

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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EDITORIAL

Our naked selves

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Stuart Murray, the “outsider” Anabaptist, is making his rounds in our circles with his *Naked Anabaptist* and Richard Rohr, the Franciscan priest, is making his way into our book studies and religious consciousness with his newest book *The Naked Now*.

What is it about nakedness that suddenly commands our attention, this unmasking of our religious life and practice that has us taking inventory of our core beliefs, the way we have done “church,” a kind of undressing that feels like getting ready for a bath, a cleansing?

Murray, with speaking engagements across Canada this spring and summer, had his epiphany with Anabaptism as a British Baptist. While admiring our historic engagement with the gospel and uniquely putting Jesus’ commands above Caesar’s, he asserts that over 500 years we have veered off-course and need to be called back to what he calls our seven core convictions.

Today, he says early in his book, “many Mennonites seem more interested in purpose-driven churches or the Alpha course,” than responding to the “rehabilitated Anabaptism” quest on which many of our Mennonite scholars have embarked. His message at our gatherings will no doubt invite us back to the wisdom of our historic beliefs and stance that he claims is the answer to much

of the religious turmoil in our modern world.

Rohr, while not calling us by name, sounds similar themes in his call, as a Christian mystic, by listening for and seeking out “a deeper voice of God,” a kind of deep calling unto deep in the present, not in our historic past, not in religious routines and order, but in a kind of new discovery of God at work in every aspect of our lives—whether that be joy, pain, disorder and disappointment or ecstasy and elation.

This new journey, which he simply calls *presence*, is experienced as “a moment of deep inner connection, always pulling you, intensely satisfied into the naked and undefended now, which can involve both profound joy and profound sadness.” At that point, he writes, “you either want to write poetry, pray or be utterly silent.”

Both of these sages, like the parables and messages of Jesus, given “not to destroy the law, but to fulfil it,” are not necessarily tearing down religious structures and beliefs that have been so carefully built and lived over centuries, but rather they are issuing a call to rehabilitate and refresh tired ways to breath new life and dynamism into our spirits.

Rohr, of course, goes further, calling what he sees as a religious crisis of the Western world. Having lost our “wisdom,” he claims it is “very difficult for churches,

governments and leaders to move beyond ego, for the desire for control and public posturing. Everything divides into oppositions such as liberal vs. conservative, with vested interests pulling against one another. Truth is no longer possible at this level of conversation. Even theology becomes more a quest for power than a search for God and Mystery.”

Ouch!

Another sacred cow Murray might hide us on is our newfound purpose in justice and ethics in a world we perceive has lost its way on both counts. Many of us are passionate about global warming, for instance, and have made a mission of “creation care” and working at development as global poverty and war take a bigger and bigger toll.

These are worthy goals and we shouldn’t diminish our enthusiasm for them in the least. But we need to listen to Murray when he observes “a persistent danger within the Anabaptist tradition has been for ethics to trump spirituality, so that discipleship is detached from the realm of grace.”

Rohr echoes these sentiments when observing that “a large percentage of religious people become and remain rigid thinkers because their religion taught them that to be faithful, obedient and stalwart in the ways of God, they had to create order.”

Both Rohr and Murray invite us not to give up our passions for mercy and justice, for “healing and hope,” but to bathe these in the knowledge that God was there long before we got there, that ours mostly is the task of discovering these hidden God corners and God moments.

As “naked Anabaptists” we are being asked to walk boldly into the “naked now,” a divine gift, as Rohr would call it. ❧



ABOUT THE COVER:

Mark von Kampen, Mennonite chaplain, centre, assists students and staff at last fall’s PB Jam (Peanut Butter and Jam) Day, an annual community service event that the Inter-Mennonite Campus Ministry office at the University of Manitoba hosts. Students gather at the University Centre to make sandwiches that are then distributed to boys and girls clubs across the city and to Winnipeg Harvest.

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Hebrews 10:23-25 • Accuracy, fairness, balance • Editorial freedom • Seeking and speaking the truth in love • Open hearts and minds in discerning God's will • Covenantal relationships and mutual accountability

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SHERRI GROSZ

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Is technology enriching our worship?

What's the church to do when the calls of Jesus and modern technology tug in opposite directions

BY ANDY BRUBACHER KAETHLER

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*



Technology directly shapes Christian belief and practice in ways we must at the very least question, if not actively resist.

Technology is the single most significant characteristic of modern western culture. Canadian philosopher George Grant contends it has long displaced democracy and capitalism as top identifiers. Technology directly shapes Christian belief and practice in ways we must at the very least question, if not actively resist.

The Mennonite church has not paid adequate attention to discerning how technology shapes our theology and practice of worship, and our patterns of relating to each other. Today, we are more likely to shape our understanding of who Jesus is and how he related to others by our own use of technology than we are to shape our use of technology by our understanding of who Jesus is and the nature of the kingdom Jesus inaugurates.

Reflections on technology and worship at the global youth summit

Three observations from worship services at the global youth summit at the Mennonite World Conference assembly in Paraguay in 2009 serve as a starting point to evaluate the effects of technology on worship and Christian communication:

- **THOSE WHO** used the sound system wielded great power over the gathered body. The collective voices of worshippers were drowned by the few with microphones and amplifiers. The worship band was so loud



Youth worship at Charlotte 2005

that during the gathering time it was impossible to fellowship with people from other countries, and during worship it was impossible to make a discernable contribution to praise with your own voice. We had built an audio Tower of Babel, staking a claim for ourselves in heaven and on earth.

- **TECHNOLOGY TENDED** to homogenize our worship. While genuine attempts were made to allow youth from each continent to lead worship in a style that reflected their context, the presence of high-tech equipment and a talented worship band proved a temptation too strong for many to resist. The worship leaders from some continents adopted an American Idol-style, egoistical, sexualized and audience-pandering stage presence. Other continental worship leaders simply felt inadequate and deferred to the worship band.

- **THE STYLE** of worship dependent on electronic technology worked against the theme of the summit: "Service: Live the difference." Philippians 2:1-11 emerged as a guiding passage: "*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility*

regard others as better than yourselves." Angelica Rincon-Alonso of Colombia characterized the elements of service as "collaboration, love, solidarity, humility, solutions, compassion, gifts and talents." Of these themes, only love emerged prominently in the worship songs, where it was almost exclusively in reference to loving God or Jesus.

This is not to say these themes were never addressed. They were addressed in a number of the messages, prayers and confessions. There were, in fact, times for meaningful interaction, such as at meals and workshops. The point is that the times we relied most heavily on technology were also the times we were most fragmented and disconnected from each other. The times we relied most heavily on technology were the times the global body was most foreign and distant, and where biblical themes such as solidarity, humility and compassion were most absent.

We are united as Anabaptist Christians not merely by the faith and practices we hold in common, but more importantly

by the Holy Spirit, who unites us in, and because of, our diverse expressions of faith. The unity of the Spirit, however, is undermined and diminished by the tendency of technology to homogenize and universalize. Without wise analysis of our use of technology to communicate and to mediate worship, we are likely to settle for a shallow, technology-induced homogeneity, rather than rich, contextually appropriate expressions of faith in the one, true God.

Four questions emerge from these observations:

- **WHAT IS** the core problem with technologically mediated worship and communication?
- **HOW IS** what we communicate connected with the way we communicate?
- **DOESN'T TECHNOLOGY** help us communicate more efficiently, and isn't efficiency a good thing?
- **SHOULD OUR** understanding of Christian worship and communication be shaped primarily by western technological culture or by the Incarnation?

Technology and incarnation: Competing modes in communicating the gospel

Jesus asserts, “*I am the way, the truth and the life*” (John 14:6). To take Jesus’ claim seriously requires that we consider how technology makes similar claims. Like Jesus, technology invites us to follow a certain way, to view truth in a certain way, and to a certain experience of life. Are the way, truth and life promised by technology consistent with the way, truth and life promised by the One who first made this claim?

If the church of the future is going to be founded on the way, truth and life of Jesus, rather than on technology, the church needs to develop a language and tools to evaluate our degree of “at-homeness” with technology and discern ways in which technological life is incommensurate with life in Jesus.

Technology is not neutral tools and gadgets

One dominant myth about technology is that it is merely a collection of tools or gadgets we use every day. Another is that these tools and gadgets are neutral, neither good nor bad until taken into human hands. Those suggesting technology is neutral might say: “Technology is like a hammer. You can use it to build a house or to kill. The hammer does not tell you how to use it; the user decides.” This logic is used by the National Rifle Association, expressed in their well-known slogan, “Guns don’t kill people, people kill people.”

This popularly held view does not take into account that with a hammer or gun

in my hand my identity becomes that of someone who hits or shoots, and I come to see the world as filled with objects to hit or shoot. The pattern by which I relate to God, to others and to creation is in this way shaped by technology. It is too often a pattern of objectification and violence.

This technological pattern can be understood in terms of the following three aspects, each measurable against the grain of Jesus’ life and teaching:

- **MEDIUM AND** message come together in the incarnation.

One characteristic of the technological pattern is that the method of communication is often disconnected from the message itself. Consider this extreme example: If “Jesus loves you” is spray-painted on the side of a bomb being dropped on a Muslim village, the carrier of the message is inconsistent with the message itself. Or consider this less extreme example: A popular girl wears a T-shirt that says, “Jesus loves you,” but she does not welcome others into her clique. Her exclusive behaviour is inconsistent with the message on her shirt.

When Jesus called the disciples, Philip tells Nathanael that Jesus is the one promised by Moses and the prophets to be the Word made flesh. Nathanael replies, “*Can anything good come out of Nazareth?*” (John 1:14, 46). Nathanael questions whether the medium—a simple man from a two-bit village—could bear the divine message.

As it turns out, being from Nazareth is at the heart of the incarnation. As theologian John Howard Yoder reminds us, the good news is both the message of salvation and the messenger: Jesus, who embodies the message. In Jesus, the medium and the message are bound together but not conflated. And in Jesus, difference and particularity are valued, not eradicated.

- **EFFICIENCY IS THE GOLDEN CALF OF WESTERN CULTURE.**

Another characteristic of the technological pattern is efficiency. Efficiency is the golden calf of our age, a false god we worship when we are too self-consumed to discern the presence of God or too impatient to wait in silence for God to appear. Greater efficiency is the

promise of every new tool, toy or gadget. Philosopher Albert Borgmann observes that efficiency presents itself in the ever-renewed promises of devices to be faster, easier to use, safer and more portable. At least one of these promises is present in every device or service advertised.

Technological efficiency is problematic when it becomes an end in itself. When this happens, we lose the ability to seriously weigh what we gain against what we lose with each technological adaptation, and we confuse efficiency for efficacy.

The rate of technological change today far outpaces our ability to consider whether we should accept each change, in part because overwhelming complexities are uncovered with deep discernment. The key loss with our fixation on efficiency is the distinct possibility that things like faith formation, community, witness and worship are only faithfully and properly found by the slower, more vulnerable, harder and less portable means.

- **LIFE, LIBERTY** and happiness are not Jesus’ values.

In the early Modern period, Europeans began revolting against tradition and oppressive political, social, economic and moral restrictions placed on the average person. As European settlers moved to North America, they adopted technologies that helped them maximize freedom and prosperity as they cultivated the land and as they travelled and communicated over great distances. Technologies that characterize modern western civilization—the steam engine, train, automobile, telegraph, telephone, radio and television—are technologies either invented in North America or most rapidly implemented here.

Unrestricted individual freedom and prosperity became a constitutional “right” in the United States. Most American school children can quote by heart the part of the Declaration of Independence which states, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

Individuals—initially, each white land-holding male—have the “right” to

/// Further reading

Flickering Pixels: How Technology Shapes Your Faith. By Shane Hipps. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2009.

Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology. By Neil Postman. 1st Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1993.

New Monasticism: What it Has to Say to Today’s Church. By Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove. Grand Rapids, Mich: Brazos Press, 2008.

decide for themselves what happiness looks like. In Canada, we have a similar line in the British North America Act of 1867, guaranteeing “peace, order and good governance.” Notably, the Canadian version does not pit individual against collective freedom and prosperity to the same degree. But life, liberty and happiness do not characterize the pattern by which Jesus calls us to live. By inviting the disciples to lose their life in order to save it, Jesus calls the disciples to relinquish freedom and prosperity in order to do the will of God (Luke 9:24). Jesus still invites us today to a life of suspended personal liberties and of sacrifice for the sake of the larger body. He invites us to a happiness not defined by individual whims and desires, but to joy found in loving God and loving our neighbour (Luke 10:27).

Ministry implications

What are the implications of thinking critically about how technology forms and mal-forms the way we relate with God, with creation and with each other? How might Christians of all ages be formed to be countercultural in our use of technology so we are shaped first and foremost by the incarnational Jesus in worship and witness?

- **DEEPEN CRITICAL** reflection and model critical use of technology. Learn the language and skills of critical evaluation. Ask questions such as:

Will using this device help or hinder my relationship with God or my ability to worship God? Will using this device help or hinder my relationship with creation? Would a change in my behaviour be a better solution than a technological change?

Will using this device help or hinder my relationships with family, friends and the church community? Will this device really deepen communication, understanding, empathy or compassion? Will it divert my attention from those with whom I am physically present in favour of those who are only virtually present?

What is the overall or long-term effect of using this device? On the surface, Facebook and texting appear to foster communication, but in what ways do they ultimately fragment, atomize and disincarnate relationships? Does this

device displace community with networked individualism or displace unity in the Spirit with a homogenized body?

- **SEEK LOWER-TECH** or electronic-free worship and fellowship experiences, observing the difference between technologically mediated relationships and incarnational relationships.

Technology is morally disorienting. It hides the complexity of issues under a veneer of efficiency and coolness (and lets face it, some gadgets are really cool). Develop the ability to notice:

What you stop worrying about when you don't use a cell phone or Facebook for extended periods of time and what things become more important instead.

How individuals interact differently in a group when liberated from electronic distractions. How the worshipping community begins to look more like community in the New Testament and the Early Church. How we sense or feel the presence of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Increased awareness of my worshipping neighbour and how attentiveness to the whole worshipping community enhances my own ability to worship. Increased tendency to prefer lower-tech, more personal and more time-consuming forms of communication.

- **PROVIDE BELIEVERS** with a hope and vision for life which empowers them to choose a countercultural lifestyle centred on Jesus' vision of the kingdom of God.

