, each time her kids come and go. The easy solution to that: a soft and friendly kitten who took up residence just two days later. Not that he's a replacement for my son!

Melissa Miller (familyties@mts.net) lives in Winnipeg, Man., where she ponders family relationships as a pastor, counsellor and author.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Blanco—Adam Joseph (b. Aug. 26, 2010), to Roberto and Nadia Blanco, Hillcrest Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Bruins—Ayla Gabrielle (b. Sept. 13, 2010), to Greg and Nicole Bruins, Calgary First Mennonite, Alta.

Froese—Gabiella Sarah (b. Oct. 2, 2010), to Daniel and Sarah Froese, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Hand—Sophie Caroline (b. June 10, 2010), to Terrance and Emily Hand, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask.

Kiefer—Tamia Jade (Oct. 4, 2010), to Brent and Dixie Kiefer, North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask., in Provost, Alta.

Livingston—Simon Michael (b. Sept. 10, 2010), to Michael and Amy Livingston, Hillcrest Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Peters—Maya Justina D. (b. Sept. 23, 2010), to Curtis Peters and Valerie Dueck, Ottawa Mennonite, Ont.

Redekop—Emmett Kyler (b. May 26, 2010), to Thomas and Shauna Redekop, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Regier—Hanley Ian (b. Sept. 22, 2010), to Christopher and Lesley Regier, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask.

Reis—Cecilia Shantz (b. Aug. 28, 2010), to Marcos Reis and Julia Shantz, Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal, Que.

Baptisms

Scott Currie, Allison Imbenzi, Aaron Janzen, Tasha

Janzen, Ali Kathler, Ashley Redekop—Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., June 13, 2010.

Selena Bailey, Austin Bender, Beth Bender, Chad Bender, Elaina Bentz, Cedric Martin, Curtis Wagler, Devin Wagler, Jacob Wagler, Tess Cressman-Zehr—Hillcrest Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont., Sept. 19, 2010.

Marriages

Cressman/MacDonald—Caroline Cressman and Steven MacDonald, at Hanover Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 27, 2010.

Crowe/Martin—Donald Crowe and Jessica Martin, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., at Forestry Farm, Saskatoon, Sask., July 24, 2010.

Currie/Unraw—Mark Currie and Sherry Unraw, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., July 10, 2010.

Gibbons/Wagler—Michael K. Gibbons and Donia E. Wagler (Hillcrest Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.), at Hillcrest Mennonite, July 24, 2010.

Deaths

Bauman—Howard S., 90 (b. Sept. 29, 1919; d. Sept. 15, 2010), Preston Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.

Brown—Beverley, 80 (d. Sept. 26, 2010), Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont.

Derksen—John, 80 (b. Aug. 31, 1929; d. May 16, 2010), Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Dick—Agatha, 86 (b. Dec. 6, 1923; d. Sept. 5, 2010), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Dueck—Henry, 79 (b. May 1, 1931; d. Sept. 11, 2010), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Ens—Henry G., 85 (d. Sept. 10, 2010), Blumenort Mennonite, Gretna, Man.

Epp—Gerhard D., 86 (b. July 20, 1923; d. July 9, 2010), Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta.

Epp—John, 72 (b. Nov. 18, 1937; d. Sept. 5, 2010), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Franz—Helen (nee Rempel) (Wiens), 82 (b. April 16, 1928; d. June 26, 2010), Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Friesen—Benedicty (Doris) (nee Hamm), 76 (b. Aug. 14, 1934; d. Aug. 19, 2010), Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Klassen—Anna (nee Berg), 88 (b. March 31, 1922; d. Oct. 2, 2010), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Klassen—Paul, 76 (b. Feb. 22, 1934; d. May 15, 2010), Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Krause—Eldon, 84 (b. Oct. 1, 1925; d. July 21, 2010), Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Kroeker—Shirley, 72 (b. Oct. 3, 1937; d. Sept. 18, 2010), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Langfield—Audrey, 69 (b. July 11, 1941; d. Oct. 6, 2010), Cassel Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Letkemann—John, 83 (b. March 11, 1927; d. Aug. 25, 2010), Hague Mennonite, Sask.

Ramer—Mildred, 75 (b. Sept. 20, 1934; d. Sept. 5, 2010), Wideman Mennonite, Markham, Ont.

Redekop—Jacob, 79 (b. Oct. 29, 1930; d. Sept. 11, 2010), Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Rempel—Helen, 78 (b. Nov. 21, 1931; d. March 4, 2010), Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Roth—Elmer, 67 (b. April 21, 1943; d. Sept. 26, 2010), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Stefaniuk—Barbara Joan (nee Funk), 44 (b. Feb. 2, 1966; d. Sept. 23, 2010), Superb Mennonite, Kerrobert, Sask.

Warkentin—William P. (Bill), 70 (b. July 3, 1940; d. Sept. 24, 2010), Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask.

Wiens—Brenda, 54 (b. Aug. 25, 1956; d. Sept. 14, 2010), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Woelk—John, 82 (b. Feb. 19, 1928; d. Sept. 13, 2010), 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 include birth date and last name at birth if available.

VIEWPOINT

Kill the pain, not the person

BY RUTH ENNS

The euthanasia movement is strongly pushing its agenda. While Bill C-384 was defeated in April, keeping euthanasia illegal, public hearings on the matter are ongoing this fall in Quebec, and Philip Nitschke, an Australian physician, actively promotes suicide kits and physician-assisted suicide.

But does euthanasia live up to its billing of being compassionate or a right, and does it provide a person freedom of choice? Such a choice requires knowing what euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide are and what they are not.

Ian Dowbiggin, author of two books on the history of euthanasia, says physician-assisted suicide is closer to euthanasia than to suicide. The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition's Alex Schadenberg defines euthanasia as "directly and intentionally" shortening another person's life, "usually by medical means." Dr. Jose Pereira, head of palliative care at the University of Ottawa, explains that with physician-assisted suicide the fatal dose is self-administered, while in euthanasia someone else administers it.

Euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide:

- Are not about refusing medical treatment, a right the courts have already established. We don't need to legalize assisted death to create a right that already exists.
- Are not only about terminal illness. Bill

C-384 included anyone "experiencing severe physical or mental pain without any prospect of relief, or is suffering"

- Do not include dosages to alleviate pain, but unintentionally shorten a person's life.
- Do not include palliative sedation for those rare cases of intractable pain, in which the person could be sedated until death occurs from causes other than the sedation. However, this practice is contentious because it can easily slip from palliative care to euthanasia. Pereira says this may be happening in the Netherlands, where euthanasia is legal.
- Are not part of palliative care.

'Myths' abound

- **There are safeguards in place.** Actually, some disabled people face coercion to "die with dignity," rather than receive treatment for treatable conditions. The only safeguard providing some protection for the vulnerable is maintaining and enforcing current laws.
- **People should have a "choice."** Where power imbalances occur, as in all medical situations, the choices of the powerful trump those of the powerless. Dowbiggin reveals the euthanasia movement's inability to distinguish between voluntary and non-voluntary assisted death, which always leaves vulnerable people defenceless.

Also, although the will to live comes

and goes, it remains until the end in almost all people facing imminent death, provided they do not feel they are a burden to others, and issues such as symptom management and depression are addressed adequately. To ignore the feelings of disabled or dying people is to force a premature death on them, not give them the choice euthanasia proponents promise.

- **Free, informed consent is required.** But consent can easily be manufactured.

In the only physician-assisted suicide case in which Dr. Balfour Mount, the father of palliative care in Canada, has been asked to participate, a man's wife made the request on his behalf, claiming it was his wish. However, a private interview revealed that the man's real wish was not to die, but to not be a burden to his family.

Also, there is uneven access to palliative care across Canada. In Quebec, where support for euthanasia is more than twice as high as elsewhere in Canada, fewer than 20 percent of terminally ill people have access to palliative care. For disabled people, terminally ill or not, a consent safeguard offers little or no protection. Disability organizations are opposed to legalizing euthanasia.

- **People shouldn't have to put up with intractable pain.** But people want to live even in the most difficult circumstances, as Viktor Frankl found in his concentration camp experiences. It should be noted that accepting death is not the same as wanting death; the former is resignation to the inevitable, while the latter is suicidal.

- **Disability is worse than death.** Disability and frailty of themselves are not accurate indicators of end of life. If this were true, disabled people like British physicist Stephen Hawking would have died years ago. As one wheelchair user said, he doesn't need help to die; he does need help to live, though.

Jesus stood with "the least of these." Surely he would kill the pain, not the person. ❧

Actually, some disabled people face coercion to 'die with dignity,' rather than receive treatment for treatable conditions. The only safeguard providing some protection for the vulnerable is maintaining and enforcing current laws.

Ruth Enns is the author of A Voice Unheard: The Latimer Case and People With Disabilities.

THIS PREACHER HAS 22 MINUTES

Welcoming women to the pulpit

BY ALLAN RUDY-FROESE

As a teenager in the late 1970s in Saskatchewan, I could not help but notice that it was primarily men in the pulpit. It was assumed in my world that men preached while women could teach—but not preach.

Yet there were exceptions to this rule. For instance, I noticed that if she was a missionary she could preach. The woman from the mission field apparently had special status. She was no longer defined primarily as a woman—but rather as a missionary—and surely a missionary was welcome to bring a word from the Lord. Admittedly, if she arrived at our church with her husband, it was likely that he would preach and she would tell the children's story as well as comment while the inevitable slide show proceeded. But sometimes, to my wonder, she would share the pulpit with him, or get her own time in the pulpit.

Mennonite mission workers like Esther Patkau, now of Saskatoon, were preaching in Mennonite churches in Canada already in the '50s. In 1956-57, back for a year from her ministry in Japan, Patkau preached some 200 times. There were some adventures, as she says, but for the most part she was welcomed as a fellow preacher and was granted the pulpit.

She recalls one Sunday morning when the minister introduced her and then placed the microphone beside the pulpit, where she graciously proceeded with her sermon. In the evening service, though, she was invited to preach at the pulpit proper, not beside it. The minister had received many phone calls that afternoon from members of the church insisting that she have the same place afforded to

any preacher.

If the missionary woman could preach given her special status, there was provision for the local women of the church to preach as well—but language games would have to be played. Rather than calling it a “sermon,” when women would speak at Martensville Mennonite Church, my bulletin would read either “testimony,” “meditation” or “sharing.”

What I found interesting about those meditations was how sermon-like they were. For instance, Mrs. Fehr would read a biblical passage, an experience that reminded her of that passage, and finally would give some wise application for all of us to ponder. True, these testimonies were often shorter than the regular sermon, but they had all of the stuff of a sermon, and in their brevity and honest expression were often quite memorable.

As a teenager in the late 1970s, I also noticed another place where women were producing sermons—although under the official radar. My mother and her friends would gather regularly for “Ladies Aid” and other women's groups. They always had a devotional time, a hymn or two and a prayer. These women were preaching to each other in their own way, but because men were not present what was preached was not officially a sermon.

What I observed in Saskatchewan in the late '70s was going on all over North America and the U.K., and had been going on for decades.

