

# CANADIAN MENTOR NITE

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## Summer hijinks

Focus on Camps & Summer Christian Education  
pg. 28

### inside

Just what is 'postmodern'? 4

Remembering the War of 1812 14

Is it time to tell new martyr stories? 15

## EDITORIAL

# Martyrs Mirror as totem

DICK BENNER  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

**M**ennonite poet and writer Julia Spicher Kasdorf wonders why *Martyrs Mirror*, the “big unreadable book,” as she calls it, is making a comeback in her generation of young Mennonites.

Not only has the artwork of famous 16th-century Anabaptist martyr Dirk Willems rescuing his persecutor from the icy waters of a Dutch pond gone viral on the Internet, she noted that it was marketed by our own Mennonite publishers as a gift edition in 2002 because of its value as a “treasured, if unread, object in mainstream Mennonite culture.”

Spicher Kasdorf, irreverent about the Mennonite identity in her poetry but reverent about its theology, took her audience on a journey at a recent Conrad Grebel University College visiting scholar lecture, to see what “the big book has come to mean, and how these meanings have come to dictate behaviours initially related to nonviolence and then to self-sacrifice or self-denial.”

Since it is such an old book and harkens back to a time difficult to imagine in our modern era, she insists it still holds us in its grip because of the memory it fostered over the years, and “strongly influences our homes and the homes of other Mennonites like us.” It shapes a story that maps an ideology, however “invisible and unconscious,” for the “indigenous faithful,” giving us a dominant context

while clarifying our identity to the point of knowing “what it means to be us.”

Through our 500-year history, the stories of *Martyrs Mirror* have chided us back to our primary calling, she said, citing a young 17th-century Dutch pastor, Thieleman Janz van Braght, who reminded Mennonites in the Dutch Golden Age of their martyr heritage, “even as they were busy buying and selling opulent homes and gardens, wearing fashionable clothing sewn from expensive, imported cloth and hosting lavish banquets.”

“How will they give up their lives when they can’t even spare their hot tubs?” might be the contemporary paraphrase, Spicher Kasdorf quipped.

Tracing the Mennonite ambivalence towards its martyr heritage through both the European and North American experience, our prophet-writer accuses us of “gawking with the crowd,” just as the bystanders did at a typical drowning chronicled in these stories, such as:

“A Catholic priest stands on the dock, on hand in case the heretic sees the errors of his ways; his eyes closed in prayer or disdain. Although he clutches a cross to his heart, he remains blind to the fact that this martyr follows the true way of Christ. A civil official stands beside him in a rich robe and hat, wielding the knotty rod of judgment. Church and state stand in cahoots, not to be trusted by us. Behind a pair of dandies dressed in rich

doublets is the crowd of gawkers. Indeed, there must always be a crowd for this spectacle to be effective from any side’s point of view—either the martyr giving good witness or the authorities setting an example for the rest.”

Spicher Kasdorf suggests that, despite our current uneasiness with this “classic martyrdom,” these stories call us back to the Anabaptist ethic of everyday self-denial by which these persecuted forbears “abandoned self-interest to attend to the needs of the other.” She sees this virtue not as out-of-date or impractical in our modern age, but, with James Lowery, calls believers to “heed Van Braght’s warnings to the Dutch Mennonites of the Golden Age, for their sins are also the sins of contemporary North Americans.”

Spicher Kasdorf sees *Martyrs Mirror* not so much an icon, but as a totem, representing us as a group by sustaining its identity and keeping its boundaries. As a totem myth, the big book “transforms a history of disordered violence into rational sacrifice that engendered the group.”

She worries, though, that the next generation, even with a renewed interest in these stories, is more interested in “tugging at the contours of cultural memory than considering the suffering of historical figures.”

She sees this renewal of *Martyrs Mirror* not as a return to our ideology as much as, with Ian Hiebert, an artist growing up in the Mennonite community of Henderson, Neb., an attempt to “suppress the dogmatic safeness that traditions accrue over time.” She sees Hiebert’s series of drawings, “View from a Pond,” as holding up to us the mirror of Willem’s dilemma with three possible responses:

- We do scholarly research.
- We offer inadequate solutions or inappropriate technology.
- We hide behind the security of our nation’s military solutions.



## ABOUT THE COVER:

On a hot summer day last summer, Lisa Cressman, left, Christina Wilkinson and Camille Martin, staff members at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp in southwestern Ontario, cool off by being the target of water-filled sponges. Our Focus on Camps & Summer Christian Education section begins on page 28.

PHOTO: HIDDEN ACRES MENNONITE CAMP

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# contents

## Just what is 'postmodern'? 4

Eastern Canada correspondent **DAVE ROGALSKY** helps the church wrestle with postmodernism's tendencies toward 'many potential truths; ... [and] experience, story and narrative, rather than foundational, testable and rationally provable facts.'

## Meeting our neighbours 16

Winnipeg's Home Street Mennonite and First Lutheran congregations break bread together while learning the histories of each other's denominations and how to better understand their differences.

## On shaky ground 20

Mennonite Central Committee survives 'major shift' in CIDA donation-matching program, only to suffer serious shortfall in long-term funding by same device.

## WISK women's group bridges the age divide 22

Alberta's Foothills Mennonite Church 'wisks' the generation gap away.



## Poet struggles with Mennonite identity 25

'Ancestral worship for Mennonite writers is a great temptation,' American poet **JULIA SPICHER KASDORF** tells Conrad Grebel University College faculty forum.



## Focus on Camps & Summer Christian Education 28 - 32

Read about happenings at Manitoba's Sagamace Bible Camp, Eastern Canada's Hidden Acres and Ontario Mennonite Music camps, and B.C.'s Camp Squeah.

## A marriage is more than a wedding 34

In this issue's Young Voices lead story, co-editor **RACHEL BERGEN** profiles the wedding plans of two couples.

## Regular features:

For discussion **7** Readers write **8** Obituary **11**

Milestones **12** Pontius' Puddle **12** Yellow Pages **33**

Calendar **38** Classifieds **38**

## Martyrs Mirror as totem 2

**DICK BENNER**

## Cool tool . . . but is it a motivation to give? 8

**GARY SAWATZKY**

## Saying nice things 9

**MELISSA MILLER**

## Keeping the faith 10

**GORDON PETERS**

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Ecumenical group cites increased attacks against  
Palestinian villages: **JUDITH SUDILOVSKY, ENI**  
Writing: **PAUL LOEWEN**

# Just what is 'postmodern'?

*Common term leads to more questions than answers*

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

EASTERN CANADA CORRESPONDENT



*Postmodernism tends toward many potential truths; toward more change than constancy; toward subjective belief, rather than objective principles; toward experience, story and narrative, rather than foundational, testable and rationally provable facts.*

“S taying for Sunday School, Bill?”  
“I’m staying, Sue, but not for Sunday school. I’m going to hang out with the ‘coffee drinkers’ in the kitchen. We have some really good conversations about religion and spirituality there, not dry discussions about traditional meanings of an ancient book.”

“Hey, I happen to like the book. I find that the Sunday school discussions give me some solid ground to stand on during the week. You know, the world doesn’t really support my faith.”

“Sure, Sue, but in the kitchen I get stuff to help me for the week, too. Just last week we were talking about how much our world has changed in our lives, never mind since our parents were middle-aged. Harry told us about the Muslim guy he works with and how he deals with anxiety in these economic hard times by prayer. And Diane told us about a book by an Aztec elder she’s reading that helps her to put the demands of life in order, keeping relationships first. I added that the meditation my counsellor has me doing helps. It really feels like I’m getting help from my friends in there.”

“But that sounds so relativistic. Isn’t Jesus your friend? Shouldn’t you be learning what the Bible says about dealing with anxiety? Like ‘cast your cares on God’?”

PHOTO BY DICK BENNER



*'Bill' and 'Sue' are on opposite sides of the modern/postmodern divide when it comes to Sunday school. Sue likes studying the Bible because 'the world doesn't really support my faith,' while Bill would rather meet for 'really good conversations about religion and spirituality . . . , not dry discussions about traditional meanings of an ancient book.' Portraying the fictional Bill and Sue in this photo are Marco Funk and Marla Langelotz.*

### Defining terms

The words “modern” and “postmodern” get tossed around constantly in the press, including the church press.

“Modern” is based on the sense that we can find, define and apply objective truth, truth that has always been—and will always be—true. It believes in progress, in testable scientific and medical advances, in the use of reason before passion. Modern Christians would tend to say, “Believe the truths of the Bible and church to be in relationship with Jesus.”

“Postmodern” is defined over against “modern.” Postmodernism tends toward many potential truths; toward more change than constancy; toward subjective belief, rather than objective principles; toward experience, story and narrative, rather than foundational, testable and rationally provable facts. Relationships are more important than

anything else. Openness, honesty, transparency and trust of people is key.

Individual choice, including relativism, universalism and pluralism, are outcomes of postmodern thinking. Postmoderns would tend to say, “Be in relationship with Jesus—or whomever you believe in—to learn the truth.” Many postmodern spiritual types, who generally don’t like religion, tend toward a contemplative staying in the now, rather than holding to traditions or seeing the need for progress.

Melding sociology, psychology, theology and spirituality, many postmoderns believe in a higher power who meets them individually, and to whom they respond to and relate with a wide palate of practices.

A key aspect of postmodern spirituality and practice is the concept of mystery: God—or god or spirit—is beyond us, an infinity unknowable by finite beings like

ourselves. But God does reveal something about “godself” (a postmodern term) to us in relationship.

### How this thinking influences the church

Bill would rather relate to friends who tell stories of their experiences with God than to study the Bible, especially when it feels like rehearsing traditional answers to someone else’s questions. Bill would like to have a space to ask his difficult questions about God, life and truth, rather than feeling like he has to agree to an old set of beliefs, some of which form the heart of his questions. And he doesn’t want anyone telling him what he should and shouldn’t do. He wants to find out through experience.

Sue finds this difficult. The Bible and the answers she learned in faith classes years ago still support her day by day.

Bill's questions are unsettling for her. Even asking the questions seems questionable for her. Shouldn't church members agree on what they believe and then stick to it?

But not all is lost . . . or gained.

Postmodernity as a philosophy grew up in the 20th century as people lost faith in the outcomes of modern philosophy.

Science and technology helped feed many more people, but it also created more ways to kill more people more efficiently.

The First World War disillusioned many in Europe, as Christian nations went to war with each other, destroying bodies, minds and land. In North America, the Vietnam War shattered

illusions, as the Christian West couldn't beat the non-Christian East.

Disillusioned philosophers soon came to believe that all truth is relative, based on presuppositions and biases held by historians, scientists, psychologists, educators, politicians and religious leaders. They spread the news that modernism was no more sure than anything else.

## Christianity no longer dominates western society

*Herald Press releases Reading the Bible After Christendom*

BY STEVE SHENK

MennoMedia

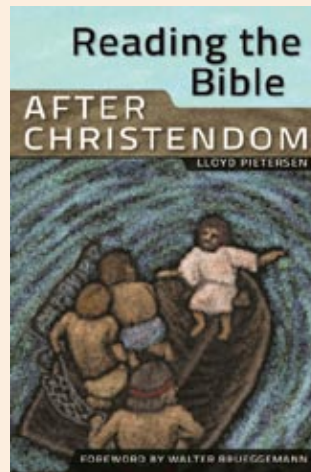
Should Christians in North America and Europe understand the Bible in fresh ways in an era when Christianity no longer dominates western civilization? Yes, says a British professor, Lloyd Pietersen, who wrote a book on the subject that was published by Paternoster Press in his country and by Herald Press in North America.

Western Christians now have a chance to understand the Bible better, Pietersen says, without the constraints of Christendom, in which European society was ruled for centuries by the church and state working together. The Anabaptists and other Radical Reformers had it right in the 16th century, he says, when they opposed the idea of Christendom. Pietersen's book, to be released by Herald Press this month, is titled *Reading the Bible After Christendom*.

The alliance between church and state started when Roman emperor Constantine adopted the Christian faith and marched his army through a river in a mass baptism. This led to an officially "Christian Europe" and to a faith that was alien to that of the earliest church, says Pietersen.

The unravelling of Christendom in recent generations has resulted in declining church attendance and biblical illiteracy. But it also means that the church has returned to the margins of society, where it can exercise a more healthy witness than when it dominated the institutions of society.

"*Reading the Bible After Christendom* is inevitably a reading from the margins," says Pietersen, "and should be done in community in ways that engage with the Bible as



prophetic, subversive, and sustaining for the Christian journey?"

Pietersen argues for elevating Jesus and the gospels in reading the Bible. The teachings of Jesus should be central to any Christian biblical interpretation, he says.

Walter Brueggemann of Columbia Theological Seminary in New York, a leading American theologian, wrote the foreword to *Reading the Bible After Christendom*. "Given the highly visible and unmistakable failure of the Constantinian system," he writes, "this fresh reading may be just what is required, not simply to revive the church but to mediate the moral energy needed for a new society."

*Reading the Bible After Christendom* is in the "After Christendom" series. *Worship and Mission After Christendom*, by Alan and Eleanor Kreider, was the first title released by Herald Press in this new series.

Pietersen is senior lecturer and research coordinator in New Testament studies at the University of Gloucestershire, England. He is a founding member of the Research Centre for the Bible and Spirituality based at the university.

An accountant by background, Pietersen serves as treasurer for both the British New Testament Society and the Anabaptist Network in Britain and Ireland.

He is author of *The Polemic of the Pastorals: A Sociological Examination of the Development of Pauline Christianity* and co-editor of several volumes, including *New Directions in Qumran Studies*.

Pietersen and his wife Sheila, a physician, are founding members of Bristol Peace Church. ☸

*Disillusioned philosophers soon came to believe that all truth is relative, based on presuppositions and biases held by the historians, scientists, psychologists, educators, politicians and religious leaders.*

A few of them actively preached and practised hedonistic individualism. In the midst of their individualism, they preached the unquestioned truths of relativism and individualism.

In the church, we need to be aware that this is what our society has become, and what most of our people believe. Although it entered society and the church through those who are now in their 40s, the influence of postmodernism is everywhere in every age group.

