

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

June 11, 2012

Volume 16 Number 12

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## EDITORIAL

## Dusty Bibles?

DICK BENNER  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

**D**usting off our Bibles for assembly?

If indeed they are dusty, something has gone wrong for the people of the Book.

No, writes Deb Froese for Mennonite Church Canada, in explaining this theme, we don't mean to imply people aren't reading their Bibles. Rather, we want them to "look at Scriptures with new eyes, learning to see beyond the familiar, so that we can apply biblical teachings to life in today's world."

Indeed. This is an important clarification because I am getting mixed messages from some readers of *Canadian Mennonite*. On the one hand, there are those who think our content is not "spiritual" enough and that we are no longer "scripturally based." Disturbed about our focus on the Occupy Movement on the front cover and an inside story, and our discussion on sexuality late last year, a Calgary reader wrote that we are becoming so issue-oriented that we have forgotten our primary calling: to "promote the gospel."

On the other hand, one of our columnists this year, raising questions about our view of the Bible in going through the process of Being a Faithful Church, wrote: "The Bible as we have it is not self-evidently authoritative," and warned that, even though we "ultimately claim [it] as the final authority," it may become an "authoritative object, or idol," rather than

life's guidebook.

Difficult words, these. One seems to be forcing a dichotomy between life's "issues" and the gospel; the other on how we use the Bible as we wend our way



through the conversation around current "issues" facing MC Canada congregations, indeed on such thorny topics as sexuality and what it means to be a "peace" church.

My response to both is yes!

First, *Canadian Mennonite* is not a denominational *Guideposts* or *Daily Bread*, which focus on devotional material. We are primarily a news journal that opens with a "thought" feature and other opinion pieces by columnists. All of our editorial content is published within a framework of "spirituality" and "Scripture," based on assumptions in our *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*. No, we don't sprinkle our stories and articles with Scripture verses, although they are often referenced when discussing an "issue."

As Anabaptist Christians, we live in a world of real struggle and mystery. We do not live in convents or communes. Divorce, mental health or "ill health," class warfare, roles of men and women, violence, injustice, sexuality, degradation of the environment, creeping militarism in our government, are all parts of our daily lives and are issues to which the good news of Jesus brings "healing and hope," to use a few of the buzzwords we employ as a context for our faithfulness.

The good news (or gospel) is operative in all of these "issues." To divide them is to revert back to an outdated and sometimes deceptive division between "sacred" and "secular." To somehow christen our stories and opinion with Scripture would be a fabrication and once again reinforce the false premise that we are one kind of person in the pew on Sunday morning and another at the workplace on Monday morning.

Rather, we consider Scripture (or the Word) to be Logos—God becoming flesh and dwelling among us (John 1:14). It is far more inspiring to look for the God ethos in all of these issues, rather than to dampen them down with Scripture verses that have a dated King James ring to them. God is alive and living within us as agents of his grace and power, not locked up in an ancient text recited as a kind of creed.

When I married my wife, I promised "to have and to hold, in sickness and in health, for richer or for poorer," but I don't begin my morning routine reciting that vow to make it valid in our lives together. Rather, my daily words, actions and attitude towards her are concrete evidence that I have integrated that promise into my living and being.

Likewise, in our Christian walk. With the Bible as our guide, not as a rulebook or icon, or, God forbid, not as a weapon with which to force others into our interpretation of its words, we walk carefully and humbly with our sisters and brothers in discerning the "way" in all of our "issues."

If we consider our Bibles only as a code of conduct, then maybe it's time to dust them off and see them with a "new set of eyes."

## ABOUT THE COVER:

**Jacinto Perez, a community leader in Nebaj, Guatemala, spearheads the resistance against hydroelectric dams on ancestral lands. See 'This land is us,' our Focus on Creation Care feature, on page 4, and our Focus on Creation Care special section beginning on page 28.**

PHOTO: TOBIAS ROBERTS, MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

*Circulation: Please contact Lisa Jacky toll-free at 1-800-378-2524 ext. 221 or by e-mail at office@canadianmennonite.org for subscriptions and address changes. Subscriptions can also be ordered at our web site. We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund for our publishing activities. ISSN 1480-042X*

Canada

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40063104 REGISTRATION NO. 09613

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE ITEMS TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

490 DUTTON DRIVE, UNIT C5

WATERLOO ON N2L 6H7

Phone: 519-884-3810 Toll-free: 1-800-378-2524 Fax: 519-884-3331

Web site: [canadianmennonite.org](http://canadianmennonite.org)

**Please send all material to be considered for publication to:**

**General submission address:** [submit@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:submit@canadianmennonite.org)

**Readers Write:** [letters@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:letters@canadianmennonite.org)

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Material can also be sent "Attn: Submissions/Readers Write/Milestones/Obituaries/Calendar" by postal mail or fax to our head office.