The hope technology promises is release from “unnecessary” burdens, some of which turn out to be the very things that make us human: the necessity of work, the ability to feel pain, cultural and linguistic particularity, and being bound by time and place. The hope that God provides, by contrast, is that God is with us, embodied in Jesus and the church, as we live with joy with the burdens that remind us that life is a gift.

Our hope as Anabaptist Christians does not lie in simply being against culture or against technology. Our hope comes from participating in the New Creation (II Corinthians 5:17-18) and living with a new centre to our lives: Jesus Incarnate. Jesus calls us to actively incarnate love, justice and hope in face-to-face community. Others will only come to know truth and life in Jesus—Emmanuel, God with us—as Christians model the way through patience, intentionality, dangerous faith and local living.

Andy Brubacher Kaethler has served as associate pastor at Bethany Mennonite Church, Virgil, Ont., and as conference youth minister for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. He currently teaches and directs the !Explore program at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. Adapted from Youth Ministry at a Crossroads: Tending to the Faith Formation of Mennonite Youth, edited by Andy Brubacher Kaethler and Bob Yoder, by Herald Press. ❧

/// For discussion

1. What technology does your congregation use in worship? What are the challenges to learning how to use new technology in worship? How much power is wielded by those who control the sound board?
2. Andy Brubacher Kaethler argues that technology is not neutral, but that technology shapes the message. Do you agree? How is the message of technology different from the message of Jesus?
3. Kaethler says that our technological gadgets and tools promise greater efficiency, but discerning the presence of God usually requires silence and patience. When is efficiency a problem? Do our gadgets foster or hinder community?
4. What would electronic-free worship be like? Do traditional Mennonites who avoid some modern technology have wisdom to share?

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

We welcome your comments and publish most letters sent by subscribers intended for publication. This section is largely an 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. Keep letters to 400 words or less and address issues rather than individuals. We do not countenance rancour or animosity. Personal attacks are inappropriate and will not see the light of print. 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. Preference will be given to letters from MC Canada congregants.

✉ Come to the defence of 'God's great gift'

IN THE BEGINNING—13.7 billion years ago—God created the heavens, also known as the universe; 4.5 billion years ago God created our planet, Earth. Life began on Earth some 700,000 years later, with human beings—*homo sapiens*—appearing in Africa some 70,000 to 100,000 years ago.

Down through these millennia humans have increased in number, expanded their geographic range, and increased in knowledge and technical competence. The invention of the steam engine some 250 years ago gave birth to the Industrial Revolution and the burning of fossil fuels on a massive scale. This has led to the atmospheric concentration of green house gasses, and the consequent global warming. This man-made phenomenon, if unchecked, will render Earth uninhabitable, ending this part of God's creative works.

God certainly did not command humanity to exploit or harm Earth, much less destroy it. As children of our Heavenly Father, we are to be custodians of God's planetary gift. We are to seek its well-being, and we are to oppose those individuals, corporations and nations that are putting at risk the very existence of Earth as a living planet.

Worshippers should come to the defence of God's great gift. A great deal of energy has gone into promoting and advancing the Mennonite peace position. It is time to mount a similar, if not greater, effort at ending this assault on our planet, since the time frame within which to do so lies within the life expectancy of some of today's children.

BILL BRYSON, TORONTO, ONT.

✉ Menno, Jesus would be 'green' if they lived today

MANY MENNONITES VOTE Conservative federally and for the Saskatchewan Party here in Saskatchewan. Both are the least green. Few vote Green Party, which has many of the best ideas. I dearly wish people would support and develop this party, or push eco-ideas elsewhere. Sanity lies in new direction.

People like other things about un-green parties, but the possibility of an extinct humanity on a dead planet might be considered something of a priority. Yet there is no demand from supporters of un-green parties that they shape up. Just vote them in, pat them on the back and look the other way.

We're addicted to dirty money, even though a clean, green economy is a wealthier option. Germany and other nations are leading the way. A well-planned transition is a happy, exciting, economy-stimulating, job-producing thing, not a drag. Scheming politicians discredit it, but even if it is difficult, we have no choice.

Mennonites are a people of the land, so some are green. Mennonites are also a people of charity. What greater gift to the poor than helping prevent and repair damage to the planet? Soon, we likely won't have anything else to give them, anyway, as increasing eco-problems and unsustainable economies will cause hard times here as well.

Christianity and Mennonitism began by countering the types of unwholesome things which many Christians and Mennonites now embrace. Does a negative fundamentalism now dominate, or what is at work? In any case, revival is needed. Lack of environmentalism isn't the only issue, but maybe the revival tents should be green—for health, life, ecology, vitality and the growth of new wisdom, which, of course, is often simply old wisdom.

I think Menno Simons would be a staunch and devoted environmentalist, preaching respect for, and harmony with, the natural world as practical, compassionate and an honour to God. I'm certain Jesus would. To believe otherwise is misinterpretation of his beautiful teachings. So, in addition to poor attitudes from individuals, why do many Mennonite organizations not emphasize the environmental imperative?
HOWARD BOLDT, SASKATOON, SASK.

✉ Our healing is within us

RECENTLY DR. BRIAN Goldman, host of CBC Radio's *White Coat, Black Art*, did an episode on hospital parking, or lack of it. He was inundated with stories about people's complaints.

Another perspective would be that there are too many people going to the hospital who shouldn't

have to: namely, Christian churchgoers who should be aware of the fact that it is the church's mandate to heal the sick. James 5:13-16 says, "Is any among you suffering? Let him pray. . . . Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up."

In his book *Your Healing is Within You*, Jim Glennon writes, "So the first point for us to note about the prayer of faith is that we must know what God has promised to give us. The second, is that we are to believe that we receive these promises so that we have no doubt in our heart."

The prayer of faith may direct someone to see a

doctor or specialist. Churches bring in specialists for everything else, so why not bring in herbalists, iridologists, people with knowledge of nutrition and supplements, and naturopaths who can teach about the importance of detoxification and a healthy immune system? Acting on these principles of health would go a long way to reducing the number of visits to a hospital. There is a lot of free parking at most churches.

In III John, John writes, "Dear friend [Gaius], I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well." We must become more proactive when it comes to our health.

WES EPP, CALGARY, ALTA.

FAMILY TIES

Making dreams real

MELISSA MILLER

I am crocheting a baby afghan. The soft, multi-coloured yarn slides through my fingers. I catch it on the end a hook, spin and loop it into the expanding blanket. My cat lies beside me, sometimes taking a swipe at the tantalizing string, but mostly curled up sleeping.

The afghan is a gift for Kenneth, the firstborn child of my nephew Matthew and his wife Emily. Kenneth would have been my mother-in-law's third great-grandchild. She eagerly anticipated his arrival and looked forward to holding him in her arms.

At 91 years old, however, she was slowed down by congestive heart

failure and knew she might not ever see the baby.

Still, she dreamed. She imagined making an afghan for the baby, a version of her ripple afghans that adorn the couches of her family members. She arranged for the yarn to be purchased and brought to her, intending to make the baby a gift herself. Before she could begin to crochet, her health failed and she died. The following month, Kenneth was born, a happy event for all of us still grieving the loss of

Mother. A baby has a way of pulling us from sadness to joy, from death to life.

After Mother's death, we sorted through her few possessions, distributing them to new owners. The skeins of yarn lay unclaimed. Looking at them, I wished I had asked Mother to teach me the pattern. That thought lasted a few seconds, as it bumped up against memories of Mother's curt and exacting instructions that scraped on my sensitivities, like sharp stones on the bottom of a canoe. No, that would not have been a happy

learning experience.

Still, it didn't seem right to let her dream die with her. It would mean a great deal to a number of family members if the yarn could be worked into an afghan for the new baby, just as Mother imagined. I already knew a bit about crocheting. When I realized how easily I could find a pattern and instructions on the Internet, I volunteered to take on the task.

Soon it will be finished and sent off to Kenneth, a direct link between him

and the great-grandmother he never knew. Some dreams are realized not by the dreamer, but by someone else who catches the vision and carries the dream forward. Mother's gift, an expression of love for her unborn great-grandson, was a gift to me, too. Like a relay runner, I was given a torch to carry for a section of the race. It's been a privilege and a joyful honour to bring Mother's dream to life.

This winter, I am reading Revelation with others who are studying Mennonite Church Canada's Season of Prayer guide. Revelation ends with a rich tapestry of a dream: a community of saints enjoying intimate, unmediated relationship with God in a city of indescribable beauty—radiant as crystal, with gates of pearl and streets of gold. No tears or mourning or pain or death.

Some dreams are realized not by the dreamer, but by someone else who catches the vision and carries the dream forward.



We're not there yet; the dream has not been realized. When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we are asking for that dream to be made real. We are asking that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Dreamers, pray-ers, crocheters: all are needed to give body and shape to God's dream.

Melissa Miller (familyties@mts.net) lives in Winnipeg, where she works as a pastor and counsellor. Her family ties include that of daughter, sister, wife, mother and friend.

✉ Time to set the record straight

IN THE LARRY Miller story of Jan. 9, it was noted that Miller and the MWC “inherited a created deficit” that came as a result of the then General Secretary presenting projected numbers for registrants and visitors that was completely at odds with what the Winnipeg Canadian Office of MWC had provided to him. We (the Director and the Organizing Committee) had put together a very realistic projection and budget and were confident in the numbers. The final numbers proved that our numbers were accurate and should not have been changed. Since 1990 the impression has always been left that the deficit was our fault. We had a team of professionals with expertise in many areas

and it is time to set the record straight.
NEIL HEINRICHS, WINNIPEG

✉ Mennonite storyteller wows Toronto audience

ON NOV. 19, an appreciative audience filled the meeting room of St. Clair-O'Connor Community in Toronto, Ont., to hear stories by Jack Dueck. Although his talents are well known, this was the first opportunity for a Toronto audience to hear him in person. His performance, sponsored by the Mennonite Centre Heritage Club, was entitled “Growing up Russian Mennonite: Humour as grace.”

Dueck set the stage for his stories by reviewing the

GOD, MONEY AND ME

An unsung hero of the church

SHERRI GROSZ

When was the last time you prayed for your treasurer or thanked him or her for his or her work? Your treasurer is a key person in church operations and carries a great deal of responsibility for the finances and legal status of the church.

Treasurers must issue correct charitable receipts on behalf of the church. Issuing receipts for donations made by cash, cheque or direct deposit is reasonably straightforward, but there are other situations where the rules may be unknown or mistakes can be made. For example, could a church issue a charitable receipt, instead of a paying a contractor?

Your church relies on its treasurer to follow the law. Each charity in Canada must file a Registered Charity Information Return, also known as a T3010, within six months of the charity's fiscal year end. In 2011, the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) revoked the charitable status of 757 charities that didn't file their paperwork on time or couldn't prove they had sent it. Of those charities, 194 identified themselves as religious.

Losing charitable status means a church cannot accept donations and cannot issue charitable receipts. Churches that have lost their charitable status may spend many months or years working to meet the CRA's re-registration requirements and may need to hire accountants



Remember to include your treasurer in your prayers and to offer a word of encouragement

or lawyers to assist their treasurer.

Treasurers experience the heart of the church in a way that no one else can. “Wallets are the last thing to enter the church and the first to leave,” one treasurer told me. A change in spiritual condition is often reflected with a change in that person's giving to the church.

Treasurers are often alone with the knowledge that a person's giving pattern has changed, but are discouraged from sharing any information with the pastor or elder.

Other church members may be surprised when a family leaves a church, but

the treasurer often had clues long before their departure. Treasurers may also be surprised or disappointed to discover that otherwise “active” members are not financially involved in the congregation.

Your church can support your treasurer by ensuring that he or she has access to the training and information needed to do the job well. Church leadership can create a team to assist the treasurer with the workload. This provides protection for the treasurer against accusations of theft or fraud, and ensures that there are trained volunteers available to help shoulder the task. Some churches have hired a bookkeeper to complete many of

the day-to-day tasks and thus reduce the workload for the treasurer.

Remember to include your treasurer in your prayers and to offer a word of encouragement as he or she offers gifts of time and skill to further the work of the Lord and your congregation.

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

history of the Russian Mennonites who arrived in Canada in the 1920s, giving credit to the role of Swiss Mennonites and Mennonite Central Committee in their rescue and settlement, often on isolated Prairie farms. Soon, economic depression and drought brought despair. Violent dust storms required lamps to be lit during the day. To prove that humour has its place even in these circumstances, Dueck recited to great effect some of Paul Hiebert's comical poems starring Sarah Binks, the "sweet songstress of Saskatchewan."

Although his stories take their inspiration from Mennonite life on the Prairies, his performance proved that they can captivate those of all ages and backgrounds. We were soon mesmerized as Dueck, with expressive gestures, sound effects and masterful evocation of images, launched into his stories about growing up in his home town of Coaldale, Alta.

In particular, his convoluted and hilarious telling of the five horses of the apocalypse had us in stitches. Who knew that Clydesdale horses and strategically placed hot potatoes could have such epochal consequences! Some of the stories were not without pathos. Throughout, he demonstrated a generosity of spirit and compassion towards the colourful characters that populate his stories.

LEONA WIEBE GISLASON, TORONTO, ONT.

Leona Wiebe Gislason, formerly from Coaldale, is a member of the Mennonite Centre Heritage Club.

✉ Christians should resist 'demonizing' stereotypes

IN RESPONSE TO "Can 'free' speech be 'hate' speech?," Oct. 31, 2011, page 21, it seems that Christians are missing the point.

Most articles so far are presenting this issue as one that pits Christian beliefs against free speech rights, when, in reality, this is mistaken. According to Canadian law, free speech is allowed until it degenerates into hate. This means that it's not what William Whatcott was saying—homosexuality is wrong—that's the issue; it's the degree, language and means he chose to express himself that arguably crossed the line.

Whatcott's flyers contained headings such as "The sodomite agenda," which implies some sort of conspiracy among homosexuals, or the intent to harm or manipulate, and they referred to LGTB people as "dirty," "filthy," "degenerate" and pedophiles.

Whatcott's literature went beyond expressing his religious beliefs. He referred to homosexual people in derogatory terms and wantonly associated them with pedophilia, which is an abusive crime and a demonizing stereotype. His flyers were not about encouraging a genuine—if uncomfortable—debate on a sensitive

issue; it was about disrespecting and degrading a specific group of people.

If Whatcott had simply worn his "Homosexuality is a sin" T-shirt and publicly argued his beliefs against homosexuality from a biblical perspective, he would not have been charged with a criminal action.