The rise of liturgical worship and the worship band both lead to experiences of the mysterious, unknown but relational God in different forms of ecstasy. Congregants and those who never darken the door of a church alike are opening up in conversations about spirituality and their experiences with God.

While older postmoderns often still react to expectations of behaviour based on rules of belonging from their youth and childhood, younger postmoderns are interested in belonging, in practising spirituality together, including creation care, communalism and lifestyles of peace and justice.

Postmoderns are interested in experiences from many cultures and religions around the world, seeking commonalities across space and time that can guide them about what is dependable in the subjective world we inhabit.

### **Postmodern opportunities**

This is an opportunity for those of us interested in the good news.

God has truly drawn near to humanity, in Jesus, in the church, in spirituality. We have a worthwhile message to communicate: God loves us no matter what. We have certainties that have been tested across cultures and through thousands of years of history to communicate: love of God, of self, of our neighbours, where we live, work, play and commute, as well as

care of the world we all need in order to continue to exist.

The church does not need to fear postmodernity with its subjectivity and questions. Postmodernity's questions push us to evaluate what is at the basis of what we believe.

We may bemoan the lack of desire to read and study the Bible. But until postmoderns see the Bible as the record of people's interactions with the creator of the universe who wants to be in relationship with us, they won't be interested. We need to be less interested in pushing the Bible than in connecting people with God.

Now is the time for those of us who have experienced God in our lives to be open to sharing those experiences with each other and with those with whom we rub shoulders. As human culture evolves, God continues to reach out with love and continues to seek partners in that embrace. ❧

### ❧ Essentials of the postmodern church

- Be honest in everything.
- Be open about our ignorance.
- Be open to questions and discussion about anything.
- Care for the other (locally and globally), without hope of them joining us.
- Put an end to "imperialistic" thinking that everything about us is better than anyone else, and that we have the right to impose our ways on others.
- Own our faith completely.
- Mystery and intellect.
- Love with clear limits.
- A challenge to consumerism, high-speed life, materialism, capitalism and socialism.
- No defence of institutions or anything else from the past.
- Know what the good news we find in our church is both for us and to invite others to join us.
- An open and growing relationship with God through practise of spiritual actions or disciplines.

*Compiled by Dave Rogalsky.*

### ❧ For discussion

1. Do you know people like Sue and Bill in the story? Does your congregation provide Sunday school classes that appeal more to Sue or to Bill? Do you see the world in a modernist or postmodernist way? Are younger people more apt to be postmodernists?
2. Do you agree with Dave Rogalsky's explanation of the differences between the modern and postmodern view? Are there other ways that postmodernism has changed our lives? Is postmodernism relevant in non-western cultures?
3. Rogalsky says that the church does not need to fear postmodernity. Do you agree? What are the strengths of a postmodern view of the world? How does the church need to change to connect with postmoderns? Are there some things that should not be questioned?
4. What is the role of the Bible or Sunday school in a postmodern church? Does the fact that our society is no longer considered "Christian" influence how we view the church? Will some churches find themselves irrelevant in a postmodern world?

## 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](mailto: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.*

## ✉ Going beyond generalizations

RE: "YET ANOTHER outspoken white man," Nov. 14, 2011, page 10.

Aiden Enns's conundrum of tending to "favour the words of whites and males" is an intriguing generalization. About whom is Enns referring as being partial to, as he puts it, "many valuable words from many important men"? Our society? Country? Faith community? Or himself, as in the royal "we"?

No matter. Whether Enns was writing about his own preference to seek, listen to, and be moved by the words of white males, or his perception that this is true for Mennonites or Christians or Canadians, I appreciate his invitation to conversation. Here's a response from a pale-skinned, middle-aged, female Mennonite cancer survivor and parent/advocate for two children with health and "ability" challenges:

- Transformation doesn't just come from exposure to words. For many of us, it is relationship with

## GOD, MONEY AND ME

## Cool tool . . . but is it a motivation to give?

GARY SAWATZKY

**T**ools. Gadgets. Thing-a-ma-jigs. Whatsits. No matter what you call them, they are designed to help us do things more easily.

Recently, I found an interesting tool from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) called the donation credit calculator. Here is how it works: Select your province of residence and tax year, then enter in a charitable donation amount. Voila, it calculates both your federal and provincial tax credit. Pretty slick, huh? To access the charitable donation tax credit estimator, visit [MennoFoundation.ca/encouraging-giving](http://MennoFoundation.ca/encouraging-giving).

You might think that Canadians would be encouraged to donate more to charitable causes when they see the tax advantage, but that is not the case. According to the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy,

94 percent of Canadians who give do so out of compassion for those in need. Only 13 percent cited the receipt of a



*In simple terms, our faith leads us to give because God first gave to us.*

government tax credit as a reason for giving.

These statistics indicate that most giving is done out of compassion for the needs of others. Canadians are giving from the heart. How much more should this be true for Christians? In simple terms, our faith leads us to give because God first gave to us. By giving, we allow our hearts to be shaped by the heart of God. This may be why Jesus clearly linked our hearts and our treasure.

From the CRA's point of view, it's all

about the credit calculation and tax relief. In reality, it's about giving from our hearts to the causes that stir our compassion: our churches, our area churches or denomination; our mission agencies; and many other social services.

In the Christian community, the initiation point resides with God. We give because God first gave to us. In I John we are encouraged to show our love not just in words, but by putting our goods into action for those who need our help. We

are to do this, it says, because God first loved us. God is generous and our generosity is a reflection of God's character, God's heart. God invites us to share and our sharing is a worshipful response.

What motivates you to give?

*Gary Sawatzky is a stewardship consultant at the Calgary 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](http://MennoFoundation.ca).*



transformed people which seeds and renews our own transformation. For many, transformation is also born and renewed in nature, music, visual art and other forms of creative expression.

• It's not just about seeing more Christ-like ways of doing or being. For those of us who have less, are suffering or unwelcome, it is often more about finding hope, worth and belonging: receiving the gospel, which can, I've been told, lead to more Christ-like ways of doing or being.

• Those who have less, suffer or are less welcome have traditionally received less airtime. How many widows, people with leprosy, sightless folk and children were selected as canonized contributors to the Bible? Partly this is related to the tendencies of the editors and publicists of the day, but could it also be that those who aren't currently holding power are otherwise occupied? We are busy changing diapers; tending to food, clothing, shelter, and appointments with practitioners; and otherwise caring for ourselves and those around

## FAMILY TIES

# Saying nice things

MELISSA MILLER

**“W**ill you say nice things about me at my funeral like you did at Jay's?”

my mother-in-law asked as she and I were driving alone in a car shortly after my brother-in-law's funeral, where I had offered memories on the family's behalf. Given the recent family death, there was a good reason my mother-in-law was thinking about death and her funeral. Still, I was startled by her question, and paused before replying. Her question seemed unexpected, given that she wasn't facing a life-threatening illness. And it's not an everyday kind of request. Generally, most of us shy away from such detailed funeral preparations.

I also sensed the vulnerability behind her question.

We all want to be liked, respected and valued. It is natural to wonder about what people will say about us when we die and to hope that it will be “nice things.” It is a push for me to express affirmation and caring to people when they are living, rather than storing it up for a funeral.

On another level, I imagined that some other family member, say a son or a daughter, might want to offer such remarks. I hesitated to agree to Mother's request because I didn't want to overshadow someone else's contributions.



Like many seemingly simple family conversations, there were multiple layers of meaning in her question and my response to it. On that day, I think I spoke of my reluctance to agree to a tribute that I thought others might want to give, and we turned to other subjects. In fact, Mother lived another decade, and on her deathbed made the same request of me, an honour I accepted with the blessing of the other family members.

It is Lent, another time when we contemplate death. In church, we may hear the weighty words of *ashes to ashes and dust to dust*, a biblical reminder of the

*It is natural to wonder about what people will say about us when we die and to hope that it will be 'nice things.'*

end that awaits us. It's a humbling time when we confront our many sins and shortcomings. It's a time of grace when we encounter God's passionate commitment to humanity, seen through covenants forged in rainbows and deserts and in Jesus.

As we mark our humanity, it is helpful to remember that the word shares a root meaning with humus, the earth. God tells Adam at the beginning of creation, “*You are dust and to dust you shall return*” (Genesis 3:19). The yearning we have

to be remembered well can be directed towards grounding ourselves in the earth beneath our feet, the earth God used to create humans and the earth to which we will return.

When we centre ourselves in those realities—our humanity, our connections with the earth and creation, our blessedness in God's sight—we can face death, and the living that precedes it, with peace and quietude. A long time ago, I was fussing about my inadequacies, insecurities and faults to a friend. The friend, who later became my husband, sent me a note in response. The note offered a bit of wise encouragement: “On judgment day, God will not ask you, ‘Why weren't you Moses, or St. Paul, or Mother Teresa?’ But rather, God will ask, ‘Why weren't you yourself?’”

It is wonderful to have people say nice things about us at our funeral or beforehand. It is also good to accept our selves, with all our unique and particular blend of strengths and struggles, and to rest in being who we are made to be: humans loved and redeemed by God.

*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.*

us; as well as teaching the next generation to do the same.

Despite all this, there are many women and others from outside the margins of health, power or welcome whose words express the good news of God's love for us in such powerful and engaging ways that it seeds new life in countless others. Aiden Enns, I hope you continue to expand your repertoire and perspective.

Maybe you'll visit a church like ours—we'd love to have you—where there is more often than not a female at the pulpit, or participate in a spiritual retreat for writers and artists like those held each year at King's Fold Retreat Centre in southern Alberta.

LISE WERNER, COCHRANE, ALTA.

## ✉ Young people lead by their financial examples

RE: "LAY UP treasures . . . or buy an iPhone?", Jan. 23, page 34.

I read the recent Young Voices article with much interest and great delight. The three young adults profiled exhibit a keen understanding of how Christians should approach stewardship.

At a time when donations to many churches and area churches are declining, the actions and attitudes of these young people inspire hope for future generations. Each of these individuals has developed a strategy for dealing with money issues while still placing a high priority on supporting the church and other organizations. They view supporting their local church as a priority

## FROM OUR LEADERS

# Keeping the faith

GORDON PETERS

In the summer of 2010, my family and I experienced a history lesson that made us really think about what it means to be Mennonite. With my wife, Geraldine Balzer, our two daughters, and my wife's sister and mother, I travelled back to the "old country," Ukraine and Russia.

Our first stop was Zaporozhe, where my mother-in-law's parents had come from. The scenery was far-reaching, with rolling hills, lots of trees, farms, watermelons and other fruit. But the stark reality was that few Mennonites remained in the area.

Because of ongoing oppression, over the years many Mennonites sought opportunities that arose in other parts of Russia, or in North and South America, until almost everyone had fled. Their desire to live without military obligations in places where they had the freedom to practise their religious beliefs, speak their languages and live out their cultural heritage was too great to ignore.

But what of those who remained

behind? Did they lose their faith because they did not leave to preserve it?

In the late 1800s, my wife's paternal ancestors had moved to the village of Padulsk in the Neu Samara Colony, about 1,200 kilometres southeast of Moscow. Life was difficult. Like thousands of others, some of them suffered in work camps, leaving families separated and weakened. Stalinization forced Mennonite churches to close, but many Mennonites, like my wife's ancestors, joined Russian Baptist churches to ensure worship and church community remained a part of their lives.



*But what of those who remained behind? Did they lose their faith because they did not leave to preserve it?*

During our stay in Neu Samara, we were hosted in the village of Krasakova by my wife's Great Uncle Will Balzer, his son Jacob, daughter-in-law Susanna and their nine children. Together with three of Jacob's brothers, they work on a collective farm, raising pigs and dairy cattle, and growing a variety of crops.

We had the opportunity to attend a couple of worship services in the local church. The whole Balzer family is actively involved. They lead worship, preach and sing. Their chosen lifestyle reflects their understanding of faith, with modest clothing—dresses only for women, no jewelry, televisions or radios. Women do not cut their hair.

The Balzer family's continuing faith also became clear in their conversations. They spoke about the importance of church and of how God had blessed and cared for them during the hard times.

Although they had not chosen to leave Russia altogether, as so many other Mennonites had done, the Balzers kept their faith. In fact, they never wavered,

always looking to God for guidance and deliverance.

What does it mean for us as Canadians to be Anabaptist people of faith? Are we also in the world, but not of the world?

*Gordon Peters is treasurer of Mennonite Church Canada's General Board.*

and an opportunity to be involved in the work of the kingdom. “It is our responsibility to give financially [to the church], and sometimes that means cutting back on [spending for ourselves],” says Annika Krause, Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, Vancouver, B.C.

Clearly, there is a lesson here for all of us. These young people have set an example with their understanding that God owns the resources bestowed on us; it is our duty to manage them wisely.

The Mennonite Foundation of Canada has made numerous presentations on faithful stewardship and living generously, but the lesson-by-example from Krause, Leah Reesor-Keller and Joel Wiens is far more moving and powerful. Their actions beg all of us to re-examine our own level of generosity.

**DARREN PRIES-KLASSEN,  
ST. CATHARINES, ONT.**

*Darren Pries-Klassen is executive director of the Mennonite Foundation of Canada.*

## ✉ What wasn't said about Durban, *oikus*

AS A WORK in progress towards a more wholesome, collectively arrived at, editorial standard as applied to letters to the editor pages (“A reasoned discussion,” Oct. 31, 2011, page 2), might the season now be ripe for a similarly refined editorial standard to be applied to the remainder of the paper? Not as censorship, but exacting a higher qualitative journalistic standard?

Two items in the Jan. 23 issue jump immediately to mind.

In a letter from Canadian Foodgrains Bank on page 12, the writer makes a bid for “What really happened in Durban,” but then never comes close to disclosing that not only did the Harper government refuse the age-old democratic practice of funding opposition MPs’ attendance, but filled with chicanery afterwards, denigrated them for not attending! As well, the letter is willfully stone deaf to the larger fact that Canada made a complete U-turn and reneged 100 percent on its remaining Kyoto commitments!