**Reprint requests:** [reprints@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:reprints@canadianmennonite.org)

**Mission statement:** *To educate, inspire, inform, and foster dialogue on issues facing Mennonite Church Canada as it shares the good news of Jesus Christ from an Anabaptist perspective. We do this through a regular publication and other media, working with our church partners.*

**Guiding values:**

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

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**Head Office Staff:**

**Dick Benner**, Editor/Publisher, [editor@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:editor@canadianmennonite.org)

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**Barb Draper**, Editorial Assistant, [edassist@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:edassist@canadianmennonite.org)

**Dan Johnson**, Graphic Designer, [designer@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:designer@canadianmennonite.org)

**Lisa Jacky**, Circulation/Finance, [office@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:office@canadianmennonite.org)

**Emily Loewen**, Young Voices Co-Editor, [eloewen@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:eloewen@canadianmennonite.org)

**Rachel Bergen**, Young Voices Co-Editor, [ca@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:ca@canadianmennonite.org)

**Advertising Manager:** **Graeme Stemp-Morlock**, [advert@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:advert@canadianmennonite.org), toll-free voice mail: 1-800-378-2524 ext. 224

**Correspondents:**

**Will Braun**, Senior Writer, [seniorwriter@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:seniorwriter@canadianmennonite.org)

**Amy Dueckman**, B.C. Correspondent, [bc@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:bc@canadianmennonite.org), 604-854-3735;

**Donita Wiebe-Neufeld**, Alberta Correspondent, [ab@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:ab@canadianmennonite.org),

780-436-3431; **Karin Fehderau**, Saskatchewan Correspondent, [sk@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:sk@canadianmennonite.org),

306-933-4209; **Evelyn Rempel Petkau**, Manitoba Correspondent,

[mb@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:mb@canadianmennonite.org), 204-745-2208; **Dave Rogalsky**, Eastern Canada

Correspondent, [ec@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:ec@canadianmennonite.org), 519-579-7258.



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FOCUS ON CREATION CARE FEATURE

# 'This land is us'

*A reverent response to endemic violence in Central America*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TOBIAS ROBERTS

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

*This 'land defence' mentality isn't so much a proclamation by the indigenous communities that 'this land is ours,' but rather an affirmation that 'this land is us.'*

**F**or five years I lived and worked in the outskirts of San Salvador, El Salvador, with an organization supporting marginalized families living with HIV/AIDS. Although the agonizing combination of poverty and HIV formed a part of my daily experience, AIDS was not the main epidemic that surrounded my life. From 2004-09, El Salvador ranked first in the world with 62 homicides per 100,000 residents. After five years in San Salvador, having a pistol pointed at your head during an assault on a public bus became a common experience.

Every day after sunset, as I returned to the small house I shared with my wife and her family, I went through the same apprehensive routine: Walk quickly through the streets; look constantly over my shoulder to see if I was being followed; sit near the front of a bus, next to an elderly lady if possible; don't look at anyone, don't talk to anyone, don't trust anyone.

A year later, I find myself living in a quiet Mayan town in the highlands of western Guatemala. Every day after sunset as I return to the small room that I share with my wife, I go through the same life-enhancing routine: Walk calmly through the streets; stop to chat with the local woman selling tortillas on the corner; pause in a dark alley to contemplate the stars and the moonlight silhouetting the surrounding mountains; find a pick-up soccer game in the park and join in; look at everyone, talk to everyone, trust everyone.

The difference between these two daily routines—one marked by fear and violence, the other by trust and tranquility—has made me constantly question how violence evolves, how it becomes entrenched in the daily lives of communities, and, most importantly, what is a real, effective response to this violence.

From my experience, there seems to be two main responses that arise due to the endemic situation of violence (like the one I experienced in El Salvador): the apathetic response and the de-rooted response:

• **THE APATHETIC RESPONSE** is generated by the genuine fear of impoverished, marginalized communities overwhelmed by the ever-present hostility of their surroundings. This response is characterized by an increased militarization of society, a general lack of trust, apathetic resignation to the inevitability of violence, and the loss of capacity to consider life sacred.

These characteristics are manifested in the recently and popularly supported political decisions among various governments to send out the military to patrol the streets, the resolve of certain political parties advocating for the death penalty, or by “hard-hand” laws that criminalize youths and “suspect” populations.

It is seen when, due to the constant killing of bus drivers for not paying extortion fees to gangs, most bus drivers in San Salvador put a sticker on their windshield reading, “Only God knows if I’ll be back,” in essence resigning their fate to the luck of the draw. It is heard in the conversations between people on the streets: “What happened over there?” “Ah, it’s just another dead person.”

Fourteen murders a day in a country about half the size of Nova Scotia numbs the inherent capacity we all have to appreciate life as the most sacred and precious of gifts.

This response is then propagated, expanded and exaggerated by the mass media and manipulated by government and business elites who prefer this simplified and superficial response to violence, which is purely reactionary, while turning a blind eye to the underlying, systemic causes. I do believe, however,

*The indigenous mentality of connectedness to their land, and their determination to defend that land as a sacred part of their community and collective lifestyle, is the single most effective barrier to the propagation of violence in their communities. That which is sacred cannot co-exist with, nor tolerate, violence.*

that, although manipulated by the mass media and elite sectors of society, and although this response has been shown to be completely ineffective in decreasing violence, it is an understandable reaction by communities affected by this unyielding aggression of violence. Communities faced with daily homicides, rapes and extortions excusably opt for the myopic solution of the apathetic response as a type of survival mechanism.