The stories of women missionaries, women's testimonies and the devotional

moments in ladies church groups are hot topics these days for historians who write about preaching. The standard histories of preaching, and the (male) definitions of the sermon that went with it, are being expanded to include these various forms of women's speech. Of the dozens of good studies in this area, one place to start is Anna Carter Florence's *Preaching as Testimony*, 2007.



Also being unearthed these days in studies like Carter Florence's is the reality that there have been women preachers throughout history; they have just been under the radar, suppressed, or noted as exceptions to the rule. Catherine Mumford Booth of the Salvation Army and

Phoebe Palmer were active preachers and evangelists in the mid- to late-19th century. Jarena Lee, an African American woman, was an itinerant preacher for decades in the 18th and 19th centuries. And they are just the tip of the iceberg. As Carter Florence says, women preachers were “everywhere” in 19th-century America.

It has to be said with nuance, but there were women preachers everywhere in Saskatchewan in the 1970s. While not officially preachers, the mothers of the church were voicing their faith and speaking a good word in many places—with lasting effect.

There were officially recognized women preachers in my world as well, and from time to time I heard them preach. By the late 1970s, Patkau was serving as assistant pastor of First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, and Elsie Epp was serving as co-pastor of what would later become Wildwood Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

Thanks be to God for women who bring the Word and for the churches that recognize their voices. ❧

Allan Rudy-Froese is a student of preaching, theology and ethics at the Toronto School of Theology. He can be reached at allanrf@rogers.com.

See the new “Sermons” feature, a category under ‘Browse’ on our newly re-designed website at canadianmennonite.org.

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Introducing Willard Metzger

New MC Canada general secretary takes the reins formerly held by Robert J. Suderman

BY RACHEL BERGEN

National Correspondent

Most 10-year-old boys express their dreams of being astronauts, firefighters or police officers when they grow up. For Willard Metzger, the new general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, who took office on Nov. 1, national ministry was his calling, even as a young child. To that end, Metzger decided to dedicate his life to ministry in a national scope; his education, vocations, volunteer work and life all reflect this call.

Metzger grew up in the small town of Dorking, Ont., near Elmira, and attended the nearby Glen Allen Mennonite Church. It was here that his call to ministry was fostered.

"A lot of people have invested in me and my development to be a leader," he says.

MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA PHOTO



Willard Metzger assumed the role of Mennonite Church Canada general secretary on Nov. 1.

This investment ultimately led him to his current position at MC Canada.

As Metzger grew up, he admits that this call "sounded arrogant, so it must have been rooted in pride," and he tried in vain to silence it. The call became louder and louder, and Metzger became more and more restless until he began to pursue his education.

Metzger received a bachelor of theology degree from Emmanuel Bible College, Kitchener, Ont.; a bachelor of arts degree in sociology from the University of Waterloo, Ont.; a master of theological studies degree from Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo; and a doctor of ministry degree from Ashland Theological Seminary, Ohio.

Metzger was ordained and worked as a pastor for 18 years; however, this wasn't the best fit for him. "I felt somewhat dishonest [because] I felt a call to national ministry," he says.

However, his work as a pastor did give him a critical understanding of church life and leadership, which he believes will be very important to him in his new role at MC Canada.

After his pastoral ministry, Metzger went to World Vision Canada, to work

'Be ready to get engaged'

A chat with Willard Metzger

Willard Metzger began his post as Mennonite Church Canada's new general secretary on Nov. 1, taking over from the retiring Robert J. Suderman. Metzger has felt called to national ministry for many years, and brings many experiences to the table, including 18 years as a pastor, 10 years as chair of MC Canada Witness, and as the director of church relations for World Vision Canada. He spoke with Rachel Bergen, Canadian Mennonite's national correspondent, in October.

CM: *What are your views on MC Canada's past?*

Metzger: I remember as we were doing the amalgamation and integration into new entities, there was a lot of excitement as well as a sense of opportunity. A new page was beginning.

We have had financial strains that we have had to navigate through. That has taken some of the wind out of the

sails, but there has still been a great deal of excitement, enthusiasm and commitment to have a national church that is strong, vibrant and healthy.

I am looking forward to being able to add strength to that as well. I don't approach this post thinking that I'm stepping in to a church in trouble. I see that I'm stepping into a church that is strong, that has a lot of opportunity. From my perspective, I'll be adding on to an already good thing that's going on.

CM: *I understand you will continue to live in Ontario. What will you do to ease into this new position?*

Metzger: I want to get a good understanding of the staff in Winnipeg. I want to try and understand their vision and their hope for not only their role, but the church, and to see if we can do some dreaming together.

I also want to take time to understand our histories, both from the General Conference history and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada history. That makes us who we are and the culmination of the two is our new identity.

I've got lots of excitement! I'm eager to start having some input, but I want to also make sure that I listen well.

as its national church relations director, which gave him an in-depth look into churches other than the one he was raised in. "This gives me an incredible platform to understand the church across Canada across Christian expression," he says.

Metzger was the chair of MC Canada Witness for the past 10 years, and a member of the steering committee that realigned the General Conference of Mennonites and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada into MC Canada and the area churches in 2000.

"Being a part of the history of our

reshaping will serve me well," he says, adding that the decade of volunteer leadership experience has equipped him with a vision of the missional church character that MC Canada now possesses.

His call to national ministry that Metzger has experienced for the bulk of his life, he says he now answers "within the framework of responsibility. I am responsible to exercise the gifts that God has given me for the strengthening of the church. So I want to do my best, knowing even my best will be inadequate, as will any one singular gift set. . . . I try to approach it with realism."

Metzger will not be moving to Winnipeg, Man., where the MC Canada offices are located, due to the fact his adult son has Down syndrome and the family has established roots and a support system in their small town and church at Community Mennonite Fellowship, Drayton, Ont., which they desire to maintain. Despite this, Metzger feels confident that he can provide new and different strengths in his position in order to build on to an already strong national ministry organization. ✎

CM: *You have a great deal of pastoring and church relations experience. What leadership qualities do you possess that will help you in this position?*

Metzger: I think I'm going to bring an entrepreneurial spirit. This has been affirmed in my time at World Vision, and, looking ahead, MC Canada folks have been articulating this as well. My time at World Vision has given me a different kind of experience base that I wouldn't have if I had just come from a background of pastoring. I can't wait to see how [my leadership qualities] will apply in this perspective. I hope they will spark new approaches.

CM: *What are your goals for MC Canada?*

Metzger: The primary goal immediately is to see if we can become financially strong. We are a visionary people. My time in the general board and Witness council showed me that we want to be more and more visionary, but . . . you are only able to be as visionary as the finances you have.

I also want to strengthen that sense of call in our youth

and young adults [that] the church is worth investing your life in. I want to generate enthusiasm in being involved with the church. I would like to mainstream Anabaptism more. I really think that the Anabaptist principles have a real relevance now. There's an appetite for that in our Canadian culture.

CM: *What are your plans for the future of MC Canada?*

Metzger: Nothing yet, concretely. That will come after I have been able to consult well with our existing staff, to see what visions, hope and aspirations they have.

CM: *Is there anything else that you would like to share with the MC Canada constituency?*

Metzger: I am very much approaching this in a sense of joyful obedience. I want to call forth our gifts. God has given gifts across Canada and across the area churches. We have all the gifts we need to fulfill God's dream. I want to encourage people to call forth their gifts into action across the constituency: Be ready to get engaged!

When is enough, enough?

Relational Boundaries seminar challenges pastors and church workers

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
HAMILTON, ONT.

Pastors live in that space between burn-out and the jokes that suggest that their only work is to deliver a Sunday morning sermon. But in reality they and other church workers are human beings with all the needs of their church members and a call from God to serve God in the church.

Earlier this fall, 25 church workers and

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada staff gathered for a day-long seminar on maintaining boundaries. Ed Heide, a marriage and family therapist in private practice in Toronto, Ont., led the seminar. Interaction was brisk, as church workers shared stories, questions and incidents.

A key lesson for many was that leaders

need to be moving towards a place of inner security. Heide described this as a place where individuals are sure of themselves and open to others. This place was compared with those who are anxious (negative about self and open to others), ambivalent (negative about self and closed to others) or dismissive (sure of self and

closed to others). In order to be in such a secure place leaders need to first take care of their needs—physical self-care, finding personal relationships to support them, having emotional needs met, intellectual development, and spiritual growth—before trying to care for the needs of others.

The seminar was focused on church workers, but the development and maintenance of secure church workers is also the task of the church, both by reminding workers of their need for self-care, and by making it possible for that self-care to happen. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Sargent Avenue Mennonite installs new pastor

WINNIPEG, MAN.—Marla Langelotz was installed as the lead pastor of Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church on Sept. 26. She succeeds Edwin Epp, who retired at the end of June. Langelotz, who has been a part of the church since the day she was born, has served the congregation in a pastoral capacity since 1999. Henry Kliever, Mennonite Church Manitoba conference minister, officiated at the installation, assisted by church council chair Alfred Woelke. After Kliever's sermon, entitled "Lasting fruit-bearing," based on Psalm 1:1-3, the congregation responded with a litany of affirmation: "As you exercise your gifts of equipping God's people for ministry, we will also exercise our Spirit-given gifts. Together as servants, we commit our support that you might freely exercise the responsibilities entrusted to you." Many of Langelotz's friends and members of her extended family were on hand to show their support. Greetings were brought by representatives from Home Street Mennonite Church and First Mennonite Church, as well as from Riverton Fellowship Circle. After the installation, Langelotz led the congregation in a communion service.

—Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church Release



Hans Peters, left, of the St. Clair-O'Connor Chaplaincy, Toronto, Ont., chats with Brian Quan of Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church during a break at the recent Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Relational Boundaries seminar.

The seminar was focused on church workers, but the development and maintenance of secure church workers is also the task of the church, both by reminding workers of their need for self-care, and by making it possible for that self-care to happen.

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Canadian, Asian pastors consider 'church as a prophetic voice'

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

As strangers they exchanged names, handshakes and eventually gifts—and when their two weeks together were over, pastors from British Columbia and three Asian countries parted as brothers and sisters in Christ.

With a theme of “The church as a prophetic voice in the world today,” Mennonite Church B.C. hosted four Mennonite pastors from Asia from Sept. 23 to Oct. 7 through MC Canada’s International Mennonite Pastors Coming Together (IMPACT) program. This initiative, hosted by a different area church each year, is intended to build bridges of understanding across cultures through face-to-face relationships.

Through church visitation, get-acquainted sessions and local tours, the pastors familiarized themselves with Mennonite churches in B.C.’s Fraser Valley and forged friendships with their hosting pastors. Norman Naromal and Mariano C. Apilado came from the Philippines, Treasure Chow came from Macau and Shi Yin Fu came from China. A participant from Vietnam who planned to come was unable to attend.

Towards the end of the two weeks, the Asian and Canadian pastoral pairs shared about their experiences.

Apilado, who was teamed with Barry Lesser of Yarrow United Mennonite Church, said, “Last week Barry was a stranger when I arrived at his door. Now he is a friend.” Apilado drew laughter when he talked of some culture shock: “I learned that [in Canada] a BlackBerry is a cell phone, not a fruit!” And he expressed appreciation at having his 74th birthday recognized with a cake and candles by the Yarrow congregation.