It is the height of a double standard for the writer to then be able to advance the spin that, “As for the Foodgrains Bank, we celebrate any movement in the direction of addressing climate change, however incremental,” bending over backwards to go along to get along with a unilateral Harper pronouncement, a pronouncement even the letter itself sees well short of any independently verifiable standard measures of implementation!

And in the “Salvation comes to a rich house” feature on page 4, Bruno Dyck advances a new and novel understanding of Luke’s use of *oikus* by casting it in

today’s terms as a “goods-and-services-producing organization,” or perhaps as “company,” but then forgets, even in fine-print, to add the all-important “buyer beware” company “limited” qualifier.

I found this article to be of much interest, but once again beware of the devil in the detail, even when omitted. Having reframed *oikus* to include, but not name, corporations as having unlimited legal irresponsibility, the writer carefully and adroitly posits the questions: Is it not the case that “salvation is something that happens in community? . . . Perhaps salvation is something that happens when managers enact organizational structures and systems that decrease the gap between rich and poor, and that foster social justice?”

I have zero argument with the questions asked! However, Dyck, as a 21st-century “business professor,” could hardly be unaware that the legal structure of corporations is guided wherever possible by the principle of one dollar/one vote, the equivalent of might makes right. But if the gap between the rich and the poor is to have any biblically based redress to it, the democratic socially just egalitarian standard of one person one vote is the minimum systemic standard by which to move forward.

Yet Dyck neither addresses—nor even names—this structural systemic inequity yoked across our backs as made even more plainly visible by the Occupy Wall Street movement, revealing rather sagely, “I refuse to believe that corporations are people until Texas executes one.”

**EDUARD HIEBERT,  
ST. FRANCOIS XAVIER, MAN.**

## /// Obituary

### **Agnes (Regier) Ewert**

March 9, 1907 – Dec. 20, 2011

Agnes (Regier) Ewert died peacefully at the age of 104 years, nine months and seven days on Dec. 20, 2011 in Rosthern, Sask. She was born on March 9, 1907, the oldest of 17 children. After completing high school and teacher-training college, she taught school for five years, first at Snowbird, near Laird, for two years, then at Kansas School



in Drake. It was there that she met Elmer Ewert, the secretary-treasurer of the school board who paid her salary, whom she fell in love with and married on July 11, 1933. Elmer and Agnes farmed together in Drake for 37 years and raised their seven children: Arlyn, Myrna, Lorna, Carol, June,

Ellen and Randy. They travelled all over Canada, the U.S. and to Europe, and after retirement in 1970 wintered in Florida for many years. After Elmer died in 1993 and Agnes moved to an apartment in Drake, she continued to travel nationally and internationally, and to visit children and grandchildren. Agnes was a long-time member of North Star Mennonite Church in Drake, where she taught Sunday school for more than 70 years and sang in the choir. She was the secretary of the founding executive of Canadian Women in Mission, a position she held for 10 years, and she continued to be involved in this organization, both provincially and nationally, throughout her life. Agnes was an active supporter of the church, its schools and institutions. She volunteered at the Thrift Shop and sewed hundreds of quilt tops for Mennonite Central Committee, stopping only when she moved to an assisted-living apartment in Pineview at Rosthern at age 103. Agnes believed profoundly in God's presence and guidance in her life. She loved sound theological teaching and was a

passionate role model, unashamedly promoting the excellence and spiritual leadership of women. Music, gardening and family were very important to Agnes. She bought her first piano before she was married and played many songs from memory. She loved trees and flowers, and planted a vegetable and flower garden each year until she was 103. Agnes loved to organize family parties and was always ready to speak eloquently—and always from memory—at any wedding or reunion. She enjoyed staying up late drinking coffee and playing Scrabble with her children, grandchildren and siblings. New grandchildren and great-grandchildren were always welcomed with open arms. Agnes loved it at Pineview. Her last months of life were incredibly rich and full of energy, love and music. A celebration of her life was held in Rosthern Mennonite Church on Dec. 20, 2011, with interment in Drake, the community in which she lived for 80 years. Memorial tributes may be sent to Mennonite Central Committee, 600 45th Street West, Saskatoon, SK S7L 5W9.

## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Albrecht**—Jaxon Allan (b. Feb. 9, 2012), to Jake and Sheila Albrecht, Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.

**Cook**—Jace (b. Jan. 8, 2012), to Ryan Cook and Jessica Rivers, Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

**Cressman**—Avery Katelyn (b. Jan. 22, 2012), to Ben Cressman and Amy Moore, Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

**Cressman**—Briella Kate (b. Jan. 18, 2012), to Christopher and Jana Lynn Cressman, Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

**Funk**—Caius Roland (b. Sept. 13, 2011), to Abe Funk Jr. and Nicole Funk, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask.

**Funk**—Dylann Elizabeth (b. Jan. 20, 2012), to Amy and Steve Funk, Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

**Harder**—Madison Eden (b. Jan. 28, 2012), to Dwayne and Jennifer Harder, Hope Mennonite, North Battleford, Sask.

**Lee**—Justin Grant (b. Feb. 15, 2012), to Grant and Gloria Lee, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**Nielsen**—Alanna Marie Friesen (b. Feb. 1, 2012), to Kathryn Friesen and Dan Nielsen, First Mennonite, Edmonton, Alta.

### Marriages

**Close/Taves**—Angela Close and Gary Taves, North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont., Jan. 28, 2012.

**Klaassen/Tyrell**—Roland Klaassen (Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask.) and Tammy Tyrell, at Seager Wheeler Farm, Rosthern, Sask., Sept. 10, 2011.

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

## Pontius' Puddle



## LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Not aware of it  
till now

BY TROY WATSON

Most people know the story in Genesis where Jacob dreams about a ladder that reaches into heaven. When Jacob wakes up he exclaims, “Surely the Lord is in this place and I was not aware of it, till now!”



careless words causing more harm than good in the company of people in distress. I have learned that simply being present with someone in pain is usually enough, as words frequently come across as empty, clichéd or even hurtful. Even so, I was still disappointed and frustrated with myself, as I assumed a good pastor ought to

Over the years, I have experienced many similar moments of awakening, where I, too, am surprised to discover the presence of God in people, places and situations I never expected. One of my most memorable “Jacob realizations” occurred in a sterile, secularized chapel in a Hamilton, Ont., hospital.

I was visiting with Brenda (a pseudonym), whose daughter was struggling for her life in the intensive-care unit. Although Brenda had a strong faith, she was running low on peace and hope given the circumstances.

We headed to the chapel to pray. It was a tiny room with no religious imagery of any kind. The off-white concrete walls were completely bare with the exception of one abstract painting. It was not a particularly inspiring or comforting place to be.

We sat down in the stained padded chairs and Brenda began praying from the depths of her soul, crying out to God with sounds more than words. I sat there with my head bowed and eyes closed, thinking of something to pray or say, but my mind was blank.

In the presence of such intense grief I am often speechless. I have observed too many people with good intentions and

have some kind of healing prayer, comforting insight, or relevant and timely

*I have observed too many people with good intentions and careless words causing more harm than good in the company of people in distress.*

Scripture passage to share. I had nothing. I didn't even sense God's presence with us. I only felt Brenda's pain, longing and helplessness.

Brenda was reduced to soft whimpers when I heard the door of the chapel open and someone walk in. There was a bit of shuffling and then the sound of a woman's voice pierced the room. She was praying in what sounded to my ears like the tongue of an angel. As her prayer continued, I felt a tremendous wave of peace washing over me, like the presence of God was filling the room in a tangible way. I was surprised by the profound sense of joy, hope and union with God I was suddenly experiencing. I stepped in the streams of living water being released within me as the sacred sound of this

lady's prayer reverberated in the little concrete chapel. Her prayer had a near angelic tone, bringing healing and hope to Brenda and myself.

Being a “proper” Christian, my head had remained bowed and my eyes closed, but my curiosity was becoming too much to bear. Finally, I opened my eyes to see who was praying with us and I think I would have been less surprised to see a winged angel shimmering in white than what I saw. Here with us was a Muslim woman wearing a hijab, kneeling on her Persian mat and praying towards Mecca in Arabic to Allah. A huge smile spread across my face as my heart leapt within me like John the Baptist did in Elizabeth's womb 2,000 years ago. I praised God and realized, “Surely God is in this place, in this bleak concrete room, in this Muslim woman, in her prayers to Allah . . . and I was not aware of it till now!”

I have no doubt the three of us were united in that little chapel with the same loving God. Of course, my mind immediately started trying to figure out what this meant theologically, as this experience

didn't fit into my Christian presuppositions and categories, but my heart and soul clung to this peace that transcended understanding. The deepest part of my being knew that God was in this place and it had been this Muslim woman who had anointed Brenda and me with the peace and hope of God as powerfully as any pastor or church ever had.

This moment transformed my life and ministry, as most “Jacob realizations” do. It seems that as I grow older, I find myself exclaiming these words more and more frequently, “Surely the Lord is in this place or person or situation . . . and I was not aware of it till now!”

*Troy Watson is pastor of Quest Christian Community, St. Catharines, Ont.*

## VIEWPOINT

# Remembering the War of 1812

BY JOHN LONGHURST

**G**rowing up in the Niagara Region of Ontario, I heard a lot about Isaac Brock, the British general who was killed repelling American invaders at the battle of Queenston Heights during the War of 1812.

As a child, my father took me on many pilgrimages to the old battlefield. We followed the path of Brock's dash by horseback from Fort George to the village of Queenston, up the heights past the Redan and Vrooman batteries, to the spot where he was shot down while leading a failed charge against American forces.

Later, we'd go to the nearby museum to reverentially gaze at Brock's tunic, the one he wore that fateful day, the bullet hole above his heart still clearly visible.

Yes, I heard lots about Brock, and how he helped save Canada from American invasion. And I expect to hear a lot more about him this year, the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812.

It is only fitting to remember that war, and the people who fought—and died—in it. That conflict shaped our nation. It helped create Canada as we know it today.

But the commemoration won't be complete if it doesn't also celebrate the two centuries of peace between Canada and the U.S. That's no small feat when you consider all the wars that have occurred over the last 200 years.

It will also be missing something if, in addition to remembering the exploits of people like Brock, Laura Secord and Tecumseh, we don't also hear about people like Duncan McColl, a Canadian Methodist minister in the Maritimes who prevented people in his area from fighting each other.

When war was declared, McColl—whose members lived on both sides of the border in New Brunswick and

Maine—called together the men from Canada and the U.S. in his parish and persuaded them to declare they wouldn't fight each other.

According to one report, McColl said: "I've baptized you and married you, and I don't believe you want to fight each other." They agreed that they did not.

Later, he personally confronted both American and British soldiers who came to the area, and sent them elsewhere to do their fighting.

McColl wasn't the only one to oppose the war. Mennonites, Quakers and Tunkers, now known as Brethren in Christ, who lived near the fighting in Ontario, also refused to fight. Their peaceful witness is being marked this year by the 1812 Bicentennial Peace Committee.

"We wanted to raise public awareness of the presence of these non-resistant

Christians during the War of 1812 and to help people learn more about their understanding of what it meant to them to be Christians in a time of being invaded by a neighbouring country," says Jonathan Seiling, a member of the committee.

Among other things, the committee plans to hold events, post information on the web about the role of peacemakers during the conflict, and place historical markers in the region about their peaceful witness.

In 1936, during a visit to Canada, then president Franklin Delano Roosevelt put the decades of friendship between Canada and the U.S. this way: "On both sides of the line, we are so accustomed to an undefended boundary 3,000 miles long that we are inclined perhaps to minimize its vast importance, not only to our own continuing relations, but also to the example which it sets to the other nations of the world."

And that, along with the war that helped create Canada, is also worth commemorating. ❧

*John Longhurst is director of resources and public engagement for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and the author of opened pieces for a number of publications, including Canadian Mennonite.*

MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE PHOTO



*Historian Jonathan Seiling poses next to the historical marker installed at The First Mennonite Church, Vineland, Ont., with the graves of the early peace church pioneers in the background. For more information about the 1812 Bicentennial Peace Committee, visit [ontario.mcc.org/warpeace-1812](http://ontario.mcc.org/warpeace-1812).*

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

## Is it time to tell new martyr stories?

BY ROBERT J. SUDERMAN

*Last November, Robert J. and Irene Suderman and Bert Lobe participated in a series of workshops and training sessions with Asian Mennonite and Brethren in Christ leaders in several venues in India. After returning home to Canada, Suderman reflected on one issue that began to grow on him: “namely the ‘routine’ ways in which many people referred to their persistent experiences of suffering as though these were individual, unfortunate parts of life. Cumulatively, they seemed more like a pervasive hum of ongoing suffering by the church, akin to the Anabaptist experience in so many other parts of the world, in so many other times.” He elaborates in the following column.*

In early December 2011, Irene and I worshipped in Haarlem Mennonite Church, just outside of Amsterdam, the Netherlands. This congregation began as a “hidden church” in 1530, six years before Menno Simons’ conversion to Anabaptism. Worshipping there was a moving experience. One reason that made it so was the note on a door indicating that this had been the congregation that nurtured Thieleman J. van Braught, the Dutch Mennonite who gave the world the compilation of *Martyrs Mirror*, first published in 1660. This is where he worshipped.

His significant work has inspired many throughout the world, and has provided a glimpse, a “mirror” of identity for Anabaptists around the world. I wondered whether he might have sat in the same place I was sitting, listening to a sermon that would culminate in meaningful sharing of the Lord’s Supper with those of us worshipping there.

I was struck by how this experience in the Netherlands gave life to what we had seen and heard during the three weeks before arriving there. We had just come from India, where we had worked with Mennonite and Brethren in Christ



Suderman

leaders from nine Asian countries. These leaders wanted to strengthen their understanding of Anabaptism and its potential contribution to their contexts today. After this workshop with Asian leaders, we engaged the leaders of the 10 Mennonite World Conference (MWC)-member churches from India and Nepal, also on the theme of “Anabaptism in a multicultural society.”

Among the many things we experienced in these settings were the testimonies of our brothers and sisters from India, Nepal, Myanmar, South Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines and others. Often these testimonies included references to the ongoing struggle of the church, the suffering of its leadership for the sake of the gospel of peace, the burning of houses of worship, the capture and release of church leaders by various revolutionary or government forces.