Whatcott and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) seem intent on spinning it so that every Christian feels bound to support him, even though the EFC itself admits that it doesn't "necessarily condone the language Mr. Whatcott used."

In this situation, Christians can—and I would argue, should—reject Whatcott's methods no matter where they fall in the homosexuality debate. As we remember that we are all children of God and so deserve love and respect, let's keep in mind what this issue is really about.

KELSEY HUTTON, WINNIPEG, MAN.

✉ Delight in the reading and hearing of Scripture

RE: "A BIBLE meant to be read with your ears," Dec. 17, 2011, page 4.

A year ago this past December, my colleague and I challenged each other to read the "King James Only" in 2011 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the KJV. It was the first version I read and memorized in the 1960s and '70s, but since the plethora of modern English versions came out I have only referred to it on occasion for comparison.

I did not read the whole thing last year, but read representative books of varying genres from both Old and New testaments, and ended the year reading the red letters in the gospels. I have to confess that it was not always a pleasurable experience. On the whole, I struggled to find meaning in the exercise, even with the Psalms.

After reading Christine Longhurst's article, I now understand why. I was reading it silently and privately! As an orator and poet, I should have known better, but the habit is so ingrained. My family may not appreciate me belting out the KJV in the silence of the mornings, but the idea is tantalizing enough to attempt to make some space for it.

This past year I was in England and learned that actors read the entire KJV around the clock at the Globe Theatre during Passion Week. An "out loud" reading of the whole—or at least a large part—Bible was done at a Mennonite assembly some years ago and could be attempted again sometime.

Interpretation and discernment of what Scripture says about controversial issues, such as homosexuality, are important processes, but I think the first step is simply to delight in the reading and hearing of Scripture.

GARETH BRANDT, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Cleland—twins Kendall Clara and Carter Al (b. Jan. 19, 2012), to Amanda and Shawn Cleland, Listowel Mennonite, Ont.

Dyck—Everly Marie (b. Dec. 30, 2011), to Jenna and Kelly Dyck, Carman Mennonite, Man.

Fischer—Ellyse Naomi (b. Jan. 11, 2012), to Blake and Tricia Fischer, North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Hastings-Fuhr—Asher James (b. Oct. 15, 2011), to Adrian and Hannah Hastings-Fuhr, Mannheim Mennonite, Ont., in Hamilton, Ont.

Heikman—Sarita Joy (b. Oct. 19, 2011), to Joe and Keri Heikman, First United Mennonite, Vancouver.

Kerr—Jacob Nathaniel (b. Jan. 9, 2012), to Jamie and Katrina Kerr, Listowel Mennonite, Ont.

Monfils—Riley Jeanne (b. Nov. 26, 2011), to Colleen and Mike Monfils, St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

Renwick—Hudson Timothy (b. Dec. 25, 2011), to Justin and Jenna Renwick, North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Vernon—Emerson Elizabeth (b. Dec. 21, 2011), to Jay and Beth Vernon, Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.

Zehr—Audrey Haleigh Ann (b. Jan. 12, 2012), to Avelea and Matthew Zehr, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.

Baptisms

Brittany Klassen, Ryan Klassen, Tara Klimchuk—Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, Jan. 8, 2012.

Marriages

Bergen/Kaminski—Cameron Bergen and Jolene Kaminski, Carman Mennonite, Man., July 31, 2011.

Bergen/Lorenz—Jarret Bergen and Megan Lorenz, Carman Mennonite, Sept. 17, 2011.

Enns/Friesen—Margaret Enns and David Friesen, Carman Mennonite, Dec. 27, 2011.

Gardiner/Wieler—Samantha Gardiner and Nicholas Wieler (Carman Mennonite), at Clearwater, Man., Dec. 30, 2011.

Gitzel/Letkeman—Ryan Gitzel and Katelyn Letkeman, Carman Mennonite, Man., Aug. 20, 2011.

Deaths

Baerg—Peter, 75 (d. Dec. 15, 2011), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

Billedeau—Joseph, 83 (b. April 22, 1928; d. Jan. 13, 2012), Wilmot Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Dyck—George, 83 (b. March 7, 1928; d. Dec. 14, 2011), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Janzen—John W., 84 (b. June 4, 1927; d. Nov. 16, 2011), Arnaud Mennonite, Man.

Klassen—Hulda, 87 (d. Dec. 28, 2011), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

Letkeman—John C., 64 (June 5, 1947; d. Nov. 5, 2011), Arnaud Mennonite, Man.

MacDonald—(nee Hilson), 96 (b. Feb. 8, 1915; d. Dec. 11, 2011), Listowel Mennonite, Ont.

Martin—Ervin L., 82 (b. June 24, 1929; d. Dec. 21, 2011), Floradale Mennonite, Ont.

Penner—Margarete, 103 (d. Dec. 25, 2011), St. Catharines United Menn., Ont.

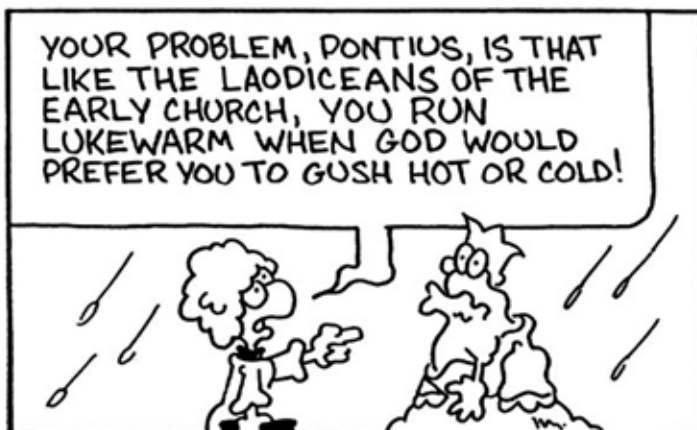
Runge—Andrew, 22 (b. Nov. 16, 1989; d. Dec. 24, 2011), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Runkel—Mary (Ediger, Dyck), 83 (b. April 10, 1928; d. Dec. 19, 2011), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Schwindt—Sylvia Grace (nee Weber), 91 (b. April 21, 1920; d. Nov. 26, 2011), Floradale Mennonite, Ont.

Wiens—Tina, 67 (b. June 3, 1944; d. Nov. 4, 2011), Zoar Mennonite, Langham, Sask.

Pontius' Puddle



POSTMODERN SHIFT

Question-shaped faith

TROY WATSON

Seven years ago one of my professors suggested our class watch the television series *LOST* to better understand life in postmodernity. I followed up on the homework assignment and my wife and I became fans of the show immediately. (It did go downhill after the first two seasons unfortunately.) *LOST*



answer. Jesus is the ultimate paradox and enigma that shapes my life. I also believe it is because of this that Jesus continues to so profoundly influence and inform my life.

Author and lecturer Sam Keen writes, "Questioning is not something we do but something we are. . . . What makes me Sam Keen rather than Rupert Murdoch

takes place on a mysterious island where strangers are stranded and forced to survive together. Although the events are routinely preposterous the storylines are fascinating in that they continue to raise questions about what's really going on. Every answer the show provides raises five more questions. For me this is what following the way of Jesus is like.

I realize for millions of Christians, Jesus is the answer. I know many people (from addicts to academics to refugees of war) who have found Jesus to be the answer to life's problems and pain in a very real, existential and practical way. My own parents were radically transformed thirty-six years ago as a result of meeting the risen Christ. Jesus was and is the answer for them and they continue to grow today as a result of their faith.

I, too, have experienced the transformative power of the gospel and have found no matter what life throws at me, I inevitably find myself responding to Jesus the way Peter did when Jesus asked him if he too would abandon him: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

Yet I confess my Christian faith raises more questions than answers. For me Jesus is the question more than the

are the questions that shape my life. . . . Nothing shapes our lives so much as the questions we ask, refuse to ask, or never dream of asking."

This is as true for churches as it is for individuals. A community built upon shared answers might be efficient but it is bound to be more stagnant and superficial. My closest friendships are not with

Many church members secretly question the assumed answers of their church but for the sake of community keep their mouths shut

people who share my answers and beliefs, but with people who are passionate about the same questions. Because they don't have the same answers they challenge my assumptions, expand my tunnel vision and help me keep growing. They help me see God is "always still bigger yet."

Religious institutions tend to discourage questioning for many reasons. One is control. Noam Chomsky writes, "The smart way to keep people passive and obedient is to strictly limit the spectrum of acceptable opinion, but allow very lively debate within that spectrum." This is what static doctrine does.

Another reason is fear—that people

will lose their faith if they start questioning. It is ironic that Jesus taught almost exclusively using questions and confusing short stories that raised questions. It is sad that many churches today equate faithfulness with holding onto "approved" answers and inadvertently undermine the sacredness and necessity of questioning for spiritual development. Consequently many Christians are moving outside the church to explore their questions.

However, I think the main reason many churches avoid potentially divisive questions is for the sake of keeping the peace. Many church members secretly question the assumed answers of their church but for the sake of community keep their mouths shut. Canadian band Arcade Fire sings, "All the kids have always known that the emperor wears no clothes. But they bow down to him anyway; it's better than being alone." If we believe our common answers are what hold us together, it is no wonder we dare not question them, at least not publically.

But what if it is God that holds us together—not our answers about God?

What if we truly believed infinite God is always beyond our finite answers anyway? What if churches made our genuine questions about God, life, and meaning a significant part of the shared substance that holds us together as community? Might we be more healthy, honest and humble in the long run?

This of course will bring a greater challenge: respecting the answers that have nurtured our faith and relationships with God for generations while creating safe environments for questioning them. ❧

Troy Watson is leader of a question-shaped faith community in St. Catharines

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

New church emerges in Winnipeg

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba correspondent
WINNIPEG, MAN.

When Barrette and Sandy Wiebe Plett returned from Egypt in 2008 after a three-year assignment under Mennonite Central Committee, they tried to move back into the church life they had left behind. But it wasn't the same. They had changed. Their family now included two preschool children. The small group and close friends that were so much a part of their church life before were no longer there and their own spiritual needs had changed. "Without really being aware of it, we had actually lost some maturity faith-wise. We needed more basic spiritual fare," said Barrette.

In January 2011 they began to search for a place that would address their spiritual need. Their search involved attending different churches and many conversations with friends and other seekers. They heard from friends and acquaintances who said, "I took a break from church and found I didn't miss it." Or, "I found other ways to meet my spiritual need." The Wiebe Pletts were reluctant to leave their Mennonite Church Manitoba affiliation and approached Norm Voth, director of Service and Evangelism for MC Manitoba. Was there a place within MC Manitoba that offered an alternative style of worship, they wanted to know.

As they drove home from working at Camp Koinonia this past summer, they asked each other whether it would be possible to bring the passion of worship that they experienced at camp to the city. When they shared some of their ideas with Darryl Neustaedter Barg, associate director of communications for MC Manitoba, they discovered that he and his wife, Krista, had been thinking along similar lines. Together they discussed and prayed about how to follow their nudgings. "It felt like it was not



Cutline: Sandy and Barrette Wiebe Plett with their children Meredith, 2 ½ years, and Orie, 4 years.

just a coincidence that Darryl had a similar nudging," said Sandy. They discovered the R.A. Steen Community Centre in central Winnipeg was available as a meeting place and offered space for child care as well. "Once we dropped off the rental deposit we realized that something was actually starting. So we went and bought some coffee mugs."

"We don't feel we are being asked to start a church plant but from the beginning we have felt a nudging to try something and see what happens," said Barrette. "We meet every other Sunday evening. Last September we booked the space for six times and decided to wait and see if there are people coming and if God is blessing this and if we should continue. It has been an exercise in trust."

Simple Church offers an alternate Mennonite worship experience. About 45 minutes are spent singing, mostly camp-style songs but also traditional or re-arranged hymns and more contemporary Christian tunes. This is followed by a sermon. Barrette is reluctant to use the word sermon. "It isn't that formal, more of a prelude to conversation—provide some teaching but also open the doors to some conversation. It aims to have tangible questions and challenges for worshipers at all stages, from nonbelievers to new believers to solid and secure followers of Jesus to people with serious doubts and questions. One of the goals is to always leave worship with a question or a task that pushes us in our faith during the next week." The sermon is followed by a time of discussion.

Simple Church's website states that their theology is rooted in the Anabaptist/Mennonite theology as described in the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*. Although they have chosen to call the gathering 'Simple Church,' "we do recognize that theology can be anything but simple," said Barrette. "Why else are there so many Christian denominations? Our hope is to invite people to take simple, tangible steps to following Jesus more closely."

Averaging about 25 people on a Sunday evening, they decided to renew their lease until April. "It is not the same regular 25. Sometimes they are altogether different people. I think people of our generation are less likely to commit to any institution. The nature of commitment is different. That's a broader societal shift that doesn't affect just the churches. People's allegiances are weaker."

Their worship services this winter focus on the book *unChristian*, which looks at the perceptions non-Christians have of Christians. "It provides us with some very good topics. We have asked five different pastors to help us address each of the issues. Four of those pastors are from MC Manitoba," said Barrette. "The Mennonite Church denominational link is important to us. We appreciate the support and assistance they are providing."

"This is what we feel God is calling us to do at this time. We won't feel it is a failure if it doesn't last. We just pray that whoever comes will have some meaningful connection to God and other believers." ▮

Mennonite church responds to Burns Lake mill fire

Church member among first responders

BY AMY DUECKMAN
B.C. Correspondent

When a devastating explosion destroyed the Babine Forest Products lumber mill near Burns Lake Jan. 20, members of First Mennonite Church there found themselves involved firsthand with the after effects.

Church member Dwane Wiebe, a heavy duty mechanic employed by the mill, was working that Friday night in the shop onsite, about 30 metres from the explosion. He told *Canadian Mennonite* in a phone conversation that he and his co-workers saw the lights flicker and felt the windows rattle. A minute later, several workers came out of the area of the explosion and he and his co-workers were able to provide aid as workers evacuated the area. The shop workers became first responders even before emergency vehicles arrived. "We managed to help people to get out," he said. "We brought eight guys into the shop" [for warmth and comfort].

Robert Wiebe, also a member of First Mennonite Church, is currently serving

as pastor of Church of the Way in nearby Granisle. He told *Canadian Mennonite* that the disaster also affected that congregation, as one of its members has a grandson severely injured in the explosion, now receiving care in an Edmonton hospital burn unit.

