



CANADIAN MENNONITE

February 7, 2011
Volume 15 Number 3

Blessed are the shovellers

(Story on back cover)

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EDITORIAL

Yes, we are online

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

We do have a website, dear readers, a recently re-designed one, in fact.

And we know many of you are reading *Canadian Mennonite* online. Our Google Analytics tell us that as many as 2,400 unique visitors a month are coming to the website for some 16,000 page views and staying an average of three minutes to read something of interest.

That's certainly gratifying and gives us some indication as to where the medium is headed. Geographically we know, too, that many of you online readers are from our two dominant population areas: Winnipeg, Man., and Kitchener, Ont. These "electronic" numbers pretty well track with our "print" numbers; out of a print circulation of 14,300 copies each issue, the higher subscription numbers are from Manitoba and Ontario, the two population centres of Mennonite Church Canada.

But there the similarity stops. While our letters box to the print version is sometimes overflowing with lively conversation, the "comment" boxes of our online articles and blogs are virtually empty. The silence is deafening!

We are puzzled by this contrast, especially since our newly redesigned website

allows for comments on every single article and feature. What we are getting, instead, are frequent spammers who use this to promote their own product, service or agenda. It usually has nothing to do with the story or feature to which they attach their comments. An annoying nuisance, these comments are deleted by us as soon as they are detected.



Of course, what we would like to see, instead, is intelligent, thoughtful and reasoned comment—affirmations, added insight, opposing viewpoints, new ideas—much like letter-writers send us for the print edition.

And there is one more advantage to an online response: no constraint of space. In our print edition, we ask you to keep your responses to 400 words or less, but online there are no word restrictions. You are more likely to be read if you keep it short and to the point, but we are not working under the same space constraints online as we are in print.

Just this past week, a letter-writer caught onto this possibility and did just that. He had submitted a long letter that had to be shortened for print, but then went online to respond to one of our columnists with his full rendition. That's just fine with us. In fact, we encourage that.

We are still puzzled, however, with a

hesitancy to respond online. Does seeing your thoughts in print somehow make them more credible and authentic? Does the print medium feel more comfortable than the electronic one? Is the wider exposure an issue? Are you more comfortable with expressing yourself to the smaller, confined audience of some 33,000 members of MC Canada (your denominational family) than you are with the millions of potential strangers on the "worldwide web?" Is that somehow more intimidating than the Mennonite family?

Anecdotally, we know that when there is a more controversial subject discussed in the print version of our publication, there is a certain "buzz" created in the pews and around our kitchen tables, an on-the-street conversation that is far less vigorous in letters than it is at the one-on-one level. When, I, as editor, hear this, or become a part of it, I always encourage persons to write a letter and let others share in the wisdom of their thoughts.

Likewise, I ask you, our readers, to share freely and vigorously with others when you have strong feelings about an issue—online and in print. We only ask that you be gentle with your disagreements, and positive and helpful in your suggestions. We do not countenance rancour or animosity. Personal attacks never reach the printed page and are deleted online.

Readership survey coming

In our next issue, you will have a chance to respond through a readership survey, a vehicle by which we hope to measure the effectiveness of our two media. Please take the time to complete this short survey and give us your comments. You will have the choice of mailing back to us the printed pages, or of completing it online and sending it to us without the cost of postage.

We are still puzzled, however, with a hesitancy to respond online. Does seeing your thoughts in print somehow make them more credible and authentic?

ABOUT THE COVER:

BLESSED ARE THE SHOVELLERS. Nine-year-old Joshua Wiebe-Neufeld helps shovel the street around his family's Edmonton, Alta., home. The gesture resulted in the neighbourhood pitching in to clear each other's sidewalks and driveways. See story on the back cover.

PHOTO: DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD, CANADIAN MENNONITE

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Please send all material to be considered for publication to:

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Mission statement: *Canadian Mennonite (CM)* is a bi-weekly Anabaptist/Mennonite-oriented periodical which seeks to promote covenantal relationships within the church (Hebrews 10:23-25). It provides channels for sharing accurate and fair information, faith profiles, inspirational/educational materials, and news and analyses of issues facing the church. In fulfilling its mission, the primary constituency of *CM* is the people and churches of Mennonite Church Canada and its five related area churches. *CM* also welcomes readers from the broader inter-Mennonite and inter-church scene. Editorial freedom is expressed through seeking and speaking the truth in love and by providing a balance of perspectives in news and commentary. *CM* will be a vehicle through which mutual accountability can be exercised within the community of believers; the paper also encourages its readers to have open hearts and minds in the process of discerning God's will.

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Head Office Staff:

Dick Benner, Editor/Publisher, editor@canadianmennonite.org

Ross W. Muir, Managing Editor, managinged@canadianmennonite.org

Barb Draper, Editorial Assistant, edassist@canadianmennonite.org

Dan Johnson, Graphic Designer, designer@canadianmennonite.org

Lisa Jacky, Circulation/Finance, office@canadianmennonite.org

Advertising: **Lisa Metzger,** advert@canadianmennonite.org, toll-free voice mail: 1-800-378-2524 ext. 224

Correspondents:

Rachel Bergen, National Correspondent, ca@canadianmennonite.org, 204-885-2565 ext. 259; **Amy Dueckman,** B.C. Correspondent, bc@canadianmennonite.org,

604-854-3735; **Donita Wiebe-Neufeld,** Alberta Correspondent, ab@canadianmennonite.org, 780-436-3431; **Karin Fehderau,** Saskatchewan

Correspondent, sk@canadianmennonite.org, 306-933-4209;

Evelyn Rempel Petkau, Manitoba Correspondent, mb@canadianmennonite.org, 204-745-2208; **Dave Rogalsky,** Eastern Canada Correspondent, ec@canadianmennonite.org,

canadianmennonite.org, 519-579-7258.



Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press



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Introducing . . . : **PAUL LOEWEN**

Breaking down the pretty/ugly altars

BY CAROL PENNER

The First Mennonite Church, Vineland, Ont.

Adapted from a sermon she preached at First Mennonite on July 12, 2009. Sermon texts included Psalm 139:1-16 and I Corinthians 6:19: 'Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?' Penner has been pastor at First Mennonite since 2004.



When you close your eyes, do you picture Jesus as a bearded white man with piercing eyes and flowing locks (above), or as a black Son of God or suffering Saviour (opposite page)?

I think you know a lot about Jesus' body, so I invite you to close your eyes and picture some things.

Picture Jesus as a baby, his tiny body wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. As a 12-year-old boy walking with his family to Jerusalem and sitting in the temple. As an adult reaching out and touching a leper; making a whip out of cords, charging through the temple and overturning tables; kneeling and praying; breaking bread on a hillside; walking on water; being crucified; lying dead in a tomb; rising with scars on his hands and feet and side; crouching down by a fire to cook fish on the beach.

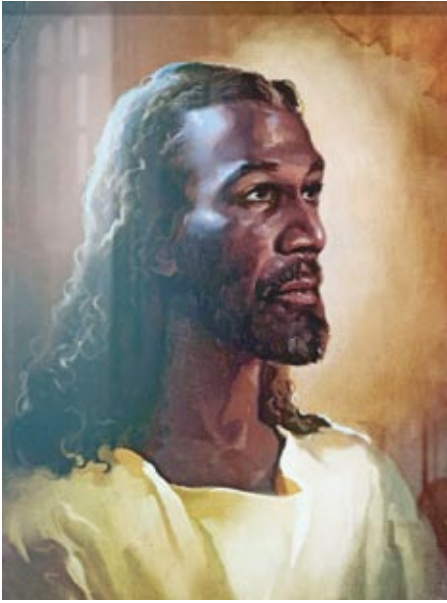
Now open your eyes. Some of you had no problem picturing Jesus' body doing all these things. We know about Jesus' body from birth to death because the four gospels tell us about Jesus: God incarnate, God with skin on. These are the stories in the gospels.

But what about the "missing verses" about Jesus? I invite you to close your eyes again and picture Jesus as handsome, strong and muscular; with a purple birthmark covering half his face; with his front teeth missing; as an overweight teen; with six toes on one of his feet; or with thinning hair.

Open your eyes again. Was that a bit weird? We know so much about what Jesus' body did, but nothing about what he looked like. The gospels do not say one word about Jesus' physical appearance. It's remarkable, really, and I think it's striking because we live in a culture that worships at the altar of physical appearance.

Worshipping a false god

The Old Testament prophets often talked about Israel worshipping other gods. The prophets were adamant that altars to false gods like Baal should be destroyed. But we are taught to worship at another altar: the pretty/ugly altar. We are taught to be loyal to a false god who tells us there are beautiful people and ugly people,



and that the first are good and the second are bad.

Through TV, movies, newspapers and magazines, our culture promotes concepts of what is beautiful and what is ugly. They all show us beautiful people or people who long to be beautiful.

What does it mean to be beautiful in our culture? According to the pictures held up for us everywhere, beautiful is to be young; to have smooth, white skin, perfect teeth and full-bodied hair—all on a thin body. Women have hourglass figures; men have broad shoulders on muscular frames.

Our culture equates beauty with goodness. From our earliest stories, the fairy-tale heroes are always beautiful, while the stepmothers and witches are ugly. This stereotyping is present in almost everything we read or watch. In *The Lord of the Rings*, for example, the bad characters limp and have bad teeth or an irregular face, while the good people are all white and handsome or pretty. Our culture tells us that how we look on the outside is the most important thing.

An altar that won't be ignored

The gospels, however, are a direct challenge to all who worship at the altar of physical appearance. Jesus was our

Saviour, and whether he had brown hair or blonde, brown skin or white, was short or tall, overweight or thin, it did not matter at all.

It's interesting that artists uniformly picture Jesus as handsome. Have you ever seen a picture of a very heavy or balding Jesus, or a Jesus with missing teeth? Do we think that because Jesus was God, he had to be perfectly handsome? The gospels tell us a different story by ignoring the pretty/ugly altar completely.

But it's hard to live in a world where everyone is worshipping at this altar. It's particularly hard for young people who form their identity by asking, "How do people see me? How do I look? Am I one of the beautiful people or one of the ugly people?"

When I was a teenager, our youth group was having a car wash on a fine summer day. A boy I really liked said to me in a voice loud enough for a dozen other young people to hear, "Boy, your toes are really ugly." And he pointed to my feet, just in case people didn't know what he was talking about. A dozen people turned their heads and looked down at my toes.

As a teenager I was worried about a lot of things. But until that moment, I had never worried—not once—about what

my toes looked like. And now suddenly I was faced with the reality that there were categories for toes, and that my toes were apparently in the ugly category. It was a mortifying experience.

We remember what people say about our bodies, perhaps especially the comments that would put us in the ugly camp, because more than almost anything we want to be in the beautiful camp. We want to be there because those people have more fun and are more successful. Everyone loves beautiful people, it seems.