We heard one horrendous story from India of a pastor —not MWC-related—who was taken back to his own home, and in the midst of the obligated audience of his 12 children and wife, was beheaded in their living room by the mob that had captured him.

In his report of the trip, Bert Lobe

wrote: “Anti-conversion bills are pending in Orissa, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Tamil Nadu states [in India]. We were told at least three times that anyone 18 or older desiring baptism is required to submit an affidavit to the district commissioner requesting permission.”

These testimonies remind me of other testimonies I’ve heard from Latin America, Africa, the former Soviet Union and the Middle East. These stories, in turn, remind me of stories of my own childhood, of my grandparents and grandparents-in-law, and the suffering of Mennonites that often led to migration and to the separation of families.

They remind me, too, of van Braught and his faithful ministry to document and tell the stories of the martyrs. Has the time now come to document and make the ongoing stories of Anabaptist experience of suffering and persecution accessible to the life of the church and world?

MWC is just finishing the ambitious Global History Project, a significant effort to tell our church’s story from the perspective of every continent. This is an important resource. Yet, there are still many stories untold, and many of the stories told that have yet to be deeply heard. Especially, there are the mirrors of contemporary martyrs of faith.

Van Braught’s work focused largely on the 16th and early 17th centuries. Is it time to start now from the other end—beginning with the 21st century, and moving back as far as funding and capacity would allow? Perhaps we could at least tell the stories of the 20th and 21st centuries?

If we did, such a project would still leave a 350-year gap, but it would allow us to understand the experience of our church, especially as it has moved into other languages, cultures, continents and countries. These stories deserve to be documented and told. They need to be heard and digested. We need to understand them and struggle with what they teach us for our continued faithfulness as an Anabaptist church in the world. ❧

## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

# Meeting our neighbours

*Lutheran and Mennonite congregations eat, pray and learn together*

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent

Two neighbouring Winnipeg congregations, one Mennonite and the other Lutheran, decided to share their Sunday lunches and learn more about each other. In the process, they discovered that they had much in common.

For four consecutive Sundays in early 2012, members of Home Street Mennonite Church and First Lutheran Church met after their respective worship services to discuss the study guide, *Healing Memories: Reconciling in Christ*, which was jointly authored by Mennonite World Conference and the Lutheran World Federation in 2010, and the histories of their denominations, over potluck lunches served in one another's churches.

"There was much laughter and comparison of soup recipes, explanations about sausages and Icelandic delicacies, and some bemusement about whether taco salad was a traditional Mennonite dish," said Sue Sorensen, an English professor at Canadian Mennonite University and a member of First Lutheran.

They also engaged in conversations that moved them towards a deeper understanding of each other. "It was a very positive experience," said Terry Zimmerly, pastor of Home Street Mennonite. "I wondered what difference the events of 500 years ago would make, but as we met with the Lutheran church we discovered that up until this event in Europe their official position was that the Anabaptists were heretics. It was written into their confession. So this was a pretty significant move for them."

Zimmerly and Michael Kurtz, pastor of First Lutheran, began to discuss the possibility of a dialogue between the two churches when they attended a meeting of the West End Faith Project, an ecumenical



PHOTO COURTESY OF SUE SORENSON

*Lucas Redekop and Jonathan Klassen of Home Street Mennonite Church, at left, and Brock and Melinda Pearce of First Lutheran Church share soup and a sandwich during inter-church conversations using *Healing Memories: Reconciling in Christ*, which was jointly authored by Mennonite World Conference and the Lutheran World Federation in 2010.*

neighbourhood faith initiative.

"We're 10 blocks from each other; we have crotchety, beloved old buildings to keep up; our people come from similar backgrounds and have similar values," noted Kurtz, adding, "And then we realized we had another connection." It turns out that Susan Johnson, the national bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, who is a member of First Lutheran, had worked with Janet Plenert, a member at Home Street, putting together a prayer of blessing involving the two denominations. "They were both present . . . in Stuttgart, Germany, in July 2010, when Lutherans officially apologized to Mennonites," Kurtz noted.

"We discovered that we have much more in common that we thought we had," said Zimmerly after they had completed the four sessions. "They have been changing and so have we. It was interesting to discover that they hold a strong peace and justice stance as well. Sometimes we think we kind of own that piece, but there are many Christians that resonate with that, and there are many in each of our congregations that don't resonate with that

position."

"Historic major differences like infant baptism are no longer as wide as they once were," observed Zimmerly. "The Lutheran church's practice of confirmation is an adult commitment to the church and very much volitional. As a Mennonite denomination, we are recognizing more and more God's grace towards us and there's nothing we can do to deserve that. Child dedication in our congregation recognizes God's gift of life to us, the gift of community and grace in the church. The differences are not as pronounced as in the past."

"The Mennonites at my table, I suspect, would be hard-pressed to disagree with Martin Luther's belief that 'receiving baptism and living in it is the lifelong task of a Christian,'" Sorensen said. "Even though Winnipeg is a city where Mennonites and Lutherans are closely connected, we discovered during our study how much we still need to learn about each other."

Sorensen recalled one member's observation that "both denominations have been very 'entangled' in ethnic questions over the centuries, and those ethnic ties—for example, Icelandic Lutherans or Russian



Mennonites—have often made us wish we could ‘disentangle’ ourselves.”

“Some of our best discussions in our Home Street-First Lutheran lunch talks revolved around what it means to forgive and be forgiven,” said Sorenson. “Some of us pondered the purpose of forgiveness 500 years after the Mennonite-Lutheran conflicts. As one participant said, ‘It’s God that forgives. God has already forgiven. What does it mean to forgive now?’”

Zimmerly is looking forward to the dialogue continuing. “We are exploring

getting together to watch each other’s movies at the Ellice Theatre, a community theatre located between our two churches. *The Radicals* tells the Anabaptist story and *Luther* is a movie which tells the Lutheran story.”

“We are learning to hold our convictions just a little more lightly while, at the same time, honouring the necessarily strong convictions and passions of our past. Canadian Lutherans and Mennonites can be more humble in their relations with each other now,” Zimmerly suggested. ❧

idol worship,” Pankratz said. His nonviolent action attracted the attention of many Mennonites, although they were disturbed by his tendency to create chaos through it.

Mennonites of many denominations had a significant missionary work in India leading up to India’s independence. It was the potential for war that led Kauffmann, together with Indian Mennonite P. J. Malagar (later a bishop), to write to Gandhi, asking that conscientious objection be included in the new constitution then being developed. Pankratz theorized that Gandhi’s response probably means that as one who believed in nonviolent interventions, he and the Mennonites were in the same boat.

Pankratz added that, to this day, India functions with a volunteer army, and that the constitution includes “an explicit recognition of freedom of religion.” The missionary-minded may have wondered why Gandhi did not espouse Christianity, but his focus on doing things in an Indian way kept him in the fold of Hinduism. Missions in the 19th and early 20th centuries tended to bring a significant amount of cultural and religious change, a problem which continues to haunt many Christian groups, including Mennonites, in India. ❧

# Gandhi and Mennonites in India

*Conrad Grebel University College 2012 Eby Lecture*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
WATERLOO, ONT.

“Why worry? I am in the same boat with you,” reads the almost cryptic postcard from Mahatma (Great Soul) Gandhi to Mennonite missionary J. N. Kauffmann, in 1947.

The reproduced postcard was a teaser in the handout for this year’s Benjamin Eby Lecture at Conrad Grebel University College. This lecture gives a Grebel professor, chosen by colleagues, the chance to present recent research. Jim Pankratz, academic dean, is currently researching interactions between Mennonites and Hindus in India in the 20th century.

Pankratz gave a thumbnail sketch of Gandhi’s life and studies, painting a picture of a pragmatic and spiritual person who accepted that “God” was at work in many different religions. Gandhi’s “religious practices included meditation, prayer, singing and Scripture reading, using sources from the Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, Jain, and Muslim traditions.” His favourite hymn was Frances R. Havergal’s 19th-century “Take my Life and Let it Be Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.”

And just as Mennonites interpret their scriptures through the lens of Jesus,

Gandhi interpreted his scriptures through a lens of “elevated ideals and aspirations of Hinduism, while challenging many of its central practices like untouchability and



*Jim Pankratz, left, this year’s Benjamin Eby lecturer, discusses his presentation with John Fast, former chaplain at Conrad Grebel University College, now a family business consultant.*

# Old story told in new way

*Mennonite Church B.C. documents history face-to-face*

BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent  
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

The words “church history” have often meant dusty volumes and archives in libraries, and a church anniversary celebration usually has meant putting together a booklet of old photographs and reminiscences. But what can it mean in the modern age to record a church’s history at significant points with visual media at the centre?

Mennonite Church British Columbia, observing its 75th anniversary this year, is answering that question with a new twist. People at the forefront of MC B.C. change over the past 20 years have been recording their reflections on video for the Pilgrimage Project, scheduled for release at the 2012 MC B.C. annual sessions on March 3.

One year ago, as MC B.C. leadership was planning how to commemorate the area church’s 75th anniversary in 2012, the idea of a book naturally came up, recalls Bruce Hiebert, now chair of the History Committee. “They wanted a new book in a year and I said, ‘No way, this is ludicrous.’ We can’t do that in a year, but [we asked] what can we do that’s really significant? Books aren’t going to go out of style, but are becoming a less-central way of communication in our churches. How do we meet the younger generation in a way that it can hear?”

Soon, the idea of video interviews emerged, and eventually the Pilgrimage Project name was chosen, giving a feel of a continuing journey. The committee selected a number of people to interview who had been in the midst of MC B.C. events over the past 20 years. It was important from a historical perspective to tell the whole story, both the positive and the painful, says Hiebert.

Dan Loewen, who does technical work



*Home page of MC B.C.'s Pilgrimage Project (pilgrimageproject.com).*

for MC B.C., found the experience of taping the interviews enlightening. “It was interesting to hear how people have experienced the changes in the last 20 years,” says Loewen. “Some changes have felt positive and exciting, while others had a sense of loss and sadness at how things have changed.”

Loewen firmly believes that with the prevalence of video clips on television news programs, and the public now used to accessing video on the Internet, archiving of video interviews is the way of the future. People love a visual medium, he says, and anyone with access to the Internet can quickly check out the website—pilgrimageproject.com—as opposed to having to buy or borrow a book to read.

“The reality is that video is a primary mode of communication in our culture,” Loewen says. “There are people who

prefer to get information through video, so wouldn’t it make sense to use it to communicate our message? It doesn’t mean those people will never read a newspaper, but the reality is, video is a primary mode of communication in our culture.”

A brief history of all MC B.C. congregations is being published simultaneously, to accommodate both the older generation that generally prefers the print medium, and the younger generation that is accustomed to accessing material on the Internet.

The MC B.C. History Committee is excited about future possibilities for historical documentation on camera. “I’m not aware this has been done anywhere else in [Mennonite Church] Canada,” says Hiebert. “I can see this reaching out to a younger generation a way that no other group has done.”

## /// Briefly noted

### How do churches disciple members?

Mennonite congregations are being invited to respond to a survey seeking to explore how to work effectively at growing disciples in today’s culture. The survey is being conducted by the Protestant Church-owned Publishers Association, of which MennoMedia is a member. The publishers want to learn what strategies and programs local churches are using to disciple their members of all ages, and what resources they are looking for to support these programs. The survey sample will include every congregation within Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A. Churches will be able to fill out the survey on paper or online.

—MennoMedia



*The AMBS community—students, faculty, staff, family and friends—read the entire Bible aloud over the course of five days in February. A cluster gathered on the first afternoon to read and listen together. AMBS student Sara Erb, centre, from Tavistock, Ont., is reading, while listeners include student Lydia Nofziger, left; Janeen Bertsche Johnson, campus pastor; and students Jeff Hochstetler, Anna Ruth Hershberger and Rod Miller.*

## Seminary spends '75 hours with the Book'

STORY AND PHOTO BY MARY E. KLASSEN

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary  
ELKHART, IND.

Starting at the beginning, Genesis 1, on Feb. 3, and ending with Revelation on Feb. 7, the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary community read the entire Bible aloud with help from friends beyond the campus.

The seminary's regular Friday chapel service was the start of "75 hours with the Book." With breaks of three-and-a-half hours each night and for worship on Sunday morning, reading continued until Tuesday, when the chapel service included the end of Revelation and reflections on the experience.

Nearly 100 people participated, some individually and some in groups. More than 30 of these were not members of the seminary community; they either came to campus or joined the effort by Skype.

Among those who read by Internet was Lois Siemens, pastor of Superb Mennonite Church, Kerrobert, Sask., who is an AMBS graduate. "When you read Scripture for a sustained length of time, you catch the movement of the text, and I began to see the shape of the larger story," she said.

When her time ended, she admitted, "I

found myself longing to hear the rest; the story wasn't done. Longing for the text, that is what I want for myself and my congregation, to hear the text and have it stir a longing for more."

Terri Geiser, AMBS student and pastoral intern at Hively Avenue Mennonite Church, Elkhart, signed up for a late-night block of time because she has had other experiences of encountering God late at night. "There was a clear sense of being in the presence of God as we read this ancient text together as a community of faith," she said of the experience. "Even laughing together felt God-inspired as we stumbled over the names in Numbers. It felt like God was laughing with us."

"The act of reading extended amounts of Scripture out loud is a good way of engaging the text that we don't do enough

of," said Scott Janzen, registrar and AMBS graduate. "I was surprised how different it sounded when spoken aloud. I was surprised at how 'untamed' it sounded."

Readers were encouraged to choose any version of the Bible they wanted, so Getu Haile Abiche, a student from Ethiopia, read in Amharic, his first language.

Janeen Bertsche Johnson, AMBS campus pastor, reflected on her experience, saying, "I was convicted of the necessity of reading Scripture not to find something [a text for preaching or worship leading or teaching], but to be found within its story."