Now the community of about 3,600 is trying to deal with the consequences of the disaster. Dwane Wiebe knows it will have long-lasting effects on him and the other workers at the mill. "I'm dealing with seeing fellow workers coming out injured," he says. "A lot of people are dealing with phenomenal trauma." Wiebe is not able to return to work yet as the mill is closed, with no one allowed on site as police, engineers and other officials investigate the cause of the explosion.

Meanwhile, the First Mennonite Church Burns Lake family is doing its best to be of help. Right now they are walking with the community and individuals in prayer and support in whatever way they can.

"The tremendous effect this will have on this community will be long lasting as this mill was the major employer of Burns Lake people," says church member Wilf Dueck. "At this time we are in prayer for those injured, their families and of those missing."

Sue Larson adds, "Some of our members have been responding at the meetings and gatherings with food and caring support. It seems that grieving has been shown in all its aspects, including denial, anger and sorrow. I think the reality of what has happened kicks in at different stages; the economic impact will be felt more keenly down the road. Right now, it has been the initial trauma and shock, concern for the injured, hearing the stories, helping with the meetings, and continuing in prayer for all the people affected in many ways." ❧

WINNIPEG MENNONITE ELEMENTARY AND
MIDDLE SCHOOLS PHOTO



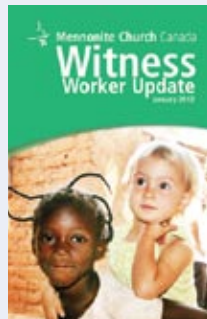
For the second year in a row, Alison Matwick, a Grade 7 student at Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary and Middle Schools won the Postmedia Canspell Spelling Bee on Jan. 17. It took 20 rounds of spelling for her to receive the cup. She is pictured with John Sawatzky, principal of the Bedson campus.

❧ Briefly noted

Meet Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers

WINNIPEG, MAN.—Keeping supporters informed about workers engaged in international ministry has prompted Mennonite Church Canada to find a more efficient way of relaying up-to-date information. Previously, MC Canada shared facts about workers and their ministries through a bound, soft-cover book called *World of Witness*. In 2011, the format changed to an easily updatable, full-colour and cost-efficient booklet called *Witness Worker Update*. The booklet can be printed in the MC Canada office or distributed electronically. *Witness Worker Update* provides pertinent information about each worker, It also features invitations to serve, either long- or short-term. Free copies of the 2012 edition of *Witness Worker Update*, can be requested online at mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1455 or by calling Ingrid Miller toll-free at 1-866-888-6785.

—Mennonite Church Canada





Ted Swartz (left) discusses his drama in worship workshop with Jamie Gerber, pastor at Crosshill Mennonite Church.



Jeff Raught (left) and Ted Swartz of Ted and Co. dramatize the story of Zacchaeus in a drama in worship workshop at Conrad Grebel University College on Jan. 19.

Ted Swartz plays crowds for laughs and goosebumps

Drama invites us into new ways of seeing scripture

STORIES AND PHOTOS BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

WATERLOO

Ted Swartz is best known as half of the comedy duo Ted and Lee from Harrisonburg Virginia. Through the 90s and early 2000s they played at nearly every major Mennonite Church gathering, as well as other gigs, including in southern Ontario.

Following Lee Eshleman's untimely death in 2007, Swartz set off on his own, writing eleven pieces, some solo, others with a variety of actors, working out his grief. There had been only six with Lee. He hopes that the four years of grief are coming to an end and that 2012 will be a move beyond it. In part to explain what he is doing now, Swartz tells of reading a PhD dissertation about Vaudeville performers who never chose another full time partner after their original on-stage partner left the business or died.

Jeff Raught, a self named "pianist, funny guy (mildly at least), speaker, actor, and composer" is one of the actors who works with Swartz and accompanied him on a week-long swing through southern Ontario Jan. 13-20, playing at the MC

Eastern Canada Winter Youth Retreat at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp, a Mennonite Foundation of Canada sponsored evening named, "What's so funny about money?"; a student event at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, and both a workshop on using drama in worship, and an evening show at Conrad Grebel University College.

At the sold-out workshop, Swartz and Raught encouraged the participants to not let the text stop their imaginations, to work at midrash-like interpretations that go beyond the literal texts into new places with God's Spirit. This raised conversation as some felt that this was untrue to the text, while others, like David Clayworth of Waterloo Mennonite Brethren, felt that "you can't go too far," and Swartz spoke in favour of learning something new in the Jesus story through our imaginations. Focussing on the story of Jesus at the wedding at Cana, participants wondered aloud why Mary was interested in more wine, as well as if she was pushing Jesus to finally "come out" at age 30. Did she wish it was his wedding?

In a conversation with *Canadian*

Mennonite, Swartz spoke of what it's like to be an actor in the Mennonite Church. He has chosen to stay inside as an artist, finding himself to have lost patience with former "Mennonite" artists who "stand outside and criticize." "Staying inside and pushing the walls back to make a roomier place," is how he would like to see what he is doing. Like many artists in the church, finding it difficult to earn a living from one's work, he has been trying to do so for the past twenty years.

Trained to be a pastor at Eastern Mennonite College and Seminary, he followed his creative heart in 1992 onto the stage. The nature of acting, pretending to be someone else, disturbs some people, but Swartz believes that in order to be someone else on stage, one has to be completely centred and transparent.

In fact he wonders, with Richard Rohr, whether drama is a mystical way of seeing, leading to different forms of knowing than the rational. In the workshop he noted that one sure way to kill a piece is to bring in too much background information, or to make a moral too obvious. It is better to stop without explaining, letting the audience come to the same "aha" that the actors/writers did in preparing the piece.

And that's what Swartz and Co., including Jeff Raught, are about—"chasing goosebumps"—that come when new understandings appear from creatively engaging the biblical texts, leading to new ways of seeing the gospel and following Jesus. ❧

PERSONAL REFLECTION

'Bring me a fiancé'

BY ERWIN WIENS

Mennonite Church Canada
CHUN CHEON, SOUTH KOREA

As we said farewell to Korea Anabaptist Center (KAC) staff before leaving for a brief vacation in Canada last June, I asked Hee Joung what we could bring her from Canada when we returned in August.

"Bring me a fiancé," she responded. "He doesn't have to be rich or handsome as long as he is a Christian and is kind and generous!"

We have endless requests from young adults longing to find marriage partners. We even met a mother on the subway who found out we were volunteers in a church-related organization. "You are holy people!" she exclaimed. "Please, please pray that my two daughters will find Christian husbands." Both daughters are highly successful professionals, but they do not have husbands so the mother agonizes while the daughters wait.

An aging pastor, on introducing his 39-year-old daughter, invited prayers that she would find a husband.

Seung Seo Kim (pseudonym) has been "in love" with a young woman for some time. He's already 35 and the woman he loves is 30. He desperately wants to marry her and she is willing, but her mother will not allow the wedding because he works at Korea Anabaptist Press and as a part-time youth pastor on weekends. According to the mother, he will never earn enough money nor have enough status for her daughter. And in South Korea "decent" young people honour their parents' wishes even if it means giving up their own.

Education, traditional culture, housing and divorce rates all play into the equation. A bachelor of arts degree is no longer adequate for meaningful employment, so more and more young people are delaying marriage to pursue post-graduate degrees. Traditional Korean culture relies on introductions by a trusted relative or senior; however, with increasing mobility, reliable

"introducers" are no longer close to young adults. Housing in South Korea is extremely expensive—especially in Seoul—and even rental fees are out of reach for most young couples; unless parents are able to help financially, young people simply cannot afford housing. The divorce rate in Korea has soared phenomenally over the past decade and is supposedly the highest in the world, with the result that young people are increasingly cautious about the value of marriage.

Because of this, our daily ministry now includes prayers for marriage partners for the young adults we love. ☸

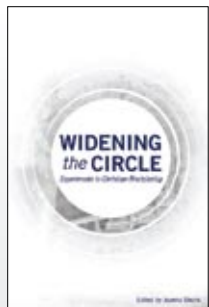
PHOTO BY HEE JOUNG



Korea Anabaptist Center staffers Jae Young and Hee Joung long for Christian husbands.

Erwin and Marian Wiens are Mennonite Church Canada Resource Workers in South Korea, where they train church leaders and strengthen ties between the Korea Anabaptist Center and churches in the Anabaptist network.

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GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

From Amish settlement to the Gates Foundation

MEDA convention speaker Joyce Bontrager Lehman earns standing ovation

BY LINDA WHITMORE

Mennonite Economic Development Associates
LANCASTER, PA.

More than 500 Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) convention-goers were entranced as Joyce Bontrager Lehman recounted her journey from an idyllic childhood in the Amish settlement of Kalona, Iowa, to international development work in Kabul, Afghanistan, and beyond.

Bontrager Lehman built on the convention theme, “Enduring values: Lasting impact.” She credits her mother’s influence in persuading her father to allow her to go to college, which opened the door to an early career in teaching before becoming an accountant. A casual conversation with friends brought her to MEDA.

“It’s fair to say that casual conversation changed my life, and the opportunity that grew out of it cannot be overstated,” said Bontrager Lehman.

She joined MEDA first as a member, then on the board of directors, and a few years later, on staff. She is now a program officer with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

MEDA’s impact not only on the 20 million families served last year, but on its staff, too, was underscored by Julie Redfern, MEDA vice president of financial services, and by Veronica Herrera, chief executive officer of MiCredito, MEDA’s microfinance partner in Nicaragua, at the association’s

annual general meeting that was part of the early November convention.

“My 15 years at MEDA have profoundly shaped my life,” said Redfern. “I ‘grew up’ at MEDA . . . influenced by people known for their generosity, support, friendship and professional guidance.” She added, “I learned about giving from a poor woman in Lesotho [a landlocked country surrounded by South Africa], who shared her scant lunch with me. When I visited clients and staff in Haiti shortly after the [2010] earthquake, I saw faith and hope from a new perspective. And from Afghan women microfinance clients, I learned strength.”

Redfern introduced long-time colleague Herrera, who credits MEDA for not only helping her personally and professionally, but also Nicaragua, the second-poorest country in the world after Haiti.

“MEDA has taught me many values, as well as the passion to serve the most needy people,” said Herrera. The daughter of poor farmers who barely had money to buy her one pair of shoes a year, she credits MEDA for “the opportunity to provide my children a better education than I had. . . . MEDA has impacted Nicaragua by bringing financial services to 20,000 micro-entrepreneurs in rural areas. MEDA is one of the most reputable and prestigious organizations due to its strong commitment in Nicaragua and its deep integrity, pacifist beliefs and human values.”

MEDA president Allan Sauder credited supporters’ donations for the ability to help more than 20 million families around the world live healthier, more economically sustainable lives last year, including:

- 12 million homes in rural Tanzania that now have mosquito nets and better health;
- 6.5 million households with better access to financial services, jobs and other products through MEDA’s Sarona Asset Management investments; and,
- 1.5 million farmers and entrepreneurs earning better incomes through training, and access to markets and financial services provided through partnership with other organizations. ❧

MEDA PHOTO BY STEVE SUGRIM



Keynote speaker Joyce Bontrager Lehman responds to questions during a Nov. 5 breakfast Q&A moderated by Wilmer Martin of TourMagination at the Mennonite Economic Development Associates convention in Lancaster, Pa.

Making baby kits not just for seniors

Home economics students make the grade with blankets, diapers, gowns for babies in developing world

BY GLADYS TERICHOW
Mennonite Central Committee
WALDHEIM, SASK.

Students in Waldheim School's home economics classes gain a deep sense of satisfaction when they sew baby gowns, cloth diapers and receiving blankets. They are learning skills through sewing items that will be distributed by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) to new mothers in refugee camps, hospitals, clinics and homes around the world.

"When the teacher talked about this project, I was surprised that younger people could do this," says Grade 10 student Eliza Urbina. "I heard about MCC and the baby kits in church, but I thought it was just older people doing this and never thought that I could do it, too."

MCC infant care kits include a layette of two gowns, two undershirts, four cloth diapers and a receiving blanket, as well as soap, a hat, socks and safety pins. Last year, MCC distributed almost 14,000 kits in Haiti, Ukraine, Bosnia and many other countries.

This is the first year that home economics teacher Marla Laskowski included the baby layettes as class sewing projects for students in grades 8 and 10. Grade 8 students sew only blankets and diapers, while Grade 10 students sew blankets, diapers and gowns.

This sewing project is ideal for home economic classes, she says, because students learn basic hemming and seam-finishing skills—two major components in their introductory sewing classes—adding that students "are apt to try their best and take special care to do it neatly" because they know that the items they are sewing will be presented as special gifts to families in need.

As a teacher, Laskowski likes the project because there are no additional expenses and no time restrictions. All items are pre-

cut and pre-packaged by volunteers in the MCC Saskatchewan Centre. "We do what we can and when we can," she says. "It's a good project for students to work on when they have free time and when they have finished any other project early."

Del Lennea, coordinator of MCC Saskatchewan's material resource centre, says this partnership with Waldheim School gives volunteers from different generations the opportunity to work together on a project that assists families experiencing poverty and hardships. "It goes beyond the items they are sewing," he says. "We simply provide the opportunity to educate young people about the importance of serving others. It is a way of developing and encouraging a culture of volunteerism."



Grade 10 student Katelyn Siemens, left, and home economics teacher Marla Laskowski at Waldheim School.

Grade 10 student Katelyn Siemens is enthusiastic about the opportunity to contribute to a meaningful volunteer activity. Most students sew one layette and one personal project to complete their course, but Katelyn says she won't sew a personal project this year, preferring, instead, to sew another layette for an infant care kit. "I want to make more of these," she says. "It is fun making baby layettes. I am enjoying this, but the main thing is that I'm helping families. I think it is an excellent idea to help people this way." ❧

/// Briefly noted

Formation Consultant on service leave in Zambia

Elsie Rempel, Mennonite Church Canada Formation Consultant, will mentor schoolteachers in Brethren in Christ (BIC) schools in Zambia during a three-month leave through a program supervised by Mennonite Central Committee Zambia directors, Eric and Kathy Fast. The Fastes specifically recruited Rempel for this role. Rempel invites prayers that she might have the wisdom and creativity to adapt her resources and teaching strategies to the challenging Zambian context, and that her short term of service will provide a ministry of encouragement.

—Mennonite Church Canada



PHOTO BY ERIC FAST

MCC PHOTO BY CHAI BOUPHAPHANH



Payam Bagheri, left, coordinator Esteban Rivera, Maria del Pilou Ofunoz, mentor Michael Seviour and Weiwen Ye at an English-language conversation class organized by the Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council in St. Johns, N.L.