Henry Krause, pastor of Langley Mennonite Fellowship, noted that the time together with Fu had taught him much. “I learned there are many faithful Christians



Norm Braun, left, pastor of Eben-Ezer Mennonite, and Norman Naromal, a Filipino pastor, hold personalized bags as mementoes of their participation in this year’s IMPACT program.

in China,” he said. Cross-cultural relationships and the meaning of words became clear to Krause as he related to his counterpart, who knew little English and communicated through a translator.

A simple gesture of an exchange of neck scarves symbolized the bond of friendship that had developed between another guest and host within a week. Naromal, who regularly wears a scarf with a Christian symbol to witness to his Muslim neighbours in the Philippines, continued that practice in B.C. As a parting gift, his host pastor, Ron Braun of Eben Ezer Mennonite, Abbotsford, presented him with a bright red “Canada” scarf to take home, and Naromal then spontaneously took off his own scarf to put around Braun’s neck.

Naromal’s visit to Canada marked the first time he had been out of his own country, but he said he quickly found that his hosts in B.C. made him feel very much at home. “You are a blessed group,” he said,

quipping, “I baptize you as ‘Menno-nice.’”

Getting a feel for Mennonites in B.C. was an important component of the international pastors’ visit. One day the group packed material aid goods at the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) warehouse and worked at Fraser Valley Gleaners, which dries food for feeding the hungry overseas. At one lunch together, the pastors learned about MCC B.C.’s Aboriginal Neighbours program from coordinator Darryl Klassen.

They also spent several sessions studying and reflecting together on the theme of the church as a prophetic voice.

Chow, who co-pastors the Mennonite church in Macau with her husband, spent her time with April Yamasaki, pastor of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford. She found her hosts most gracious as she visited a number of home care groups and individuals within the congregation. Chow said she will especially remember the “kindness of the people” during her stay in Canada. “God taught me I need to trust in him and trust in my brothers and sisters,” she said.

Visiting the area’s sites of interest was also part of the B.C. experience. The group toured Chinatown in Vancouver, home to a large Asian population, as well as Vancouver’s historic Gastown area and the Lynn Valley suspension bridge. They also visited Westminster Abbey, a Benedictine Catholic seminary and chapel in Mission.

Concluding their time together, the pastors attended the annual MC B.C. pastor-spouse retreat at Camp Squeah. Speaker Hippolyto Tshimanga of MC Canada continued the theme by talking about “lament” in prophecy, which takes many forms: speaking, action, facility with words, protest. “How do we properly lament?” he asked. “We are supposed to continue the prophetic voice of Jesus. Are we offering any alternative out there any more?” ❧

Zoar congregation, Waldheim, turns 100

BY KARIN FEHDERAU
Saskatchewan Correspondent

Former members from Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia and numerous locations in Saskatchewan, came to the July 2 and 3 festivities that commemorated the 100th anniversary of Zoar Mennonite Church, Waldheim, Sask.

The first formal event was a music concert on July 2. Of special note at this concert was the reunion of a male quartet that last sang together 45 years ago. A specially commissioned composition by Audrey Falk Janzen, entitled "Foundation," was also performed during the concert, which included a mass choir.

A quilted wall hanging featuring the past and present Zoar church buildings became an item of much conversation. It hangs in the foyer of the church.

According to local historian Ed Schmidt, the church had its beginnings thanks in large part to the concerted effort of three travelling ministers from the U.S. who came to the region to encourage and gather together the new Mennonite settlers from Mountain Lake, Minn., and Kansas.

"H.R. Voth was given the mandate to organize the churches," explained Schmidt.

Several groups began worshipping together in various venues even though the settlers came from 10 different Mennonite groups from the U.S. One group began meeting in a new school in the Waldheim area in 1910. A second congregation, organized by J.C. Peters, and made up of Mennonite farmers homesteading south and west of the Waldheim area, met in Schmidtsburg. Eventually, part of the Schmidtsburg congregation joined with the Waldheim group. By December 1912, the congregation, now numbering 58 members, had built a new church.

Acknowledgement of the church's history was seen during the celebrations with a large photo display and a church history PowerPoint presentation.

Former pastors Jerry Klassen and Barry Lesser presented brief messages. ❧

PHOTO BY BILL GINTHER



Former Zoar Mennonite Church pastors Delmar Epp, Barry Lesser and Gerald Klassen returned to Waldheim, Sask., for the church's centennial celebrations in July.

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GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Grassroots movement plants seeds for peace in Saskatchewan

BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada Release

A grassroots response to Mennonite Church Canada's Peace in the Public Square campaign is rolling through the streets of Saskatoon, Sask.

On Sept. 6, five posters adorning the outside of city buses made their debut carrying different messages promoting peace and nonviolence. Messages like "the way things are is not the way things have to be," "reuse love, reduce violence, recycle kindness," and "imagine life without war," were originally scheduled to circulate from Sept. 6 to Oct. 31, but an error on one of the signs prompted Rowlco, the transit company, to make corrections and extend the service until Nov. 30.

Seven Mennonite churches in Saskatoon and the surrounding area—Breath of Life, Mount Royal, Nutana Park, Osler, Pleasant Point, Wildwood and First Mennonite—combined resources to support the campaign.

Stephanie Epp, chair of the ad hoc peace and justice committee that rallied congregations for their support, says the committee simply responded to MC Canada's challenge to give peace a public presence by having each congregation across the country commit to one act of peace each year for the next four years.

"We were on it right away," Epp says. "We've been in conversation over the past

year, figuring out a timeframe and asking how we get churches involved. How do we prepare them?"

Epp had been invited to join the committee just over a year ago, after returning from a Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation to Palestine. Other committee members include Gordon Allaby, pastor of Osler Mennonite Church and a vital force behind the national church initiative; Berny Wiens of Herschel Mennonite; and Melody Neufeld of Breath of Life Mennonite, Saskatoon.

At the MC Saskatchewan annual meeting in February, the ad hoc committee facilitated a roundtable discussion about



Stephanie Epp, chair of an ad hoc committee of seven Saskatoon, Sask., area churches created to promote peace in the public square, stands beside a 'peace bus' in Saskatoon.

how churches could work together to share messages of peace publicly, and compiled a list of delegate suggestions. “We had almost three pages of single-spaced suggestions that we sent out to churches,” Epps says.

Although the committee Epp chairs falls loosely under the banner of MC Saskatchewan, moderator Renata Klassen points out that committee members were not elected to their positions and they had no budget to work with. It was their passion for peace that drove the project, inspiring others to draw in support from their respective congregations. “I have to say that without the support and encouragement

and pushing of the ad hoc committee, the campaign probably wouldn’t have happened,” Klassen says. “We needed that catalyst.”

Will bus signs make a difference, though?

“I’ve heard people say that signs have never changed anyone’s mind,” Klassen muses. “But if advertising doesn’t make any difference, why do companies spend a large fortune on it?”

The bus signs are there to plant seeds, and, like seeds, they are simply a beginning.

“It can’t stop with this,” Epp says. “We have to be doing things to make us credible to say this.” ❧

More prisons won’t improve public safety: MCC

BY GLADYS TERICHOW

Mennonite Central Committee Release
WINNIPEG, MAN.

Spending billions of dollars on more prisons in Canada won’t create safer communities, says a spokesperson for Mennonite Central Committee. According to James Loewen, coordinator of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) restorative justice programs in Canada, “Spending more money on bricks and mortar will not create safer communities. It is people supporting people that reduce crime; it is not bricks and mortar.”

As part of the federal government’s criminal justice strategy, Canada’s prison population is expected to increase and spark a wave of new prison construction. Although the true financial cost of the initiative is still being debated, the cost of new construction, expanding existing prisons and staffing will be in the billions of dollars.

Studies have consistently shown that the relevancy of prisons as a response to all crime in Canada is very small, says Loewen, who urges the government to re-direct its spending on “new priorities” that increase public safety through reducing the circumstances which give rise to criminal behaviour. “Let’s spend the money on what works,” he says, adding that Canada’s

justice system focuses almost entirely on those who harm others—the offenders.

“We need to respond to victims of crime,” he says. “You will be hard pressed to find anyone in our communities who have experienced a meaningful response to their victimization, and some of these become offenders themselves.”

Public safety, he says, can be increased through investing money and resources in community-based programs that support victims of crime, hold offenders accountable for the crimes they have committed, and help prisoners and ex-prisoners reintegrate into the community.

Loewen says that more resources are needed to respond to the needs of children and youths who have witnessed or experienced family violence. He would like to see more support for community drop-in centres, stay-in-school initiatives and programs for parents.

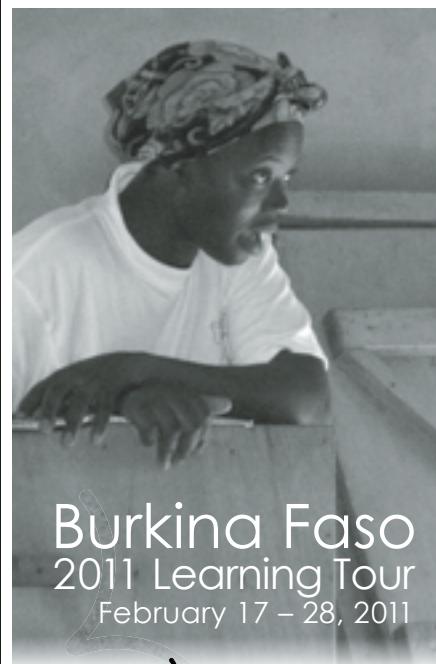
The average cost of maintaining a female offender in a federal prison is \$348,810 a year, while a male inmate in a maximum security prison costs \$223,687. There are currently almost 14,000 federal prisoners serving sentences of two years or more in 57 federal penitentiaries.

Loewen says these costs can be drastically reduced, and public safety significantly increased, if the focus of Canada’s legal and justice systems was on restorative justice, instead of punishment. Restorative justice puts the emphasis on the wrong done to a person, as well as on the wrong done to the community, while victims are given an active role in the dispute mechanism and offenders are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions.

MCC in Canada supports a range of restorative justice initiatives, including prisoner visitation programs; Victim’s Voice, which provides support and resources to crime victims; and Circles of Support and Accountability, which work with sex offenders released into the community after serving their time.

These programs work, says Loewen, citing a study by Correctional Service Canada that shows that the accountability circles model has resulted in:

- An 83 percent reduction in sexual recidivism; and
- A 73 percent reduction in all types of violent recidivism. ❧



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GOD AT WORK IN US

Soli deo gloria

Recipient of inaugural CMU Blazer Distinguished Community Service Award gives the glory to God alone

Canadian Mennonite University Release
WINNIPEG, MAN.

Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) presented its inaugural Blazer Distinguished Community Service Award on Sept. 25, naming Altona, Man., citizen Ted Friesen as the first recipient.

The award recognizes distinguished achievement and service within the broader community or church, through business, leadership, artistic, political or volunteer contributions.

Retired businessman Ted E. Friesen, together with his two brothers, further developed D.W. Friesen & Sons (now Friesens Corporation) into a major business, fully employee-owned and serving the community in significant ways. Throughout his career, Friesen has been an active participant in Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), the Canadian Conference of Mennonites and southern Manitoba's Eden Mental Health organization. He also served as the secretary and president of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada for 28 years (1968-96); it was during this period that the three-volume "Mennonites in Canada" series was published. A lifelong resident of Altona, Friesen is a founding member of Altona Mennonite Church.