The experience was so meaningful for the seminary community and the friends who joined, that the planning committee is considering implementing something similar in the future, perhaps each year or at the beginning of each semester. ❧

*'The act of reading extended amounts of Scripture out loud is a good way of engaging the text that we don't do enough of.'*  
(Scott Janzen, AMBS registrar)

## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

# On shaky ground

*Mennonite Central Committee survives 'major shift' in CIDA donation-matching program, only to suffer serious shortfall in long-term funding by same device*

By TOMAS URBINA

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

When the massive earthquake hit Haiti in 2010, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) was one of the fortunate non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to receive money for its relief work from the government fund set up to match donations from Canadians, but by then the ground beneath Canadian NGOs had already shifted.

MCC received \$2.1 million for relief and development projects in Haiti, but now what fellow church aid organizations have called a "major shift" in the donation-matching program run by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is also responsible for the denial of nearly \$9 million in funding for MCC projects over the next three years that was announced in early February.

"We're disappointed that our submission didn't succeed," says Don Peters, MCC Canada executive director, about its funding proposal. "That's only to say that we'll cross the t's and dot the i's so that we're in better position next time."

Next time, however, could be several years away, and international development expert Stephen Brown of the University of Ottawa's School of Political Studies says the loss of long-term funding from CIDA raises serious concerns: "That kind of impact can be huge. Not having that kind of funding can very often mean closing down programs in developing countries, which means letting go all the staff and basically ending operations and relationships with beneficiaries in recipient communities."

Although Peters did not provide hard numbers, he acknowledges the loss of the proposed \$8.7 million over three years from CIDA's Partners for Development Program will mean that staff in the countries where projects were planned "will not be needed."

Overseas, it means that long-term development projects will not go forward as planned in seven countries, six of which are on the list of CIDA's countries of focus. Among them are projects supporting food security and access to clean water in Ethiopia, Vietnam and Mozambique.

The funding shortfall comes as a result of a new competitive bid process that requires MCC and other NGOs to compete for funding dollars, rather than working with CIDA to develop plans that meet CIDA's priorities and continue the long-standing funding relationship.

"In the past, we've had a fairly continuous source of funding," Peters says. But after the deadline for proposal submissions in March 2011, and as the previous funding agreement approached its end last summer, CIDA unexpectedly told MCC that the process would be competitive and that it should not yet start developing project plans, Peters recalls.

"CIDA is claiming to be transparent, but they clearly are not," argues Brown. "And it's this appearance of being objective and transparent and accountable that's so frustrating, because the process is anything but."

Peters says that this was the first time a competitive bid process has been used to allocate long-term funding. CIDA had already changed the way NGOs could access money collected in public disaster donation-matching funds, such as those set up

following Haiti's earthquake and last fall for the East African drought crisis. When the first donation-matching program was set up to respond to the 2004 Southeast Asia tsunami, donations from Canadians to registered Canadian NGOs were matched by the federal government and channelled directly to those same NGOs. The next time a disaster struck, when a major earthquake rocked Pakistan in 2005, NGOs had to compete for money placed in CIDA's disaster donation-matching fund.

While Peters is not lamenting the new funding reality, other church aid groups have pointed out unexpected consequences.

"We knew, within the NGO community, that the matching wouldn't be automatic or guaranteed," says Naba Gurung, humanitarian relief coordinator at the Anglican Church's aid agency. "But our hope was that the money that was raised—and that CIDA put in the pot—would fund the proposals put forward by the NGOs. We didn't anticipate the money would be used by CIDA to fund projects outside the Canadian NGO community."

"Allocation decisions for the government matching funds were based on CIDA's humanitarian and development assistance guidelines," CIDA stated in an e-mail at the time of the Haiti disaster, "and the ability of Canadian and international humanitarian and development organizations to reach the affected populations."

Following the 2004 tsunami relief effort, CIDA has regularly allocated up to 75 percent of its donation-matched disaster relief funds to recipient government and multi-lateral organizations, like agencies of the United Nations, rather than to Canadian NGOs.

Brown insists that the changes in both disaster relief and long-term development funding regimes are part of a larger context. "This must be interpreted within a broader change in CIDA's relationship with NGOs and how it funds them, and the extent to which it funds them," he says. "We've seen over the past couple of years a lot of NGOs with which CIDA had a longstanding and good relationship be completely cut off."

Brown refers specifically to Kairos, the ecumenical justice group denied funding in a public scandal involving Bev Oda,



Peters

federal international cooperation minister, last year, and to the Canadian Council for International Cooperation. Both organizations ostensibly lost funding for not fully aligning with the government's direction on foreign and international development policy, respectively.

"In general terms, CIDA informed us that, while our proposal had positive merits, it did not meet several merit criteria as well as some of the other proposals," says Peters on the recent funding loss. "We have initiated a dialogue with CIDA and registered our interest in a face-to-face meeting, and CIDA has acknowledged our request. We expect

this to happen within the next month, but it hasn't occurred yet."

For now, MCC will have to find other ways to move its work forward. "MCC and others have other sources of funding, including public donations, so it doesn't mean they can't do anything, but it definitely means a scaling down, often a very radical one," explains Brown.

"We may be able to align some of those [needed] funds with Canadian Foodgrains Bank, some of the food security initiative [funds]," Peters says. "We may need to go to our constituency and say, 'Help us with this.'" ❧

## 'The church can fail sometimes'

*Mennonites listen to residential school survivors*

BY KARIN FEHDERAU

Saskatchewan Correspondent

Many of their stories sounded the same. Deep pain leading to alcohol abuse and broken lives. As they spoke at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearing held last month at the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre in Prince Albert, Sask., the First Nations people moved easily from Cree to English and back again, a miracle in itself because they were pulled from their parental homes at such a young age to attend residential schools, so it is hard to understand how they retained their mother tongue.

It is part of their culture to share from their hearts, one man said. And share they did. For three days, the three commissioners listened to the gut-wrenching honesty so freely displayed. There was no shame in showing emotions for these survivors and the tissue box was much needed by many in attendance.

The Prince Albert hearing was the third of 12 being held in Saskatchewan in the months leading up to a concluding event scheduled for June. Mennonite Church Saskatchewan moderator Renata Klassen sent a letter to Mennonite churches encouraging everyone to attend or listen via live webcast.

Grace Mennonite Church is located in

Prince Albert and several of its members attended the hearings.

"We're just recognizing now this important point," said Ryan Siemens, pastor of Grace Mennonite. "This is not an aboriginal issue, it's a Canadian issue. . . . We, the church, took their traditions away. We have an opportunity to offer a healing touch by just listening."

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Saskatchewan also took an active role in the listening. Board member Ray Funk attended all three days of the hearings. Describing the stories as heartrending, he tried to frame his thoughts from a faith perspective: "I have to remind myself that each one [survivor] is a child of God that was badly treated in the name of God."

Specifically, MCC Saskatchewan wanted to be on hand to hear stories about the Timber Bay Children's Home. "We want to make sure we have somebody [at the hearings] at all times, in case there's a reference to the Timber Bay Children's Home," Funk explained.

Although not officially run by Mennonites, MCC did provide volunteers at the home and Funk recalled the involvement of Saskatchewan Valley churches in fundraising for the home.

The children's home was started by the Northern Canadian Evangelical Mission. The Saskatchewan conference was asked to take it over, but declined. Instead, a group of Brethren in Christ churches ran the home until it closed.

MCC Saskatchewan, together with MCC Canada, had drafted a letter and sent it to four band offices, as well as individuals, saying they wanted to support people through careful listening.

"We want to hear what did happen. We're not always sure," said MCC Saskatchewan executive director Claire Ewert Fisher.

Ryan Wood, a native studies teacher at Rosthern Junior College, took his Grade 11 class to sit in for an afternoon of the sessions. "It seems like we're so distant from it," he said. "We've collectively dismissed these stories as a society."

Wood noticed that his students were moved by the stories and had a lot of questions at the end of the day, saying the experience "was an academic exercise and a faith exercise" for them.

Wood was surprised by the appearance of an Anglican bishop, who, he said, came to "reaffirm" that church's official apology. "The church can fail sometimes," Wood acknowledged. ❧

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GOD AT WORK IN US

# WISK women's group bridges the age divide

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD  
Alberta Correspondent

## Across Generations

Committee meetings have a reputation for being necessary but tedious. But at Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary, there is a standout exception to the rule in the Women Intergenerational from Seniors to Kids (WISK) group.

"For me, the committee is the source of great excitement," says Kate Janzen.

"The WISK committee is really fun," adds Becky Andres.

June Miller feels blessed by the group. "Our meetings are not just about planning another event, but a gathering of friends who share a passion for Jesus," she says.

After studying away from home for eight years, Megan Enns says that being on the committee has "instantly connected me with four different age groups in the church."

Janzen remembers a January 2011 congregational meeting at which the board

asked what could be done to build relationships at Foothills. "I said I had a vision for bringing the women in our church together in some way," she says.

The board encouraged her, and WISK was born. The group invites women from six to 106 to get together twice a year for fellowship, fun and belonging, and seeks to cultivate authentic relationships among women of all ages.

The first event, a strawberry tea, attracted almost 100 women. It featured deliberately intergenerational seating at tables, entertainment and food. A number of women brought old dresses, such as bridesmaid dresses, and told the stories behind them.

The latest event, "Mennonite Girls Can Cook," was held last November. The turnout was exceptional again, with 100 women

attending the event named after the title of the recently published book, which was for sale there.

Alice Unrau, another WISK committee member, describes this evening, saying, "We began by having women/girls of each generation sit at a table and decorate aprons. . . . It got the girls and women chatting with each other. We then had two women demonstrate some of their recipes. In order for all the women to see, we had set up a camera and a screen. While that was happening, we had cupcakes for the girls to decorate, which we later had with our coffee. What struck me about it was how interested the girls, especially the junior and senior high kids, were in coming to this event."

Miller speaks highly of the way intergenerational relationships impacted her faith development. "As a child growing up, it was the 'grandmas' in my church that heavily influenced my life," she says. "They were more than Sunday school teachers, children's club leaders, youth leaders for me and my siblings. They were the ones who cared and invested in our lives, our spiritual champions at a time when my mother did not know the Lord. In turn, it was us kids who brought our mother to the Lord."

While relationships like these are often important, and desired, people commonly feel hindered in developing intergenerational connections outside of family circles. "There is a wrong preconceived notion that the young don't care about older people and that older people think young people don't care about them," Janzen says.

The success of WISK comes at a time when more established women's groups, such as sewing circles and mission groups, struggle to remain viable and attract young members. Janzen, who is also an enthusiastic supporter of the Mennonite Women Canada organization, says that the frequency of WISK events encourages participation. "Our original women's group was every month," she explains. "Times have changed and people don't want to make that kind of commitment."

The committee acknowledges that two events per year is not enough to build relationships, so it has a vision to encourage the addition of Bible studies and service opportunities. "This is just a starting-off point,"

PHOTO BY ROSE KLASSEN



Susan Nielsen, left, a member of Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary, brought her neighbours Melanie and Kayla Beingsner to the "Mennonite Girls Can Cook" event last fall. "It was a great event," says Melanie. "I hope she invites us to the next one."

Janzen says. "We want people who come to this to get a sense of the larger church"

Doug Klassen, pastor at Foothills, is a strong advocate of what WISK is doing to bring women of all ages together. In a Feb. 12 sermon, he encouraged men of the church to consider something similar, saying, "Men have really lost the roles they've played in the past." Klassen says that Foothills is in the preliminary stage of forming a Men and Boys Association

(MBA), so intergenerational fellowship and mentoring could occur for them. "Some thought we should call ourselves the 'WISKers,'" Klassen says with a laugh.

Asked if she had encouragement or advice to offer to other congregations thinking about establishing an intergenerational fellowship, Enns says, "Do it. It's fun, and if you get to do it, be on the planning committee. You get the most out of it when you are involved." ❧

❧ Staff change

**Neufeld new pastor of Rosthern Mennonite Church**

ROSTHERN, SASK.—Craig Neufeld was installed as pastor of Rosthern Mennonite Church on Feb. 5, after serving as youth pastor for more than a year. Jerry Buhler, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan conference pastor, and Anna Rehan, MC Saskatchewan youth pastor, performed the installation service. Following an installation litany involving the whole congregation, a group of church members gathered around Neufeld to offer a prayer of blessing. After the service, the congregation shared a potluck dinner. Neufeld is originally from Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont. —Rosthern Mennonite Church



Neufeld

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MCC PHOTO BY NINA LINTON



Mario Gregoire, 13, canoes with his grandfather and learns to set up tents, cook caribou meat and make medicine from trees. 'It was my best summer ever,' he says.

## 'The river is his friend'

*For great-grandmother, annual canoe trip is all about the future of Innu community*

BY GLADYS TERICHOW  
Mennonite Central Committee

As he paddled down the Churchill River for 10 days with his grandfather this past summer, 13-year-old Mario Gregoire came to understand the fundamental importance of the river to his Innu community. Along the way, he saw an otter and a black bear, made new friends, and learned more about his Innu roots and culture through setting up tents, making camp fires, cooking caribou meat and negotiating rapids.

"It was my best summer ever," says Mario of his first-ever experience of taking part in an annual canoe trip organized by his aunt, Elizabeth (Tshaukuish) Penashue, 67, an Innu elder from Sheshatshiu, about 20 kilometres north of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, N.L.

Penashue, a mother of nine, grandmother of 43, and great-grandmother of nine, is deeply concerned about the future of her community and culture, which she believes

is closely linked to the well-being of the environment. She organizes the canoe trip and a three-week snowshoe walk in spring to increase awareness of how important it is to protect the land and water from pollution, and to pass on knowledge of Innu culture, traditional survival skills and food.

Penashue has led the canoe trip for years, and every year she is saddened by the health advisory sign on the river warning people to limit the number of fish they eat. "The river looks beautiful, but the water levels are dropping and there is a lot of mercury in the water," she notes. "I don't want to drink dirty water; I want to drink clean water. The same holds true for the fish and animals. They don't want to drink

dirty water."

The pollution, she says, is being caused by a huge hydroelectric plant on the Upper Churchill River in Labrador, a project that flooded Innu hunting grounds, burial grounds and other sacred sites. She fears that the proposed Lower Churchill hydroelectric development project will create even more environmental damage with minimal long-term benefits for people. "It will leave a big mess; it will leave a lot of damage," she says. "I wish the government had more heart to think about the people."