• Then there is **THE DE-ROOTED RESPONSE**, a response formulated by academic sectors, non-governmental organizations and people more aligned with the political left. It is a response that seeks to question not just the visible consequences of violence, but uncover its underlying causes. This response argues that delinquent youths and gang members are victims of an unjust system that denies them educational and work opportunities. It advocates for more policies aimed at re-inserting youths as productive members of society, and condemns the militarization and “hard-hand” policies that are implemented by governments and championed by the mass media.

Although this response by a sector of society is much more holistic and visionary, although it seeks to correct the causes of violence and not just attack its observable consequences, and although it offers a much more realistic attempt to effectively reduce violence, there is one key problem. This response is generally formulated and advocated for by sectors of society that live removed from the callous daily reality of the violence that affects their country.

It is a lot easier to advocate on behalf of delinquent youths as victims of an

unjust society when you’re not a victim of extortion, or when you don’t have to fear being assaulted on public transportation, or when you don’t live in a community controlled by local gangs and drug dealers. Ultimately this response, although well articulated and well intentioned, is divorced from the deep-rooted reality of the majority of the marginalized population.

### **A third option**

It is popularly said, “Where there are only two options, look for a third.” I left San Salvador a year ago without a third option. Intellectually and spiritually, I identified with the de-rooted response to violence, but corporally and as a part of a community anguished by violence, I admit that the superficial, apathetic response had its place in my being as a survival mechanism.

It was here in the small villages of the Mayan Highlands of Guatemala that the third option began to become clearer. Nebaj, the town I live in, hasn’t always been a peaceful place. In the 1980s, the Mayan Ixhil people of the region were victims of genocide perpetrated by the army during an internal armed conflict. It is estimated that between 15,000 and 25,000 people were killed in and around Nebaj. But today Nebaj is a comparatively peaceful place. What has changed from then until now?

The indigenous mentality of connectedness to their land, and their determination to defend that land as a sacred part of their community and collective lifestyle, is the single most effective barrier to the propagation of violence in their communities. That which is sacred cannot co-exist with, nor tolerate, violence.

I witnessed the most visible example of



*A typical street scene in Nebaj, Guatemala.*

this mentality early last year. After struggling to resist the forced implementation of a mega-hydroelectric project on their ancestral lands by the Italian company ENEL, the indigenous communities of Cotzal (neighbouring Nebaj) decided to close access to the construction site of the dam as a way to protest the lack of respect for their rights and lifestyle shown by the company and the Guatemalan government.

The response of the government was to send in 700 military and police officials armed with semi-automatic weapons and helicopters to terrorize the local population and force them to open access to the construction site of the dam. Faced with a situation of imminent violence, the community came together, formed a human wall to impede the military and police from further advancing onto their lands, and steadily and decidedly pushed it out of their community.

This mentality of connectedness to the

land permeates indigenous culture. Due to an increasing presence of multinational corporations searching for resources to exploit, this mentality has given rise to a resolute determination to defend their land and traditional lifestyle.

Even the most rural households, although illiterate and with very limited Spanish, can recite International Labour Convention No. 169, which states: "The peoples concerned shall have the right to decide their own priorities for the process of development as it affects their lives, beliefs, institutions and spiritual well-being and the lands they occupy or otherwise use, and to exercise control, to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural development. In addition, they shall participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of plans and programs for national and regional development which may affect them directly."

This "land defence" mentality isn't so

much a proclamation by the indigenous communities that "this land is ours," but rather an affirmation that "this land is us." It is in this subtle defence that we find that third option to violence. "This land is ours" would revert back to meagre ownership and possession, which is a concept of western civilization and unknown to most pre-1492 Mayan cultures. The struggle between "mine" and "yours" inevitably opens the door to conflict and violence.

"This land is us," however, changes the paradigm. It makes sacred the land, the people on it, and the intricate web of relations that exist therein. It is this web of relationships that is worthy to defend because it is who we are.

I think that this mentality is what needs to be nurtured in the barrios and marginalized neighbourhoods of San Salvador. Instead of more police control or more "hard-hand" laws against delinquents, instead of an apathetic resignation to the

reality of violence, instead of some unrooted academic analysis of the causes of violence, these communities need to find ways to make sacred once again their streets, neighbourhoods and parks. They need to take back those areas in their communities that have been kidnapped by violence, and reconstruct a sense of community teeming with trust, friendship and mutual caring.

### **Taking back the streets**

Marina, my mother-in-law, is an underprivileged single mother working in a sweatshop for miserable wages. She lives in an underprivileged Salvadoran community distressed by rampant violence. But on New Year's Eve last year, she demonstrated how violent urban areas can find ways to once again revere their local communities. Marina organized a party to celebrate the new year with the local community. She raised funds to bring in a sound system and a DJ, and at 10 p.m. the party started.