Former refugee now helps newcomers resettle in Canada

By **GLADYS TERICHOW**
Mennonite Central Committee
ST. JOHN'S, NFLD.

Jose Rivera understands the diverse needs of newcomers as they try to develop a sense of belonging in a new country. Death threats forced him, his wife Maria and their two children to flee Colombia in 2002 and rebuild a new life in St. John's.

"The bad guys said you have 72 hours to get out of here or else," he said. "When we got here, we had to figure it out, how

to manage living here. I ended up at the refugee council for help."

Now serving as the executive director of the Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council, he uses his experiences to offer a safe, peaceful and welcoming setting for other newcomers.

The council, supported by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) since the early 1980s, is rooted in the work of grassroots community organizations that got together to share resources as they welcomed

newcomers from many other countries.

"When people come to a new country, they feel lost," Rivera said. "The first big need is information, but they have many other needs.

Staff change

Plenert takes over as MDS Canadian manager

Janet Plenert of Winnipeg began her new duties as the Region V (Canada) Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) manager on Jan. 11. Plenert

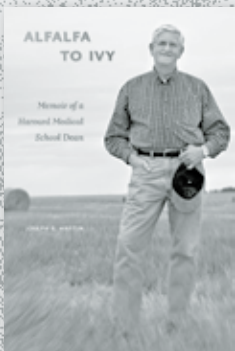


will oversee MDS Region V's disaster response in Canada and U.S., as well as manage the Region V office in Winnipeg in disaster response and Canadian volunteer deployment on both sides of the border, providing support to the provincial MDS units. She will also build capacity across Canada and be responsible for communications and promotion of MDS in Canada. Her job will also entail being part of the binational MDS leadership team. Plenert replaces Lois Nickel, who resigned in August. Plenert is presently the vice-president of Mennonite World Conference and will continue in this role; until this spring, she had served as the executive secretary of Mennonite Church Canada Witness. She and her husband Steve attend Home Street Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.
—Mennonite Disaster Service

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We are here for them. We are like firefighters, we have to be ready for everything.”

One of the most pressing needs of newcomers, he explains, is learning the English language. Twice a week, the council offers conversation classes and also provides skills assessment, job-search support, counselling, moral support and referrals.

This support, said Rivera, is made possible through the commitment of volunteers and financial support from organizations such as MCC, whose contributions cover telephone and other office costs. The agency has two staff funded through donations and income-generating projects, such as its job support programs. ❧

❧ Briefly noted

Canadian workers begin MCC assignments

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) commissioned 27 new workers for service, including four from Mennonite Church Canada congregations, after they participated in an orientation at MCC offices in Akron this fall.

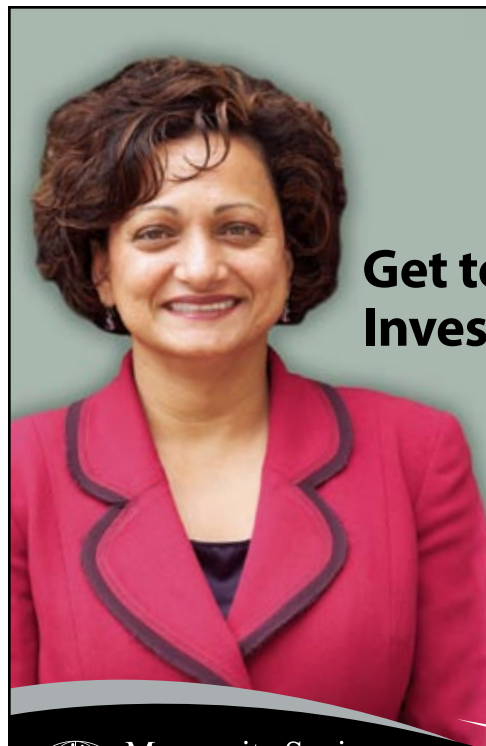
- Jesse Epp-Fransen of Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man., has begun a two-year assignment in Washington, D.C., as legislative assistant and communications coordinator with the MCC U.S. Washington Office.
- Martin Kaethler of Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, has begun an assignment in Winnipeg as a computer support specialist with MCC Canada. Kaethler has a bachelor's degree in psychology from Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg.
- Jessica Reesor Rempel of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., has begun an assignment in Kitchener as a Circle of Friends program manager.
- Miriam Harder of Clavet, Sask., who attended the Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal during her studies at McGill University, has begun a three-year assignment in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Mexico, as a conservation agriculture consultant.

—Mennonite Central Committee

PRESBYTERIAN WORLD SERVICE AND DEVELOPMENT PHOTO BY BARB SUMMERS



Women wait for food distribution in Northern Kenya, one of 22 projects worth \$13 million that the Canadian Foodgrains Bank has committed to help about 355,000 people suffering from drought in East Africa. Altogether, about 18,500 tonnes of food and other assistance is being distributed in Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia. The responses in East Africa are part of the Foodgrains Bank's larger work around the world, with 72 projects worth \$23 million having been approved since April 1, 2011. About 960,000 people are benefitting from the assistance being provided by the Foodgrains Bank.



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GOD AT WORK IN US

PHOTO BY BULLER FILMS, LLC



Getting people around a comforter is a good way to foster conversation and friendship

Mennonite develops friendships with Muslims to build grassroots peace

BY BARB DRAPER

Editorial assistant
FLORADALE, ONT.

Because Leon Kehl has been fostering friendships between Mennonites and Muslims, he was interviewed by Third Way Media when they were filming the recently

released documentary, *Waging Peace: Muslim and Christian Alternatives*. Kehl, a member of Floradale (Ont.) Mennonite Church, hopes the group of Muslim and Mennonite friends that he has worked with in Waterloo Region for several years can grow to also include other Christians and Jews.

"We need to understand each other and get to know each other," says Kehl. "We have been asked to respond to the 'other' with violence and that's not in keeping with being Mennonite or what Jesus teaches."

Kehl well remembers 9/11, remarking that it was a pivotal day in his life. He attended a prayer vigil that evening and was overwhelmed with a sense of sorrow, not only for those who died that day, but also for those "who were going to die because of that day." In his struggle to know how to respond, he felt drawn into working at developing relationships with local Muslims. It is work he has felt called to do.

With the help of Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, Kehl and others organized a friendship group of Muslims and Mennonites who meet together once a month, often at each other's places of worship. They have also planned small forums with speakers and discussions on topics related to faith and life. Gathering people around a comforter is a neat way to break the tension and get people talking says Kehl. As people

from different backgrounds sit together and tie knots to bind the layers of the blanket together, they relax and just begin to talk. Working together to make relief comforters has been part of a few events.

In 2010 the Muslim/Mennonite friendship group worked together to sponsor refugees who had fled from Iraq and were in a refugee camp on the Syrian border. Because of the friendships that had been established, two Mennonite churches and two mosques pooled their finances and worked together to sponsor three families. They shared expertise in how to access government services and where to find translators and food appropriate for refugee families. Kehl was not directly involved in helping the refugee families; he concentrated on facilitating others and approach-

ing more churches to increase the number of sponsorships.

When a request came to film Mennonites and Muslims working together for peace, Kehl helped to organize an event where all the local sponsors and refugee families could interact with a panel discussion followed by supper. Footage from that event, hosted at Floradale Mennonite



Kehl

Church, was used in the *Waging Peace* documentary. The documentary also reports on friendships between Muslim and Mennonite students at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener.

Kehl is helping to organize screenings of the *Waging Peace* documentary in various locations in southern Ontario the second week of February. He hopes that the ensuing discussions will air a wide range of opinions about faith in a positive way.

In recent years Kehl had the opportunity to visit Israel/Palestine and to take his family to Turkey. Visiting with families there helped to deepen his understanding of Muslim culture. "I've met some deeply spiritual conversations with unlikely people in unlikely places," he says. "My favourite experience was sitting in a coffee bar in Istanbul at 2 a.m. with a United Church pastor and young Muslim tour guide talking about the idea of being predestined!"

Kehl passionately believes that, "love is stronger than hate—it just takes longer." ❧

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COVER STORY

Inter-Mennonite campus ministry connects and supports students

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent

Mark von Kampen is never quite sure where the conversation will lead. As Mennonite chaplain at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, he hosts formal and informal gatherings of students in the Inter-Mennonite Campus Ministry office in the University Centre throughout the school year.

Last semester, a group of students had gathered in his office for casual conversation over lunch, something that happens frequently. The conversation turned to the topic of how to have interfaith dialogue, recalls von Kampen. During the discussion a young Muslim student walked in who often enjoys the quiet space for her lunch and she was invited to join the conversation. A Jewish colleague was passing by the door when he was invited in to share his perspective, too. The discussion about interfaith dialogue became an interfaith

dialogue itself.

Von Kampen, a half-time associate pastor at First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, has been half-time chaplain at the university since 2003 and counts it a privilege to be part of these conversations. Through e-mail he keeps in touch with approximately 100 students, staff and professors who are interested in the events, discussions, worship services and interfaith activities that are planned from his office.

The Inter-Mennonite chaplaincy program is a joint ministry of Mennonite Church Manitoba, the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference and the Evangelical Mennonite Conference.

It's an exciting partnership, according to von Kampen. "We recognize that we share a common Lord and Saviour, and we want to live that out as disciples," he says. "It's also good stewardship and a witness



to the larger world, partnering together in what we couldn't do on our own."

"I am blessed by the board that oversees this ministry," says von Kampen of the representatives from each of the partner churches. "They are excited about this work and about doing it together."

The Mennonite Brethren Church used to have associate membership, but, he says, "that hasn't been the case for a number of years. We lament their absence and would love to have them. We have students with Mennonite Brethren connections who come regularly to the office."

Inter-Mennonite Campus Ministries is a resource for staff and professors as well as students. Relationship issues, addictions, work-related and other stresses are issues not limited to students. For those seeking help in addressing these issues from a faith perspective, von Kampen's door is always open. Some are not necessarily from a Mennonite background, von Kampen points out.

Von Kampen hears from those who are very involved in their churches and from those who are disenchanted with church. "Some have seen churches go through difficult times," he says. "They shake their heads and don't know what to make of it. Some continue to go to church sometimes and others not at all. I'm glad they come here where we can meet one on one, and where we can keep the possibility for reconciliation and healing open."

Over the years the problems that emerge have not changed that much, observes von Kampen. "The range of issues—academic stresses, other stresses, lifestyle choices—is similar," he says. "But one thing I have observed is that more and more students are trying to balance work and studies. They are not living with their parents, but are on their own and they are stretched, financially and otherwise. That has been a shift in the last 10 years. Students are working more hours." ❧

/// Obituary

MFC remembers former national manager

The Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC) is mourning the loss of C. Blake Friesen, former national manager, stewardship consultant and long-time supporter. Friesen passed away on Jan. 9. Friesen was an assessor and auditor with Canada Revenue Agency for 33 years. Much of his life was spent serving the church. He was instrumental in starting Grace Mennonite Church, Regina, Sask. Friesen joined MFC in 1979 as a regional manager in Clearbrook, B.C. He had been a member of the MFC board of directors since its inception in 1973. In 1980, he was appointed national manager and served in that role until 1984. In 1987, MFC awarded Friesen the distinction of honorary life member in recognition of his years of service. "Blake played a very instrumental role for MFC, first as a board member, then as a regional manager and stewardship consultant, say Darren Pries-Klassen, MFC executive director. "Blake's leadership skills and financial acumen proved extremely beneficial during MFC's early years."

—Mennonite Foundation of Canada

ARTBEAT

VIEWPOINT

Billy Graham meets the evangelist of outrage

BY WILL BRAUN

SENIOR WRITER

I recently received two books by authors in their 90s: *Nearing Home* by Billy Graham, and *Time for Outrage* by Stéphane Hessel, a retired French diplomat and concentration camp survivor who helped draft the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Each book conveys a strong sense of mission and each is made more compelling by the author's age.

"It won't be long before God calls me home," Graham writes. While Hessel, a Jew with humanist inclinations, says "the end is in sight." These books are their final public messages. Beyond that, similarities between the books thin out, but I find them complementary nonetheless. They mirror an important tension in the Mennonite church.

Graham's book is personal, pastoral and simple. The evangelist—who has met with every U.S. president since World War II and has landed on Gallup's list of "Ten Most Admired Men in the World"

for 49 years in a row—makes no effort to be sophisticated or avoid clichés. He combines practical advice ("take full advantage of your company's retirement plan"), pastoral guidance ("when the infirmities . . . of old age threaten to overwhelm you, turn your heart toward your Heavenly home"), repeated calls to conversion (the first one on page 4: "For those of you who do not know Him . . ."), and autobiographical notes (he confides that he cannot get out of a chair by himself, he has "never heard the voice of the Lord audibly," and he misses his wife Ruth, who died in 2007, "far more than [he] ever could have imagined").

Graham says the book is not just for elderly readers, but much of it is directed at them, with sections on retirement, preparing a will and relating to grandchildren (God loves them even if they don't "dress the way you wish they would"). The book is a call to grow old "with grace" and to have an "impact" for the Lord right 'til the end.

Like Graham, Stéphane Hessel burns with an undying commitment to rouse conviction in readers. Hessel's mission arises not from the Gospel but from his "lifelong commitment to politics" and to the values of the French Resistance that set up a "modern democracy" after ousting the Nazis. The Resistance emphasized social security, freedom of the press and the common good.

Hessel wants to rekindle the fervour that first advanced these ideals. Revving up his political altar call, Hessel tells "younger generations": "It's time to take

over! It's time to get angry! . . . Let us not be defeated by the tyranny of the world financial markets. . . . join the great course of history as it flows toward greater justice."

Originally published in French, the 30-page mini-book has sold more than four million copies in over 30 languages. It's emphasis on income inequality and the "dictatorship of executives" overlaps with the ethos of the Occupy Wall Street movement.

While Hessel calls outrage "one of the fundamental qualities of being human," he says rebellion must be peaceful. "The future belongs to nonviolence and the reconciliation of clashing cultures."

"The worst attitude is indifference," he implores.

Neither he nor Graham could be accused of indifference. Both care deeply about humanity, though in different ways—one about people's earthly well-being, the other about people's spiritual and eternal well-being. Hessel doesn't talk about matters of the soul; Graham doesn't talk about poverty, war or climate change. Only one would ever say, "It is high time that integrity, justice and sustainable development be allowed to prevail." And only one would encourage readers to "make a forgiving spirit part of [their] legacy."