I did a study where I read every verse in the Bible that had the words "body," "beautiful" or "handsome" in it. The Old Testament contains references about the appearance of people's bodies: Sarah was beautiful, Leah's eyes were lovely, Rachel was graceful and beautiful, David was handsome and had beautiful eyes.

A change in the New Testament

But when we get to the New Testament, descriptions about people's bodies are strangely absent. There is no verse describing what Mary, Elizabeth, Peter, John or Paul looked like. There are no verses that read, "God chose Mary because she was the most beautiful girl in Israel," "Jesus took the cutest child and set it among them and said, 'Be like

this child;” or, “Jesus gathered the tallest, most handsome men to be his disciples.”

This lack of physical description in the New Testament is not a simple oversight. Jesus broke down the pretty/ugly altars of physical appearance because he saw people for who they were. He saw them as precious and loved in the sight of God: each person a gift and each body beautiful, because each is a temple of the Holy Spirit.

As Christians, we are challenged to worship at God’s altar, to make our bodies temples. We long to be filled with God’s Spirit. We are called to cast down the pretty/ugly altars and see people as God sees them. We are called to see deeper than skin deep, and to see into people’s hearts, just as Jesus did.

We do this sometimes. We meet someone and you think, “She is gorgeous, strikingly so!” But as we get to know her, we realize she is not nice. In fact, she is mean, dishonest and untrustworthy. A year or two later, if we hear someone refer to her as pretty, we are startled, because we realize that we don’t see her that way at all.

In the same way, we meet someone and initially think that he is quite ugly. But as we get to know him and see how kind and truly good he is, we look back and wonder, “Why did I think he was unattractive?”

I saw an old circus movie once that challenged this stereotype that pretty or handsome people are good and ugly people are bad. *Freaks* was made in 1932, and the director used actual circus performers for the movie. In that era, circuses weren’t like our current Cirque du Soleil, but included people with birth defects and strange genetic conditions—called “freaks”—who were put on display.

There are two normal people in the movie who are beautiful in every cultural way. She is young and slim, with blonde hair and nice teeth. He is tall, dark and handsome, and very muscular. Their appearances fit every stereotype of beauty. The rest of the cast is an unbelievable assortment of dwarves with hooked noses or irregular facial features, a man covered with hair and a man who was born with no arms or legs, among others.

I invite you to close your eyes again and picture Jesus as handsome, strong and muscular; with a purple birthmark covering half his face; with his front teeth missing; as an overweight teen; with six toes on one of his feet; or with thinning hair.

The startling thing about the movie is that the people who would not be culturally considered beautiful are the ones who keep showing hospitality, love and kindness. The normal people turn out to be filled with meanness and hatred.

Freaks challenges our categories, making us ask, “What makes a person a freak?” It challenges us to look beyond skin deep and into people’s hearts. In a way it’s a challenge to all who worship at the pretty/ugly altar.

Your assignment this week

As Christians, we reject that pretty/ugly altar—or we should. Our bodies are created by God, who saw us in our mother’s wombs. Everyone is beautiful in God’s eyes, because every person is a temple. We all hold the breath that God has given us. We can spend our lives trying to fill our bodies more with God’s Spirit, or we can spend our lives working against that.

We can either seek God’s presence to fill us more and more, or we can go our own way and actively work to fill that

temple with other things. What is beautiful, what is truly beautiful in God’s eyes, is whether we are drawing close to God’s heart.

After reading this, I want you to unmask the pretty/ugly altars all around you. As a follower of Jesus, refuse to judge people by their appearance. Instead, say to them, “I think you’re beautiful just the way God made you.”

The pretty/ugly altar can also be found in the mirrors in our own homes. When you look in the mirror, say, “My body is a gift from God. Thank you God for this body.”

Remember, we live in bodies, bodies that we have not chosen, but that were given to us as a gift and that can be filled with God’s Spirit. We have the power to reject the tyranny of the pretty/ugly altars of this world because we worship a Saviour who broke those altars down by treating every body as beautiful. ❧



Penner

❧ For discussion

1. Do you remember comments about physical appearance from when you were young? What attitude did your parents and family have about physical appearance? How did they communicate that attitude? How many mirrors do you have in your house today?
2. What do you think Jesus looked like? If you were drawing Jesus, what characteristics would you give him? How do you think people would have responded to an ugly Jesus?
3. Carol Penner presents the challenge to “unmask the pretty/ugly altars all around you.” In order to do that, what would you get rid of in our society? Are there any situations in which you would encourage someone to have cosmetic surgery or to participate in a beauty pageant?
4. Penner suggests that when we get to know the character of a person, physical appearance is less important? Do you agree? Do we see aging family members with eyes that remember how they used to appear? How can we encourage each other to treat “every body as beautiful”?

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.

✉ Local elders—not 'rented pastors'—should care for Christ's church

RE: "MENTORSHIP WITH a difference," Dec. 20, page 12.

I wish to respond to Bob Wiebe's question: "What is the greatest need in your congregation in the area of harnessing human capacity?" The answer of that "creative" pastor was "quick and emphatic: Mentorship."

This is precisely the Apostle Paul's instruction to his fellow labourer, Timothy, in II Timothy 2:2: "Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others." Here we have three generations within a local congregation impacted.

It appears the model for most Mennonite churches is putting out a call in a variety of media for the kind of personnel being sought, including the appropriate skills and educational level, while listing salaries and benefits in a very commercial way.

Paul Stevens of Regent College, Vancouver, B.C., refers to these as "rented pastors." How "safe" is it for such newcomers to teach the "whole counsel of God," the tough stuff?

When Paul bade farewell to the Ephesian elders, he said in Acts 20:26,27: "Let me say plainly that I have been faithful. No one's damnation can be blamed on me, for I did not shrink from all that God wanted you to know."

Wherever the apostles ministered, they charged the elders to care for the church, Christ's body. Take a peek at James 3:1 and the stated challenge for teachers/elders to be very conscious of their calling. To sublet all this work to a hireling is to put the saints at risk.

Having said all of that about the critical role of leadership, this does not leave the individual member off the hook. In the final analysis, we will all have been given gifts and will stand individually before Christ as judge to "receive good or evil according to what we have done" while on earth.

I am convinced that if the Bible is read in the style of Job 34:4—individually and then together to share and apply insights—and as the Bereans did in Acts 17:11,12—where they checked up on Paul and Silas—tremendous results will follow. In the Bereans' case, "many Jews believed."

We also can experience that if we follow the template given in II Timothy 3:16-17. By the grace of God, even the commercial/rental pastoral model can be completely revamped to serve in God's mission as he intended "from the beginning."

GEORGE H. EPP, CHILLIWACK, B.C.

✉ Ordinary Israelis also to blame for anti-Palestinian racism

RE: "ISRAELI DEVELOPMENT thwarts peace on earth . . . at least in Bethlehem," Dec. 20, page 4.

Your Christmas issue leads off with Alex Awad's extraordinarily sensitive call to peace on earth in all the Holy Land. Awad prefers to believe the best of all ordinary Israelis, and holds only the tiny minority of ultra-nationalist Zionist settlers responsible for the intransigence of the Israeli government.

But to compliment ordinary Israelis on their charity, he has to overlook some extraordinary racism, such as Safed's rabbis calling on Arabs attending school in their own town to be evicted and deported, and thugery, as ordinary citizens threaten the life and property of a Jewish apartment-building owner renting to these Arab students.

This is no isolated instance. Each day countless thousands of actions like these, and worse, are recorded by the tiny minority of fair-minded Jews belonging to B'Tselem, Gush Emunim and the few remaining Israeli human rights organizations.

Ordinary Israeli citizens participate in this racism to an astounding degree not seen in past decades. Israeli writers and historians, such as Jonathan Cook, Uri Avnery, Ben Morris and Gideon Levy, among dozens of others, have chronicled the terrifying abuses the Zionist nation performs daily to maintain its grip on the land, while ordinary Israeli soldiers concerned about the war crimes they are forced to perform on a daily basis in the Occupied Territories have formed their own protest and advocacy organization called Breaking the Silence.

Further, the Israeli government has taken steps to make it illegal for Israelis to assist Palestinian Christians who have suffered abuse, seizure of property or illegal confinement, to prevent them from seeking redress.

This is not the nation the Bible dreamed of. It is a vindictive, secular nation in the model of the old Roman empire, and such nations raise hordes of zealots, such as Barabbas, whose freedom was traded for Jesus' life on the cross by vote of the ordinary Jews of the day (Matthew 27:21).

It appears not much has changed. The only difference is that now there is a Peace Church to stand beside Jesus and against Barabbas, if only it will find such

courage as that shown by Awad. Regretfully, it appears the Peace Church in North America is too caught up in its own narrative of empire to pay attention to the screams of its victims.

ANDRE PEKOVICH, VANCOUVER, B.C.

✉ Canadian Department of Peace an idea whose time has come

NEARLY THREE YEARS ago, I attended a world religions conference at the University of Manitoba organized by the Ahmaddiyya Muslim Community in Winnipeg and sponsored by the Ahmaddiyya

FAMILY TIES

A whole new game

MELISSA MILLER

We live in a complex and rapidly changing world, a world that brings about dramatic changes in family lives. Most of us have personal experience with one or more of the following: couples choosing to cohabit before marriage or as an alternative to it; divorce and blended families; same-sex intimate relationships; and decisions related to complex medical technologies at conception and end of life and points in between. Many of these experiences have been fraught with confusion, pain and even anguish.

One speaker uses a vivid sports illustration to explain this changing reality. "It's like the team went into the locker room at half-time", he said, displaying a picture of a football field, "and when they came out, it was a whole new game." The picture in front of us had changed to a baseball diamond. Many of us are like football players trying to figure out what happened to the game we knew, had trained for and loved.

As I survey the changing landscape of family relations, I marvel at the task that lies ahead for all of us. How will we form strong, lasting marital bonds? How will we raise our children, giving them

both security and freedom? How will we discern which medical technologies are ethical and life-giving, and which feed a denial of death and a false sense of control? How will we receive and become vessels of God's grace and compassion? What faith resources do we draw on to guide us? How do our ancient Scriptures provide instruction for us and what are the limits of our previous interpretations of Scripture? How do we "fashion lives that are holy and hearts that are true"



As I survey the changing landscape of family relations, I marvel at the task that lies ahead for all of us.

("Here in This Place," *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, No. 6)?

Much of my own history has traced a relatively conservative path in family life. I am grateful for the fruit I have known: the stable home my parents provided; a long, loyal marriage; good health; and strong faith. I name these fruits humbly, knowing they are gifts, and also knowing that any number of factors could have led me to a very different life.