Her son, Peter Penashue, is making history in Canada as the first Innu from Labrador to be elected to Canada's Parliament, where he was appointed minister of intergovernmental affairs and president of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada. Although she is proud of her son's accomplishments, Penashue does not endorse his support for more development on the river.

At the same time, she recognizes that everyone has a "path" to follow in order to express their values and beliefs. "My path and his path are different," she says. "I think my path is important, but his path is important too."

As development continues to threaten the traditional way of life, Penashue recog-

*'My path and his path are different. I think my path is important, but his path is important too.'*  
(Elizabeth [Tshaukuish] Penashue)

nizes the urgency of sharing her stories of being born in a tent and growing up on the land, and passing on traditional knowledge and skills to the younger generation.

This was the third summer that Mario's grandfather, George Gregoire, canoed the river. "I want to tell people how important it is to protect the land and river," he says. "The reason I took Mario on this trip was to let him know that the river is his friend."

Mennonite Central Committee assists Penashue with her environmental and cultural activities, and generally assists her with anything written in English, which includes her website, e-mail, letter writing and editorials. ❧



## ARTBEAT

# Poet struggles with Mennonite identity

BY DICK BENNER

Editor and Publisher  
WATERLOO, ONT.

Ancestral worship for Mennonite writers is a great temptation, Julia Spicher Kasdorf told a faculty forum at Conrad Grebel University College on Feb. 17 as part of the award-winning Mennonite poet's three-day presence on campus as a visiting scholar sponsored by the Rod and Lorna Sawatzky Fund.

Spicher Kasdorf, currently teaching creative writing and women's studies at Pennsylvania State University, read several of her poems to a small group of faculty and community participants. The only American writer in a nine-week series celebrating 50 years of Mennonite writing in North America, she identified "ethnic identity" as an author's dilemma in sharing his or her insights with a wider audience. "What do we do with our shared knowledge, our quarrel with the past, our deeply ingrained ethos, that so intrigues readers with 'other ethnicities'?" she asked the group.

Unlike in Canada, Spicher Kasdorf observed that Mennonite writing in the U.S. only burst onto the national scene in the early 1990s, much later than her northern neighbour, with the publication of her first collection called *Sleeping Preacher*, along with the works of Jeff Gundy and Jean Janzen. "Mennonite poets emerged all at once," she said, triggering a sort of national conversation about "who we are and what we do."

She differs with her critics, however, who point to several of her poems as "the signature Mennonite poem," such as "What I Learned from my Mother," a work that she insists has universal themes, rather than ethnic Mennonite ones. "My goodness," she said as proof of broader identities, "this poem was read publicly by Hollywood actress Meryl Streep, became a guide for

child care by baby boomer parents and was considered a positive view of women's care."

Mennonites, she said, are a blood tribe held together by ethnic foods and religious customs, but "we are much more than that." She is increasingly suspicious of the "Mennonite" label in Mennonite writing because it tends to place national identifiers in a post-national world, saying, "Our future writers will carry many passports who have given up their sectarian identity."

In a follow-up discussion, Tom Yoder Neufeld, who attends First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, which has a growing immigrant population speaking "13 different languages," wondered how this Mennonite identity of mixed perceptions comes across to those of non-Mennonite ethnicity attracted to the Anabaptist faith. Spicher Kasdorf responded bluntly: "That's a way of shaming our Mennonite artists!" This engendered a discussion focused on just how this is playing out in a "post-national world."

Classical musical conductor and former CBC Radio host Howard Dyck, observing the burgeoning growth of Mennonites in such places as India and Africa, asked if Spicher Kasdorf knew of any budding writers there. "I don't really know," she said, but agreed that it is an important question, speculating that this ethnicity will likely go global in the near future. Miriam Maust observed that Japanese poet Yorifume Yaguchi, a Buddhist turned Christian and Mennonite, embraces the peace stance in his poetry.

Grebel music prof Carol Weaver wondered about the next generation of writers, observing that Mennonites are now in "crisis mode" with their identity, and asked

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



*Julia Spicher Kasdorf, the Rod and Lorna Sawatzky Visiting Scholar, spoke to staff and students at Conrad Grebel University College and members of the public last month.*

how young writers will handle this identity issue. "They are far more comfortable with it than their elders," replied Spicher Kasdorf, from her experience of speaking with students from Mennonite campuses in both countries. "[Students] have picked up the justice part of our belief and are practising it every day," she said. "They have no difficulty with it."

Paul Tiessen of Wilfrid Laurier University observed that, in Canada the public's intrigue with Mennonite ethnicity has long passed. In the 1970s and '80s, he said that when he and his wife Hildi were developing the arts and writing for the wider world, their peers in academia and mainstream religions were lamenting how they had no ethnicity to celebrate and draw from. Governments that were into multiculturalism at many levels were anxious to fund Mennonite art and writing for public consumption.

Twenty years later, he said that such interest had waned, with his non-Mennonite colleagues saying, "You are no longer ethnic, but have gone mainstream," a phenomenon Rob Zacharias described as an "astute strategy" to meld Mennonite writing into "national writing."

Spicher Kasdorf took great heart in this and concluded her presentation with a reading of "Bat Boy, Break a Leg," a poem from her most recent anthology, *Poetry in America*, described by critic Jeff Gundy, whom she called her "sibling rival," as a "peaceable encounter with the 'other.'" ❧

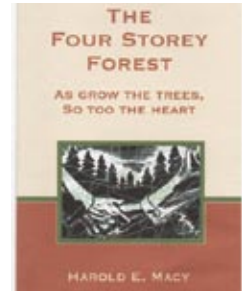
## BOOK REVIEW

# Where clouds squat on the forest

*The Four Storey Forest: As Grow the Trees, So Too the Heart.*

By Harold E. Macy. Poplar Publishing, Courtenay, B.C. (poplarpublishing.ca). 2011.

REVIEWED BY GARETH BRANDT



between creation and Creator. ❧

Harold E. Macy's first book, *Four Storey Forest*, is a unique combination of spiritual journal, forestry manual, political commentary, local almanac and historical fiction. Macy's writing is part Wendell Berry and part Rudy Wiebe, but mostly just his very own eclectic reflections. The book includes local humour from Vancouver Island, where Macy lives and attends United Mennonite Church, Black Creek, as well as homespun tales, sad stories of forest fires and world wars, and deep insights into religion and global environmental issues.

The four stories are not only about the levels of growth in the forest, from the mushrooms on the floor to the tips of the giant Douglas fir trees. The book also hints at the layers of history from creation to ice age to aboriginal habitation to European settlement to modern technology. The deepest story, however, is the level of spirituality that includes talk of relationship with God, prayer and hymn singing, and the interrelationship of all aspects of creation.

I laughed out loud at Macy's descriptive turns of phrase. Fellow islanders will understand the image of "clouds squatting on the forest." After chuckling at his humour, I said amen to his homespun advice, and then shed a tear at his tenderly told stories of struggling Mennonite settlers who planted the trees in his woodlot during the war.

The book is more like a series of vignettes, reflections and memoirs. The historical fiction and the personal reflections are kept separate through the use of a distinctive typeface until the end, when they satisfyingly merge in a wonderful final chapter. It will be of interest for all

those who live in or visit British Columbia, and for all who care about the sustainability of the forest and the relationship

*Gareth Brandt is a professor of practical theology at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C.*

## Three Herald Press books get updates, facelifts

BY STEVE SHENK  
MennoMedia

Herald Press, the book imprint of MennoMedia, has re-issued three popular books, adding some updates and designing new covers.

"We constantly evaluate our books with readers' preferences in mind," says Amy Gingerich, director of print media at MennoMedia. "It just so happened that all three of these important Herald Press titles received new covers and some new content at about the same time."

The first refreshed book is *A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue* by Badru D. Kateregga and David W. Shenk. First released in 1997, it models a new and better way for two faiths to interact. It now joins two newer books—*Teatime in Mogadishu* (2011) and *Journeys of the Muslim Nation and the Christian Church* (2003)—under the series label "Christians Meeting Muslims."

The updated book added study and discussion questions for each chapter in addition to a new cover. Shenk is currently using *Teatime in Mogadishu* in a three-month study for Sunday school at Mountville Mennonite Church, where he is a member.

Herald Press's other two refreshed books are:



• *The Upside-Down Kingdom* by Donald Kraybill. It has sold more than 100,000 copies since it first appeared in 1978. Jesus' countercultural message is a clear call to turn the social ladder upside down, says the author. In addition to a new cover, this edition includes three essays by people whose lives have been inspired by the book.

• *Forgiveness: A Legacy of the West Nickel Mines Amish School* by John L. Ruth. This new edition was released five years after the mass killing of Amish schoolchildren in Pennsylvania. Even many Christians were stunned when the Amish community extended words of forgiveness to the killer and his family. The new edition includes a new afterword by the author, reflecting on the five years since the event on the lives of those touched by the tragedy. ❧

## BOOK REVIEW

# Following God's lead

*Planting Churches in the 21st Century.*

By Stuart Murray. Herald Press, 2010.

REVIEWED BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Leaning heavily on the experience of a wide variety of churches across England and other countries, Stuart Murray has created “a guide for those who want fresh perspectives and new ideas for creating congregations.”

Murray, author of the best-selling *The Naked Anabaptist*, refuses to eschew a single kind of church planting or any other single reason or factor in the process. His broad approach makes this a useful book to individuals, small groups, teams, congregations and denominations that want to plant new congregations.

The only place where he gives a single warning is in regard to the rationale to plant churches: Such an effort should only be undertaken when God leads in the process. Murray is steeped in the theology of *Missio Dei*, the mission of God. Neither the church, nor any individual, should do anything without a sense of God going before into a project, program or ministry.

But this is not a book for church planters, mission committees or denominational mission ministers alone. One key area for church plants is in places that are under-churched, lack a variety of churches or where congregations are languishing.

He speaks to the idea of geographical change in regard to congregations. Many congregations grew up serving a community that has since changed. Perhaps a highway has bisected it, or the original members have moved to the suburbs or from a rural area to neighbouring urban areas.

Does the church still make sense in its current format or location? Is it time to plant a new congregation of a different nature in the same place, or in a new place? Does it still make sense for a congregation to continue to exist in its current place?

A very small traditional congregation might make sense in a rural area where other congregations have closed, and the population has decreased through increasing farm sizes. For example, Nairn Mennonite Church in southwestern Ontario has inherited many members from other denominations whose congregations have closed. On the other hand, does that size of a traditional congregation make sense in an urban area or should different “flavours” of congregations exist to appeal to a variety of people, needs and styles?

Murray's extensive material on researching a location and community would be useful both in planting a new church, in changing a current church,

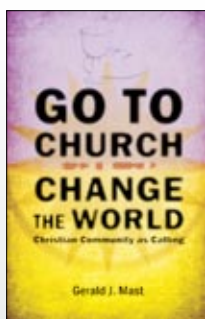
or perhaps even in choosing to close a congregation.

The book tends to be dry and encyclopedic, but useful in thinking through the many facets of planting—and maintaining—congregations in this post-Christendom/postmodern western world. ☿

*Dave Rogalsky is the Eastern Canada correspondent for Canadian Mennonite and the pastor of Wilmot Mennonite Church, New Hamburg, Ont.*



## New from Herald Press



### Go to Church, Change the World

Christian Community as Calling

by Gerald J. Mast

In a time when many are questioning the relevance of the church to their spiritual journeys, this book asserts that “going to church”—not just personal virtue or ethics—is at the heart of Christian vocation. Drawing on Anabaptist life and conviction, Mast presents Christ's call to all believers to be the church, whether gathered for worship or scattered for service.

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 Herald Press

## FOCUS ON CAMPS &amp; SUMMER CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

# Sagamace Bible Camp hopes to reopen this summer

*Ministry of Nordheim Mennonite Church celebrates half-century of service*

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU  
Manitoba Correspondent

**N**ordheim Mennonite Church in the small community of Winnipegosis is Mennonite Church Manitoba's most remote congregation. More than 275 kilometres northwest of Winnipeg and far from other area church congregations, this small church community continues to thrive.

Fifty years ago, the congregation began Sagamace Bible Camp, where it has offered two weeks of camping every summer. The church funds and staffs the program, maintains the facilities, and offers an important ministry that extends beyond its community. It's a success story few people know of.

For the first time in its history, camp was cancelled last summer, however.

The camp had been flooded since the fall of 2010, says Mary Bergen, chair of the camp committee. The floodwaters covered "most of the playground and, at the highest, was up to the floor joists of the mess hall. We checked on the campground all summer and it was never to the point of doing any clean-up. We cancelled the camping program in early June [2011] as the camp staff needed sufficient notice to make their plans elsewhere."

Throughout last spring the church remained hopeful it would be able to carry out its summer Bible camp program. Registration forms were already distributed and coming in, but by late spring, "we decided that camp would not be a safe place for the children," Bergen says. "We called every household and informed them that the camp would be cancelled for this year and reimbursed their money."



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARY BERGEN

*Sagamace Bible Camp, operated by Nordheim Mennonite Church in northwestern Manitoba, had to cancel its program last summer due to flooding, but hopes to be up and running in 2012.*

"There was definitely disappointment in all cases, but especially in the families who could not afford to send their children to another camp," she says. "Most other camps have double and triple the fees."

Although the flood dampened spirits, there was much to celebrate at the camp's half-century landmark. Last July, people gathered at the church to reminisce, share stories and give thanks for this ministry. Photos, camp crafts and T-shirts on display reflected changes throughout the years. Harvey and Helen Westlake, song leaders from the camp's early years, led singing of old and new camp songs.

Bergen says she has been involved with the camp over the years, "as cook, counselor, mother and grandmother of campers, and, of course, a camper, when I was of age." Bergen recalls "the awesome meals," reminiscing that Agatha Andres, cook for many years, "would not plan her meals until she would receive the food donations and then make whatever meals she could."

Jake Wiebe, who had the original vision for the camp, was also at the summer celebration. In his 80s and struggling with failing health, he was still able to share pictures and budgets from those early years when camp fees were two dollars.