Elements of these two worldviews exist within the Mennonite church. Some people focus on social justice, while others—influenced perhaps by Graham and other largely American evangelical figures that have filled airwaves for decades—focus more on individual faith. This creates tension.

If people on both ends seek to understand and learn from people on the other end, the church becomes stronger. But that's tough. I'm tempted to offer critique of both Graham and Hessel, but instead I will suggest that their respective emphases are complementary. The point is not to choose sides but to choose to humbly learn from the other side—to reconcile the many parts of the one body. Significantly, the need for a posture of reconciliation is something Graham and Hessel agree on. ❧



Billy Graham chats with President Obama

CMU prof reproduces 1611 King James Bible title page

By NADINE KAMPEN

Canadian Mennonite University
WINNIPEG

Before 2011 drew to a close—along with the 400th year anniversary of the publication of the 1611 King James Bible—Paul Dyck commemorated the event with a hands-on demonstration of printing the Bible's title page utilizing 1960s proof-press technology.

Dyck, a Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) professor and dean of humanities and sciences, served as curator for the University of Manitoba (U of M) King James Bible exhibit, "This Booke of Starres: 400 Years of the King James Bible." Central to the display is the 1611 King James Bible issued by the King's Printer Robert Barker. Also in the display at U of M's Elizabeth Dafoe Library at the University's Fort Garry Campus until April 30 are other rare Bible editions.

Dyck, who teaches a CMU course focusing on 13th- to 17th-century printing, has a love for print machines and technologies like proof—or letterpress—printing. CMU acquired its 1960 Challenge proof press from the U of M, which Dyck uses for printing unique projects and raising understanding of print technologies.

It is from the U of M's 1611 edition that CMU got its image to construct a replica of the original wooden block used to print the Bible's title page. Dyck describes this process as a little "reverse engineering," starting with a colour photograph, converting it to black and white, and using digital engraving to build a print block on a magnesium surface over a wooden base.

Dyck's main goal is to illustrate the technology to his students. By printing copies of the King James' 1611 title page from his small print shop in CMU's Founder's Hall, he had faculty, staff and students hovering around the press and taking turns printing their own copy of the title page.

"Today, students are experimenting with text and images electronically using existing technologies," he says. "In the

1400s and 1500s, people were doing the same kind of experimentation, only using the technologies available at that time." Dyck hopes his students "rediscover" printing technology by getting their hands dirty using the proofing press.

The intricate hand-carving of the image on the 1611 title page speaks not only to the craftsmanship, but also to the scholarship behind the design. Dyck notes that the imagery is derived from the Book of Revelation. He points out how the scrolls of history in the image are shown surrounded by 24 elders, representing 12 tribes and 12 disciples.

"The evangelists come with their traditional symbols," says Dyck, describing how, in the iconography, the beasts are translated as the four evangelists: John (the eagle); Luke (the ox); Mark (the lion) and Matthew (the angel).

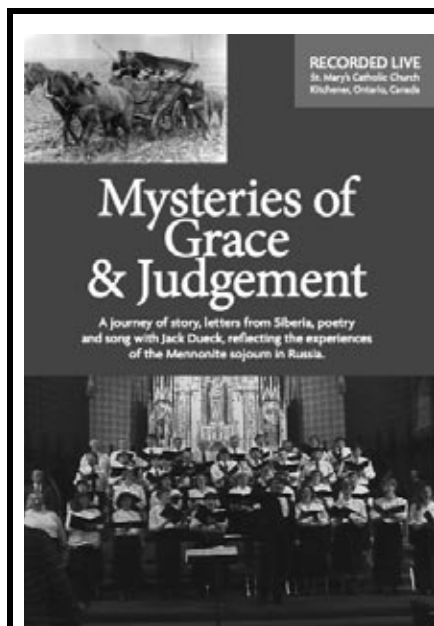
He points out the sacrificial lamb on the altar at the centre of the image. "There is a sense of sorrow [in the imagery] that the scrolls of history cannot be opened by

man. It is only the lamb who was slain who can open them," says Dyck, adding, "The image also speaks to what it means to read this book, and how it is to be understood. The title page is telling the reader that the reading is itself a holy act that needs to be mediated by Christ." ❧

CMU PHOTO BY KAREN ALLEN



CMU professor Paul Dyck demonstrates the proof-press technique for student Ellen Wiens.



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Keep the Bible central: Wally Unger

Columbia Bible College president emeritus gives 75th anniversary address

BY BARRIE MCMASTER

Columbia Bible College
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Columbia Bible College is proof that “where there is a vision, people will support,” said president emeritus Wally Unger at an Oct. 22 banquet to celebrate the school’s 75th anniversary. As part of that vision, Columbia’s faculty “didn’t teach students for information,” he said, “we taught them for transformation.”

At the banquet, attended by 485 guests, alumni from each decade stood up and were recognized in turn, including a representative from the 1930s. The dinner capped a day-long program of events, including a tour of the new residence hall that was built with enhanced safety and

community in mind.

Alumni came from all over B.C., Alberta and elsewhere.

Rudy Baerg, who retired after a 30-year term as Columbia’s music director, came back from a new posting in Ukraine to lead the alumni choir.

Unger, the keynote speaker, thanked college supporters, faculty, and alumni “for letting me serve you” for more than 40 years, many of them as president. He offered four guideposts to keep the school on track for the future:

- Continue to keep the Bible central, stressing biblical literacy in an era of resurgent atheism.
- Maintain and teach ethical integrity, wedding theology to ethics in how students and graduates live and act as Christians, in order

to stay distinctive in a secular society.

- Give priority to doctrinal faithfulness, grounding teaching on biblical principles, and remembering balance to ensure doctrines of sin and heaven and hell aren’t lost.

- Remain culturally relevant. Christians must understand their culture and relate to it, he said, “but do so while we also guard our Christian values.” ❧



Unger

❧ Staff change

Providence appoints new business prof

OTTERBURNE, MAN.—Jeremy Funk will be joining the staff of Providence University College as a new assistant professor of business administration this fall in the business admin-



Funk

istration program. He is in the fifth year of his Ph.D. studies at the Asper School of Business, where his research focus is on strategy in the family business context. His research interests are in the area of small- and medium-sized family business operations and the impact of corporate social responsibility. “I’m looking forward to the opportunity of once again being involved full-time in Christian higher education,” Funk says of his decision to teach at Providence. “We have a tremendous opportunity to work with bright students who want to do well in business, but are also passionate about having their faith be reflected in their everyday business activities. I am excited to make a contribution towards growing a solid business program.” Funk received an honours B.A. in business administration from Trinity Western University, Langley, B.C., in 1985, and an M.B.A. from the University of Manitoba in 1987. He was appointed to the board of governors of Trinity Western University in 2004 and elected chair in 2011.

—Providence University College

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New Grebel program encourages agents of peaceful change

Conrad Grebel University College
WATERLOO, ONT.

In the culmination of more than a decade of dreaming and a year of intense work, Conrad Grebel University College announces the launch of a new master of peace and conflict studies (PACS) program. Combining interdisciplinary scholarship with concrete application, the program will empower students with the knowledge, research and practical skills needed to contribute to nonviolent peacebuilding efforts. Placing a unique focus on the pivotal role that individuals within civil society play as catalysts for peace, it is a course-based, professional graduate program open to both full-time and part-time students beginning in the fall of 2012.

Lowell Ewert, director of Grebel's PACS program, says, "Civil society is key to peacebuilding because it brings out the best in humanity by inspiring citizens to take responsibility for their communities and develop creative solutions to local issues. Imagine how impoverished our communities would be if there were no effective civil society organizations. By mobilizing our community to get involved in organizations that promote the arts, sports, health, education, religion or social justice, our communities are enriched and made more compassionate."

"Peace studies is in our DNA," says Susan Schultz Huxman, Grebel's president. "The undergraduate program in PACS has been wildly successful by many measures. College stakeholders recognized this 15 years ago when they first began developing the idea for graduate education at Grebel."

Applications for the master's level PACS program are currently being accepted by the Graduate Studies Office at the University of Waterloo, although processing of applications and admission of students will not occur until the new program is approved by the Ontario

Universities Council on Quality Assurance. The university will acknowledge and store

applications, but will be unable to evaluate or act on them in any way until the program has been formally approved. In the unlikely case that the program is not approved, the application fee will be refunded. ☺



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Mennonites writing in Canada: The first 50 years

Conrad Grebel University College celebrates Mennonite literature

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

The chapel at Conrad Grebel University College was packed to hear renowned Mennonite author Rudy Wiebe read through his life of writing on Jan. 11, 50 years after his 1962 novel, *Peace Shall Destroy Many*, was published.

Hildi Froese Tiessen marks the publication of Wiebe's first novel as the beginning of Mennonite writing in Canada, although Wiebe began his reading with a story he had written several years earlier but which was not published until later.

In an interview with Tiessen, professor of English and peace and conflict studies at Grebel, she noted that, while there had been materials published in both German and English before Wiebe's book, his was the first published completely in English by a non-church-related press, and was the first Mennonite book published for the larger Canadian audience.

To celebrate this anniversary, Tiessen has put together a series of readings over three months. Open to the public, the readings also form the basis of a course she is teaching. Students hear writers read their own material and comment on it, as well as reading other works and writing papers.

Tiessen remembers growing up in WASP Canada as "minor characters in someone else's story." Wanting to have stories of her people read has motivated her to focus on Mennonite literature throughout her career. She has seen changes over the last 50 years. Earlier writings were part of the "immigrant" genre in which writers try to make sense of the old and cultures with one foot planted in each. Now, as Mennonites have by-and-large become part of the Canadian mainstream, writers are exploring what it means to be Mennonites in the multicultural mosaic, or simply what it means to be Canadian.

Earlier writers were often seen as "angry young people out to change the church," she said, while some more recent writers are content with their spirituality, either in or outside of Mennonite churches. But in or out of the church, writers, as artists, often look at things from a different slant and have important things to say to the church. "We need to read them," says Tiessen, referring to writers like Dora



Rudy Wiebe is pictured after his reading at Conrad Grebel University College with moderator Hildi Froese Tiessen, professor of English and peace and conflict studies. Wiebe kicked off Grebel's Celebrating Mennonite Literature reading series on Jan. 11.

Dueck, Darcie Friesen Hossack, Carrie Snyder or Hedy Martens.

At Wiebe's reading, retired CBC commentator Howard Dyck recalled trying to buy a copy of Wiebe's *My Lovely Enemy* in 1983 in a southern Manitoba town. Finding none on the shelf, he asked the clerk if the store had a copy. Meeting him at the till, the clerk handed Dyck the book in a brown paper bag with the rehearsed sentence, "The management does not agree with all the contents of this book."

Tiessen confirmed that writers have often paid a price by expressing what they experienced in the Mennonite church. Wiebe's prescient voice is heard in his first book through the character of Joseph Dueck. Dueck is questioned by Elder Block, "You told that to them?" when Dueck tells Block that he has told the stories of happenings in the Mennonite church to non-Mennonites. Wiebe himself paid a price for publishing his book, and yet remains in the Mennonite church.

The series continues through March 14, at 7 p.m. on Wednesdays in the Grebel chapel including Julia Kasdorf, David Bergen, Darcie Friesen Hossack and Paul Tiessen. ▮


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PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN



Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C., officially opened its new student residence, Redekop Hall, with a dedication ceremony and tours on Jan. 15. The hall provides 128 beds in 32 units, and apartments for married students. Students moved into the facility on its completion in late November 2011. The new residence hall is the result of a \$3.5-million campaign launched in 2009 with a lead gift of \$1 million from the extended Redekop family of Abbotsford. Since the demolition of the former men's dormitories as a result of renovations in 2004, male students had been housed off campus in nearby apartment buildings. It was noted that having all students now rooming and boarding on campus will help establish more cohesive relationships in the college community. CBC president Ron Penner said opening the new residence was "the fulfillment of a dream," as he told the Redekops. "We appreciate your heart for education."

/// Staff change

Rempel to assume role of Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre director

John Rempel, Ph.D., will assume the role of director of the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre at the Toronto School of Theology (TST) next fall following his retirement from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) at the end of the 2011-12 academic year. Rempel will direct the academic partnership between Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., and TST, and the student programs of the Mennonite theological centre. He and other Grebel faculty will teach Mennonite and Anabaptist courses in the graduate programs of TST, continuing the tradition established by Jim Reimer more than 20 years ago. Rempel will also mentor Mennonite students at TST, organize forums and conferences with the theological centre students, and communicate the centre's vision and activities to the public. Having spent "many years in New York City in the midst of church encounters with many religious and secular worldviews, as well as some years at AMBS within an intensely Mennonite community," Rempel says he looks forward to bringing that experience "into the encounter with many worldviews and out of that be a resource to the Mennonite church."

—Conrad Grebel University College

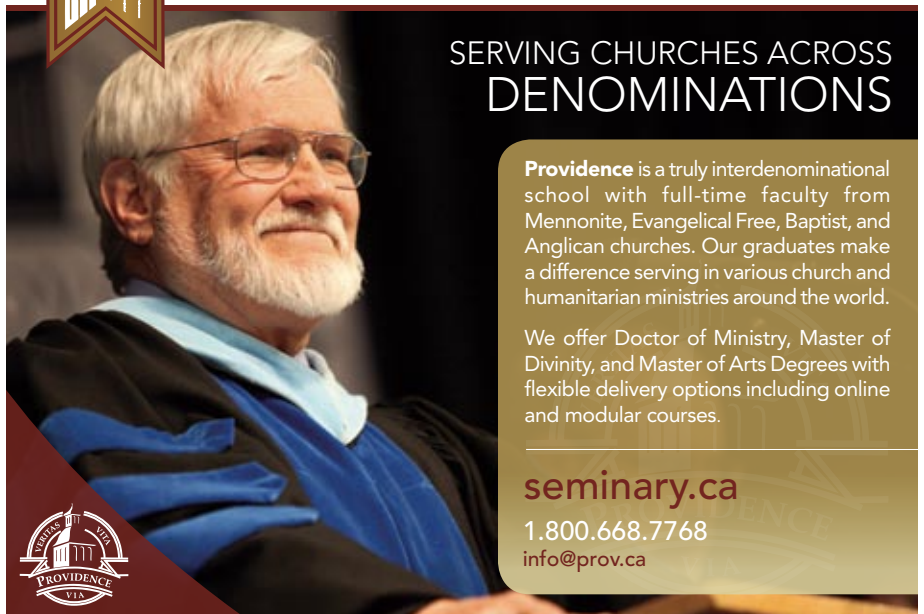


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Seduced by our abundance

By LAURA AMSTUTZ

Eastern Mennonite University
HARRISONBURG, VA

Beware of seduction by accumulation. That was one of the money issues explored by Walter Brueggemann, a world-renowned Old Testament scholar, in talks to as many as 700 people gathered at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) Jan. 16 through 18.