I consider it a privilege that I've been invited—as a pastor, counsellor, friend or family member—to witness other

people navigate the terrain of rapidly changing family life, as they find themselves living with cohabitation, divorce, blended families and same-sex unions. Like pioneers who set out for a new land, they face daunting uncertainties. They use their tools of faith, hope, compassion and tenacity to carve out new homes for themselves and their loved ones. Often they walk a lonely path, shunned by other Christians, not given a place to speak honestly of their experience or perspective. I have learned much from them. As we increasingly face these changes in family life, we will need to learn from those who are "walking the walk."

We will also need to ground ourselves

in the essentials of our faith. The Apostle Paul, writing in I Corinthians 13, offers a wise and well-known teaching: "Faith, hope, and love abide, . . . and the greatest of these is love." I believe that love is at the heart of God, that love is what God calls us to and surrounds us with, and that love will be our guide, whatever the future.

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

Movement in Islam Canada. The heading read, “World Peace—Religious Perspective.” It was, to say the least, an enlightening experience, but also shocking. Those of different religions were, without exception, striving for peaceful coexistence and understanding in the world.

Unfortunately, in 2008 there was no such thing as a Canadian Department Of Peace proposal (Bill C-447) in existence to focus the discussion and bring it down to earth. How I wish that such a proposal could have been an item on that agenda. But now it is on the table, so what are we going to do about it?

PETER HIEBERT, WINNIPEG, MAN.

✉ Poppy, peace button both important symbols

RE: “REMEMBERING PEACE,” Dec. 20, page 28.

I, too, wore both the traditional red poppy and the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) alternative peace button when I attended the Remembrance Day ceremony at the retirement home where I now live. Many of the residents here were in some way or another involved in the war effort. The suffering, pain and bitter feelings were still evident in the words they spoke and the memories they shared. For them, I wore the red poppy. The MCC button supported my prayer that wars could cease and that the people of the Earth could live in peace and harmony.

ANNA NEUFELD, OTTAWA, ONT.

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Why give?

DORI ZERBE CORNELSEN

In early December, *The Globe and Mail* reported that the number of Canadians making charitable donations has dropped, the average age of donors has risen to 53, and the total amount donated to charity has fallen in the last two years. Shortly after this, it ran a series on the future of faith in Canada, concluding that Canada is quickly becoming a secular nation.

Are these two news items linked?

Research from the Good Works Company, donor research consultants, shows that four out of five donors give as an extension of their

spiritual beliefs. Perhaps for some, giving might be based on a sense of guilt or obligation, as if God requires a head tax from each of us. There are, though, infinitely more positive motivators to give for those of us who are Christians.

In the ministry of facilitating financial generosity, Mennonite Foundation of Canada uses four statements to inspire our work:

• **GOD OWNS, WE MANAGE.** The Bible teaches that God created a wonderful world, but never gives up ownership (Psalm 24:1). What an incredible

privilege we are given as stewards responsible to manage all aspects of God’s household. This means that God places incredible trust in us to use the resources provided for us with care. We give from what God entrusts to us in the first place.

• **GOD IS GENEROUS.** When Paul writes to Timothy about finances and the church, his words are that we are not to put our “*hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides*



[I]t may just be that the way we spend our money is a mirror of our spiritual priorities.

us with everything for our enjoyment” (I Timothy 6:17). For those of us who think that God works within an austerity plan, we may need to remember God’s provision for our enjoyment. When we give, we act like God, who is generous.

• **GOD ASKS FOR OUR WHOLE SELVES.** Modern life is based on the idea that we should have separate compartments for the pieces of our lives: work, family, leisure, religion and so on. Because of this, we may assume that our financial lives and church don’t belong together. But it may just be that the way we spend

our money is a mirror of our spiritual priorities. Perhaps Jesus’ response to the rich ruler (Matthew 19) was to get him to see that eternal life is something that starts with living and giving right now.

• **GOD INVITES US TO SHARE.** There is constant expression of concern in the Bible that the people of God must care for one another, especially for those who are most vulnerable. It is often the most vulnerable whose stories of generosity jump out at us from the pages of the Bible. Paul says this was the case for the Macedonians, who, “*out of their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity*” (II Corinthians 8:2). As Paul goes on writing to the church at Corinth,

he suggests that their acts of service and generosity prove that their confession of the gospel of Christ is true (II Corinthians 9:13). We, too, can give no matter what our circumstances are.

Why do you give?

Dori Zerbe Cornelsen is a stewardship consultant at the Winnipeg, Man., 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.

✉ **Individual MCC supporters are humble, not 'imperialistic'**

RE: "MCC CENTRALITY questioned," Nov. 29, 2010, page 4.

I am writing this response on behalf of the Community Mennonite Fellowship women's group.

We don't pretend to understand the complexities of restructuring Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), but we know where the heart lies—not in the logistics of a "green" plan or how global we are. The heart lies in individual donors and individual receivers.

MCC collectively, as a North American body, might

come across as "imperialistic," but, as individuals, our giving is done in humility and with great joy. Some of us can only do this kind of giving, especially when you hear of women over 100 years old sewing blankets and little children preparing newborn kits. All generations are involved in our church.

The helper and the helped are connected in a way that is only defined by God, not an organization. The helper is humbled by the spirit of the helped, as we were after witnessing the spirit of worship shown by Haitians right after their catastrophic loss last year.

Please don't restructure our ministry away from us.
MARIE ASSAD, DRAYTON, ONT.

FROM OUR LEADERS

Growing and sustaining church leaders

KAREN MARTENS ZIMMERLY

Indeed the body does not consist of one member, but of many (I Corinthians 12:14).

Mennonite Church Canada has identified the challenge of growing leaders for the church as one of our main priorities. To find out what kind of leadership development is needed in a world that continues to grow more diverse and complex, we're engaging in conversations across the church.

So what are we learning?

To thrive in this unsettled reality, the church needs visionary leaders who can inspire existing congregations as well as new ministries to enter into God's mission in a changing landscape. Amidst all the commotion, we also need leaders with a non-anxious presence, renewed and sustained by God's vision for the world.

To meet today's demands for leadership, we are calling on every member of the body to bring their gifts to a partnership for pastoral formation and training.

Congregational life and active ministry hone and mature a pastor's leadership skills. We need to encourage and equip local congregations to recognize and

embrace their role in forming pastors, but also in their ongoing responsibility to identify and nurture new leaders with a diversity of gifts for new ministry opportunities.

But local congregations cannot carry the burden of leadership development alone.

We also need the gifts that our schools bring, to offer sustained, in-depth training and formation shaped by ongoing research and scholarship. School environments have the unique opportunity to provide a communal setting for peer relationships, networking and support that continues into the ministry setting.



[L]ocal congregations cannot carry the burden of leadership development alone.

Not everyone has access to the pastoral training our post-secondary schools offer, but technologies are now available to help us make training more accessible across cultural diversities, geographical locations and personal realities. We need to think creatively about how we can offer pastoral training at a number of educational levels to form and sustain

pastors for their calling. But this is not a responsibility that the schools can carry alone.

In a world where change is normative, systems of ongoing and regular support, resourcing, re-tooling and spiritual renewal are vital. Our area churches play a key role in providing these services and creating new initiatives for support.

As the national church, MC Canada recognizes its responsibility to create and facilitate a new vision for leadership development. The vision taking shape has partners who are in conversation with each other, sharing gifts and experiences, and together creating more collaborative, flexible and diverse paths for leadership development.

While we do not know what the future will hold, we do know that the One who has called us to be the body of Christ is the One who will sustain us and walk with us.

We invite you to come to the MC

Canada assembly this summer at the University of Waterloo, Ont., to hear more about the strategic plan for pastoral leadership development.

Karen Martens Zimmerly is Mennonite Church Canada's denominational minister and director of leadership development.

LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

The future of faith in Canada

BY TROY WATSON

When economists were asked about the future of free market capitalism during the global economic meltdown of 2008, I repeatedly heard them responding, “We don’t know. Nobody knows. We are in new history.” I think the same could be said about the future of the church and conventional Christianity given the current paradigm shift we are in, as one predominant worldview is being replaced by another.

This is clearly happening in Canada. Look at the numbers:

- In 1901, 98 percent of Canadians identified themselves as Christian.
- Over the past two generations, the number of Canadians identifying themselves as non-religious has increased from 1 percent to 23 percent.
- If recent trends continue, non-Christians will outnumber Christians in Canada around 2023.
- 30 percent of Canadians do not believe in God.
- 36 percent of Canadians under the age of 25 do not believe in God.
- 84 percent of Canadians between the ages of 15 to 44 don’t attend church regularly.
- Mainline Protestant Christianity is the only major religion currently in decline in Canada. This decline began in 1921. The growth of all other major religions is due primarily to a shift in immigration patterns in Canada.
- Wicca, neo-paganism and native Canadian spirituality experienced the

highest percentage of growth over the last decade.

- Secular humanism—those who report themselves as agnostic, atheist, humanist, secularist or as having no religion—had the greatest numerical growth by far, increasing by 1.46 million people over the past decade. Secular humanists represent the second largest “religious group” in the country now.

These numbers indicate the spiritual paradigm shift in Canada is quickly approaching the tipping point. Canadians are converting in much greater numbers today than at any other time in our history. The difference is that they are now converting from Christianity.

One of the most striking profiles implied by these statistics is that the majority of people who are converting in Canada are:

- Between the ages of 16 and 44;
- In the process of getting a post-secondary education or already have one; and
- Moving from a Protestant faith to a secular humanist worldview.

Millions have already made this conversion, but there are even more who find themselves in transition between conventional Christianity and secular humanism. Consider this statistic: The percentage of those with a religious affiliation never attending a religious service increased from 24 percent to 41 percent in the past 20 years. This is a huge number of people, almost 10 million people.

So why is it that nearly a third of our

population still shares an affinity with Christian faith, but never goes to church? I believe that, for the majority of these people, church is not the primary problem; most of them are not merely looking for new and improved churches with polished pop rock worship and more technologically advanced sermon presentations. The real problem for these folks

is conventional Christianity itself.

As a result of my research and my own experience in connecting with those on the “fringe of the fold,” I am convinced the majority of Christians who no longer go to church—not to mention the

many more who are still attending only out of a sense of guilt, duty, loyalty, community or family pressure—still resonate with certain aspects of their Christian faith, but are finding the scientific secular humanist worldview as more credible in making sense of the world in which they live. I believe more and more Canadian Christians are not merely looking for an updated church as much as for an updated worldview that integrates their faith, education and experience of reality.

What does this mean for the church?

In my opinion, to deny, ignore or fight against this paradigm shift is futile. I don’t believe this shift has surprised or angered God, or is at heart against God. I believe this movement is at its centre a genuine pursuit of truth and will, therefore, lead to greater understanding and deeper experience of God, even if it means taking two steps backward for every three steps we take forward.