"Over the 35 years that Ted and his two brothers, Dave and Ray, led the business, they grew it into one of the premier, most technologically sophisticated printing companies in North America," said CMU president Gerald Gerbrandt at the presentation ceremony held in conjunction with this year's homecoming events. "Ted, like

his father and brothers, believed that a business should serve its community, and Friesens has modelled that commitment."

Friesens Corporation, Altona's largest employer, has grown into a company of international status, and prints for such organizations as *National Geographic* and major American universities.

Gerbrandt noted that, besides being an outstanding businessman, Friesen is a committed congregant and an involved community citizen. "Ted grew up in the Altona Bergthaler [Mennonite] Church, and remained active there for many years," he said. "Later, he became a founding member of Altona Mennonite, where he and Linie [his wife] remain active. As a young man, he became involved with the Board of Christian Service of the Canadian Conference," Gerbrandt continued. "And in 1964 he was on the first executive of MCC Canada, helping to establish MCC's office in Ottawa in 1970."

His involvement with MCC developed his conviction that Mennonites in Canada needed their history told, said Gerbrandt, which led to the establishment of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada in 1968.

"I am very grateful for the honour bestowed on me on this occasion by CMU," said Friesen in accepting the award. "That feeling is also accompanied by a sense of



Ted E. Friesen holds the inaugural Blazer Distinguished Community Service Award presented to him by Canadian Mennonite University president Gerald Gerbrandt on Sept. 25. Looking on is Friesen's wife, Linie.

humility when I remember colleagues and co-workers in the various organizations that I have been associated with in the past who would be as worthy, if not more worthy, for achievements in the area of our mutual work. So, as a survivor, I also accept this award remembering their contributions."

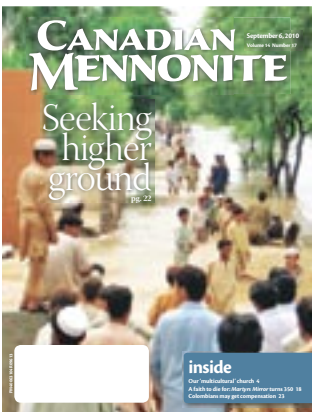
"I worked in two communities," Friesen commented, "the local one, which is the Altona community, and the community of Canada, on the board level of Mennonite Central Committee and the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada and other organizations. When I look at all of these today, I am amazed at how they have grown from humble beginnings and have reached a position that is making a significant impact today . . . both in the Mennonite and in the larger community. I rejoice that past efforts have been blessed beyond all expectations."

Friesen concluded with these words: "I want to give tribute to my good wife Linie and my family, who have been very, very supportive all the way. And, in closing, I simply want to say with J.S. Bach, 'Soli deo gloria—to God be the glory.'" ❧

*'Ted, like his father and brothers, believed that a business should serve its community, and Friesens has modelled that commitment.'
(CMU president Gerald Gerbrandt)*

PHOTO COURTESY OF CMU

It takes a village, and a good publication, to keep a denomination together



Maurice Martin (MCEC representative) chats with (from left) Ernie Regehr, Peter Pauls, Nancy Regehr at Rockway Mennonite Church's 50th anniversary Oct. 2-3. –Photo by Lewis Brubacher

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FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

Confessions of an editor trying to live more with less

30th-anniversary edition of Living More With Less forsakes celebrity endorsements for messages from the working poor

BY VALERIE WEAVER-ZERCHER

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

Editing a book about living simply has a way of throwing one's own hypocrisy into stark relief. When I began work on the 30th-anniversary edition of *Living More With Less* for Herald Press, I knew that I'd have to face the many ways that I failed to make choices that were mindful of global poverty and climate change.

What I didn't expect was the sense I suddenly had that author Doris Janzen Longacre and the contributors to *Living More With Less* were peering around the shelves at Target, watching me finger those plush crimson towels I really didn't need, and glowering at me at the grocery store when I furtively bought apples from Chile or packets of instant oatmeal shot through with sugar.

But you can only read so many submissions from hundreds of folks committed to living simply before you have to acknowledge the yawning rift between your own ideals and practice. As Brian McLaren writes in the afterword of the new edition, "There's always another light to be turned off, another degree of heating or cooling to be sacrificed, another dessert or drive to be foregone."

For although I had already tried to mould my household in more-with-less directions, I was increasingly perplexed by the countless changes we hadn't yet made. The more-with-less crowd felt like some elite club of what Leonard Dow calls, in his chapter in the new edition, "radical rock stars": people of privilege who choose to live with



less — and then get a lot of attention for doing so.

When green equals cool

And Dow is right. In an era in which sustainability has become trendy, both for economic and environ-

mental reasons, people who choose to live with less may become, unwittingly, the centre of attention. No one needs to be told how cool it is to be green these days, and Lauren Weber, author of the new book, *In Cheap We Trust*, adds that, thanks to a tanking economy, "cheap is the new green."

So while they might not have known it, the contributors to the 1980 volume of *Living More With Less* were at the forefront of a shift in culture. Many of them were convinced of something a few decades before most people in Canada and the U.S.: that we can't burn through resources, money, forests and fuel without consequences. In fact, one of the funnier aspects of this convergence occurs when celebrities like Cindy Crawford and Ted Danson start sounding like 1970s Mennonites. "We are meant to be stewards of this time that we're

here," Danson told a reporter recently.

As an antidote to a fashionable version of *Living More With Less*, Dow suggests we listen to the stories of the working poor who have been making do with less for a long time, instead of only to the stories of the privileged who choose less. While celebrity endorsements of ecological responsibility can be a good thing, listening to the poor is something that the fashionably green frugality has yet to learn.

Always raising the bar

But whether I focused on the stories of the poor who make do with less, or the privileged who choose less, it still felt like a club to which I couldn't belong unless I gave up a lot more privilege, a lot more stuff, and maybe even my dreams of doing more with my days than hanging up laundry and freezing corn. I wondered whether I had it in me to go any farther towards the always-rising bar of green, frugal living. And I wondered, as a woman with vocational aspirations other than household management, which is where the nitty-gritty decisions about thrift and creation care are often made, whether I even wanted to.

The "great cloud of witnesses" created by Longacre and the contributors to her books started to feel a tad suffocating. I went through enough self-reflection to merit a trophy from a therapist, and at times considered writing off the whole book as a slightly addled exercise in unhealthy asceticism.

But here's the thing: Somewhere along the way, as stories and tips for the book continued streaming in, I began to realize that inconsistency isn't the same thing as hypocrisy, and that sometimes God's

While celebrity endorsements of ecological responsibility can be a good thing, listening to the poor is something that the fashionably green frugality has yet to learn.

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

Would Doris use Facebook?

BY JOHN LONGHURST

Herald Press Release

If she were alive today, would Doris Janzen Longacre, author of the *More-With-Less Cookbook* and *Living More With Less*, have a Facebook account?

That's the question being asked by a new Facebook group created in advance of the Nov. 1 release of *Living More With Less: 30th Anniversary Edition*.

"As I've been putting together this page for the new edition of *Living More With Less*, I can't help but wonder what Doris would think of Facebook," writes the group's creator, Paul Boers, of Longacre, who died in 1979.

"Access to Facebook is a privilege of the developed

world," Boers says. "It's no coincidence that over 60 percent of Facebook users live in North America and Europe." On the other hand, he notes, "Facebook is one way that people can keep in touch with faraway friends and relatives without travelling or racking up phone bills." It also "gives users a platform to band together to work for social causes," he adds.

"At a time when 'green' is trendy, how do we keep it tethered to an authentic concern for the poor and for the planet?" Boers asks. "Has Doris's vision been realized or co-opted? How do we avoid oversimplifying the complicated economic and ecological realities facing all of us? And how can we pursue more-with-less ideals without settling into self-castigation, smugness or doomsday sermonizing?"

The Living More With Less Facebook page was created with support from Mennonite Publishing Network.

grace appears just when you need it. Somewhere along the way, the dour judgmental expressions that my imagination had placed on the faces of Longacre and her peers changed to looks of encouragement, understanding and compassion. Somewhere along the way, I began to feel energized by their ideas and grateful for their witness. And I began to take a few more teeny steps towards the kind of more-with-less living to which they were calling me—not out of guilt or peer pressure, but out of desire.

Testimony meeting

I'm not sure how this happened, but I'm grateful that it did. I think it had something to do with the spirit in which the contributors wrote their entries. They offer their stories—of biking to the grocery store, celebrating Christmas without gifts, using fireless cookers and starting a church garden—not to shame me or pressure me, but to share the joy that such actions have brought them. They want to tell me about the first word in the phrase "more with less," not just the second.

And eventually I realized that their testimonies are just that. *Living More With Less* is a kind of testimony meeting, Longacre wrote in her introduction to the 1980 edition, and she reminded her readers what a testimony meeting actually does: "Such a meeting does not report how God always

acts or how people always respond," she wrote. "It never assumes common experience—otherwise there would be no point at all in holding it. A testimony meeting expects that God gives unique skills and experiences to people and communities, and that sharing stories will strengthen everyone who hears. A testimony meeting believes in 'many gifts, one Spirit.'"

From ambivalence to grace

My shift from a defensive read of contributions by Longacre and her peers to an open read was subtle, and it took time. Readers of the 30th-anniversary edition might find themselves similarly conflicted as they read the pages of this book. But, as with Scripture or a good friend's advice, sometimes the things that make us the most uncomfortable are just what we need to hear. And sometimes our discomfort gets transformed, or at least tinted, by grace.

I still worry about what the contributors to the new edition would think if they knew that their editor still doesn't have a rain barrel and that she sometimes feeds her kids hot dogs. But just as I'm learning grace with myself and others, I think most of the contributors have walked this journey as well. They know the ways that they, too, fail to live up to their more-with-less ideals, and the way that God loves them just the same. And they're humbler and happier for living in what Longacre called

the "holy frustration" of more-with-less life.

Indeed, humility and happiness can't be underestimated. "Humility' is a word that must characterize our relationship to the coming world," writes Sheri Hostetler in the new edition. "Humility' means knowing our place in relationship to the Creator and creation. It also comes from the same root as the word 'humus,' the rich organic matter from which healthy plant life emerges, and 'humour.'" We will need all three, Hostetler writes—humility, humus and humour—to face the challenges of a stressed world in the years ahead.

And many of us will need humility, humus and humour tomorrow, too, when we are faced with decisions about towels and apples and oatmeal. Longacre and the contributors to *Living More With Less* won't be doing surveillance of our shopping and living habits, as I once imagined. But they will be rooting for us, hoping we can find more by taking less. ☞



Valerie Weaver-Zercher is editor of the 30th-anniversary edition of *Living More With Less*, published by Herald Press. She lives and works in Mechanicsburg, Pa.

Fall 2010 Listing of Books & Resources

Theology, Spirituality

Ecclesiastes. Douglas B. Miller. Herald Press, 2010, 300 pages.

This is the 23rd volume of the "Believers Church Bible Commentary" series. Miller is professor of biblical and religious studies at Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kan.