In his three packed lectures at EMU's annual School for Leadership Training, Brueggemann talked about two narratives: the narrative of accumulation, demonstrated by Pharaoh in the Old Testament, and the narrative of abundance, demonstrated by manna in the desert in the Old Testament and the feeding of the 5,000 in the New Testament.

"The narrative of accumulation dominates our society and it is enormously seductive," he said.

Using Pharaoh, Solomon, and the

parable of Jesus about the rich man who tore down his barns and built bigger ones, Brueggemann demonstrates that this narrative only leads to death, both the death of the wealthy individual and the death of the poor.

"Accumulation promises to make us safe and happy, but it cannot," he said. "Anxiety about scarcity leads to accumulation, which leads to monopoly, which leads to violence."

Brueggemann said God is the source of all bounty, including food, and thus is the central player in the narrative of abundance.

"Moving from scarcity to abundance depends on understanding that the world is God's creation, not a system of zero-sum economics," Brueggemann said. He called on his listeners to practice their faith by

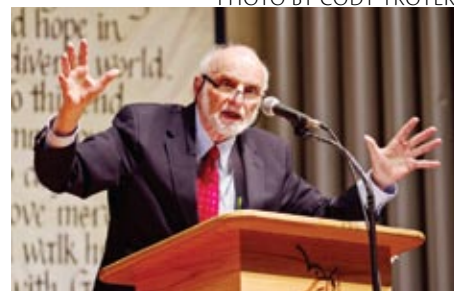


PHOTO BY CODY TROYER

Walter Brueggemann inspires School for Leadership Training participants to move beyond the drive to accumulate toward accepting God's gracious abundance.

living gratefully instead of anxiously.


The accumulation narrative and the abundance narrative are "deeply contradictory," said Brueggemann. Yet most people try "to juggle them and hope no one notices." Brueggemann called on the church to do "more truth-telling about the deathliness of the [accumulation] system," even if the church's stance is called unrealistic by many. "The gospel is fiction when

UpComing

CMU announces summer peacebuilding courses

WINNIPEG—The Canadian School of Peacebuilding, an institute of Canadian Mennonite University, features two sessions this summer. The first will run from June 18-22, featuring three separate courses entitled "Great leaders of peace: Stories of aboriginal, Canadian and international leaders," by Ovide Mercredi; "Peace skills practice," by Karen Ridd; and "Speaking out and being heard: Citizen advocacy," by Stuart Clark and Sophia Murphy. The second session runs from June 25-29, featuring "Participant-driven processes: Cultivating change, respecting difference," by instructor Barry Stuart; "Faith, music and inter-ethnic reconciliation," by Ivo Markovic; and "Women and peacebuilding" by Ouyporn Khuankaew and Anna Snyder. For information about courses, instructors, lodging, costs and times, visit cmu.ca/csop.

—Canadian Mennonite University



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judged by the empire, but the empire is fiction when judged by the gospel.”

In his Jan. 18 talk, Brueggemann said that practicing Sabbath is one way to move from accumulation to abundance. “Sabbath is a deliberate, disciplined pause in the narrative of accumulation,” said Brueggemann. “We are most imitating God when we trust

creation enough to rest.

“A society that does not practice Sabbath is a society of depleted selves. And the less self I have the more I want to surround myself with signs and symbols of value to keep persuading myself that there is something good going on in my life even if it is relatively empty at the center.” ❧

The REAL thing at Bethany College

BY WES ENNS

Bethany College, Sask.

Every February, high school students from across Canada brave the cold, snow, and winter wind to make the trip to Hepburn, Saskatchewan for Bethany College’s Youth Advance (YA)! Bethany’s annual youth retreat brings people together to be challenged through dynamic teaching, drama, music, art and loads of fun activities. It is one of the most anticipated annual events at Bethany, both by current students and high schoolers alike.

The theme for YA 2012 is, “This is REAL,” and Kevin Snyder, this year’s main session speaker, will challenge attendees to find reality in their world, based on the theme verse for the weekend: John 1:4, “The Word gave life to everything that was created, and His life brought light to everyone.” Kevin, an alumnus of Bethany College, is currently the Youth Pastor at Coast Hills Community Church in Surrey, BC.

Much more than a youth retreat, YA is an opportunity for students to be drawn closer to Jesus through the unique culture at Bethany College. Each year, Bethany’s drama department prepares a production for the “retreaters” (lovingly referred to as “advancers”), and this year, will be presenting “Cotton Patch Gospel” (encore of Fall Theatre) and “The Gospel According to Jessica.”

Matthew Bergen, a third-year student at Bethany, has decorated the Bethany Halls for YA by creating a special art piece highlighting the weekend’s theme. Over the years that Matt has attended Bethany, this visual art display has grown in size. At

YA 2011, advancers were treated to a large piece of graffiti art on canvas that hung in the center of the gym wall and as Matt explained it was, “a snapshot of what Jesus’ heart may have looked like on the cross.” The piece that Matt has produced for YA 2012 is almost twice as large as last years, and like all of Matt’s graffiti, “goes out to my best friend – Jesus.” ❧

PHOTO BY DARLENE DYCK



Matthew Bergen creates large graffiti art for Bethany College’s retreat.



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/// Briefly noted

First fully endowed faculty chair established at AMBS

ELKHART, IND.—The first fully endowed faculty position at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) reflects the vision and commitment of donors Mary Esther and the late Walter Schmid. The newly established chair in missional leadership development, named for the Orrville, Ohio, couple, has been created through contributions totalling \$1.5 million. The annual earnings will fund one full-time faculty member. “This gift ensures that missional leadership development will have a significant presence in the faculty and curriculum in AMBS’s future,” says Rebecca Slough, AMBS dean. The teaching role is held by David B. Miller, a son-in-law of the Schmidts, who joined the AMBS faculty in 2009.

For the donors, involvement in the church was a significant part of life. Mary Esther, served at Orrville Mennonite Church as a Sunday school and Bible school teacher. Walter, who died in 1998, served as treasurer for the Ohio Mennonite Conference. Their four children remember visiting mission churches in the conference when they were young. The gift for missional leadership supports his parent’s vision and practical values, son Steve Schmid says on behalf of the family: “They always desired that church leaders would encourage congregations to put their faith into action. The church is most vibrant when it is actively serving the needs of the community.” Wanting to support people rather than construction projects, Mary Esther began making contributions toward the endowed faculty position in 2004. In 2008 the seminary created a position in missional leadership to correspond to needs identified in the church. AMBS opened the search to fill that position and discerned that Miller, who was then serving as pastor of University Mennonite Church, State College, Pa., was the best candidate. —Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary



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I am from the Mennonites

A reflection on the importance of Mennonite culture to someone who doesn't come from any place

BY ELISE EPP

Special to Canadian Mennonite

PHOTO COURTESY OF ELISE EPP



It happened often enough in grade school. My classmates would talk about where their families lived before they came to Canada. They would say things like, “I’m half Norwegian and half Irish,” then ask, “What are you?” I would say, “I’m... Mennonite. We’re not really from a country.” In grade eight, my social studies teacher corrected the detailed family tree I had submitted: how could I use the German words *Oma* and *Opa* for my grandparents if their families came from Russia?

Historically, nationality has not been important to Mennonites. Instead, they have clung to their faith community, moving together from country to country as it no longer became safe to stay where they were. Their status in their countries was tenuous; their faith was not. For centuries, Mennonites lived in insular groups separated from local society—and yet not, as they absorbed local foods, worship styles, music, and new surnames into their own traditions.

I grew up in a Mennonite home in a Scandinavian Lutheran town—Camrose, Alberta, and with the exception of my earliest years, I did not feel like I was from there. In grade 11, I went to Rosthern Junior College, a Mennonite high school, and continued on to the University of Saskatchewan, trying to be from somewhere.

In Saskatoon, I was near many relations as well as the homesteads of my dad’s family. It helped me to connect to my roots, but I’m still not from anywhere. I’m not from Alberta or Canada. I like to say that I’m from Saskatoon, but I’m not. I live in Toronto, and I love the city, but I’m not

from here. I am Mennonite, in culture and in faith.

As a young adult, I have finally found people who share this unique past. Starting at RJC, I was no longer the only Mennonite. I was able to share my heritage with people like me, to meet people with names like mine, to look forward to *Pfeffernüsse* (peppernuts) at Christmas and have people understand what that meant. To find a new meaning for the question, “where are you from?” I am from the Mennonites.

Still in the excitement of newfound belonging, I learn that Mennonite-the-culture has become taboo. The fear is that if we talk about “Mennonite” names and food, we will exclude people who are from other ethnic backgrounds. That concern is fair. But it is one thing to welcome people of different backgrounds into our communities; it is another to shy away from our own heritage.

There is also resistance to “Mennonite” being seen as anything other than a faith. It is not lamentable that what began as a faith movement grew into a culture. It is wonderful that we have been so shaped by our faith to have it extend to all aspects of our lives.

It should be natural for Mennonites to include people from all over the world, because from early on, we have been world travellers. Even “Mennonite food” is a multicultural combination, and cookbooks like *More With Less* include recipes from all over the world. It makes sense for us to welcome onto our potluck tables foods from a variety of cultures.

We came out of a movement that aimed to make God accessible to all, so it makes

sense for us to adapt our worship services to the members of our congregations, to sometimes read scripture in Spanish or sing songs from various traditions. But we can do so and still acknowledge where we came from. We can be rooted in our culture in order to be hospitable and able

to enlarge our story. There is a difference between our heritage and our current churches, and yet they exist in overlapping space. By recognizing them as separate but compatible entities, there should be room for both. ☺

Mennonite: culture or denomination?

A reflection on what it's like to be part of a faith community where the culture sometimes keeps people out

BY KAREN ALLEN

Special to Canadian Mennonite

Over the last few years, I have encountered a strange conversation amongst my co-workers. It comes up occasionally, each time with a different group of people and a multitude of opinions. The enthusiasm for this topic has long fascinated me, as it seems far too ordinary a thing to elicit such emotion from people.

The hot button topic: the best place to buy Farmer's sausage.

Apparently, the location is somewhere out in Saskatchewan and if I'm not mistaken, a colleague's second cousin's neighbour knows the guy who makes it. Even now, after listening to this conversation countless times, I am still amazed at how excited people become. What is the point? Farmer's sausage all tastes the same to me.

This small, quirky part of the Mennonite world is a reminder that while I might worship and work within this community, I am the proverbial fish out of water. Almost fourteen years after my family's immigration from South Africa, and I still find myself on the outside looking in. I have learned the customs of this community, the great fondness for *schmaundt fat* (cream gravy) and farmer's sausage and the truly astounding feat of gathering 150 of your closest relatives for a family reunion. But these cultural landmarks have yet to permeate my personal life.

Why do I continue to be part of a world

in which I don't always fit? It always comes back to the idea of community. Immigration is lonely, and a phone call or Facebook can only do so much to connect you to your loved ones. In the absence of extended family, I have readily jumped into the world of Mennonites, simply because it was easier to belong to an established community than to have to deal with the grief of being so far from my own family and community.

There is great comfort in being swept along with the communal aspect of this culture, but there are always two sides to the coin. There is a strange exclusivity amongst Mennonites, a general, unspoken, assumption: if you are attending a Mennonite church or working in a Mennonite organization, you should already know the ins and outs of this complex culture. Howard Yoder should be a household name, your grandmother should've taught you how to make perogies and you should be related to at least one Mennonite in order to play the Mennonite Game.

I am a fifth generation South African with roots in England and Wales. My grandmother taught me how to make fishcakes and shepherd's pie, and I was almost 26 before I learned about Yoder. Over the years, I have focused on just living in this community rather than assimilating into it. And after my trip home to South Africa in 2010, a trip that renewed the connection to



Allen

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KAREN ALLEN



Karen Allen with her second cousin, Annette Lee; grandmother, Maureen Roos; and great Aunt, Joan Visser at, Hluhluwe Game Reserve in KwaZulu Natal.

my home country and family, I am questioning the way we, as a church community, approach the idea of multiculturalism. I want to be a part of the church, to worship God in the Anabaptist faith, but I want to be South African as well. I cannot negate my cultural and family ties any more than Canadian Mennonites can deny their cultural and historical backgrounds.

There is more to our faith community than just Russian Mennonite and Swiss Mennonite. Part of being a community is not just to embrace the similarities between individuals but also to respect the differences. The ideology of our group seems lop-sided to me. So much emphasis is placed on inviting different cultures into our churches and institutions, without giving thought to how they will adapt, and

eventually thrive, in these settings.

I wonder what our church will look like 25 years from now. Will the majority of members still claim ties to the early Mennonite immigrants? Or will the congregations have diversified, spread out to many different cultures—Congolese, British or Portuguese. Because at the end of day, what or who are Mennonites? Is it a culture or a church denomination? And can I be a part of it if I don't have a Mennonite last name? ॥

Karen Allen was raised in Kempton Park, South Africa, a town co-founded by her great-great-grandfather. She now lives in Winnipeg, where she works at Canadian Mennonite University and attends Bethel Mennonite Church.



Nathan Cullen (right), NDP leadership candidate, speaks with CMU students, staff, and faculty

CMU engages with NDP leadership candidate

BY RACHEL BERGEN

Co-Editor of Young Voices

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

Often, young adults are seen as apathetic about politics. But a group of Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) students met with a Member of Parliament

and a New Democratic Party (NDP) leadership candidate on January 11 to explain their hopes for the future of Canada.

Nathan Cullen, an MP for Skeena-

Bulkley Valley in Northern British Columbia, is in the top tier of competitors to fill Jack Layton's shoes as leader of the NDP. On January 11, he was a guest speaker in an International Development Studies class at CMU called "Non-Governmental Organizations: Practices, Impacts, and Issues" instructed by Ray Vander Zaag.

Cullen has worked for various NGOs in North America, Latin America, and Africa doing community and economic development. Speaking in Vander Zaag's class, Cullen discussed his work with NGOs and the current government's view of them.

"Our current government equates international relations with trade. I think that's a shame," he said. Also, many NGOs from developed Western countries take the old colonial approach to international aid and do not humbly assume that the people they help know what they're doing, they just need a hand up.