I believe that what we need more than ever are eyes to see God’s presence in the midst of all the change and confusion, and ears to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches today. We also need courageous pioneers of faith to help shape this new history.

To be continued . . .



I am convinced the majority of Christians who no longer go to church . . . are finding the scientific secular humanist worldview as more credible in making sense of the world in which they live.

Troy Watson is a Mennonite minister, resident theologian, spiritual director and a founding leader of The Quest, “a different kind of ‘church’ for life in the postmodern shift” in St. Catharines, Ont.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Clark—Rachel Joanna Buhler (b. Dec. 4, 2010), to Sarah Buhler and Charlie Clark, Osler Mennonite, Sask.

Friesen-Stoesz—Sophia Jolene (b. Jan. 7, 2011), to Jolene and Trevor Friesen-Stoesz, Pembina Mennonite, Morden, Man.

Martin—Colby Ty (b. Jan. 16, 2011), to Steve and Roxanne Martin, Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont.

McCandless-Buckwalter—Jarrett William (b. Nov. 30, 2010), to Danielle and Andrew McCandless, Warden Woods Mennonite, Toronto, Ont.

Nganga—Chris (b. Jan. 16, 2011), to Christien and Jeane Nganga, Ottawa Mennonite, Ont.

Weber—Cole Frederick (b. Nov. 12, 2010), to Cari and Elvin Weber, Community Mennonite, Drayton, Ont.

Yutzy—Quinten Bryce (b. Dec. 17, 2010), to Sandy and Justin Yutzy, Community Mennonite, Drayton, Ont.

Marriages

Dirks/McDonald—Shawna Dirks and Keith McDonald, at Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., Dec. 29, 2010.

Dyck/Enns—Mary Dyck (Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.) and Edmund Enns (Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.), in Saskatoon, Jan. 8, 2011.

Hergott/Smith—Gary Hergott and Lisa Smith, at Poole Mennonite, Ont., June 26, 2010.

Deaths

Bauman—Aden H., 82 (b. May 12, 1928; d. Sept. 23, 2010), Elmira Mennonite, Ont.

Bender—Lavern, 90 (b. Oct. 21, 1920; d. Jan. 5, 2011), Cassel Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Bueckert—Margaret (nee Zacharias), 70, (b. Dec. 5, 1940; d. Jan. 1, 2011), Eyebrow Mennonite, Sask.

Dahl—Ronald, 67 (b. July 4, 1943; d. Dec. 18, 2010), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Dyck—Louise (nee Sudermann), 84 (b. March 14, 1926; d. Jan. 11, 2011), First Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Dyck—Wayne Peter, 64 (d. Dec. 29, 2010), Rosenfeld Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Epp—Katie (nee Rempel), 84 (b. Oct. 12, 1926; d. Dec. 30, 2010), Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask.

Erb—Wilma, 83 (b. June 12, 1927; d. Jan. 1, 2011), Zurich Mennonite, Ont.

Friesen—George, 91 (b. Nov. 21, 1919; d. Dec. 27, 2010), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Friesen—Mary, 82 (b. Sept. 20, 1928; d. Dec. 31, 2010), Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Gingerich—Mildred, 83 (b. Sept. 17, 1927; d. Jan. 18, 2011), Zurich Mennonite, Ont.

Heinrichs—Edwin, 82 (b. Feb. 21, 1928; d. Jan. 13, 2011), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Meyer—Katharina (Tina) (nee Quiring), 86 (b. June 7, 1924; d. Jan. 5, 2011), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Moote—Agnes (nee Kroeker), 97 (b. Aug. 23, 1913; d. Dec. 29, 2010), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Paetkau—Helene (nee Friesen), 89 (b. Sept. 12, 1921; d. Dec. 17, 2010), First Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Penner—Maria (nee Klassen), 95 (b. Aug. 14, 1915; d. Dec. 12, 2010), First Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Rempel—Paul, 87 (b. June 18, 1923; d. Dec. 25, 2010), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, 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.

Ponius' Puddle



GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

An online voice for the 'quiet in the land'

By ROSS W. MUIR

Managing Editor

The simple and quaint have raised their voices, loudly, on AnabaptistBlogs.com," says the blog's founder, Jeff McLain.

Several hundred years ago, Mennonites and their Anabaptist predecessors educated and addressed their congregants in small rooms, mountainside caves and hidden in barns. Early thinkers like Michael Sattler and Menno Simons wrote their letters and theological statements by oil lamps and the shimmering moonlight.

Mennonites and their cousins of other

Anabaptist denominations don't have to preach in caves anymore, nor do they still write by oil lamps. Although they are still defined by their simplicity, there is an increasing and engaging voice of these Mennonites and Anabaptists on the blogosphere.

Last year, McLain formed AnabaptistBlogs.com as an engaging and missional online directory and network of Anabaptist-themed blogs from Anabaptist bloggers, giving them a central and unified home on the Internet. Not affiliated with any specific

Anabaptist or Mennonite denomination or conference, AnabaptistBlogs.com simply organizes blogs that are Anabaptist-themed.

Blog themes range from missionaries to pastors, and from Mennonite recipes to Anabaptist history and theology. More than 40 diverse bloggers—from conservatives to progressives—make up this network, which includes posts by Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker Andrew Suderman.

"I hope we do more than just network online," says McLain, who also acts as the site's webmaster. "I hope we can see benefits from this network form offline as well."

McLain hopes to eventually see churches hosting conferences and public forums for Anabaptist bloggers so they can learn how to sharpen their blogs and their online voice to carry the Anabaptist message in what many call a post-Christendom world. ❧

From a release by AnabaptistBlogs.com.

PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD



Friends Dayna Goertzen and Danika Peters from Didsbury's Bergthal Mennonite Church pretend to eat snow at this year's Mennonite Church Alberta junior snow camp held at Camp Valaqua in late January. The annual event brings together youths from across the province for worship, fellowship and winter fun. Megan Enns, a former Valaqua staffer and student at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Man., spoke on a theme of technology, healthy image and communication. "It was relevant . . . because it actually had to do with us," said Ryan Dickinson of Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary, of the keynote address.

Growing up into Christ

Church leaders consider post-Christendom Christian formation

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
CROSSHILL, ONT.

So important to congregations is the current state of Christian formation that, despite the blowing snow in rural Waterloo Region, most registrants arrived at Crosshill Mennonite Church for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's annual Pastors, Chaplains and Congregational Leaders Seminar on Jan. 15.

Inside the warm and inviting confines of the church, they listened to Arnold Neufeldt-Fast, associate academic dean of Tyndale University College and Seminary in Toronto, Ont., lecture on the Canadian post-Christian scene.

Neufeldt-Fast painted a picture of Canada's precipitously declining religious attendance and Christian knowledge. Referring to Stuart Murray's *The Naked Anabaptist*, he repeatedly made the point that the way evangelism and formation were done even 20 years ago no longer work. He described one teacher from Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener, Ont., who admitted that "the language of faith he had grown up with had lost its edge."

The latter part of Neufeldt-Fast's presentation drew heavily on David Augsburg's 2006 book, *Dissident Discipleship: A Spirituality of Self-Surrender, Love of God,*

and Love of Neighbor. In response to the move by many to individual spiritualities that are either mono-polar (it's all about self-realization), or bi-polar (it's all about God and me), Augsburg argues for a tri-polar spirituality that includes love of God, self and neighbour.

"We are not governed primarily by what we know, but by what we love and by what we desire," he said, quoting Pope Benedict XVI.

Desires are formed by habits and then trained by them, Neufeldt-Fast explained. But this is not a strictly intellectual process, or the acquisition of information. "Information rarely kindles core passions," he said. "Rarely does information disturb or re-orientate what we do. Information does not require us to become part of a different community with different practices."

Quoting theologian Stanley Hauerwas, he said that Christian formation needs "to corrupt the youth, precisely by making them citizens of the coming kingdom—perhaps useless and unproductive for what currently passes for 'society.'" Or the church needs to be moulding "not so secret agents of an ancient, urgent cause / who infiltrate the world with the love of God," he said, referring to Mennonite songwriter Bryan Moyer

Suderman's "Infiltrating the World."

Neufeldt-Fast spoke to the need for experiences that develop Augsburg's Seven Practices of Anabaptist Spirituality:

- Radical attachment to Jesus;
- Solidarity in community;
- Tenacious serenity (*Gelassenheit*);
- Habitual humility;
- Resolute nonviolence;
- Concrete service; and
- Authentic witness.

The goal for subsequent table discussions was to develop practical outcomes from these practices. However, it proved difficult for many to wrap their minds around how to not just give information in sermons, and faith exploration and Sunday School classes, since they themselves were steeped in the modern principles of Christian formation through education and information. ❧

❧ Briefly noted

MWC hopes to deepen global church connections

An international team from Mennonite World Conference (MWC) began a month-long tour of MWC member churches in the eastern and midwestern U.S. on Jan. 28. Led by Bert Lobe, MWC's North American staff representative, the group hopes to strengthen connections between the North American and global church. The group is travelling through Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Virginia and Kansas. "The goal is not so much to report," Lobe says. "Rather, we want to engage in conversation about the significance of the church, wherever it exists within our communion." Besides Lobe, the group includes church representatives from Asia, Africa and South America. Lobe acknowledges that MWC's support base in North America is very broad. "However, we still need to deepen our understanding of the global church and its strengths," he says. By sharing perspectives from churches on four continents, the team hopes to establish those deeper bonds.

—Mennonite World Conference



Arnold Neufeldt-Fast, associate academic dean of Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, Ont., discusses 21st century Christian formation with Marilyn Rudy-Froese of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., and Ardith Frey of Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont.

Understanding the Book of Revelation with John Neufeld

STORY AND PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent
WINKLER, MAN.

What would prompt a person to devote three to four hours a day for six months to study the Book of Revelation?

When John Neufeld, the former president of Canadian Mennonite Bible College (a predecessor of Canadian Mennonite University), Winnipeg, Man., and the author of the three-part *Canadian Mennonite* series “Reading the Bible for all its worth,” was given the assignment of preparing a nine-part radio series on the Revelation for the German radio program, *Frohe Botschaft*, in 2009, he embarked on a six-month, daily in-depth study of this

perplexing New Testament book.

John Klassen, pastor at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Winkler, invited Winkler Bergthaler, Covenant, Mordent and Carman Mennonite churches to join his congregation in hosting Neufeld’s study of

Neufeld said that Revelation should not be interpreted as prophecy that predicts, but as prophecy that proclaims God’s will for a specific time.

Revelation. The five churches then opened the invitation to others in the community.

“I never had the time to do this before,” Neufeld, a retired pastor and professor, told a crowd of nearly 100 people who came out on two frosty Saturday mornings in January to hear what he had discovered in his study. Some of his research was through commentaries, but much of it was refreshingly new. “Sometimes I was so caught up that I would wake up at night and had to make notes,” said Neufeld.