Although most families had locked themselves behind the razor wire surrounding their houses two hours earlier, the music and lights gradually drew their interest. By midnight, the streets that were usually given over to the gangs and drug dealers were flooded with people of all ages dancing, laughing and celebrating the New Year. Women were cooking tacos and pupusas on the street corners without any fear of extortion because the gang members that regularly extorted them were in the middle of the party dancing with the rest of the community. People who usually shunned any and all contact with the "evil" gang members were now sharing a plate of tacos and mutually enjoying the party.

It was a moment when the community became sacred again, when the fear associated with violence melted away, and when the community collectively affirmed that this place is us—we are this place—and we will defend it from anything that threatens it/us.

It was a moment that offers a new and urgently needed response to the violence affecting Central America. And it was a moment when a community oppressed by violence recognized and brought



*Jacinto Perez, a community leader in Nebaj, Guatemala, spearheads the resistance against hydroelectric dams on ancestral lands.*

to fruition the biblical promise: "There should be no poor (or violence) among you, for in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess as your inheritance, he will richly bless you" (Deuteronomy 15:4). ❧



*Tobias Roberts works with Mennonite Central Committee in the Mayan Highlands of western Guatemala supporting indigenous rights and sustainable rural livelihoods. He is originally from Bowling Green, Ky.*

### /// For discussion

See also Focus on Creation Care, pgs. 28 to 33.

1. How do you, or people in your community, express a sense of sacredness or love for the land and creation? What activities show a lack of respect for creation? Does concern for the environment speak to younger people more than older people?
2. What does it mean to have a mentality of connectedness to the land? What relationship do Mennonites have with the land? What is the connection between a sense of the sacredness of creation and peace? Do indigenous people have a stronger sense of connection to the land than those from western cultures?
3. In Deuteronomy 8:6-11, God's people are reminded to praise and thank God for the fruit-bearing land they received. What does this passage have to say to us today? How could we increase our awareness that our food is a gift from God?
4. Is there a connection between growing your own food and respect for the environment? What are some ways that we could improve our care for creation? Does new technology help or hinder our care for creation?

## VIEWPOINTS

## /// Readers write

*We welcome your comments and publish most letters sent by subscribers intended for publication. This section is largely an open forum for the sharing of views. Letters are the opinion of the writer only—publication does not mean endorsement by the magazine or the church. Keep letters to 400 words or less and address issues rather than individuals. We do not countenance rancour or animosity. Personal attacks are inappropriate and will not see the light of print. Please send letters to be considered for publication to letters@canadianmennonite.org or by postal mail or fax, marked "Attn: Readers Write" (our address is on page 3). Letters should include the author's contact information and mailing address. Letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines. Preference will be given to letters from MC Canada congregants.*

## ✉ Intimate worship part of Mennonite DNA

THE RECENT TREND to larger "mega-churches" in North America may be as much a reflection of our culture as anything to do with religion. The concern for preserving a certain way of life did not have political legs here (U.S./Canada) as the big box stores moved in. In many other parts of the world, this was not the case. In Argentina, for example, this way of merchandising cannot get a foothold because the government has decided their population would rather pay a bit more and shop in their own neighbourhoods from a person with whom they have a personal relationship.

When Europe was being rebuilt after the last big war, agriculture subsidies became, and still are, an issue between Europe and North America. Charles de Gaulle said that France would do whatever it took to preserve the small farm because it was a part of French culture to continue living in a style that included small

## FROM OUR LEADERS

# Reflections at the close of a ministry

MURIEL BECHTEL

**T**welve years ago, on beginning as conference minister of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, I described a painting of a small boat on a large body of water with these words inscribed below: "How frail my craft; how vast yon sea."

I came to this role after 18 years in Toronto, 11 of those as pastor at Warden Woods, where the church often felt like a frail craft in a multicultural, multi-faith, high-density neighbourhood. There, I led weddings and funerals with Catholic priests, a Baptist pastor and a native elder, among others. After the tragic shooting of a youth shook the community, I led the community centre staff of various or no faiths in a day of reflecting on the spiritual questions left in the wake of that crisis. I had long conversations with a gay senior who had grown up in the Mennonite church and wondered

what kind of welcome he would receive when he came back with his partner of 20 years after a long absence.



After that vast sea of diversity, MC Eastern Canada felt like a very little lake. Yet by God's grace, I grew to love the lake with all its beauty and storms. One of my greatest joys has been collaborating with others to plan and birth the Transitioning into Ministry program that supports pastors as they launch out on their maiden voyages. It has been a sacred privilege to participate in the high holy moments when church and pastor say "yes" to ordination and to be the presence of Christ's wider body through the low times when the bottom is falling out of the calling.

I have made my share of mistakes. But God has been gracious, and so have you. Often the risen Christ appeared in the face of a staff colleague, lay leader or pastor,

or in the outstretched hand of a colleague from the wider church. Sometimes Jesus' voice came through a spiritual director, friend or colleague from outside the Mennonite church. At other times, the Spirit gave new insight in the silence through Scripture, meditation and prayer.

Being a leader in today's church is not easy. The sea in which we are sailing keeps changing. Fewer and fewer people know the story by which we steer our boat. Rural churches are shrinking with an aging population and the disappearance of small family farms. New churches, some of them recent immigrants, are asking to anchor themselves to the Anabaptist/Mennonite boat.