Engaging Pastors: Papers and Reflections from the Summative Conference. Jewel Gingerich Longenecker. Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2010.

This collection summarizes what was learned about pastoral ministry through the five-year "Engaging Pastors" program of the Church Leadership Center at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

A Mennonite Woman: Exploring Spiritual Life and Identity. Dawn Ruth Nelson. Cascadia Publishing House, 2010, 184 pages.

Nelson explores the spirituality of Mennonite women of the 20th century. She reflects on the life of her grandmother and looks at the influence of contemplative spirituality.

Mission From the Margins: Selected Writings From the Life and Ministry of David A. Shank. James R. Krabill, ed. Institute of Mennonite Studies and Herald Press, 2010,

357 pages.

Shank had wide experience in mission work in Europe and Africa. This collection puts together more than a half-century of Shank's reflections on what the mission of the church is all about.

Peace Be With You: Christ's Benediction Amid Violent Empires. Sharon L. Baker and Michael Hardin, eds. Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2010, 300 pages.

This collection of 14 essays explores the church's role in peacemaking, especially as the church relates to the modern state. Many of the contributors are Mennonite; two are from Canada.

Prophetic and Renewal Movements: The Prague Consultations. Walter W. Sawatsky, ed. World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 2010.

Ecumenical consultations reflecting on minority Reformation traditions have been held. This volume includes the proceedings of the sixth and seventh consultations, which met in Strasbourg, France, in 2000, and Prague, Hungary, in 2003.

Prophetic Peacemaking: Selected Writings of J.R. Burkholder. Keith Graber Miller, ed.

Institute of Mennonite Studies and Herald Press, 2010.

This is a collection of Burkholder's essays on pacifism, patriotism, public witness, Mennonite ethics, stewardship, vocation, service and other issues of authentic

discipleship.

Sexuality: God's Gift. Anne Krabill Hershberger, ed. Herald Press, 2010, 317 pages.

First printed in 1999, this is the second edition. It has been updated with some new chapters and provides a tool for engaging and discussing sexuality issues of our time. The 16 chapters include questions for discussion.

Take Our Moments and Our Days, Vol. 2: An Anabaptist Prayer Book, Advent through Pentecost. Arthur Paul Boers, Eleanor Kreider, John Rempel, Mary H. Schertz, Barbara Nelson Gingerich, eds. Institute of Mennonite Studies and Herald Press, 2010, 912 pages.

This collection of prayers is designed for daily use by individuals, families or small groups between Advent and Pentecost. A new printing for **Vol. 1 (Ordinary Time)** has also been released in 2010.

History

About Those Reimers: A Memoir. Elizabeth Reimer Bartel. Rosetta Projects, 2010, 223 pages.

Elizabeth Reimer describes growing up in southern Manitoba in the years before World War II. She also reflects on her extended Reimer family, proprietors of H.W. Reimer's store in Steinbach.

Jörg Maler's Kunstbuch: Writings of the Pilgram Marpeck Circle. John Rempel, ed. Pandora Press, 2010.

An English translation of letters and other documents written in the 1500s by members of the Swiss and South German Anabaptist communities. The book contains meditations, theological treatises and pastoral letters by Pilgram Marpeck, personal confessions of

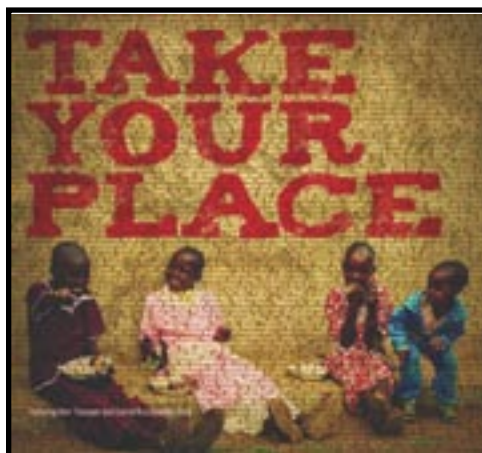
Take Your Place

The new CD/DVD by Kim Thiessen & Darryl Neustaedter Barg is available now!

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FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

faith and poems.

Leaders Who Shaped Us. Harold Jantz, ed. Kindred Productions, 2010, 324 pages.

The year 2010 is not only the 150th anniversary of the Mennonite Brethren, but also marks 100 years since the creation of the Conference of Mennonite Brethren in Canada. This is a collection of biographical stories about 25 leaders who were influential in Canada.

The Mennonite Brethren Church Around the World: Celebrating 150 Years. Abe J. Dueck, ed. Pandora Press and Kindred Productions, 2010, 391 pages.

Beginning with its origins in Ukraine in 1860, this book outlines the history of the Mennonite Brethren and how they have spread around the world. Various writers describe the church in 18 different countries.

Mennonite German Soldiers: Nation, Religion and Family in the Prussian East, 1772-1880. Mark Jantzen. University of Notre Dame Press, 2010, 384 pages.

This is the story of how Mennonites of eastern Prussia responded to strong pressure to accept conscription into the army during these years of rising German nationalism. Some finally emigrated, others became acculturated.

The Mennonites of St. Jacobs and Elmira: Understanding the Variety. Barb Draper. Pandora Press, 2010, 378 pages.

After describing Mennonite culture in Waterloo Region, Ont., in the 19th century, Draper explains how theological and cultural shifts brought schisms to the Mennonites of the St. Jacobs/Elmira area. The book describes the origins and characteristics of six different Mennonite groups.

Mission and Migration: Global Mennonite History Series, Latin America. Jaime Prieto Valladares, translated by C. Arnold Snyder. Good Books and Pandora Press, 2010, 362 pages.

This is the third in the Global Mennonite History Series, following histories of Mennonites in Africa (2003) and Europe (2006). From the first mission in Argentina in 1911 to the present, this is a comprehensive history of all types of Mennonites in Latin America.

Roots & Branches: A Narrative History of the Amish and Mennonites in Southeast United States, 1892-1992. Martin W. Lehman. Cascadia Publishing House and Herald Press, 2010, 308 pages.

Lehman tells the story of how Mennonite and Amish communities were begun in Florida and other southeastern states. This is the first of two volumes explaining how enthusiasm for evangelism led to growing churches up to the end of the 1960s.

Storied Landscapes: Ethno-Religious Identity and the Canadian Prairies. Frances Swyripa. U. of Manitoba Press, 2010, 296 pages.

Mennonites are among the ethno-religious groups examined in this book. It compares the settlement experiences of various immigrant groups on the Prairies.

Through Fire and Water: An Overview of Mennonite History. Steven M. Nolt and Harry Loewen. Herald Press, 2010, 336 pages.

Steven Nolt has revised this introduction to Anabaptist-Mennonite history, first published in 1996. The Mennonite story is told within the context of the Christian church and includes stories from Mennonites in all parts of the world today.

The Voice of a Writer: Honoring the Life of Katie Funk Wiebe. Doug Heidebrecht and Valerie G. Rempel, eds. Kindred Productions, 2010, 355 pages.

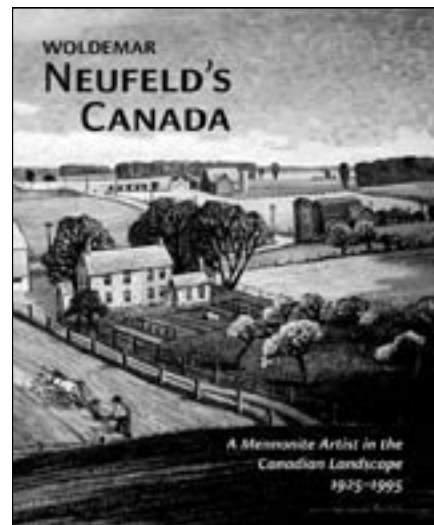
This collection of articles about Katie Funk Wiebe is interspersed with some of her writings over the past 50 years. It is intended to reflect on her life and her contribution to the Mennonite community.

Other Books

An American in Persia: A Pilgrimage to Iran. Richard A. Kauffman. Cascadia Publishing House, 2010, 128 pages.

Richard Kauffman travelled to Iran in 2008 as part of a Mennonite Central Committee delegation to help develop relationships between North Americans and Iranians. This little book describes the trip and what he learned.

At Powerline & Diamond Hill: Unexpected Intersections of Life and Work. Lee Snyder.



Woldemar Neufeld's Canada

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FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

Cascadia Publishing House, 2010, 204 pages.

Snyder, who grew up in a conservative church with Amish roots in Oregon, became vice-president and academic dean at Eastern Mennonite University and president of Bluffton University. In this book she reflects on her life and her experiences on this journey.

Living With Rain Girl. Angela Loepky. Word Alive Press, 2010, 138 pages.

Although Hannah appeared healthy when she was born in 1997, she soon suffered medical difficulties and was eventually diagnosed with autism. Loepky, her mother, describes her personal journey as she learned to cope with these challenges.

Saving the Seasons: How to Can, Freeze or Dry Almost Anything. Mary Clemens Meyer and Susanna Meyer. Herald Press, 2010, 208 pages.

With many glossy photographs, this collection includes a variety of recipes for canning as well as simple, clear instructions for preserving food in a variety of ways. It is designed for those without experience.

This Hidden Thing. Dora Dueck. Canadian Mennonite University Press, 2010, 330 pages.

This novel gives a good picture of what Mennonite families faced when they immigrated to Canada in the 1920s. Maria, the main character, was one of the young women who worked in Winnipeg as a domestic in order to help support her family.

Children's Books

The Food Bank Mystery. Leuba Franko. Privately published, 2010, 115 pages.

Intended for ages nine to 13, this book explores themes of poverty, job loss and food banks. The book and teacher/student activity sheets are available online at winnipegharvest.org.

Sensing Peace. Suzana E. Yoder, illustrated by Rachel Hoffman-Bayles. Herald Press, 2010, 32 pages.

This book, for children ages four to seven, encourages them to discover peace in their everyday lives, using their five senses.

Resources

PeaceParts Toolkit. MCC. 2010.

This six-session curriculum and resource pack introduces MCC's work in justice and peacebuilding around the world. This is for primary grades to adult, with one curriculum for children and one for youths and adults.

Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology. Vol. 11, No. 1, Spring 2010: Unity and Diversity. Vol. 11, No. 2, Fall 2010: Teaching the Bible in the Congregation.

This semi-annual journal is published by Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Canadian Mennonite University. For information, visit MennoVision.org.

Wee Wonder: Sharing God's Love with Twos. Chrissie Walls and Lori Steiner Jans. Faith and Life Press, 2010, 52 sessions.

With 12 modules and 52 sessions, this curriculum is designed for two- and three-year-olds in Sunday school or other settings with young children. As well as Bible stories, it has songs, action rhymes and creative ideas for responsive play.

DVDs

Gifts to Share. MCC. 2009, 52 minutes.

With information on how to help others, this DVD includes school kits, relief kits, health kits, newborn kits, AIDS care kits and comforters. It is suitable for Grade 1 to adult.