“Curiosity pays big dividends,” he said. “We short-change ourselves if we just read through Revelation. It is a unique book that needs a slow-cooker approach, rather than a microwave approach.”

With this in mind, Neufeld offered a condensed version of what he learned in his study. “The whole book is a letter, the longest letter in the New Testament,” he explained. “Within this letter are seven

shorter letters.”

Neufeld said that Revelation should not be interpreted as prophecy that predicts, but as prophecy that proclaims God’s will for a specific time. Nor is Revelation to be read as a sequential narrative, like the Gospel of Mark, for example. “The sequence in Revelation is a sequence in which John saw things, not in which they are supposed to happen. The series of visions overlap in time.”

John, the author of Revelation who received a vision that he was to communicate to the churches in Asia Minor, wrote the book to encourage the believers to

endure and remain faithful even through the persecution they faced. The letters describe the strengths and weaknesses of the churches, but offer assurance that Jesus is with them. That assurance holds for the church today, he said, adding, “I think we’d feel at home with these churches with their faithfulness and failures.”

Revelation is also not about the end of the world, according to Neufeld. “We have been led to believe that this is a sequence of end-time events, but that idea does not come from the text, but from outside sources and individuals,” he said. “The end time in biblical thinking is from Jesus’ time to the end. Revelation is helping us to understand what this end time is actually about.”

What John tried to communicate to the first-century churches, Neufeld said, is that they were not waiting for Jesus to become king, but that “Jesus is king already. He lives among his people already. The ‘millennial’ reign began on Christmas Eve.”

Neufeld also provided the historical and cultural backdrops of the book, saying, “John is giving the believers an understanding of the world in which they live. He is not predicting a future, but giving an understanding of the present.”

Neufeld’s study gave handles with which to read Revelation that will inspire readers of the Bible’s final book to renewed worship and discipleship. ❧



John Neufeld, who led a two-part study of the Book of Revelation to Winkler, Man., area churches, is pictured in the pulpit of Emmanuel Mennonite Church with his Bible and study notes.

MC Canada snapshots

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA



Ben and Patti Wiebe of Beamsville, Ont., are serving as Mennonite Church Canada Witness resource workers at Union Biblical Seminary in Pune, India, from mid-January until mid-April. He will teach intensive New Testament courses at the seminary which has strong connections to several Mennonite conferences in India. She will assist in the library and with a women's program. The Wiebes are receiving support for their service in India from St. Catharines United Mennonite Church and Brussels Mennonite Church.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA



Mennonite Church Canada Witness has sent Palmer Becker of Kitchener, Ont., to Bethlehem Bible College in Palestine to serve as a resource worker until March 19; he will teach a course on pastoral care and counselling at the college's Bethlehem campus and at its Nazareth branch. Becker's wife, Ardys, will join him later to serve as a library assistant at the college. The Beckers are members of Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont.

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Former panhandler wows MEDA audience

BY WALLY KROEKER

Mennonite Economic Development Associates
CALGARY, ALTA.

For Frank O'Dea, a second chance led to the founding of Second Cup, Canada's first specialty coffee chain.

Speaking to the annual convention of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) in Calgary, Alta., last fall, he said he had hit rock bottom on the streets of Toronto, a homeless panhandler begging for nickels and dimes to buy cheap wine or a night at a 50-cent flophouse. Then he got a second chance at sobriety.

His audience of 400 was transfixed by his story of unearthing hidden potential and "unleashing entrepreneurship," the convention theme. He explained how he parlayed his mounting successes into the co-founding of Second Cup, which now has hundreds of outlets across Canada.

After selling his share in the company, he moved on to other business and service ventures, founding Street Kids International and the Canadian Landmines Foundation. He eventually received the Order of Canada, the country's most prestigious civilian honour.

"With a little hope, vision and action you can change the world," he said.

Another keynote speaker—a global authority on faith and business—laid out a framework for Christian ethics to bolster entrepreneurship in daily life.

"Can Christians still engage in the marketplace with all the problems going on?" asked David Miller, a former international investment banker who now directs Princeton University's Faith and Work Initiative. For him, a better question is, "How can Christians not engage in the marketplace?"



Frank O'Dea, a former homeless panhandler on the streets of Toronto, Ont., who went on to found the Second Cup chain, told MEDA convention participants in Calgary how to 'unleash' their entrepreneurship potential.

Miller asserted that "the corporate world can be a moral community," and a good starting point is for firms to see themselves as "producing goods and services for humanity to make this world a better place."

While western business has suffered greatly from greed and misbehaviour, Miller sees evidence that a new generation "doesn't want to play the game the way it has been played." He encouraged businesspeople to build "faith-friendly" companies that go beyond mere tolerance and recognize that "the spirit is part of the people we hire."

MEDA president Allan Sauder reported that 2010 had been "a very successful year," despite ongoing uncertainty in the global economy. "Most gratifying, we were able to help over 9.4 million families to live healthier, happier lives through 101 partners in 45 countries."

He said donated funds had unleashed matching funds by a 10-times ratio, adding, "Your \$3 million contributions translated into nearly \$33 million of programs. Every dollar you donated was able to do the work of 11."

Three days of attention to "unleashing entrepreneurship" concluded with a challenge to turn inward and find spiritual freedom to unleash even greater service in the world.

Pennsylvania pastor Jane Hooper Peifer noted in her message that entrepreneurs, at their best, mirror "the creative, risk-taking, problem-solving, empowering and enabling characteristics of God." But, she added, there is still more room to grow in spiritual stature, suggesting that the circumstances of business, such as meagre profits and striving to satisfy regulators, could "tether" and "tie down" the energy, ingenuity and creativity of entrepreneurs.

Hooper Peifer said Paul's message to the Galatians pointed to a spiritual freedom by which entrepreneurs could "let go" of binding ropes. "Don't let yourself be tethered or held down by the things of this world, or by the power of your self-serving ego," she said, "but tether yourself instead to love, to the Spirit of Christ, the presence and love of God. Tether yourself to that place within you where Christ meets you and has set you free, which will then empower you to serve one another, to become servants to one another." ❧

*'With a little hope, vision and action you can change the world.'
(Frank O'Dea, co-founder of Second Cup)*

Africans urge Canadians to support mining regulations

STORY AND PHOTO BY GLADYS TERICHOW

Mennonite Central Committee

Although Canada is a world leader in mining, its laws don't ensure that Canadian mining companies operating in developing countries conform to human rights and environmental standards, says a Tanzanian Lutheran minister with an interest in mining issues.

"A voluntary code of conduct is not enough," said Godfrey Walalaze, who was visiting Canada and the U.S. late last year as part of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)-Africa Peacebuilding Learning Exchange.

Participants included five African leaders working for churches and Christian organizations in Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Congo, and five MCC staff working for peace and justice programs in Canada and the U.S.

Although mining was not the only focus of the learning exchange, participants visited mining-affected communities in Tanzania and Canada to gain a better understanding of the ethical, social and environmental consequences of mining.

According to a 2008 Canadian government report, 75 percent of the world's mining companies are headquartered in

Canada. More than 1,000 Canadian companies operate in more than 100 countries. In Africa, 100 Canadian-owned companies operate mines in 37 countries.

"It is important for people to be informed on how Canadian mining companies are conducting their business in our countries," said Walalaze. "We are not saying that Canadian mining companies should leave our countries. Minerals are there to be mined, but we want them to be mined responsibly. It should be a win-win situation for everyone."

One of the more serious incidents in Tanzania, he said, dates back to 1996, when families involved in small-scale gold mining operation in central-western Tanzania lost their homes and livelihoods to make way for commercial mining. He said religious leaders in Tanzania are calling for an independent and comprehensive investigation into the allegations that more than 50 small-scale miners were buried alive when the mineshafts were filled in.

"I know a woman personally who continues to express sorrow and grief because two of her sons were down there," Walalaze said. Families evicted from the

area have not received compensation and continue to claim that the evictions were swift and brutal, causing enormous economic and social hardships, he said, adding that the reputation of all Canadians is being tarnished by these allegations against Canadian-based mining companies.

Walalaze said he and many others who have access to international news through the Internet were watching closely the debate in Canada on Bill C-300. A private member's bill, Bill C-300 was drafted to develop corporate responsibility standards for Canada's gold, gas and oil companies working overseas, and to give the Canadian government

'Minerals are there to be mined, but we want them to be mined responsibly. It should be a win-win situation for everyone.'
(Godfrey Walalaze)

the power to investigate allegations of human rights and environmental abuses.

"This bill was not the solution to everything, but it would have been a very good way to solve two-thirds of our problems," he said.

The bill was defeated in late October by a vote of 140-134.

Walalaze encouraged Canadians to continue advocating for new legislation that addresses mining injustices. "Just because this bill was defeated doesn't mean that the issues can't be debated again," he said. "Justice is not an event; it is a process."

During their visit in Ontario, the African church leaders travelled to Timmins, where they met with representatives of several First Nations communities. Walalaze said he found many similarities in the lives of people in aboriginal communities and in Tanzania. "The similarities are how people value the land and talk about the land," he said. "The land is the centre of our relationship to God, to each other and to our existence. That is how we relate to the land; it is the source of our life. I was surprised to see a group of people here in Canada who had values very similar to ours." ▮



Learning exchange participants visit *The Mennonite Story*, a museum at St. Jacobs, Ont. Pictured from left to right: Godfrey Walalaze and Hubert Mukalasi Lubyama of Tanzania, Ray Motsi of Zimbabwe, Dumisani Nkomo of Zimbabwe, Jean-Calvin Kitata of Mennonite Central Committee Quebec, and Rose Lala Biasima of Congo.

A new direction for Sam's Place

MCC Manitoba brings the financially struggling organization under its corporate umbrella

BY GLADYS TERICHOW
Mennonite Central Committee
WINNIPEG, MAN.

Sam's Place, a used book store, café and performing arts venue, has developed into a welcoming meeting place for people living in Elmwood, a working class neighbourhood in the northeast part of Winnipeg.

But during its first 20 months of operations, the venture has not met the expectations that it could generate enough funds to cover operational costs and donate profits to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) programs, says Brad Reimer, coordinator of MCC Manitoba's resource generation team. "We didn't do our homework," he admits. "The projections for generating income were too optimistic."

Sam's Place opened in March 2009 under the same organizational structure as MCC thrift shops in Manitoba: as independent, community-based, non-profit organizations that contribute their proceeds to MCC. But beginning last September, Sam's Place became part of MCC Manitoba and the community board running it became an advisory committee.

"It is our hope that Sam's Place will generate enough funds to cover its costs and eventually have profits that will be donated to MCC, but it is not just about making money for MCC," Reimer stresses. "Sam's Place is developing into a hybrid social enterprise that blends community benefits and income generation."