Our craft is frail and yon sea is vast. But if our spiritual keel is deep and we join with others, there's no need to be afraid. If we listen deeply for the leading of the Spirit and hold tightly to the hand of the One who walks beside us on the sea, it's surprising how much love, wisdom and strength God provides: more than enough for all we are called to be and do. Thanks be to God who takes all our meagre and best efforts, and makes of them something far more beautiful than we can ask or imagine!



villages and farms with sheep and cows grazing in small, rolling fields tended by the owner.

As Mennonites, our whole cultural and spiritual history is full of resisting bigness and delegated authority. We have usually opted for a direct, personal and fairly private way of handling our cultural and spiritual affairs. The Anabaptist/Mennonite idea of worship was more a sense of fellowship of believers than a hierarchical and ritualistic structure. There was a very personal and intimate aspect to this that many of us cherish to this very day.

Does any of this make any difference in modern times? I suggest it does. My training in biology and genetics tells me that DNA carries not only physical

characteristics, but also cultural and psychological ones that are established through repetition and become part of the genetic footprint. Carl Jung called this the “collective subconscious” and it’s inherited just like the colour of your skin. We may not always know exactly what these fuzzy characteristics are, but we do know what is comfortable and what is not.

I suggest being aware of these subtle aspects of our lives before we jump to the next shiny thing.

**RICHARD PENNER, CALGARY, ALTA.**

## OUTSIDE THE BOX

# Church is . . .

PHIL WAGLER

Every Sunday evening our church hosts a community dinner. The peculiar mix of human diversity and dysfunction is beautiful. They are, in a word, authentic. What you see is what you get.

On Mother’s Day I encouraged the group with Psalm 27:10: *“For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in.”* It is a relevant passage for those shaped by parental neglect and foster care system failure.

In the middle of my talk a man announces that he has no parents. He is unwavering as the people around him guffaw.

Later, the truth trickles out. Born prematurely, his parents were killed on the way to visit his struggling little life in the hospital. He never knew them and defends his parentless dogma, while proudly displaying the “mom” and “dad” tattoos that cover his orphaned heart. He yearns for what family is.

What does a family do? Through no fault—or great fault—a family can do incredible damage or good. However, you can’t really pin a family down on what it does. Do families do better if their kids

are in sports rather than the arts? Do they do better if they are vegetarians instead of meat lovers? Do they do better if they avoid classical music for the sake of rock and roll?

Families do a host of different things, but a healthy first start depends not on what a family does, but on an understanding of what a family is. A family is the first place of knowing God; of refuge; of identity and belonging; of living with the diversity of the sexes, ages and per-



*Through no fault—or great fault—a family can do incredible damage or good.*

sonalities in that primary microcosm of a worldwide web of people.

When a family knows what it is, then what a family does becomes the organized expression of a unique and healthy identity. Our family dysfunctions are not changed by simply doing a bunch of new things, but by getting to the root of what we believe a family is. That is what my Mother’s Day friend was missing most.

That’s a long introduction to this simple question for church families to ask: Is what we do as churches reflective

of what the church is? Craig van Gelder helps focus this when he points out:

- **THE CHURCH IS.**
- **THE CHURCH DOES** what it is.
- **THE CHURCH ORGANIZES** what it does.

The starting point for a healthy missional church is understanding and articulating the nature of the church. What is she exactly? What is the theological and biblical nature and mission of the communion of the saints? From there we can identify what a church is to do. And only at that point can we begin to organize what that looks like for our culture, context and gift mix.

Many long for what a family is more than for what a family does. I have also learned that many long for what a church is more than for what a church does. I wonder what orphans might find the home they were looking for if we, who have been enveloped into the family of God, started with “is” and organized ourselves from there?

*Phil Wagler (phil\_wagler@yahoo.ca) is a pastor, husband, father and son living in Surrey, B.C.*

## ✉ More M2W2 volunteers sought in B.C.

RE: "AN UNCOMMON welcome," March 19, page 4.

As Will Braun states in his wonderful story, welcoming those on probation is "what the church is called to do." There is no question that Jesus was the ultimate M2W2 (Man to man/Woman to woman) volunteer, reaching out to repentant criminals right up to the cross.

Although there are 250 volunteers, both men and women, making regular prison visits in the B.C. Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley, there are still 234 requests for M2W2 volunteers.

Volunteers are welcomed by prison staff, wardens and, most of all, by the inmates. The effort is very rewarding, with new and lasting friendships not only with inmates but also camaraderie with volunteers. The rate of recidivism—repeating crime—is reduced, saving \$180,000 per inmate per year.

Recently, Wayne Northey, M2W2 general director, received from Correctional Service Canada a very positive evaluation. In my experience, three of the inmates I visited are now released and leading productive lives. Two have come to faith.

Consider what you can trigger in heaven, as in the case of the lost coin, with "joy in heaven over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:7 NKJV). Your witness could well start a positive chain reaction.

GEORGE H EPP, CHILLIWACK, B.C.