"There will be some flood damage to some of the buildings," Bergen explains. "We have checked into programs for diking, but have run into dead ends so far. Part of the problem is that the land along the lake is Crown land and they are hesitant to co-operate with us."

"We are hopeful that [2012] will be a better year," she adds, noting that last summer's celebration was an expression of that hope that Sagamace Bible Camp will continue to be an effective outreach of Nordheim Mennonite Church.

A youth group from Winnipeg will be visiting the camp over the May long weekend to help with the clean-up. In the event the camp isn't able to re-open this summer, the church will run a Vacation Bible School program for the children instead. ☸

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HIDDEN ACRES MENNONITE CAMP



*Canoeing on the pond is a popular activity at Hidden Acres. Out for a paddle last summer are Julia Schumm, Hannah Stanley and Joselyn Polanic.*



*The rock-climbing wall is always busy at Hidden Acres.*

# A reason to celebrate...

50 years of Hidden Acres: 1962 – 2012

Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp  
New Hamburg, Ont.

As we reach the 50th anniversary of Hidden Acres, it is abundantly clear that we have reason to celebrate!

A camp still surviving would be reason enough, but a still-thriving, growing facility and program is more than the brave founders 50 years ago could have dared to hope for. God's generosity is tangible in the many buildings, climbing wall, pond and towering trees that dot the nine hectares of what was once farmland located amidst pig farms in Perth County.

We can celebrate the thousands of volunteers who have worked tirelessly to make our camp possible; the hundreds of young adults who have chosen to serve as summer staff, instead of finding higher-paying summer positions; and the thousands of people who have been impacted by God in this place.

We will celebrate with a history book, an anniversary DVD, a celebration weekend in July and a benefit concert in October.

Beyond just the anniversary of Hidden Acres, there is greater reason to celebrate. As we finish a five-year span in which three Mennonite camps in Ontario alone have crossed the 50th-anniversary mark, we can celebrate the fact that summer camping is still recognized by parents and congregations as a valuable ministry.

In the age where you can play sports with the help of a gaming system, communicate with friends over the Internet

and experience the wonders of nature on Blu-ray, there is still something unique about a hands-on camp experience. The



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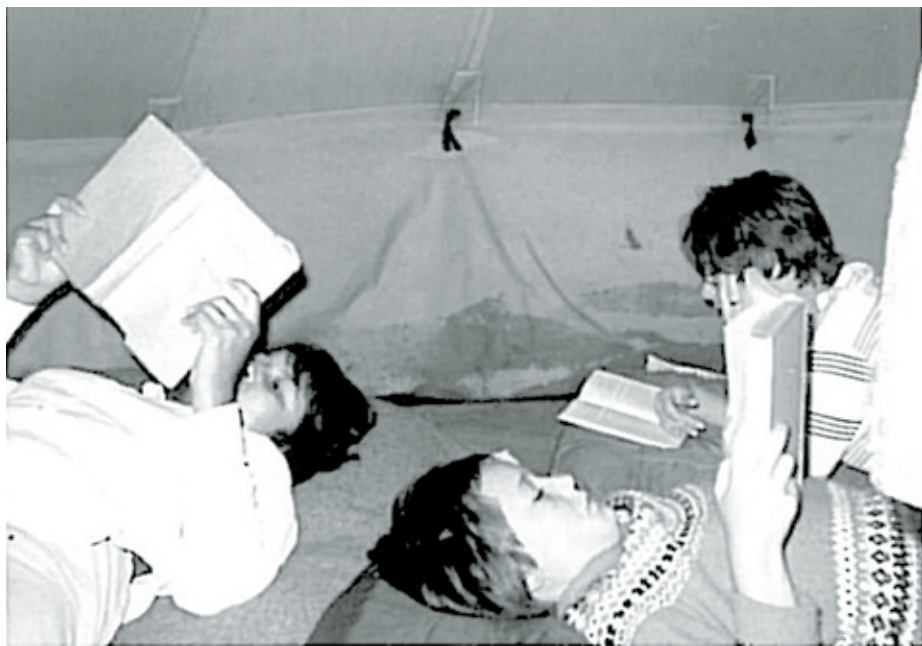
## FOCUS ON CAMPS & SUMMER CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

friendships formed, skills gained and memories made cannot be replicated in any other setting.

After all, the ability to build a fire, whisper late night stories to new friends or eat pudding without using your hands are not

gained by watching a YouTube video. As the stresses and distractions of the “real world” fall away, it can also be easier to experience God in the notes of a song, in the “magic” of a forest lit with fireflies, in the crackle of a campfire or in the blaze of stars in the expansive void above.

The excited memories of campers on their way home from a week away are more than enough reason for us to celebrate. So, amidst this year of celebration, we will also take a moment to recognize the powerful ministry that Mennonite camping has been for generations, and pray that it will continue to be for many years to come. ☸



*Hidden Acres campers take time out to read a book in this 1964 photo.*

### ☸ Briefly noted

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—Ontario Mennonite Music Camp



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CAMP SQUEAH PHOTO



The Wiens family of Abbotsford enjoyed a unique family vacation at Camp Squeah last summer and plan to attend again this year.

# Family camp becomes family's summer highlight

BY ANGELIKA DAWSON

Camp Squeah  
HOPE, B.C.

A week of Family Camp at Camp Squeah turned out to be a summer highlight for the Wiens family of Abbotsford, B.C. Maria Wiens, her husband Gerhard and children Jacob and Elizabeth spent a week of their summer playing together, trying new activities, enjoying both family time and couple time, and being nurtured body and soul.

Both Maria and Gerhard, who attend Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, have served as summer staff at Squeah, a children's summer camp and outdoor education facility operated as a ministry of Mennonite Church British Columbia, and as a family they have taken part in their church weekend retreats there.

Their children haven't gone to summer camp on their own yet, as they still feel a little unsure about being away from



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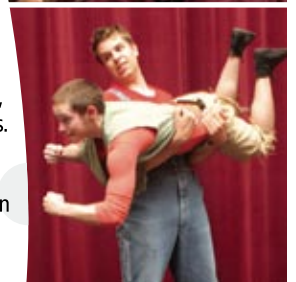
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## FOCUS ON CAMPS & SUMMER CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

their parents for an extended period of time. Maria says Family Camp gave them an opportunity to introduce their children to the summer camp experience as well as a quality family vacation.

Each family member had a different highlight. Jacob loved canoeing and blowing up rotten veggies with the camp's potato gun. Elizabeth loved the climbing wall and swimming. Gerhard loved the opportunity to try a little falconry and the times when staff took care of their children so that he and Maria could go on a hike together.

"The highlight for me was watching the camp staff relate to my children," Maria says. "What a privilege to have my children surrounded by Christian young people who are at camp because they enjoy children and nature. My kids can sometimes be so active and creative that they annoy others. Yet at camp they felt accepted and appreciated for who they are. My children got a real glimpse of what they can aspire to in the future."

A typical day was fun, fun, fun, with lots of opportunity to play, take part in different activities around camp and worship together at chapel. And while Maria was fully expecting her children to be cared for, both she and Gerhard were surprised at how well they themselves were cared for.

"We were mainly doing this for our children and to have the camp staff surround us as parents to share the load for a week was incredible. It really did feel like the body of Christ was supporting us in our role as parents," she says. "Often, churches are too busy using parents as volunteers to support and energize them in their role as spiritual mentors in the family. We were able to spend time as a family, as a couple, and alone. Gerhard and I felt refreshed, rejuvenated and appreciated for the effort that we put into parenting in a godly way."

Maria also truly appreciated the kitchen staff and the way they accommodated their family's dietary challenges. All in all, it was such a good experience that the Wiens family has decided to attend Family Camp again this year. Maria hopes other families will join them. "It is a wonderful way to spend a week as a family," she says. "Family Camp gives you the chance to be together having fun, enjoying nature and learning

about God."

For more information about Family

Camp and other camping opportunities, visit [squeah.com](http://squeah.com). ☺

*'The highlight for me was watching the camp staff relate to my children. What a privilege to have my children surrounded by Christian young people who are at camp because they enjoy children and nature.'*  
(Maria Wiens)

# Knowing Being Doing

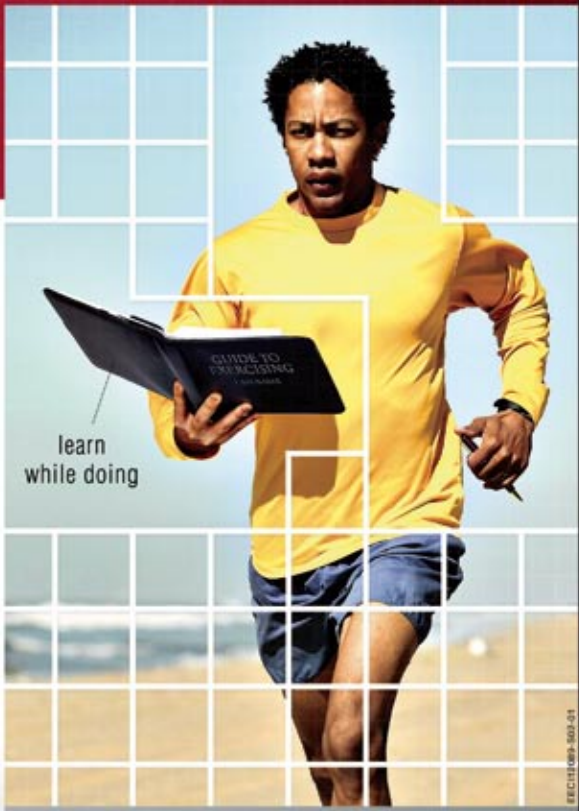
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## A marriage is more than a wedding

*How some young Mennonites choose to plan their wedding day*

BY RACHEL BERGEN  
Co-Editor of Young Voices

PHOTO COURTESY OF KRIS  
AND SUSIE GUENTHER LOEWEN



*Kris and Susie Guenther Loewen on their wedding day.*

Many weddings include diamond engagement rings, expensive wedding gowns, the bride being given away, extraordinarily expensive flowers and cakes, and spending way beyond one's means in order to celebrate a lifelong commitment.

This was not the case, though, for Susie and Kris Guenther Loewen and Brandi and Nathan Thorpe on their respective wedding days.

The Loewens and the Thorpes did things a little differently than most people organizing weddings, citing theological reasons for doing so.

They wanted to break from convention to carry through their values on one of the most important days of their lives.

The Loewens were married in 2007 in Winnipeg behind Canadian Mennonite University's south campus in "the back 40." On their wedding day, they emphasized the religious and community aspect of marriage, simplicity and family involvement.

They did so by not signing the legal marriage licence in front of their family and friends. They also involved many of their friends and family members, although they did not have bridesmaids or groomsmen. Instead of having the father of the bride give Susie away, their families gave them both away to each other.

"We chose to have our families walk both of us in from either side and we met in the centre," Kris explains.

Because the Loewens try to live simply every day, simplicity was something the couple valued in the planning of their wedding.

"The pressure to spend thousands and thousands of dollars on one day distracts from the fact that you're not just having a wedding, you're marking and celebrating the beginning of a marriage," Susie says.

Their clothes were second-hand or home-made, they had a post-ceremony chilli potluck at Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, after the ceremony, and Kris's siblings made cupcakes for dessert.

"Why would I not emphasize this [and other] values in weddings and marriages as well?" she asks.

Because the Loewens believe that weddings are often so focused on the bride, they decided to both wear simple engagement rings without diamonds.

"Weddings are really about two people getting married, not just the bride," Susie says. "There's no need for the bride to be the sole focus of attention. The diamond engagement ring tradition implies that the bride is the only one who becomes engaged, which is indicated with an extravagant piece of jewelry that's unaffordable for most people. There are also a whole bunch of issues related to diamond mining practices."

For the Thorpes, who just got married on New Year's Eve at midnight in Kitchener, Ont., concentrating on making their wedding and marriage a ministry was very important.

The date of the wedding itself was a celebration of newness, Brandi says. "We didn't want to have traditions for the sake of traditions, but we wanted to have a wedding that reflected Christ and his

purpose for marriage, rather than what culture says. . . . We wanted to bring back the focus of bringing people together in simplicity, Christ-centred community and celebration.”

In order to do this, the Thorpes involved almost 80 percent of the wedding guests. Their parents gave both Brandi and Nathan away, and they had a community prayer space.

“Our guests came around us and, as they were comfortable, they formed a massive circle, laid their hands on us and started praying for us,” Brandi says.

Brandi also waited for God to provide her wedding gown. Before the wedding, she

had gone to France on a prayer trip and felt encouraged by a friend to wait for God to present her with a gown. It was found 15 days prior to the wedding and it was in her possession one day before the wedding. “It was like God saying, ‘Brandi, I love you and this is how I’m going to show you,’” she says.

Both Kris and Susie advise people getting married to step outside of conventions even though there may be criticism or pressure to conform. “We also got plenty of compliments for doing this differently, though,” Susie says.

“It was worth doing it differently even though people didn’t understand” the theological reasons, Brandi says. ☘

PHOTO COURTESY OF MATTHEW VEITH



*Wedding guests surround newlyweds Brandi and Nathan Thorpe and pray for them.*

## Nothing interesting ever seems to happen . . . until now

*An excerpt from Paul Loewen’s latest novel, The Good Morning Man*

BY PAUL LOEWEN

The long grass in the field ahead of her hadn’t been mowed in months, maybe even years. Across the field was an old swing set, a boy swinging back and forth with a goofy grin on his face. Asia waved at him and he waved back. For a fleeting instant she wondered what kind of pain he experienced in life, thinking about what it would be like to be him.

Her house was on the right and she weaved her way through some broken toys littering the front yard. A small bike completely blocked the path and she stepped over it, instead of moving it, then kicked a soccer ball at the side of the house. A flake of paint fell off where the ball hit, but she didn’t even notice. The front door creaked on its rusty hinges—her mom had never had the money to fix it. If they did, they wouldn’t be living there.

“Asia, honey, you home?” came her mom’s sweet voice.

“Yup,” Asia responded.