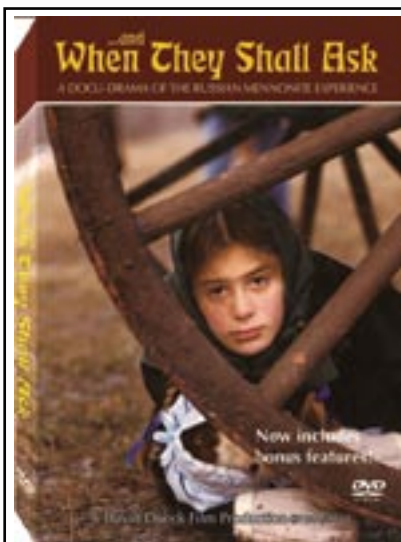
Peter J. Dyck Memorial Service. MCC. 2010, 112 minutes.

This DVD gives an overview of Peter and Elfrieda Dyck's work with Mennonite refugees after World War II, as well as clips from the January memorial service for Peter Dyck.

Stories of Service. Mennonite World Conference. 2010, 45 minutes.

Mennonite World Conference has put together seven stories of member churches from around the world reaching out to serve their local communities. The accompanying guide offers discussion questions and resources for further study. Funded by MCC, it is available in English, French and Spanish. ☸

—Compiled by Barb Draper, Books & Resources editor.



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FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

Helping churches prevent child abuse and neglect

BY JOHN LONGHURST

Herald Press Release

Jeanette Harder's goal is to help churches and communities become safer places for children.

"I strongly feel the need to prevent child abuse in church, but also in neighbourhoods, schools and anywhere else," says Harder, a professor at Grace Abbott School of Social Work at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and author of the

new Herald Press release, *Let the Children Come: Preparing Faith Communities to End Abuse and Neglect*.

Sadly, however, "scores of children are hurt every day by those responsible to care for them," she says, noting that in Canada 217,319 child investigations were conducted in 2003, of which 103,297—47 percent—were substantiated.

"Through abuse and neglect, the light in these children's eyes is fading," Harder says. "They are giving up on the hope that someone will ever love them in a way that doesn't hurt. They need us to protect them, value them and give them life again."

The most common type of abuse is neglect, which Harder defines as lack of care, food, education, medical care or supervision. Most of the abuse is perpetrated by people closest to children: their parents and caretakers.

"It's important to teach our children about 'stranger danger,'" she observes, "but it is also important to realize that more children are hurt by their caretakers or other people they know and trust."

What can the church do to address this important issue? A good place to start is the Bible, according to Harder, a member of First Mennonite Church, Lincoln, Neb. "The Bible has a lot to say about strengthening families," she says. "We find stories of Jesus blessing and taking time for children. We find parents valuing and protecting



their children. We find instructions for healthy family relationships. Overarching all this, we find the importance of family and family relationships."

At the same time, churches can do practical things to safeguard children entrusted to their care, she notes. This includes having procedures and policies regarding work with children, educating everyone

who works with children about abuse and neglect, always requiring that two adults be present whenever children are involved in a program or a class, putting windows into every classroom door, and screening everyone who wants to work with children.

It's the last point that raises the most controversy, she notes. "Nobody wants to believe abuse could happen in our churches," Harder says. "But research and experience tell us that it does. We need training to recognize the signs of abuse and to know how to respond."

Through *Let the Children Come*, churches can find practical how-to ideas and guidelines for protecting children and ending abuse in churches, the home, extended families, neighbourhoods and schools.

"Jesus commands us to 'love your neighbour as yourself,'" Harder says. "We must do all we can to keep children safe and provide them what they need to grow and thrive." ❧



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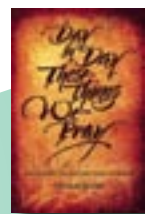
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FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

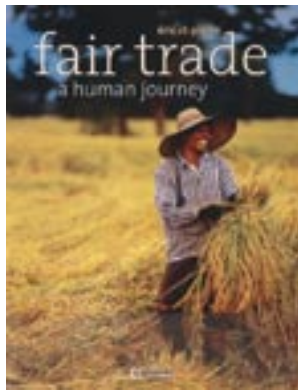
A picture is worth 1,000 words

Fair Trade: A Human Journey.

Éric St-Pierre, text by Emerson da Silva and Mathieu Lamarre, translated from the French by Barbara Sandilands. Les Éditions de l'Homme, 2010, 240 pages.

REVIEWED BY BARB DRAPER

In this coffee table-style book, Éric St-Pierre, a Canadian photojournalist, has put together a collection of magnificent photos of artisans and farmers preparing goods for the fair trade market. The book is clearly Canadian, having been originally published in Quebec in the French language.



importance of TTV in the distribution of fair trade products in Canada.

St-Pierre's photographs tell a fascinating story of how fair trade goods are produced. He spent years travelling to various countries, spending time and living with artisans and peasant farmers. The pictures are very informative; they show incredible detail as handicrafts, coffee,

Fair Trade credits Mennonite Central

Committee and Ten Thousand Villages (TTV) as early initiators in the handicraft fair trade sector and recognizes the

cocoa, sugar, bananas, tea, cotton, flowers and more are prepared for market. This book is a good place to learn what coffee

berries, ripe cocoa pods or sugarcane shoots look like. The text provides additional information about how artisans and farmers are working together in cooperatives to improve quality and to find a steady market for their products.

Fair trade, with its concern for social justice and respect for the producer, is also concerned for the environment and for product quality. The volume of sales has been growing in recent years; in Canada, sales of fair trade products grew by 67 percent between 2007 and 2008. TTV, with its 50 stores across Canada and many festival sales, has been a part of that growth.

This book, available through TTV, is especially suited for anyone who enjoys learning through pictures. The text is not particularly easy to read, with many references to unfamiliar organizations and some foreign words, but it is worth reading in order to learn about the growing and changing field of fair trade. ☘

Barb Draper is Canadian Mennonite's Books & Resources editor.

Mennos described with biting wit

Mennonite in a Little Black Dress: A Memoir of Going Home.

Rhoda Janzen. Henry Holt and Company, 2009, 241 pages.

REVIEWED BY BARB DRAPER

My sister lent me her copy of *Mennonite in a Little Black Dress*, saying, "You'll hate it, but you've got to read this book!" I sat down to read it that afternoon and was surprised that I didn't hate it as much as I thought I would.

Rhoda Janzen writes with a wry sense of humour and biting wit that makes her dialogue interesting, funny and easy to read. Janzen's story begins in her 40s after she has suffered some major difficulties in life. As she reflects on her childhood, her family and her situation, she decides to return to the Mennonite Brethren community in California where she was raised. While her self-deprecating comments are very funny, her caustic descriptions of her family and Mennonite community are less amusing.

She describes her growing-up years with the sharpness of a recalcitrant teenager and the digs at her mother and other Mennonites are relentless.

After Janzen moves back home to recuperate, there is a sense that she is beginning to value the strengths of the Mennonite community. She never puts it into words, but she describes a new respect for people with whom she is re-acquainted. That mellowing and sense of hope is destroyed by the final chapter, however.

The Appendix, entitled "A Mennonite History Primer," is back to the caustic and



sophisticated Janzen who pokes fun at her prudish Mennonite heritage as she wittily skips her way through Mennonite history, bundling together fact, fiction and clever comments.

I wonder if the title was chosen to entice readers of the popular "bonnet fiction." If so, readers will be shocked, as this is the antithesis of that genre. Janzen's writing style is

very interesting, but it's not very wholesome or respectful of Mennonites. ☘

Barb Draper is Canadian Mennonite's Books & Resources editor.

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

Theological differences should be seen as a gift

The Gift of Difference: Radical Orthodoxy, Radical Reformation.

Chris K. Huebner and Tripp York, eds. Canadian Mennonite University Press, 2010, 240 pages.

REVIEWED BY DAVID DRIEDGER

The *Gift of Difference* makes two substantial attempts—first, to frame a dialogue between two very different Christian traditions, and second, to explore how these traditions are “differently ethical and differently political.”

The thread between the two is the larger question of how to navigate difference, a fearful prospect for many people, especially in the realm of religion. We often bypass the gift of difference and assume that difference already implies judgment. After all, someone has to be wrong when difference is present, right? This work, however, does not assume that difference can be fixed or static in any conversation; difference remains active.

In this book, the Radical Reformation is best understood as a commitment to the particularity of Jesus, and Jesus’ words, movements and actions all carry weight for our lives. Thus, most of the writers understand Christians to be called to a vulnerability that does not attempt to fix, secure and protect our church or our theology.

The term “Radical Orthodoxy” represents a recent movement in theology—mostly coming out of Anglican and Catholic contexts—that attempts to recover and restore the place and role of the church as the site and expression that God offers to make the world intelligible. In this way, both traditions have a high view and hope for the church.

As an attempt at cross-denominational dialogue, *The Gift of Difference* has some strengths and weaknesses. One weakness is the lack of voices representing Radical Orthodoxy. The contributors are almost all from a Radical Reformation background.



Another weakness is the fact that many of the chapters reduce the conversation to two individuals: John Howard Yoder, representing the Radical Reformation, and John Milbank, representing Radical Orthodoxy. As illuminating and prominent as these two figures are, the work could have benefited from a wider engagement.

The strength of bringing these two traditions together

was that no common ground was assumed. Some contributors saw the conversation as mutually constructive, while others

questioned whether any distinctive sharing would be helpful. I consider this a strength because it accomplished what I think was a major aim of the book: to let difference be, and to not avoid or assume that it can be worked through. It may be only in this way that difference can offer itself as a gift, that is, when we stop trying to set its agenda.

This book offers provocative and fresh accounts of how to live between the false options of complete purity and total compromise, and contributes to what I would broadly call political theology. ❧

David Driedger is a blogger for Canadian Mennonite.

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FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

'Must reads' for thoughtful Mennonites

The Naked Anabaptist: The Bare Essentials of a Radical Faith.

Stuart Murray. Herald Press, 2010, 191 pages.

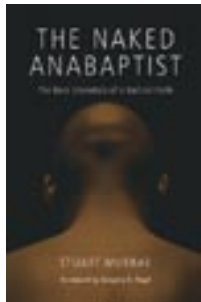
To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World.

James Davison Hunter. Oxford University Press, 2010, 358 pages.

REVIEWED BY DICK BENNER

It is a powerful gift, as Robert Burns reminds us, to “see ourselves as others see us.” Practising, thoughtful, self-identified Anabaptists have most certainly been gifted this year with these two books, both written by recognized authorities outside of our tradition and bringing insights and direction that often elude us “insiders.”

The Naked Anabaptist and *To Change the World* should be read in



tandem, probably Murray first, because of his personal relationships with, and appreciation for, Anabaptist practitioners such as Alan and Eleanor Kreider, for many years directors of the London (England) Mennonite Centre. His is a gentler presentation of our theological uniqueness and flaws.

Hunter, on the other hand, is the iconoclast from academia—a distinguished professor of religion, culture and social theory at the University of Virginia and director of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture. Growing up evangelical (getting his undergraduate degree from Gordon

College), he takes a more critical view of how Anabaptism has developed over its 500-year history, giving the impression, as a liberated evangelical, of a more grudging admiration.

Both authors see Anabaptism as a “gift” to the postmodern religious world, bringing a new vitality and a way out of “the Egypt of Christendom and into the wilderness of post-Christendom,” as Gregory Boyd writes in his preface to Murray’s treatise. Both, too, intentionally give us a revised brand name—neo-Anabaptists—precisely because they both think the “old wine” needs new cultural wineskins within which to permeate and germinate in a nihilist postmodern world.