There has also been a change in the ownership of the building where Sam's Place is located. When MCC Manitoba began looking for new office space for its satellite office, the second floor of the Sam's Place building was identified as suitable. The negotiations evolved into an agreement to purchase the building on Sept. 1 of last year and to renovate the second floor into offices.



Patrons at Sam's Place in Winnipeg, Man., enjoy coffee, reading and good conversation under the watchful eye of 'Sam,' the Komodo dragon. The formerly independent, community-based, non-profit organization is now a part of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Manitoba and the board that ran it now acts in an advisory capacity.

The building, appraised at \$550,000, was purchased by MCC Manitoba from Sam's Place for \$350,000, the same amount as the loan that MCC Manitoba had co-signed previously. This loan enabled the community board operating Sam's Place to purchase the building and renovate the main floor.

Under the new arrangement, Sam's Place will cover 60 percent of the building's operating costs, including mortgage payments.

In addition to co-signing the original loan, MCC Manitoba had loaned Sam's Place \$154,000 to help with renovation cost overruns and operating cost shortfalls. Sam's Place has made payments of \$10,000, leaving a balance of \$144,000.

"That is the only debt from before Sept. 1, when Sam's Place was a separate entity from MCC," Reimer explains.

Renovations to the second floor for office space were expected to be complete by the end of January.

The MCC Manitoba board approved an additional mortgage of \$200,000 for these renovations, but, according to Reimer, cost overruns of \$60,000 have accrued.

Although revenue is improving, Sam's Place still has operating shortfalls of between \$1,200 and \$1,500 each month.

To help Sam's Place become self-sufficient, the advisory committee is exploring new ideas for income generation. A book and bake sale held in December raised \$1,800, a rare book is currently being listed on the Internet for \$1,500, and plans are underway to host special events that have admission fees and cover charges.

MCC Manitoba's financial relationship to Sam's Place has drawn criticism from some constituents over the past year, but, Reimer says, "Our advisory committee is committed to developing Sam's Place into a financially viable enterprise with a strong community outreach component. I am energized and enthused by the commitment of our committee, volunteers and staff, and the potential for success and growth."

About 90 volunteers of all ages assist Sam's Place with a variety of duties, including working in the kitchen, sorting books and serving customers. ☘

GOD AT WORK IN US

A lifelong joy of words

BY KARIN FEHDERAU

Saskatchewan Correspondent

SASKATOON, SASK.



If you open the front cover of the Merriam-Webster's Primary Dictionary, you'll find acknowledgement of Victoria Neufeldt's contribution in the preface. Lively illustrations make the book visually appealing and invite children inside where they can learn and discover the joy of words.

The joy of words is what initially led Neufeldt, a member of Saskatoon's First Mennonite Church, into language studies. Now several years into her retirement, Neufeldt looks back on a long and varied career in linguistics.

The middle of three children, she grew up, as she puts it, "all over Saskatchewan." Although raised Mennonite, Neufeldt did not experience a typical farm upbringing common to so many of her generation. Since the family often found itself in non-Mennonite communities, her parents attended the nearest church regardless of denomination.

Finally settling in Saskatoon in her teens, Neufeldt attended Nutana High School. University followed, earning an honours bachelor of arts degree in English and German. After graduation, she spent a year in Germany on an exchange scholarship and then spent another year working as a reporter for the local paper. She then went back to school, this time for her master's degree.

A second trip—this time to Colombia with Canadian University Service Overseas—provided her with valuable experience teaching literature to fourth-year students at the university there.

"Some students came from illiterate families," she recalls, lamenting that, while she could see the academic potential in her students, she knew they would never go further because of financial constraints.

Returning to her hometown again, Neufeldt found herself back in the classroom in the English department as head of the English as a Second Language (ESL) program at the University of

Saskatchewan.

"I was the only teacher," she says, adding, "I developed the curriculum."

The expectation for faculty at the University of Saskatchewan at that time was to get a Ph.D. within three years to secure their jobs. "If you didn't have a Ph.D. by then, you were not going to get tenure," she says.

In 1970, Neufeldt was accepted for studies at the University of Toronto, Ont., where she specialized in linguistics. Right away, she found herself up against a roadblock. "U of T made me take a second masters," she says. Because she was shifting from language studies to linguistics, she had some courses to make up, so it took her an extra year to finish her doctorate.

By then, jobs were scarce in the academic world, and Neufeldt wanted to teach. "I applied to every university that had even one linguistics course," she says, "but nobody was hiring."

Finally, she heard about a job with Gage Publishing in Toronto, and applied there out of desperation.

"I didn't even know there was such a thing as lexicography," admits Neufeldt of the work of producing dictionaries. While at Gage, though, she worked on three volumes in the Dictionary of Canadian English series.

After a decade of writing dictionaries for Gage, she took a job working for Webster's New World Publishing in the U.S. Initially, she didn't plan to stay in the States for long, but a second opportunity came along eight years later in Springfield, Mass., when she was hired by

Merriam-Webster.

Her return to Saskatchewan in 2006 coincided with the publication of a children's dictionary whose idea belonged to Neufeldt. Specifically geared to five- to seven-year-olds, the purpose was to introduce children to dictionaries and prepare them to use one.

Lively illustrations and childish jokes make the book visually appealing and enticing for young minds.

She originally approached Hertig Publishers in Edmonton, Alta., to see if there was any interest in such a work. "[Mel Hertig] was the only Canadian publisher who would even have taken on something like that," she recalls, knowing the profit-hungry nature of publishing and the small profit margin of dictionaries.

In the end, Merriam-Webster agreed to develop her idea.

"Most publishers choose stuff they can flog in the United States," she says, going on to explain that Canadian publishers will even regularly use the American spelling of words so as not to offend American sensibilities. The idea exists in the publishing world that Canadians don't care, she says.

At 71, Neufeldt now spends her days editing *The Historian*, a magazine published three times a year for the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan, and enjoying time with her friends and family. ❧

PHOTO BY SUSAN MCCRAE



Victoria Neufeldt works on *The Historian*, a publication of the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan, from her home office.

ARTBEAT

A more inclusive overview of Mennonite history

By JODI H. BEYELER

Goshen College
GOSHEN, IND.

The book *Through Fire and Water: An Overview of Mennonite History* was first published in 1996 by Herald Press and presented the Mennonite faith story within the sweep of church history for youths and adults wanting to learn more about the denomination or their heritage. Now, 14 years later, it needed to be revised and updated to be more globally and ethnically inclusive.



Nolt

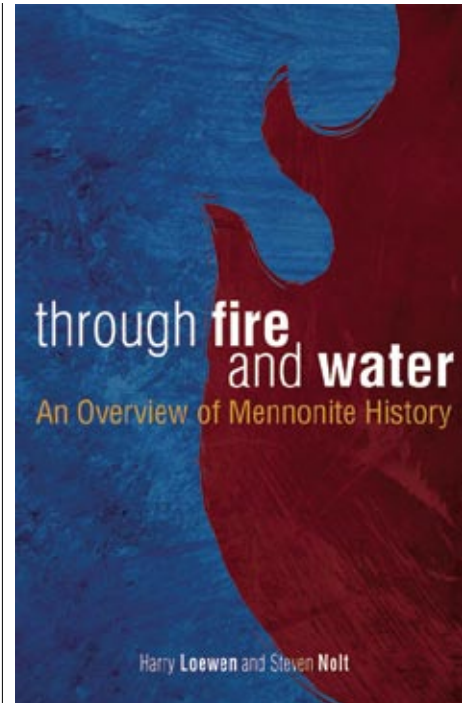
As a co-author of the original with Harry Loewen, Goshen College history professor Steve Nolt agreed to update the story and incorporate new historical research and discoveries. A newly revised version of the book was published last year.

Through Fire and Water uses stories to trace the radical Reformation from 16th-century Europe to today's global Anabaptist family. Written in an accessible and non-academic style, the book is an introduction to the Mennonite faith story. It was written with several audiences in mind: those wanting to learn about Anabaptists and Mennonites, churches seeking to teach youths and adults about Mennonite origins and beliefs, and students in Mennonite colleges and high schools in Canada and the United States. The revision includes many more stories from Asia, Africa and Latin America, as well as more recent North American Mennonite history.

"I hope that readers will find some stories of people like them, and who have similar questions and challenges," says Nolt. "Some of the people they will meet in *Through Fire and Water* were trouble-makers who couldn't keep quiet, and others were cautious folks who lived their faith in quieter

ways. Some lived through horrific wars and others faced the challenge of prosperity. They were refugees, missionaries, mothers and peacemakers, all discerning how to live faithfully as followers of Jesus in their contexts. I hope younger Mennonites and anyone coming to know the tradition will join this living conversation about discipleship, interacting with the stories in the book, and then also with those around them today."

Nolt is the author or co-author of eight other books, including *Amish Grace: How Forgiveness Transcended Tragedy* (2007), *Mennonites, Amish and the American Civil*



War (2007), and *A History of the Amish* (2003). He is also a co-author of the forthcoming North America volume in the Global Mennonite History Project. ❧

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FOCUS ON POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

VIEWPOINT

The trouble with the Bible

BY ED NEUFELD

Different people have different problems with the Bible, but what has troubled me the most over a few decades of reading the Bible and preaching regularly is that a lot of the Bible is not practical. Make it relevant, they taught me when I was a seminary student. But most of the Bible is hard to make relevant. Much does not meet my needs, at least not the things I feel I need: encouragement, guidance, relief, help or something.

I read the Bible, but what it says doesn't help. Put another way, a lot of the Bible does not answer our questions. We have questions that we would like God to answer, and most of the Bible doesn't answer

differently this week, or at least encourages us. These are all valid topics, but if this definition governs what God's people hear, a lot of Scripture never sees the light of day. If we are right about what we need, then God is out of touch, or at least a lot of his book is. And that troubles me enough to question the premise. Maybe we are not right about what we need.

There are certainly parts of the Bible that do meet our felt needs, that are easily made practical and relevant, and that answer our important questions. If the goal is to find verses that are relevant, one can usually succeed. But if we intend to preach and teach the whole Bible, we lose relevance.

If the goal is to find Scriptures that are relevant, one can usually succeed. But if we intend to preach and teach the whole Bible, we lose relevance. At least that's what we assume.

them. If the Bible is God's Word—God speaking to his people—why does so much of it not seem practical or relevant?

I am reading through Numbers, where Moses tells the different clans of Levites what they will carry when they move the Tabernacle and its furniture. How on earth will I make that practical or relevant?

Part of the problem is just me. I am better at figuring out what a part of the Bible meant to the first readers than I am at figuring out what it might mean for us. But I know how few sermons get preached on texts like that, so the problem is not just me.

I take a "practical" sermon to be one that warns us about a prevalent sin, helps us manage our inner life, tells us what to do

At least that's what we assume. This is why preachers who are always practical and relevant preach topical sermons. But most of Scripture does not bend easily to our definition of practical and relevant. And that's the trouble with the Bible.