## ✉ Confident men honour both the masculine and feminine

RE: "SHIFTING MALE roles," May 28, page 4.

I have just read the article by Doug Klassen.

Shoot. You can't really print it, but my first and most heartfelt response to this article was an earnest, grieving curse word.

Klassen writes, "They are desperately lonely, they are deprived . . . but what many men fear the most is that someone is going to blow their cover." With these words, he gets right to the tough stuff of an issue that most men cannot speak of, if we are even aware of it.

I agree that we men need more helpful role models than Homer Simpson and Chuck Norris. But I'm not sure how to respond with action even though I see how important and urgent an issue it is.

Any other men want to get together sometime and brainstorm or go camping? May the Holy Spirit direct our efforts to become role models of confident men who honour both the masculine and the feminine.

MICHAEL TURMAN, WATERLOO, ONT.

## ✉ New social revolution creating needs for youths, parents

RE: "IT TAKES a church to raise a child," May 14, page 4.

Thank you to *Canadian Mennonite* and Evelyn Rempel Paetkau for the fine article on how the church can help families raise their children. As the bus shelter ads in my city read, parenting is a most important and challenging task.

I was so encouraged to read about the parenting classes some of our Mennonite schools are offering in their neighbourhoods and had to wonder if this unexpected role might be one God is calling more of us to embrace.

Sunday schools grew out of a particular urgent social need during the Industrial Revolution. We are part of a significant social revolution that is creating new needs and dilemmas for today's youths and families, even while it offers us amazing new possibilities. How will our churches respond to these new needs that make parenting so challenging?

I'd love to hear your ideas. Contact me at [erempel@mennonitechurch.ca](mailto:erempel@mennonitechurch.ca) or call toll-free at 1-866-888-6785.

ELSIE REMPEL, WINNIPEG

*Elsie Rempel is Mennonite Church Canada's formation consultant.*

## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Antoniuk**—Kain Edward (b. April 9, 2012), to Luke and Carla Antoniuk, Jubilee Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Boehm**—Rory Jared (b. May 23, 2012), to Ranelle and Jared Boehm, Hague Mennonite, Sask

**Brenneman**—Molly Faith (b. April 30, 2012), to Brad and Jenny Brenneman, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

**Gibson-Krete**—Jaxson Noah Murray (b. April 6, 2012), to Andrea Gibson and Justin Krete, Preston Mennonite Church, Cambridge, Ont.

**Penner**—Reid Thane (b. Feb. 10, 2012), to Doyle and Kendra Penner, Arnaud Mennonite, Man.

**Sawatzky**—Archer John (b. April 3, 2012), to Stephen and Dana Sawatzky, Jubilee Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Shantz-Martin**—Ryan Andrew (b. May 8, 2012), to Andrea Shantz and Nick Martin, Breslau Mennonite, Ont.

**Wiens**—Julianne Elizabeth (b. May 18, 2012), to Chani (Windsor Mennonite, Ont.) and Alex (Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.).

## Baptisms

**Stephanie Estabrooks, Sara Froese, Micah Zerbe**—Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., May 6, 2012.

**Jonathan Schmidt, Dixie Bergen, Drusilla Bergen, Cynthia Bergen, Darius Dueck, Dorian Dueck**—Tofield Mennonite, Alta., May 20, 2012.

## Marriages

**Bartel/Klassen**—Gordon Ray Bartel and Bethany Joy Klassen, at Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, May 20, 2012.

**Bowman/Fernandez**—Ross Bowman (Crosshill Mennonite, Ont.), and Gloria Fernandez at Crosshill Mennonite, April 28, 2012.

**Dyck/Pries**—Tim Dyck and Kerri Pries, at Sargent Avenue Mennonite, May 18, 2012.

**Erb/Roes**—Alison Erb (Crosshill Mennonite, Ont.) and Kyle Roes (Living Water Community Christian Fellowship, New Hamburg, Ont.), at Crosshill Mennonite, May 5, 2012.

**Hildebrand/Kinskofer**—Monika Lisa Hildebrand and Mark Emile Kinskofer, at Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, May 19, 2012.

**Leis/Simair**—Marina Leis and Chris Simair, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., at Elkridge Lodge, Waskesiu, Sask., May 20, 2012.

## Deaths

**Hoffman**—Naomi (nee Martin), 95 (b. Oct. 10, 1916; d. March 9, 2012), Breslau Mennonite, Ont.

**Kaufman**—Agnes Grace (nee Paff), 93 (b. Feb. 11, 1919; d. May 3, 2012), Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

**Kornelsen**—Helen, 91 (b. Sept. 17, 1920; d. May 15, 2012), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask., formerly of Bethany Mennonite, Watrous, Sask.

**Striker**—George Hanley, 82 (b. March 10, 1930; d. May 9, 2012), Tofield Mennonite, Alta.

**Wismer**—Ada, 93 (b. May 13, 1918; d. April 30, 2012), Preston Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.

**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.**

## Obituary

### V. Ray Yoder

July 23, 1920 - May 21, 2012

V. Ray Yoder, previously of Clarence Center, N.Y. Survived by his wife, Mary Anna (Weber), and four children. The funeral was held at Walnut Hill Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on May 26, 2012.