Both recognize that our faith system has been sustained largely because we have not immersed ourselves in the political structures of national cultures, but have, instead, stayed on the margins, making, as Murray puts it, “the demise of Christendom much less disorienting.”

“Anabaptists revel in opportunities to reconnect with the biblical story in which the kingdom of God seems normally to advance in unexpected and marginal places,” Murray writes. He wants to bring us squarely into the 21st century, however, by defining us as having seven core convictions—a kind of overhaul of our belief system in Jesus as central, a heavy emphasis on discipleship, the distancing of ourselves from wealth and status, and our commitment to peace in an ever-increasingly violent world.

Hunter is not quite as sure that these core beliefs carry the day. Sceptical of “kingdom talk,” which implies the wrong use of power, he builds a case for what he calls “a faithful presence.” An admirer of our leading biblical scholar, John Howard Yoder, whom he



Tongue Screws and Testimonies

Poems, Stories, and Essays Inspired by the Martyrs Mirror
Kirsten Eve Beachy, editor



From the publisher of *Martyrs Mirror* comes this refreshing, reflective, heartbreaking, humorous—and sometimes irreverent—anthology of poems, creative essays and fiction by new and noted authors with connections to the Anabaptist tradition.

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hold on faith, life and imagination today.

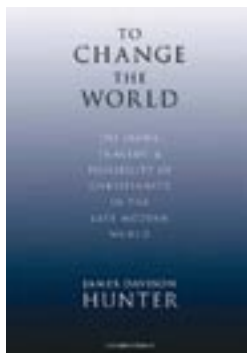
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Herald Press is the book imprint of Mennonite Publishing Network.

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quotes extensively throughout the book, he nonetheless thinks we are still much too sectarian.

He objects to our collective identity coming through our “dissent from the state and the

larger political economy,” claiming our identity depends on the state and other powers being corrupt, and the more unambiguously corrupt they are, “the clearer the identity and mission of the church.” Quoting Charles Mathewes, he says ours is a “passive-aggressive ecclesiology.”

In pressing for a new paradigm that is informed by a vision that “embodies continuity, historical memory, rituals marking the seasons of life, intergenerational interdependence and most of all common worship,” Hunter reluctantly, but firmly, says neo-Anabaptists are on the right track. “When the theologians in Radical Orthodoxy speak of the church as *polis* or *altera civitas*, marked by a distinct narrative recounted in distinct practices, a distinct *telos* whose form and substance is defined by the coming kingdom, and the presence of the Spirit at work among believers through Word and sacrament, they are gesturing in the right direction and their instincts are exactly right.”

Echoing some of the same sentiments, Murray backs up this encouraging word:

“With all its weaknesses, Anabaptism seems to have an unusual capacity to provoke Christians from many traditions (and some who are not yet Christians) to encounter Jesus afresh.”

These two books, written in much different styles by two different personalities, give us much to ponder, throwing new light on both the strengths and inherent weaknesses of our faith, and will likely provide much discussion in the days ahead. They are must-reads for thoughtful Anabaptist Mennonites.

Taken together, they are a powerful and enduring gift to our faith tradition. ❧

Dick Benner is editor/publisher of Canadian Mennonite.

INTERVIEW

Does church publishing matter?

Earlier this year, Ron Rempel, the executive director of Mennonite Publishing Network, was interviewed for Mennonite Church Canada's Church Matters radio program. Excerpts from that interview follow.

Church Matters: *These days parents and the church educators use a lot of resources that do not necessarily come from their denominational publisher. Does having a church publisher really matter anymore?*

Rempel: A Mennonite pastor stated rather bluntly, “If we quit producing our own materials, we will quit being the Mennonite church.” I agree with the underlying assumption



Rempel

that a body of published material—whether in print or some other form—is crucial in grounding the identity and mission of a denomination.

This begs the question whether it's important to continue having a denomination

called Mennonite. I would say yes, as long as we don't think we can be the church of Christ all on our own and as long as we see this identity as a gift to be shared, and not as a fence to close ourselves off from everyone else.

Church Matters: *It's been said that you can't compete with all the free material in the digital marketplace. We live in a multi-media age, where production values sometimes sell a product better than the content. Is success in the publishing ministry as simple as making your product so much better or so different that people will want to pay for it?*

Rempel: Quite frankly, it's hard to compete, especially when resources are limited. I believe that the way to be successful is to create something of value which people and churches want and need so that they can be true to their identity as the people

of God.

Will people automatically want to pay for this? Not necessarily and not at any cost. Obviously, we have to make things as affordable as possible. But if we can keep connecting with people around the core value proposition, then we at least have a chance.

Church Matters: *What does that value proposition look like to an Anabaptist publisher?*

Rempel: A Christ-centred and community-based faith that expresses itself in a practical lifestyle of discipleship, service, peacemaking.

Church Matters: *Does it also need to be packaged as flashy and glitzy?*

Rempel: Increasingly, we can't assume that just because people are part of a church they will use material from their publisher. We are having to put more energy and

Increasingly, we can't assume that just because people are part of a church they will use material from their publisher. We are having to put more energy and money into marketing and making our case.

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

money into marketing and making our case. This is a task that belongs not only to the church publisher, but to all parts of the church.

Church Matters: *So loyalty is on the decline. There's tonnes of free online material. What is the biggest opportunity you see as a denominational publisher?*

Rempel: We're dealing with churches and their members with whom we have a historic and ongoing relationship. Many appreciate the foundational resources that have been provided over the years—hymn books, Sunday school material, devotional material, recordings of memorable songs, books on living the faith in practical ways.

This ongoing relationship and conversation gives us the cues we need on what to publish and in what forms to deliver this content—whether in print or in the many new digital media. One of the exciting features of the emerging social media is their relational character and the opportunity for two-way conversation about things that really matter.

Church Matters: *What would congregational life look like if there were no longer a denominational publisher to provide churches with hymn books, devotional resources or Sunday school curriculum?*

Rempel: Our congregations and families are very resourceful. If there were no denominational publisher, they would establish one, to help them do what they do every day.

On the one hand, they're trying to read the culture and figure out what is life-giving and what is life-threatening. On the other hand, they are reading the Bible and listening for God's word for our time. They are creating places for people to study and talk, and rituals that will help people align with God's purposes.

Some of the larger churches could continue doing this on their own for a long time. But most of the churches would eventually say, "Why can't we do this collectively, so that we can each benefit from what others are doing?" ❧

MPN executive director to retire next year

BY JOHN LONGHURST
Mennonite Publishing Network Release

In 2003, when Ron Rempel was named the new executive director of Mennonite Publishing Network (MPN), the organization faced a very uncertain future. Today, as he prepares to leave, it still faces challenges—but it also has many new and exciting opportunities and possibilities.

"It's been a very satisfying experience," says Rempel of his seven years with MPN, the publishing ministry of Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A. "It was a privilege to serve the church through publishing."

Rempel, 65, announced his retirement Sept. 23 during the MPN board meeting in Pittsburgh, Pa. He will leave the organization next summer.

During his tenure, MPN:

- Eliminated a legacy debt of almost \$5 million;
- Created a major new Sunday school curriculum: Gather 'Round;
- Brought costs under control through consolidation and downsizing;
- Published a number of successful new titles; and
- Began a process leading to integration with Third Way Media, a department of Mennonite Mission Network, to create a new organization that will focus on publishing, video, radio and the Internet.

All of these things will be part of Rempel's legacy, says MPN board chair Phil Bontrager, noting that he "provided consistent and gentle leadership" during times of "significant change and disruption."

Rempel also "worked to strengthen MPN's ties with the church in Canada and the U.S.A.," Bontrager says, adding that the board "is deeply grateful for his leadership, for revitalizing MPN and for building a new vision for the future."

"Ron accepted the challenge of leading MPN at a very difficult and pivotal time in its ministry," says Dave Bergen, executive secretary of MC Canada's Christian Formation Council. "He steered the MPN ship successfully through rocky fiscal and relational seas with a great deal of wisdom, courage, prayer and sheer tenacity." MC Canada "owes him a debt of gratitude for the service he has provided," Bergen adds.

Looking back, Rempel says it has been good to be "part of MPN's turnaround." But what was especially gratifying, he says, was "to see the church re-embrace publishing, and to see MPN draw closer to the church."

At the same time, he says, "there are still challenges ahead for the new organization and a lot of work yet to be done. . . . I'm looking forward to how we will find new ways to be of service to the church and a witness to the world." ❧

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Calendar

British Columbia

Nov. 19-21: Senior Youth Impact Retreat at Camp Squeah.
Nov. 20: Vancouver Peace Choir concert at Chapel of the Epiphany, Vancouver School of Theology, at 8 p.m.
Dec. 4, 5: Advent vespers with Abendmusik Choir; (4) Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford; (5) Knox United Church, Vancouver.

Alberta

Nov. 10: MCC Alberta fine arts peace festival at Menno Simons Christian School, Calgary.
Nov. 13: MCC Alberta restorative justice event at Deer Park United Church, Calgary.
Nov. 14: Cowboy Church at Trinity Mennonite Church, near DeWinton/Calgary. Join Doris Daley and other friends and guests for western-style worship, cowboy poetry, music and yodelling; at 11 a.m.
Nov. 20: Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta meeting, at First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, at 1 p.m. Four travellers will speak about Mennonites beyond Canada's borders.

Saskatchewan

Nov. 22: RJC perogie supper fundraiser at First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.
Dec. 2-5: RJC Christmas dinner theatre.
Dec. 4, 11: Buncha Guys fundraisers for Shekinah Retreat Centre; (4) Knox United Church, Saskatoon; (11) Shekinah Retreat Centre.
Dec. 12, 17: RJC choir concerts; (12) at Knox United Church, Saskatoon, 7:30 p.m.; (17) at RJC, 7 p.m.

Manitoba

Nov. 10, 11: DIVE—a short intensive retreat for serious senior high students—at Camp Assiniboia; 7 p.m. (10), 3 p.m. (11). For more information, call MC Manitoba Youth Leadership Ministries at 204-896-1616.
Nov. 13: "Keith and Renee" concert, a Menno Simons College 20th anniversary event, at the West End Cultural Centre, Winnipeg; 7:15 p.m. reception; 8 p.m. program and concert.
Nov. 13: Women's Chorus Festival, featuring the CMU and University

of Manitoba women's choruses, at Covenant Reformed Church, Winnipeg, at 7:30 p.m.
Nov. 14: Friesens Arts Café, at CMU's Laudamus Auditorium, at 7:30 p.m.; featuring Leanne Regehr on piano.
Nov. 18: Evening of the Arts at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, at 7 p.m.
Nov. 20-Jan. 15, 2011: "Just food: The right to food from a faith perspective" exhibit at Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg. For more information, e-mail curator Ray Dirks at rdirks@mennonitechurch.ca.
Nov. 21: First Mennonite Church Choir presents Faure's "Requiem" and Mendelssohn's "Hear My Prayer," at First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7:30 p.m. Soloists: Karis Wiebe, soprano; Aran Matsuda, baritone.
Nov. 22: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate annual general meeting, at Westgate, 7 p.m.
Nov. 25-27: *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* community drama at MCI's Buhler Hall; 7:30 p.m. each evening. For tickets, call 204-327-5891.
Nov. 26, 27: Southern Manitoba Choral Society Christmas concerts: (26) Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church, (27) Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church; both concerts start at 7:30 p.m.
Nov. 27: Manitoba Mennonite Youth Organization volleyball tournament in Steinbach. Bus trip offered from Winkler and Winnipeg. For more information, call MC Manitoba Youth Leadership Ministries at 204-896-1616.
Nov. 27, 28: "Christmas@CMU"; (27) 7 p.m.; (28) 3 p.m. Both concerts at the north campus.
Dec. 5: Mennonite Community Orchestra concert, featuring pianist Becky Reesor, at CMU chapel, at 3 p.m.
Dec. 6: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Christmas concert, at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.
Dec. 9: Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary School Christmas concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m. For more information, call 204-261-9637.