The solution is hinted at in the Old Testament. Job wished for an audience with God, because he had big questions to put to God directly. Finally God appeared to Job, but then God asked all the questions and answered none. Job agreed it was better that he just listen.

Jesus had his own solution. In the gospels, he at least responded to people's questions, but often did not answer them. He changed the topic and answered what people should have asked, instead of what

they did ask:

- In Luke 12, Peter asked, "Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?" Jesus responded, but did not answer.
- In Luke 13, someone asked Jesus if only a few would be saved. Jesus responded, but did not answer.
- In John 3, Nicodemus wanted to talk about whether or not Jesus was from God, but Jesus answered something else.
- The Samaritan woman in John 4 wanted to know why a Jewish man would ask a Samaritan woman for water. Jesus spoke kindly about a more important question.
- The disciples asked, "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Wrong question.

While Jesus often did answer directly, he freely spoke of other things if he thought the question was misguided. Might this be the way of the whole Bible? Is it possible that all of Scripture might be answering the questions we should be asking? Consider the people who spoke with Jesus in the gospels. Should they have assumed that if Jesus did not answer the question they asked, his words were not practical or relevant?

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful," begins a famous verse in II Timothy 3. By whose definition, though: God's or ours? And that is the right question. If the trouble turns out to be not with the Bible after all—if all Scripture is, in fact, useful—then the trouble is with us when we won't let God change the topic.

Let us assume that the whole Bible is practical and relevant, and meets our needs better than any other book possibly could. Then, based on that premise, let us consider what we need to hear. It turns out that God is actually God and our trouble with the Bible is that God thinks he knows best. ❧



Ed Neufeld is a professor of biblical studies at Providence College, Otterburne, Man. ❧

FOCUS ON POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Grebel students leading a solar revolution

BY JENNIFER KONKLE

Conrad Grebel University College
WATERLOO, ONT.

It started as an altruistic dream, but almost two years later a vision for a cleaner and greener Grebel has been realized.

A student group began meeting in 2009 with the hope of taking a more active role in environmental issues in their immediate community. Named Solar Grebel, the group proposed a cluster of solar thermal panels on Conrad Grebel University College's roof to preheat the domestic hot water used for student showers. With the support of Grebel administrators, these students researched the project, released a request for proposals, selected a supplier and applied for grants.

Jonathan Van Egmond, one of the founders of Solar Global, found the whole process invaluable. "When Solar Grebel first formed, we had no idea where to even start," he admits. "In completing this project, all the students involved learned what it takes to organize a building and energy project from beginning to end."

Beyond practical knowledge, Madeleine Bonsma's reason for joining Solar Grebel was to take a step towards saving the world and to help set a good example. "We, as westerners, grossly misuse our resources, and as a result we desperately need to take action when it comes to environmental and economic justice," she says. "Solar Grebel provides a way for students to work towards a sustainable and fair society. This technology will ultimately save Grebel money, and it's a great way for the college to lead by example."

After several days of construction and installation in chilly December, Grebel's first solar thermal collector began its endless cycle of heating glycol! Glycol is circulated through pipes that go between a tank in the boiler room and the panels on the roof. City water is passed through the tank and gets pre-heated by the coils of warm glycol before moving on to the boiler. On average,

the cold water starts at 10 degrees C. The 30-tube collector on Grebel's roof will contribute to a 39-degree C rise for every 150 litres of water after eight hours of sun.

The three solar panels will produce 7.82 megawatt hours of electricity, which will ultimately contribute to savings of 936.9 cubic metres of natural gas annually, about 14 percent of Grebel's current load. More importantly, Grebel's CO2 emissions will be reduced by 1,981 kilograms.

With hard work and determination, the students managed to secure donations towards a goal of \$47,800. Notable supporters included \$10,000 from TD, \$5,000 from the Grebel administration, \$1,500 from Student Council, and \$4,140 through government grants. Students in Ed Janzen's sociology class voted to provide \$100 as the most worthy charitable project around.

Once the last \$6,000 has been raised, "we hope to expand our current three-panel system over the next several years to a total of nine to 12 panels," Bonsma says. "Also, if Grebel proceeds with a new building, we would like to incorporate this technology in its construction from the get-go. And if, far in the future, we run out of places to put panels, I think Solar Grebel could continue on as a more general group to make Grebel more environmentally friendly." ❧

CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE PHOTO



Solar Grebel students are thrilled to watch their green dreams take shape as they stand on the roof at Conrad Grebel University College with a partially installed solar thermal collector.

FOCUS ON POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

A serious interest in student well-being

By JOSIAH NEUFELD
Canadian Mennonite University
WINNIPEG, MAN.

“Most universities are good at academics,” says Sue Sorensen, who teaches English literature at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg, adding, though, “If you turn up on our campus, people are going to care about you, whether you want them to or not!”

Lindsay Braul can vouch that Sorensen’s words aren’t just good PR. Braul put her studies at the University of Regina, Sask., on hold to come to CMU, where she found something she’d been missing. Braul went straight from Grade 12 into an education degree program at the University of Regina. She worked hard to get high marks and qualify for scholarships. It was a lonely year, she recalls. She didn’t have time for

her friends or personal growth. “Parts were missing,” she says. “I was ready to leave my hometown and try something new.”

Her parents encouraged her to attend CMU for a year.

“It was refreshing,” says Braul. It startled her to be around people who talked openly about God. “It’s the first time I’ve been surrounded by a lot of people who also believe,” she says.

Even though she describes herself as a science student who “would rather do math equations than write a paper,” Braul says getting a three-year arts degree at



Christy Anderson, second from the left, shares her experience at Canadian Mennonite University with fellow students.

CMU has been the best choice she could have made. While she plans to pick up her studies in Regina again, she says that what she learned at CMU will inform the way she lives her life.

Joshua Krueger, majoring in international development studies, says CMU has

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boosted his confidence. He was 17 when he came to CMU from Ladner, B.C., on a \$10,000 leadership scholarship. Unsure about his major, he signed up for every class that looked interesting and joined the volleyball team. “One of the guys took me under his wing,” says Krueger. “These 23- or 24-year-old guys had no problem hanging out with me. . . . By second semester I had tons of self-confidence.”

Adam Janzen of Coaldale, Alta., came to CMU because of its budding sciences program, but he ended up taking many Bible and theology classes as well. At CMU, he discovered how theology and science illuminate and inform each other. “I want to take the things that I learned about theology and my faith here, and take them wherever I go,” he says.

Few students at CMU have a more dramatic story than Christy Anderson, a communications major who is preparing to graduate this spring. She spoke recently at a CMU chapel service in which she told about an abusive childhood and her struggle for fulfillment that led to an addiction to hard drugs and the spiralling chaos of not caring whether she overdosed or died.

Anderson shed tears when she described how she saw the face of Christ in a detox centre on Main St. and of how this began her healing journey.

Telling her story in chapel isn't something Anderson was ready to do when she first arrived at CMU. “I was nervous,” she recalls. “I was thinking, ‘I’m a single parent. I’ve got a one-year-old, and I’m 30 years old. How am I going to fit into this place?’

“But what I found was just total acceptance. I was welcomed here just like anyone else,” says Anderson, who is part Ojibwe. “I have a lot of brothers and sisters here.”

A Christian university ought to offer students an alternative to mainstream culture, Sorensen believes. “Our culture today is acquisitive, commercial and pretty unloving,” she says. “Someone needs to demonstrate that there are other ways to think and to live. Working and studying in a faith-based institution, as far as I’m concerned, just signals that we take love and justice and compassion seriously.”



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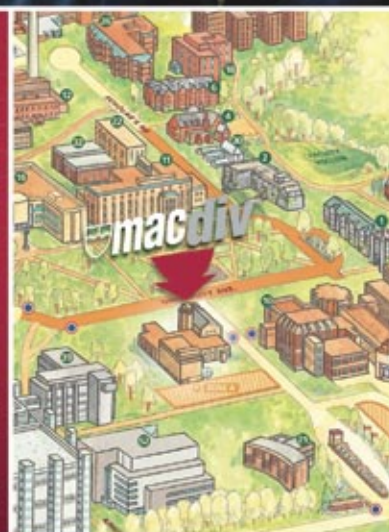
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Canadian students enjoy benefits of distance education

BY ANNETTE BRILL BERGSTRESSER

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
ELKHART, IND.

In 2009, the high percentage of Canadian participants in the pastoral studies distance education program at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) left program administrators scratching their heads. Ten of the 16 students were from Mennonite Church Canada, with eight of these coming from MC Eastern Canada.

Last year, six of the eight continuing students were Canadians.

These statistics prompted administrators to ask the Canadians how they'd heard about AMBS's college-level ministry-training program in which pastors and lay leaders complete coursework via correspondence and meet with a local mentor.

The first step

Susanne Thiessen of Faith Mennonite Church, Leamington, Ont., signed up for the program after her pastor, Ruth Boehm, gave her the brochure. "I'd always considered that [the program] would be a good idea, but I had put it on the back burner," said Thiessen, who has a background in electronics and computer sales/support, and began working as a youth minister at Faith two years ago.

But then Boehm told her that two other youth workers in Leamington were interested in the program and had approached her about being their mentor. "I thought, 'This is the time to do it, whether I'm ready or not,'" she said.

"I struggled with the schedule a bit at first," said Thiessen, who was working half-time as youth minister and half time as secretary at Faith. "But Lois Zehr, our instructor, was very accommodating and

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flexible, and it worked out.”

Zehr lives in Goshen, Ind., and corresponds with her students via e-mail.

Brent Horst, a lay leader and long-time member of St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, Ont., first picked up a program brochure last January, when Sherri Martin-Carman, development associate and admissions counsellor for AMBS, visited his church.

“I hadn’t done anything quite like this before, but it seemed like a time to give it a try,” said Horst, who works full time as an information technology director for Home Hardware Stores. Like Thiessen, he has found it challenging to make time to study, and has appreciated Zehr’s flexibility.

Engaging the material

Thiessen has valued the questions that have helped her to see her congregation as a whole and to identify its strengths and weaknesses. Remembering that Faith had begun a visioning/ dreaming process a few years prior, she helped initiate a re-examination by pastors and church council of the list that had come out of that process. “It was interesting to see how many things on that list were actually starting,” she reflected. “We then worked to connect people who were interested in moving forward with some of the projects.”

An area church connection?

Is there a correlation between the number of students from Ontario and the leadership development focus of MC Eastern Canada?

“I think that [the area church] does a really good job of encouraging faith growth/nurture opportunities,” Horst said, noting his congregation’s strong ties to MC Eastern Canada.