“How was school?” her mom asked, coming bustling around the corner with an apron around her neck, wringing her

hands with the bottom of it. Her feet were in woolly slippers, sliding on the old hardwood floor. She grabbed Asia’s backpack off her back, slipped it onto the hook by the front door, and pulled out Asia’s lunch at the same time.

“Same old, same old,” Asia said.

“Anything else happen, dear?” her mom asked, already moving out of the front entrance, clearly not anticipating an abnormal response.

“Nope, not at all,” Asia answered, the same four words she had said for as long as she could remember. Nothing happened in their lazy river town, nothing ever happened at all.

“Jordan’s not doing well,” Asia said. “And it hurts to watch. He’s losing more hair. The therapy isn’t working—at least, it didn’t last time, and I doubt it will this time. He’s getting worse and worse. There are times when he has energy—like this morning—but they’re few and far between. Usually he mopes around. And it’s rubbing off on me. It’s rubbing off on Mom. We’re starting to





Loewen

all get dragged down. And we can't help it. We try our best, during the good times, to pretend like nothing is happening. But then something reminds us and we all shoot off, so frustrated."

"You can't, you can't," Sherri was saying, but she couldn't finish her words. Where before she had talked for five minutes without stopping to breathe, now she was speechless. This was Asia and her brother's cross to bear alone.

They reached the end of the bridge and stepped off the wood onto gravel. "Welcome to the East Side," Sherri mumbled, clearly not proud of her surroundings.

"Hey," Asia said, "it's not like West is much better."

"This place is a dump," Sherri said. "I'm surprised there's still people here."

"Sometimes," Asia said, "sometimes the best things can come from the weirdest places."

"What are you talking about?"

"I'm not so sure," Asia said, "but I think something's about to happen."

"Really?" They hit the road and turned right. The ditches were overgrown, but showing through the long blades of grass were raised manhole covers painted a shiny black. "What does this place have to look forward to?"

Asia felt it bubble up from inside of her, the frustration at Jordan's sickness and the pain of living in a small town where nothing—good or bad—ever seemed to happen. Life ticked by one day at a time,

slowly passing with nothing, nothing ever happening. And then it all burst forth, a torrent of water rushing out from a dam, in a barrage of words that she couldn't contain.

"Something's changing, Sherri. I can feel it. It has to do with Jordan. It has to do with me. It has to do with everyone in this town. And I'm going to be the one to bring it about—to figure it out. Something's happening, Sherri, I can feel it!"

Her twelve-year-old voice rang out; a dog they couldn't see barked in the distance.

"I don't know what's got into you, Asia, but whatever it is—well, I like it!"

The moment of inspiration over, both Asia and Sherri began laughing out loud. A laugh that couldn't be contained. A laugh that carried through the chilly air of fall, reverberating over rocks, empty fields, the expanse of water separating East from West, up the bank, over the dike that protected the town, through the trees, across another field, and into the back window of a small apartment unit where, fork raised partway to his mouth with a bite of pie, an older gentleman with a spring in his step heard it, cocked his head to the side to listen, and began to laugh with Asia. ❧

*Paul Loewen works as a youth pastor with his wife in Winnipeg. He writes theological fiction and believes story has the power to change lives. His work can be found online at paulloewen.com and at blurb.com/user/store/paulloewen.*

## FILM REVIEW

# How to build interfaith relationships

*Waging Peace.*

Directed by Burton Buller. Produced by MennoMedia.

Available online at [WagingPeaceAlternatives.com](http://WagingPeaceAlternatives.com).

REVIEWED BY EMILY LOEWEN

After 9/11, many North Americans have viewed Islam with a sceptical eye, often encouraged by the media. In America,

being Muslim often comes with a stigma, said Sheri Hartzler, executive producer of the documentary *Waging Peace* at a screening in Toronto on Feb. 19.

The film tries to eliminate that mistrust by highlighting the commonalities between Islam and Christianity and communities where people of the two faiths have become friends, Hartzler said.

Beginning with an introduction to both faiths, the filmmakers focus on how each has a strong background in peace, with scriptures that encourage believers to love and care for others. Despite the common ground of peace, though, the film also reminds viewers of the integral differences between the two faiths. The documentary calls on viewers to recognize those differences and still find ways to form relationships and treat each other with kindness and respect.

Alongside interviews with religious leaders and professors, the film also presents viewers with examples of com-

truth for the sake of making peace with its neighbours.

California aside, *Waging Peace* is full of positive examples for communities to follow in getting to know neighbours of other faiths. It also provides good background information for those unfamiliar with either religion.

Yet there are points where the film can strike viewers the wrong way. In one interview, there is a strong focus on the Bible's commandment for Christians to love their enemies. But by using the word "enemy," it encourages people to see those from other faiths as oppositional forces, instead of people different from them who can become friends, said Samira Kanji, a member of the interfaith panel discussion which followed the Toronto screening.

*Yet there are points where the film can strike viewers the wrong way. In one interview, there is a strong focus on the Bible's commandment for Christians to love their enemies.*

munities where Christians and Muslims got to know each other and built lasting relationships.

We head to the Middle East with Christian Peacemaker Teams to see volunteers walking with Muslims to act as a buffer in situations where violence seems imminent. We visit Waterloo, Ont., where breakfast between a Mennonite pastor and Muslim imam grew into a friendship between their larger communities. We look at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, Ont., where Muslim teens have enrolled and made new friends. And we watch kids in Harrisonburg, Va., at an annual interfaith summer camp.

The project would not be complete, however, without looking at the places where Christians and Muslims face conflict. The filmmakers interview a pastor at Calvary Baptist Church, Temecula, Calif., where the church has protested plans to build a mosque in the empty lot across the street. The pastor said that his congregation will not compromise its

Produced for an American audience, the film also presents a distinct American point of view. Although likely similar, the experience of Muslim-Christian relationships might differ in Canada, which experienced 9/11 second-hand.

Also, when the film states that the U.S. is the best place in the world for Muslims, because there is little discrimination, it seems to refute its own call for more dialogue to ease interfaith tensions.

Those criticisms aside, *Waging Peace* is a good tool to generate interest in building interfaith dialogue. It demonstrates the different ways others have made it work and the benefits they have reaped from knowing someone from a different faith.

The film leaves viewers with the same question posed to the audience in Toronto after the screening: How will you build relationships with people from other faiths and give the world positive images of how Christians and Muslims can relate? ❧

*Emily Loewen is co-editor of Young Voices.*

PHOTO BY EMILY LOEWEN



*Leon Kehl and Susan Kennel Harrison listen as Samira Kanji shares her thoughts on the *Waging Peace* documentary after a Toronto screening.*

## Calendar

### British Columbia

**March 31, April 1:** Lenten Vespers with Abendmusik Choir (31) at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford, 8 p.m.; (1) Knox United Church, Vancouver, 8 p.m. Offering to Menno Simons Centre.

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

### Alberta

**March 23-24:** MC Alberta annual assembly, at Calgary First Mennonite Church.

### Saskatchewan

**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.

**April 28:** Saskatchewan Women in

Mission Enrichment Day at Rosthern Mennonite Church,

### Manitoba

**March 16:** CMU campus visit day.

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

**April 4:** Jazz at CMU.

**April 12:** Winnipeg and area celebration banquet for CMU.

**April 21:** MCI, Gretna, fundraising supper; "God's Kingdom: Here and Abroad," 6 p.m.

### Ontario

**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.

**March 24:** Elmira meat canning fundraising breakfast, at Calvary United Church, St. Jacobs, at 8 a.m. Speaker: John Hillegass, MCC meat canning coordinator. For tickets, call 519-745-8458. Proceeds to MCC Elmira meat canning project.

**March 30-April 1:** Marriage Encounter weekend at Jericho House, Port Colborne. Contact Marjorie Roth at 519-669-8667 or wmroth@rogers.com.

**April 14:** MC Eastern Canada youth Bible quizzing; at East Zorra Mennonite Church, Tavistock.

**April 16:** New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale promotion dinner at

Bingeman's, Kitchener, 6:30 p.m. Guest speaker: Phil Enns, returned MCC worker, Indonesia. For tickets call 519-745-8458.

**April 21:** Mennonite Coalition of Refugee Support is celebrating 25 years of service to refugee claimants in Waterloo Region with a fundraising banquet, at Knox Presbyterian Church, Waterloo, at 6 p.m. For more information, call 519-571-1912 or visit www.mcrs.ca/25years.

**April 27-28:** Engaged workshop (affiliated with the Mennonite and Brethren Marriage Encounter), at Riverdale Mennonite Church, Millbank. 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

### Workers Sought

**MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE** seeks service workers for Akron Service Unit. Two **Canner positions** available as well as 12th Street **Receptionist** to be placed this summer, based in Akron, Pa. For more information, contact Emily Stednick at eas@mcc.org, call 559-301-3403, or visit mcc.org/serve.

## Employment Opportunities



### CHAPLAINCY POSITION

Concordia Hospital/Concordia Place, Winnipeg

Concordia is a Mennonite Christian acute and long term health care facility. Concordia is seeking a .8 FTE Chaplain to work at Concordia Place, the Personal Care Home. Applicants must have a minimum Bachelor of Religion or Theology (Master's level training preferred), 2-3 units of Clinical Pastoral Education as well as relevant chaplaincy or pastoral ministry experience. Starting date is negotiable.

Direct inquiries and resumes to:  
Kathleen Rempel Boschman  
Phone: 204-661-7149

E-mail: krboschman@concordiahospital.mb.ca

## UpComing

### CMU announces high school essay contest

WINNIPEG—Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) announces an essay contest for Manitoba high school students interested in the humanities. The contest, which invites students to engage with important questions about art, ethics and theology, offers prize money in the amounts of \$500 for first place, \$300 for second place, and \$200 for third place. Students are invited to write a 950- to 1,100-word formal essay engaging one of three questions:

- Are some pieces of art simply better than others? If they are, on what basis can that judgment be made? Or is it only a matter of personal opinion?
- Do some nations have a moral obligation to intervene with injustices they see in other parts of the world? How can nations discern when and if interference is moral?
- In the last decade, many prominent intellectuals have come forward to claim that religion—and Christianity in particular—is evil, that it goes against reason, encourages violence and halts progress. Are these claims legitimate?

Submissions will be accepted until March 31. Contest results will be released on May 1. To submit an essay, or for further information, e-mail Andre Forget at aforget@cmu.ca.

—Canadian Mennonite University

**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](mailto:office@peacemennonite.ca).

**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](http://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](mailto: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.*



**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](http://www.CommunitasCare.com). In addition, resumes can be sent to:

Layne Bieber,  
HR Recruitment & Retention Coordinator,  
Email: [hr@CommunitasCare.com](mailto: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.

**Director of  
Stewardship Services**



Mennonite Foundation of Canada, a donor-advised charitable foundation committed to helping others live generously with the financial resources God has entrusted to them, is seeking a Director of Stewardship Services.

The Director of Stewardship Services is a newly created position that will be responsible for leading and directing the work of MFC's Stewardship Consultants. The Director of Stewardship Services will offer support and encouragement to, and work with, MFC Stewardship Consultants to develop goals that assist MFC in achieving its organizational objectives. This position is accountable to the MFC Executive Director and is a member of the Senior Management team.

As the ideal candidate you will:

- ♦ have a proven track record in leading and directing a staff team
- ♦ be able to identify and prioritize activities and opportunities
- ♦ have experience in the charitable gift planning sector
- ♦ have worked in sales or marketing with good communication, presentation and interpersonal skills
- ♦ have a willingness to travel
- ♦ be committed to ongoing professional development
- ♦ have knowledge of, and appreciation for, the Anabaptist church, wider Christian faith community and related agencies and cooperative organizations
- ♦ be an active member or adherent in a sustaining conference church.

MFC offers a competitive salary and benefits package. Please submit resumes by March 30, 2012 to:

**Darren Pries-Klassen, Executive Director**

Mennonite Foundation of Canada  
4-595 Carlton Street, St. Catharines, Ontario, L2M 4Y2  
Email: [dpklassen@mennofoundation.ca](mailto:dpklassen@mennofoundation.ca)

**Job Fair**

**NOT JUST ANOTHER JOB FAIR - EMPLOYERS NEEDED**

Looking for an employee whose values match that of your organization? For a very modest rate, consider a booth at the 4th annual, "Not Just Another Job Fair"! This job fair is sponsored by several local Mennonite and other values-based agencies and employers. This event is advertised widely in local media, churches and faith-based agencies. More than 120 interested candidates have attended in each of the last years. Monday, March 26th at Waterloo Recreation Complex, Waterloo. To register for an employer table, please contact [phartman@mescu.com](mailto:phartman@mescu.com) or [cathw@mennonitecc.on.ca](mailto:cathw@mennonitecc.on.ca).

# Outdoor ministry

it's what Jesus did!

## **British Columbia**

Camp Squeah – Hope  
[www.squeah.com](http://www.squeah.com)

## **Alberta**

Camp Valaqua – Water Valley  
[www.campvalaqua.com](http://www.campvalaqua.com)

## **Saskatchewan**

Shekinah Retreat Centre – Waldheim  
[www.shekinahretreatcentre.org](http://www.shekinahretreatcentre.org)

## **Manitoba**

Camps with Meaning – Winnipeg  
[www.campswithmeaning.org](http://www.campswithmeaning.org)

Camp Assiniboia – Cartier

Camp Koinonia – Boissevain

Camp Moose Lake – Sprague

## **Ontario**

Willowgrove – Stouffville  
[www.willowgrove.ca](http://www.willowgrove.ca)

Fraser Lake Camp – Bancroft  
[www.fraserlakecamp.com](http://www.fraserlakecamp.com)

Glenbrook Day Camp – Stouffville  
[www.glenbrookdaycamp.com](http://www.glenbrookdaycamp.com)

Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp and  
Retreat Centre – New Hamburg  
[www.hiddenacres.ca](http://www.hiddenacres.ca)

Silver Lake Mennonite Camp – Hepworth  
[www.slmc.on.ca](http://www.slmc.on.ca)



**Mennonite Camping Association**  
[www.mennonitecamping.org](http://www.mennonitecamping.org)

- Seeking God's face in creation
- Receiving God's love in Christ
- Radiating God's Spirit in the world