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## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

# Migrant church grows new roots

*After more than 20 years in Germany, resettlers from former Soviet Union maintain conservative traditions*

BY TIM HUBER

For Meetinghouse  
NIEDERNBERG, GERMANY

Jenny Spent is fascinated by her parents' stories of life in the Soviet Union.

Her great-grandfather was once taken prisoner, and her grandmother was sent at a young age to labour in Kazakhstan, separated for weeks from her mother and sisters. The KGB, the Soviet secret police, kept a watchful eye and applied pressure when it perceived that religious efforts were going too far.

But the 24-year-old member of Christuskirche Niedernberg (Niedernberg Christ Church) wonders about a paradox of freedom. "Sometimes I get the feeling they were more grateful than we are in our luxury," she says.

Her family and the Niedernberg congregation are *Aussiedler* (resettlers), Russian Mennonites who emigrated from the former Soviet Union to what was then West Germany in the 1970s and '80s.

*Aussiedler* are more conservative than other German Mennonites. For women, this sometimes translates into an objection to cosmetics, jewelry and fashionable dresses. Lay preaching is preferred, and churches avoid the salaried-pastor system employed by the nearby Union of German Mennonite Congregations. Some, like the Niedernberg congregation, do not use the word "Mennonite," preferring to describe themselves as evangelical or Baptist.

## Immigrant beginnings

The Niedernberg congregation got its start in 1989 when about a dozen people began meeting. They had recently arrived from Kazakhstan. They were soon joined by others from the former Soviet

Union, including present-day Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Moldova and Siberia.

Today, the congregation counts about 300 members, although more attend Sunday morning services. Children who cluster in the first few rows significantly outnumber elderly women still wearing traditional head scarves. Some local Germans diversify the congregation from

purely *Aussiedler*.

From children's activities on Friday night—some in Russian—to small groups and Bible studies, there are gatherings every day of the week.

The Sunday morning service begins with praise songs in High German, followed by prayer and a message that some might mistake for an early sermon. The service concludes with a sermon by one of about 12 volunteer male preachers.

Tucked above the balcony, a media centre includes an imposing sound-mixing board, racks of amplifiers and wireless receivers, and computer equipment for projecting song lyrics and Scripture passages on a wall at the front of the sanctuary.

## Strong traditions

A tradition of evangelism has been passed through the generations. Alexander Spent, one of the church's three elders and Jenny's father-in-law, recalls thinking that Germany was a Christian nation upon his arrival.



*Christuskirche Niedernberg members—Jenny Spent, 24, left, Tatjana Hagelgans, 23, Alexander Spent, 49 (Jenny's father-in-law and one of three church elders), and Johann Siemens, 23—enjoy a sunny day after the Sunday morning worship service on May 20 in Niedernberg, Germany. Most of the church's members were born in the former Soviet Union and immigrated to Germany since the 1980s.*

“In the Soviet Union, there were believers and unbelievers,” he says. “In Germany, there are many non-believers who are called Christian, but they are just like the atheists over there. Today, I see similarities to the U.S.S.R.”

Jenny laments the prevailing secular culture. “I’m overwhelmed by tolerance,” she says. “I sometimes wish people would focus less on tolerance and more on decisiveness. Our country is outwardly characterized as Christian, but is terribly wicked.”

Alexander says that intensive Bible study, something the church supports through a school in Bonn, has a complicated history due to previous regimes. “In the U.S.S.R., Christians seldom had teacher training,” he explains, noting that education can make someone stand out from the rest of the church and lead to congregational disunity.

Johann Siemens, 23, says that education is increasing, however. “More people are attending Bible schools,” he says. “This changes the general level of knowledge in the congregation, which can bring with it more scrutiny.”

But generational differences are not pushing young adults out of the church. Tatjana Hagelgans, 23, says that training, study and work might pull people away for a time, but most return with experiences that can impact the congregation.

Ties both within the church and to Russia are strong and fertile, like the Bavarian soil on which the church building sits, much closer than the identity they might share with North American Mennonites whose ancestors came from Russia.

“Because the churches in North America have already been there a long time, I think there is less evidence of the Russian Mennonites,” Hagelgans says. “I know a girl from Vancouver, also with a Russian Mennonite background. She told me that young people always hold a Halloween party. That would be unthinkable for us. I think the churches in North America have adopted more traditions of the surrounding area, but we, still, are not ready.” ❧

*Tim Huber is associate editor of Mennonite World Review. He wrote this article for Meetinghouse, an association of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ publications.*

## Help offered for Low German addicts

*Alcoholics Anonymous book translation especially needed in Bolivia, Mexico*

STORY AND PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS

The Winkler Morden Voice  
WINKLER, MAN.

Thanks to Ed Zacharias, Low German speakers around the world struggling with alcoholism will now be able to learn how to take it *een dach opp eemol* (one day at a time).

The book outlines the famous 12-step program that forms AA’s path to recovery, as well as personal stories of those who have wrestled with and beaten the addiction.