Ontario

Until Nov. 28: "Via: Exploring the Way of Christ" each Sunday from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener. Supper and childcare provided. For more information, or to

register, call 519-745-4769.
Nov. 6, 7: Steve Bell in concert at Floradale Mennonite Church (6), and Bethany Mennonite Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake (7); both concerts at 7:30 p.m.
Nov. 7: Grand Philharmonic children's and youth choirs present "Storybook Voices: Selections from Ruth Watson Henderson, James Whicher, Mary Goetze, W.A. Mozart and others," at the Cedars, Waterloo, at 3 p.m.
Nov. 7: University Voices 2010 choral festival, at Koerner Recital Hall, Toronto, at 3 p.m. The festival includes singers from the Canadian Mennonite University Chamber Choir and Wilfrid Laurier University's Laurier Singers, among others.
Nov. 11: "Fear and hope: Religion's role in conflict and peace" colloquium with Luis Lugo of the Pew Forum, at the Centre for International Governance Innovation, Waterloo, at 7 p.m.
Nov. 13, 14: Soli Deo Gloria Singers present "The Lord's Prayer," at UMEI, Leamington; (13) 8 p.m., (14) 2 p.m.
Nov. 13, 14: DaCapo Chamber Choir presents "Vanishing Point: Music for choir, organ and saxophone," at St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Kitchener; 8 p.m. (13), 3 p.m. (14). For more information, or for tickets, call 519-725-7549 or visit www.dacapochoir.ca.
Nov. 19: Spirituality and aging seminar, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Speaker: George Handzo. Topic: "Integrating spiritual care into health care."
Nov. 19: Benjamin Eby Lecture at Conrad Grebel University, at 7:30 p.m. Speaker: Nathan C. Funk. Topic: "Peace starts now: Religious contribution to sustainable peacemaking."
Nov. 20: Nithview Christmas tea and bake sale, at Nithview Home, New Hamburg, from 2 to 4 p.m.; featuring tea room, baking, crafts, silent auction and apple dumplings. Sponsored by the Nithview Auxiliary.
Nov. 20: Annual handicraft sale at Fairview Mennonite Home auditorium, Cambridge. Crafts, decorations, gifts, quilts, woodworking, and much more. Tea room and lunch available. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Nov. 20: Mennonite and Brethren Marriage Encounter annual general meeting at Hawkesville Mennonite Church. Potluck supper, 6 p.m.;

meeting, 7 p.m.
Nov. 20: Grand Philharmonic Chamber Choir presents "Music of the North," at First United Church, Waterloo. For more information, or to purchase tickets, call toll-free 1-800-265-8977.
Nov. 21: Menno Singers leads "Songs of Healing and Hope," a hymn sing, at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, at 7 p.m.
Nov. 23: Willowgrove annual general meeting, at Rouge Valley Mennonite Church, Markham, at 7 p.m. Guest speaker: Colin McCartney, founder of Urban Promise, Toronto.
Nov. 26: House of Doc Christmas concert at Hamilton Mennonite Church, at 7:30 p.m. For more information or tickets, call 905-632-8268, or e-mail: ennsme@cogeco.ca.
Nov. 26, 27: 19th annual Spirit of Christmas event at Nairn Mennonite Church, Ailsa Craig; (26) 7 to 9 p.m.; (27) 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Featuring local talent and Ten Thousand Villages crafts for sale. For more information, call Barb at 519-232-4720.
Dec. 3: University of Waterloo Chamber Choir presents "Oil and Water," at Knox Presbyterian Church, Waterloo, at 8 p.m.
Dec. 4: University of Waterloo Choir presents "Peace for Our Times," at Knox Presbyterian Church, Waterloo, at 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 4, 5: Pax Christi Chorale presents Bach's "Christmas Oratorio I, VI & Cantata 140," "Wachet Auf," Carols and Motets with guest conductor Howard Dyck at 7:30 (4) and 3 p.m. (5).

To ensure timely publication of upcoming events, please send Calendar announcements eight weeks in advance of the event date by e-mail to calendar@canadianmennonite.org.

Classifieds Announcement

TRAVEL: Visit Europe the Mennonite Way! See website for the 2011 Hotel and Youth Hostel Heritage Tours, including Holland, Germany, Poland, France and Switzerland. www.mennoniteheritagetours.eu.

Employment Opportunities



STUDENT RECRUITING AND FUNDRAISING

Rosthern Junior College is issuing a **Request for Proposals** for responsibilities in Student Recruiting and Fundraising. Please see www.rjc.sk.ca for the job description and essential elements of your proposal. Closing date: Nov. 15, 2010.



CURRICULUM WRITERS

Gather 'Round curriculum is hiring writers for the 2012-13 year. Writers will produce age-appropriate and engaging material for teacher's guides, student books and resource packs. Writers will attend an orientation conference March 6-10, 2011, in Chicago, Ill. For more information, go to www.gatherround.org. Deadline for applications: Jan. 1, 2011.

Shekinah Retreat Centre is inviting applications for:

PROGRAM DIRECTOR (FULL-TIME)

Qualifications should include training/experience in working with children and school programming. Sensitivity to camping and retreating, summer camp marketing and promotion, maintenance of summer camp and school database; possess the ability to work well alongside other people; a willingness to incorporate environmental practices that promote sustainability; have an understanding of Shekinah's philosophy, aims and objectives.

On-site accommodations available. Employment opportunities available for spouse as well.

Direct all resumes and inquiries to:

Lorne Friesen, Co-administrator
Shekinah Retreat Centre, Box 490, Waldheim, SK S0K 4R0
or e-mail: lorne@shekinahretreatcentre.org



Mennonite
Church
Manitoba

ASSOCIATE PROGRAM DIRECTOR, CAMPS WITH MEANING

Mennonite Church Manitoba invites applications for the full-time position of Associate Program Director for Camps with Meaning. This person will give leadership to the summer camping and winter retreat ministry of Camps with Meaning, including camp and retreat promotion; program design; budget preparation and management; and summer staff and volunteer recruitment, training and support.

Qualifications include an undergraduate degree in outdoor education, recreation or camping ministry; experience in camping ministry; excellent communication and management skills; and the ability to work well with staff and volunteers of all ages. The successful candidate must demonstrate a personal faith commitment to Jesus Christ, affirm the Camps with Meaning Statement of Faith, and uphold the vision and mission of Mennonite Church Manitoba. A complete job description is available at www.campswithmeaning.org.

Application deadline is Monday, Nov. 15. Send resume in confidence to: Pam Peters-Pries, Interim Administrator, Camps with Meaning, 200-600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 2J1; e-mail: pam@pries.ca; or phone: 204-392-5709.



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UMEI Christian High School has a 65-year history as an accredited, independent high school providing Christian education (with an Anabaptist/Mennonite perspective). The school welcomes students from many faith backgrounds and teaches those students the Ontario curriculum using a holistic approach that incorporates physical, social and spiritual growth for students, as well as the development of strong academics.

The Board of UMEI Christian invites applications for the position of **Principal**. As a leader with vision and commitment to the mission of the school, the successful applicant will participate in the continuing growth and development of the school, as well as supervise the school program. Duties to commence Sept. 1, 2011. Applications should be sent to:

Janice Huntingford Wagner, Personnel Chair
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NURSING FACULTY POSITION PEDIATRICS

Eastern Mennonite University announces a full-time faculty position in the Department of Nursing beginning Fall 2011. Doctoral degree in nursing or other terminal degree preferred. Teach classes in pediatric nursing and supervise clinical experiences in a tertiary medical centre. Nine-month contract, salary determined by education and experience. Eastern Mennonite University uses an extended contract system.

Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable), and three reference letters to: Nancy R. Heisey, Vice-President & Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; or e-mail: ugdean@emu.edu. Applicants will be asked to respond to questions specific to EMU's mission after the initial inquiry. EMU reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic and cultural diversity.

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NURSING DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Eastern Mennonite University announces a full-time Department Chair position in Nursing beginning Fall 2011. Ph.D. in nursing or other terminal degree required. Experience in nursing education. Demonstrated leadership qualities with excellent interpersonal skills. Twelve-month contract, salary determined by education and experience. EMU uses an extended contract system.

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The Neufeld children in Bolivia's Swift Current Colony read Das Blatt für Kinder und Jugend, a magazine for children and youths.



The opportunity to read treasured in Bolivian colony home

BY GLADYS TERICHOW

Mennonite Central Committee Release

Eleven-year-old Franz Neufeld tries to hold back his tears as he talks about a Bible story that his mother reads to him and his siblings in Bolivia's Swift Current Colony. It is the story of Joseph, who is favoured by his father, sold into slavery in Egypt by his jealous brothers, and reunited with his father, brothers and their families when his brothers come to Egypt to buy grain to save them from starvation.

"Joseph must have been very lonely," says Franz, the eldest of seven children living with their parents Sara and Heinrich Neufeld 50 kilometres south of Santa Cruz. The best part of the story, he says, is the happy ending with the family being reunited.

"The children love to hear me read stories to them," says their mother. "It is so interesting for the children. They often cry when I read. They often say, 'I want to hear it again.' Reading is something that interests me," she adds, explaining that her parents had encouraged her to read and she is now passing on this legacy to her children.

Neufeld reads stories in *Das Blatt für Kinder und Jugend*, a 32-page magazine for children and youths published monthly by Die Mennonitische Post Ministries and supported by Mennonite

Central Committee (MCC) Canada. "I have been reading *Das Blatt* since the first issue came out," she says, recalling she was a teenager in 1989 when the first issue was published.

Neufeld likes having the magazine in her home because it connects Bible stories to lesson ideas, colouring pages, activity sheets, quizzes and crossword puzzles, and provides hours of fun and learning opportunities for her family.

She also often reads to her children from the Plautdietsch Bible, a Low German Bible published in 2003. Neufeld says her children like to hear her read this Bible because it is written in the language they speak in the home. "Some people find it hard to read Low German, but I don't," she says. "I learned to read Low German through reading *Die Mennonitische Post*."

Die Mennonitische Post, a 28-page biweekly newspaper published by MCC Canada, is written mainly in German with some of the columns in Low German.

"I'm very curious about what is happening in Mexico and in Canada and the rest of the world," Neufeld says. "If it wasn't for *Die Mennonitische Post*, where would I get this information? For me, it would be a great loss if I couldn't read this newspaper." ❧