Muriel Bechtel, who has served for 10 years as MC Eastern Canada’s conference minister, said, “One way we’ve tried to encourage pastors to use this resource is to help with financial assistance. This is an important way of encouraging the congregation to do their part as well, to help their pastors take this course.”

Bechtel gives credit for MC Eastern Canada’s work in leadership development to Ralph Lebold, who was the first person to hold a leadership training position shared between the area church and AMBS, and

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all who have built on his efforts.

“But I’m just amazed so many times at the way the Spirit works. I don’t feel as though we are doing all the work,” she added. “Like with Frank [Froese of Leamington United Mennonite] just finding [the course unexpectedly] on the Internet: I believe that was the Spirit’s leading. Then we give our own small effort, and the Spirit multiplies it all.” ❧

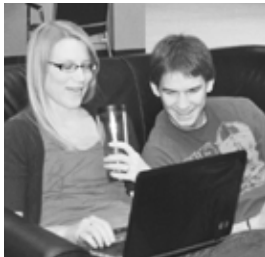
❧ Briefly noted

CMU students raise over \$4,200 for foreign aid

WINNIPEG, MAN.—As a student body, Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) beat its goal of raising \$4,000 for foreign aid through its 2010 Pearson Challenge by almost \$300. The student council kicked off its annual challenge in October by encouraging students to make a difference in the global community by personally donating 0.7 percent of their tuition costs to foreign aid. Students turned in their pledges in November, along with signed letters calling for action from the Canadian government regarding development assistance. The Pearson Challenge, which has run each fall at CMU since 2005, commemorates the 1969 Partners in Development Commission report that recommended 0.7 percent of a country’s income be donated for development assistance. “Forty-one years later, Canada is barely meeting half of that commitment each year,” says student council vice-president Erin Weaver, who headed up the 2010 challenge. Ninety-two CMU students participated, raising \$4,278. That sum will be added to student council’s matching fund of \$2,500, for a total of \$6,778. The final total is only about \$700 short of the \$7,500 goal that represents 0.7 percent of total tuition paid to CMU for one academic year.

—Canadian Mennonite University

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Calendar

British Columbia

Feb. 25: LEAD conference, Living Hope Christian Fellowship, Surrey.

Feb. 26: MC B.C. annual general

meeting, Living Hope Christian Fellowship, Surrey.

April 8-10: Junior youth "Impact" retreat, Camp Squeah.

April 16-17: Camp Squeah paddle-athon fundraiser.

April 16,17: Lenten Vespers with Abenmusik Choir; 8 p.m. each evening; (16) Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford; (17) Knox United Church, Vancouver. Free-will offering to Menno Simons Centre.

Alberta

Feb. 25-27: Senior high snow camp at Camp Valaqua. For more information, call 780-637-2510.

March 11-12: MC Alberta annual general meeting, at Holyrood Mennonite Church, Edmonton.

Saskatchewan

Feb. 25-26: Songfest, at First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

March 5-6: Canadian Mennonite University "portable" class with Delmar Epp, at First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

March 11-13: Canadian Mennonite University "portable" class with Titus Guenther, at Zion Mennonite Church, Swift Current; topic: "Proclaiming Christ in a post-Christendom society."

March 18-19: MC Saskatchewan annual delegate sessions, in North Battleford.

April 5: Pastors gathering at Langham Mennonite Church.

Manitoba

Feb. 21-23: Manitoba Mennonite Young Adults winter retreat at Camp Koinonia.

Feb. 25-26: MC Manitoba annual delegates gathering, at MCI, Gretna.

Feb. 26: Journeys to Wholeness: a fundraising event for Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA), at Canadian Mennonite University's Great Hall, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m. To reserve a seat, call 204-925-1915.

March 11-13: Peace It Together Conference returns to CMU after a yearlong sabbatical, featuring drama by Ted Swartz and keynote speakers Jarem Sawatsky, Dan Epp-Tiessen and Adelia Neufeld Wiens. For more information, e-mail info@cmu.ca.

March 17: Verna Mae Janzen Music Scholarship performances, at CMU's Laudamus Auditorium, at 7:30 p.m.

March 20: Mennonite Community Orchestra performs at the CMU chapel, at 3 p.m.

March 21: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate fundraising banquet at the Marlborough Hotel, Winnipeg, at 6 p.m.

March 26, 27: CMU 10th anniversary choral concerts: (26) at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, at 7:30 p.m.;

UpComing

PHOTO BY RICHARD ALBRECHT



Nathan Martin, left, Jocelyn Cameron, Laura Janzen and Joel Becker are pictured during a dress rehearsal for the upcoming production of Godspell at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, Ont. The musical centres on Jesus attracting disciples and followers, then follows those individuals as they grow into a community, confronting the pressure and persecution from the society around them. The play runs from Feb. 17 to 19, with evening performances beginning at 7:30 p.m., and a 2 p.m. matinee on Feb. 19. For more information, or to purchase tickets, visit rockway.ca or call the school at 519-342-0007 ext. 3012.

Continuing education offered for B.C. pastors

A "Continuing Education for Multicultural Leaders" course is being offered to pastors from Mennonite Church B.C. congregations this winter and spring. Co-sponsored by Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), MC B.C. and MC Canada, the training event will focus on Anabaptist history and thought for the church today. It begins on Feb. 19 at Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, and will feature worship, fellowship with church leaders and three learning sessions with Maurice Martin of MC Eastern Canada. "Our purpose is to strengthen the Anabaptist understanding of the leaders of MC B.C.'s multicultural congregations through offering a one-semester module [of AMBS]," says Samson Lo, director of Multicultural Ministry for MC Canada. Curriculum will be available in English, Korean and Vietnamese. Ten small group study sessions are planned from February through May using the "Anabaptist History and Thought" booklet, with regular meetings throughout the semester with a mentor/small group cohort based on participants' first language. The curriculum is one unit of a five-unit pastoral education curriculum that is offered for college credit through AMBS. The event will conclude on May 28.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN

(27) at Buhler Hall, Gretna, at 3 p.m.

Ontario

Feb. 11: Rod and Lorna Sawatsky Visiting Scholar Lecture, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. Speaker: Donald Kraybill. Topic: The tragic shooting of 10 girls in an Amish schoolhouse in Nickel Mines, Pa., the unique features of Amish forgiveness, and the meaning and relevance of Christian forgiveness in a contentious world.

Feb. 12: Grand Philharmonic Choir presents the premiere of John Burge's "Declaration" (based on the UN Declaration of Human Rights) with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, at Centre in the Square, Kitchener, 7:30 p.m. For more information, or to purchase tickets, call toll-free 1-800-265-8977.

Feb. 12, 25: February Potato Blitz events for House of Friendship. (12) Drop your spuds off at local participating supermarkets, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (25) Community potato lunch at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Kitchener, noon to 1 p.m.

Feb. 17-19: Rockway Mennonite Collegiate presents the musical *Godspell*; (17,18) at 7:30 p.m.; (19) at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 21: Family Day open house at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Indoor and outdoor activities. Light lunch provided at noon. For more information, or to register, call 519-625-8602 or e-mail info@hiddenacres.ca.

Feb. 22-24: MC Eastern Canada School for Ministers, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. Speaker: Irma Fast Dueck. Topic: "Why worship?" Open to the public.

March 5,6: DaCapo Chamber Choir presents "Chiaroscuro: Music for choir and two harps," at St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Kitchener; 8 p.m. (5), 3 p.m. (6). For more information, or for tickets, call 519-725-7549 or visit www.dacapochoir.ca.

March 14, 15: Grandparent and Grandchild Days at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp and Retreat Centre. Inter-generational fun and learning each day. For more information, visit hiddenacres.ca or call 519-625-8602.

March 18-19: Living Water Fellowship, New Hamburg, hosts a communications workshop for engaged or newly married couples. For more information, contact Denise Bender at 519-656-2005 or denise_bender@yahoo.com.

March 25-27: Marriage Encounter weekend at King Hotel, Palmerston; begins 7:30 (25) to 4 p.m. (27). For more information, or to register, call Marjorie Roth at 519-669-8667 or e-mail wmroth@rogers.com.

March 26: Menno Singers present "Choral Mystics," at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, at 8 p.m.

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.

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Review of applications will begin February 28, 2011 and will continue until the position is filled. Subject to final budgetary approval, the appointment will begin July 1, 2011. Rank will be commensurate with qualifications and experience.

All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadian citizens and permanent residents of Canada will be given priority. CMU is committed to employment equity.

More information: www.cmu.ca/employment.html
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AREA MINISTER

Mennonite Church Alberta invites applications for the position of Area Minister (three-quarter time), starting July 2011.

The Area Minister is a pastor to the pastors and spiritual leaders within Mennonite Church Alberta (MCA). She/he gives primary attention to the pastoral care and leadership development of the pastors of MCA congregations, and MCA staff and contract employees. She/he completes administrative duties related to assisting congregations in pastoral searches, pastoral reviews, the ordination and commissioning of pastors, and she/he provides spiritual oversight to the work and ministry of the Area Church.

Mennonite Church Alberta is a community of 16 Anabaptist-Mennonite congregations in Alberta; worshipping the Triune God; unified in Jesus Christ; guided by the Holy Spirit; living a biblical faith; growing as communities of grace, joy and peace, and together presenting Jesus Christ to the world; and is affiliated with Mennonite Church Canada.

To express your interest, or to get more information about this position, please contact:

Hélène Wirzba, Personnel Committee, Mennonite Church Alberta
E-mail: wirzbah@telus.net or Phone: 403-330-4524.

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BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent
EDMONTON, ALTA.

It's amazing how little gifts sometimes act like seeds.

Just before Christmas, our neighbour to the East had major surgery. She is a widow and her two daughters are not able to be with her as much as they would like. Our family pitched in, shovelling snow, getting groceries, checking on her and providing a few meals.

One evening, my nine-year-old son and I were out shovelling, and he went West. Those neighbours are a young couple expecting their first child. I asked Jacob why he was shovelling that walk. "It doesn't look like they're home, so I'll do it," he said.

On Jan. 9, my husband Tim preached at First Mennonite about how God's Spirit has given all of us gifts to use for the building up of the body of Christ.

After church, we found three neighbours shovelling, chipping ice and blowing snow off

of our driveway! Our young neighbour—who we found out later was recovering from knee surgery—limped as he worked. He saw Jacob clear his walk a few days earlier, and was touched by the gesture.

We grabbed our shovels and joined the snow party. Another neighbour from across the street showed up with a Bobcat. He pushed the mountains of snow farther onto front yards so that we'd have more space for the next snowfall. Another neighbour added his snowblower to the mix. Soon the street was level and clear for a stretch of about four houses!

Heavy snowfalls in Edmonton this winter have made driving difficult. Streets are rutted and windrowed, but ours appears as a sudden clearing. It has an open and welcome feel.

A few shovels and a little time are small gifts, but they grow some pretty amazing results. ❧