Cullen suggested to those considering international development work to ensure that they only work with partnership organizations for this reason.

"You work together, you sweat together," he said. He also shared that it is very difficult work and development workers must take care of themselves physically, emotionally, and spiritually or they will harm themselves and others. NGOs that are committed to supporting their staff are often the most successful, he said.

In addition to discussing the work of NGOs, CMU students, staff and faculty gathered in the Blaurock Cafe to discuss important issues that Canada might look at differently. The omnibus crime bill was one issue that student, Jami Reimer felt was important to address. Her mother works in the prison system helping inmates to earn their High School diplomas and has seen first-hand how the current justice system is harming incarcerated people rather than helping them reintegrate into society as contributing members.

Reimer shared that "Harper's 'serious crime for serious time' philosophy just puts

more serious, hardened criminals back into communities when they are released."

Cullen believes that "we should worry as much about criminals going into prison as criminals coming out." Because the government over-emphasizes the former and overlooks the latter, he has serious concerns about the Omnibus crime bill.

Students also wanted to hear more about Cullen's idea to change the voting system. Cullen hopes the political parties to the left of centre will collaborate so that votes will matter. He plans to implement this if parties are willing if he becomes leader of the NDP on March 24.

"Right now, the opposition can't affect the agenda of the government," Cullen said, so young people who are apathetic about politics don't think their vote matters. "Your vote should matter," Cullen said. He hopes to call upon the riding associations to hold joint nominating meetings with the Greens and Liberals in areas represented by a conservative MP.

This is not the first time that CMU has hosted political figures. In the recent past, CMU has hosted political forums with local MPs from different political parties fielding questions from students. Steven Fletcher, Progressive Conservative MP for Charleswood, St. James, Assiniboia, and Headingley in Winnipeg has visited CMU several times, whether to speak about politics or to be a part of CMU announcements.

CMU wants students to be challenged by politicians and for politicians to be challenged by students and are intentional about inviting politicians into discourse said Ben Borne, CMU Student Council President and organizer of the event. Discussions like these encourage voter responsibility and are opportunities for students to be transparent and honest about their vision for the future, he said. "Often times we live in our own little bubble. As Christians, we are called to engage with the world." ❧



Nathan Cullen (left), NDP leadership candidate speaks in a CMU classroom about his work with non-governmental organizations.

UpComing

Youth assembly to transition to new biennial schedule by 2016

WINNIPEG—After considering a number of options, Mennonite Church Canada's Christian Formation Council approved last fall a cycle of Canadian youth gatherings that will include a stand-alone event held in Manitoba in 2013. Two years later, in 2015, MC Canada will plan a unique gathering opportunity in conjunction with the dates of the global Mennonite World Conference assembly in Pennsylvania. Then, in 2016, the youth assembly will take place on the regular biennial cycle of national gatherings, together with adult delegate meetings. MC Manitoba youth pastors and area church leaders are extending an invitation to all MC Canada youths to come to Manitoba for Youth Assembly 2013. This will be a "youth-only" gathering, falling between the even-numbered years of the biennial cycle of delegate gatherings approved by MC Canada delegates in Waterloo in July 2011. Exact dates and location of Youth Assembly 2013 will be confirmed in the coming weeks.

—Mennonite Church Canada

Calendar

British Columbia

March 2: MC B.C. LEADership Conference at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford.

March 3: MC B.C. annual meeting and 75th anniversary celebration and banquet.

April 27-29: Junior youth Impact retreat at Camp Squeah.

Alberta

Feb. 24-26: Senior high snow camp at Camp Valaqua. For more information, call Valaqua at 403-637-2510.

Saskatchewan

Feb. 24-25: MC Saskatchewan annual delegate sessions at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

March 11: RJC Guys and Pies fundraising event.

March 23-24: Songfest at First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon with Clayton Braybrook conducting; (23) Registration at 6:30 p.m. and session at 7 p.m.; (24) sessions at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m., with a program at 7:30 p.m.

April 24: RJC/CMU choir concert at Osler Mennonite, at 7 p.m.

Manitoba

Feb. 22: Adults with Disabilities Venture Camp at Camp Koinonia. For more information, call the Camps with Meaning office at 204-895-2267.

Feb. 22: CMU open house for prospective students.

March 2: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate gala concert.

March 4: Mennonite Community Orchestra and CMU Choir in concert.

March 8-10: MCI, Gretna, presents its spring musical, *The Pirates of Penzance*, at Buhler Hall. For tickets, call 204-327-5891.

March 9-11: CMU Peace-it-Together. For more information, visit cmu.ca/pit.

March 10: MCC Manitoba spring banquet with John Janzen, Kennert Giesbrecht and Tina Fehr Kehler speaking about Low German programs. Call Paul at 1-888-622-6337.

March 12-13: CMU presents the Proclaiming the Claims of Christ Lectures.

March 16: CMU campus visit day.

March 17: CMU Friesens Arts Café, featuring Dustin Wiebe playing Balinese Gamelan music.

March 19: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate fundraising banquet, at the Marlborough Hotel, Winnipeg, at 6 p.m.

Ontario

Feb. 17: 31st annual Heifer Sale sponsored by Ontario Mennonite Relief Sale Inc., at Carson Auction, Listowel, beginning at 11 a.m. Proceeds of the auction go directly to MCC relief, development and peace work around the world. For more information, visit heifersale.org.

Feb. 17: Sawatsky Lecture at Conrad Grebel Great Hall, at 7:30 p.m. Speaker: Julia Spicher Kasdorf. Topic: "Mightier than the sword: *Martyrs Mirror* in the new world." For more information, visit grebel.uwaterloo.ca/Sawatsky.

Feb. 20: Family Day open house at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Possible activities include sledding, skating, building a snowman, floor hockey, making pretzels, and a campfire. Bring your own outdoor equipment. Light lunch provided at noon. For more information, or to register, e-mail info@hiddenacres.ca call 519-625-8602.

Feb. 22-24: MC Eastern Canada School for Ministers, "Living into the future: Anabaptist convictions, the missional church and a post-Christian world," with Stuart Murray, author of *The Naked Anabaptist*; at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

March 3: Menno Singers performs

"Choral Romantics," the centrepiece of which is Dvorak's Mass in D Major, at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, at 8 p.m.

March 12,13: Grandparent/Grandchild Days at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp. This retreat is for grandparents and their grandchildren in grades 1 to 6. For more information, call 519-625-8602 or e-mail info@hiddenacres.ca.

March 15,16: Bechtel Lectures at Conrad Grebel Chapel, at 7:30 p.m. Speaker: John D. Roth. Topics: "The challenge of church unity in Anabaptist tradition" (15); "What has Zurich to do with Addis Ababa? Ecclesial identity in the global Anabaptist church" (16). For more information, visit grebel.uwaterloo.ca/bechtel.

March 16-17: Engaged workshop (affiliated with the Mennonite and Brethren Marriage Encounter), at Living Water Fellowship, New Hamburg. For more information, or to register, contact Denise Bender at 519-656-2005. Advance registration is required.

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

Classifieds

Travel

Visit Europe the Mennonite Way! Mennonite Heritage Tours 2012: 10-18 day Hotel Tours focussing on Mennonite heritage in Holland, Germany, Poland, Belgium and Switzerland. www.mennoniteheritagetours.eu

Employment Opportunities

CMU CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Web Designer
Part Time

www.cmu.ca/employment.html
204.487.3300 hrdirector@cmu.ca



**ACCOUNTANT**

Accountant needed for a full-time, 40 hour/week position working as a member of the accounting team providing day-to-day management and oversight to all accounting and payroll related aspects of the organization at the Communitas office in Abbotsford. All applicants must have prior accounting experience in the non-profit sector and an accounting designation (e.g. CMA, CGA, CA). Position starts September 2012. Applicants must submit an application on our website at www.CommunitasCare.com. In addition, resumes can be sent to:

Layne Bieber,
HR Recruitment & Retention Coordinator,
Email: hr@CommunitasCare.com or Fax: 604.850.2634

Communitas is a non-profit, faith-based social services agency. We provide various resources to persons living and dealing with mental, physical and/or emotional disabilities. We are advocates on behalf of those we serve.



Fairview and Parkwood Communities are looking for an experienced

FINANCE DIRECTOR

to lead our Accounting Department.

Reporting to the Executive Director and as a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the successful applicant will lead a team responsible for the company's financial reporting including the coordination of the annual audit process with external auditors.

The position requires meticulous attention to detail and the ability to multi-task in a fast-moving and challenging environment.

Candidates must have an accounting designation of CA/CMA/CGA or equivalent along with a minimum of 5 years experience in a similar role in a health care facility.

If you are looking for a challenging career and the opportunity to be part of a company with a promising future, please submit your resume by February 29, 2012 to:

tkennel@fairviewmh.com

For full job description see www.fairviewmh.com or www.parkwoodmh.com.

**Employment Opportunities:**

Bethany College is seeking passionate, innovative and enthusiastic people to join our team. We welcome applications for the following positions:

- » Donor Relations Field Representative
- » Athletics Director
- » Ministry Arts Director

For information on these employment opportunities or to respond, please visit: www.bethany.sk.ca or contact: Human Resources, Bethany College
Box 160 Hepburn SK S0K 1Z0
Phone: 1.866.772.2175 email: info@bethany.sk.ca



Bethany College, an evangelical Anabaptist college, is a biblical learning community with an emphasis on active, informed discipleship. Our mission is to "nurture disciples, and train leaders to serve." We seek to create a community of learning in which instruction, modeling, and mutual accountability can result in transformed lives both intellectually and spiritually.

INTERIM PASTOR

Calgary Inter-Mennonite Church (CIM) is currently seeking an Interim Pastor, starting May, 2012. Current pastor retiring. Located in Calgary, Alberta (membership of 110) CIM is guided by Christian faith in Anabaptist / Mennonite tradition. CIM is a member of the Supportive Congregations Network (SCN) as a publicly welcoming church. Term of 6 to 9 months, all areas of pastoral and congregational care required. Please see: www.cimchurch.org. For more info, or to send application / resumes please contact cimchurchsearch@gmail.com.

**CANADIAN
MENNONITE****ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE**

Canadian Mennonite is seeking a part-time Advertising Representative for the biweekly magazine. The majority of work can be done from home if desired.

The Advertising Representative is responsible for managing, caring for and growing Canadian Mennonite's advertising base, including online advertising. The successful applicant will provide service to advertisers; develop and carry out ad marketing campaigns; respond to ad inquiries; and, assist advertisers, as needed, with the production of ads from development through to print and/or online publication. The person will work with the publisher to develop our overall advertising business plan.

Applicants should be self-motivated idea people with strong sales and communication skills; have the ability to understand customer needs and match them to our offerings; support Canadian Mennonite's ministry and mission; and be able to work independently.

Resumes will be considered starting immediately. Send your resume to:

editor@canadianmennonite.org
Dick Benner, Editor and Publisher, Canadian Mennonite
490 Dutton Dr., Unit C5, Waterloo, ON N2L 6H7
Phone: 1-800-378-2524, x225

www.canadianmennonite.org

ASSOCIATE PASTOR

PEACE MENNONITE CHURCH
RICHMOND, BC

Peace Mennonite Church invites applications for the full-time position of **Associate Pastor**.

This position places major focus on youth ministry and family ministries, along with a minor focus on general congregational ministry.

Applicants should have a relevant degree in Christian ministry, an understanding of contemporary Anabaptist theology, and an interest and ability to relate to young people.

Please send resumes either by mail to: The Search Committee, Peace Mennonite Church, 11571 Daniels Rd., Richmond, BC V6X 1M7, or by e-mail to office@peacemennonite.ca.

PHOTO BY DICK BENNER



Providing music for the Friendship Dinner event with the interactive performance of several international songs was the Inshallah Choir led by Debbie Lou Ludolph, dean of Keffer Chapel at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and director of Worship Ministries for the Eastern Synod.

PHOTO COURTESY OF UOFW ALUMNI OFFICE



Ron Schlegel, (right) shown at an earlier time, receives recognition for his leadership in aging by David Johnston, Canada's Governor General.

PHOTO BY DICK BENNER



John Siebert (left) receives the annual Peace and Dialogue award from John Milloy, the local provincial MPP and a cabinet Minister of Community and Social Services and Government House Leader. The event was attended by faith and community leaders from the Muslim and Christian communities. Leon Kehl, a member of Floradale Mennonite Church, Elmira, emceed the dinner event.

Award winners

By Dick Benner
KITCHENER-WATERLOO

It seemed to be the week of awards Jan. 16-20 with a Mennonite entrepreneur and a nationally-known justice organization begun 35 years ago by Conrad Grebel University College getting the public nod for their outstanding work. And both award winners are rooted in a local congregation—Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener.

Ronald Schlegel, retired professor, philanthropist and poultry farmer, was bestowed the fourth annual community Barnraiser Award by Canada's Governor-General David Johnston, recognizing Schlegel's family values and community leadership with his support of research into aging.

John Siebert, executive director for Project Ploughshares, was the recipient at this year's Peace and Dialogue Award at the annual friendship dinner of the Intercultural Dialogue Institute, a national organization with 12 chapters across Canada. The non-profit IDI is dedicated to "promote respect and mutual understanding among all cultures and faiths through partnerships in the community."

Schlegel was singled out, according to Johnston, mostly for his innovative work in helping to launch the Schlegel-University of Waterloo Research Institute on Aging as well as an initial gift of \$6 million at its founding and another \$48 million pledge toward a three-phase 192-bed long-term care facility hailed as a first its kind in

the world. The "Barnraiser" award came from Johnston's inspiration of having an equestrian farm next to several Old Order Mennonites in rural Waterloo where he has taken a liking to their community spirit of barnraising.

Siebert, in receiving his peace award, gave credit to the Mennonite ethos of peace building that came from his education at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate and his congregation's calling, saying that Ploughshares has been engaged in "acts of imagination" in bringing peace to the world over the past 35 years of research and development.

He quoted Mohamed ElBaradei, the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize winner, as Ploughshare's vision:

"Imagine what would happen if the nations of the world spent as much on development as on building the machines of war. Imagine a world where every human being would live in freedom and dignity. Imagine a world in which we would shed the same tears when a child dies in Darfur or Vancouver. Imagine a world where we would settle our differences through diplomacy and dialogue and not through bombs or bullets. Imagine if the only nuclear weapons remaining were the relics in our museums." ❧

Schlegel and Siebert are both long-time members of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church.