Zacharias says he was approached by a person involved with AA about the idea of translating the book—which has been published in dozens of languages—in 2005. “People who are in Canada, who are comfortable in English, can’t really understand” how hard it can be to try and read a book like this when seeking help, Zacharias says. “This is really for people that Low German is their first language.”

It took Zacharias just a few months to get the first draft of the translation done, although there were a few challenges. “There are technical terms you need to have an expression for, so we had to invent a few,” he says. “It was hard to come up with equivalents.”

This isn’t Zacharias’s first foray into codifying what has traditionally been an oral language. He has also translated the Bible into *Plautdietsch* and published a Low German dictionary and a hymn book translation.

“A lot of people say it is a dying language, but it’s not, especially not in the world at large,” Zacharias says, noting that he grew up speaking Low German and has always maintained it as a working language in the home.

Ron Neisteter has seen the need for this translation first-hand among Mennonite communities in Central America and Mexico. He recently spent three years working in Mexico with Mennonite



*Ed Zacharias translated the Alcoholics Anonymous handbook, informally known as the ‘Big Book.’ It was published by the global organization last December.*

Central Committee. While there, he served on the board of an addictions centre in the city of Cuauhtémoc.

“This will be a huge help in Mexico and Bolivia,” Neisteter says, speaking not only for alcoholics, but also for those trying to support people struggling with addictions. “The preachers in the [Mennonite] colonies have no training in how to help people with this,” he says. “Now they can help those people in their natural language, which is the language that speaks to us the most.”

The same is true in the Winkler area. “There are a lot of people who move here from Latin America,” he says. “They move here to start a new life, and they need help in their own language.”

The Low German version of the AA book is available online at [www.aamanitoba.org](http://www.aamanitoba.org). ❧

*Reprinted by permission of the Winkler Morden Voice.*

# Manigotagan Community Fellowship thriving

*Norman Meade reflects on the expanding ministry of this growing church*

STORY AND PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU  
Manitoba Correspondent

**M**anigotagan Community Fellowship is thriving nine years after budget restraints led to the cutting of Mennonite Church Canada's Native Ministry program.

"Just in the last six months we have had a full church at least three times," says co-pastor Norman Meade, who grew up in Manigotagan, a community of around 200 people on the east shore of Lake Winnipeg. "We've even had to set up extra chairs. This has never happened before."

"When Vic and Norma Funk from MacGregor were pulled out of Manigotagan in 2003, we had to make a decision about what we were going to do about the church and its programs," recalls Meade. "We had no money for a paid pastor."

Since Meade had been assisting the Funks and Neill and Edith Von Gunten (former Native Ministry co-directors) with church leadership, the congregation asked him to continue in the role of pastor. Meade and his wife Thelma were living in Winnipeg at the time, but because they owned property and had family in Manigotagan, they made the two-hour drive to this community regularly. "I said I would try," he says of the commitment.

In the beginning, there were challenges and learning curves Meade needed to navigate. He had never officiated at funerals or weddings before, but these services were increasingly being requested of him. "I started working together with the Anglican ministers, an aboriginal couple," he says. "Eventually they asked if I was interested in being ordained as a deacon in the Anglican Church."

Former Native Ministry workers Murray and Ruth Martin remained in the nearby community of Hollow Water working for the school division after their MC Canada

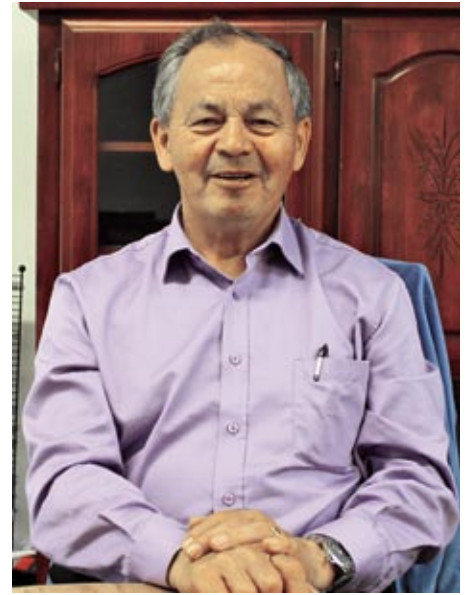
positions were cut. When MC Canada turned over the Manigotagan church property, including a house, to the fellowship, the couple was invited to live in the house and help with the church ministry. Murray assists Meade in pastoring and Ruth leads a vibrant music ministry in the church.

Building bridges across denominational lines is an important part of Meade's ministry. Although his family was active in the Catholic Church, he became familiar with the Mennonite church through the work of Mennonite Pioneer Mission workers in the community. "I have done training with Mennonite pastors and I follow the Mennonite way of doing things," he says, "but when I am asked to do the funeral of a Catholic or Anglican or other person, I ask if they are comfortable with this. Usually they are okay with it, but I am also open to modifying the program."

Meade has also learned more about traditional aboriginal practices and, if requested, will incorporate drumming or other traditional components into his funeral services. "Often the drum is used as a travel song, when the body is moved from the church or hall to the cemetery," he explains. "I also use the Ojibway language when that is requested."

Meade sees pastoral visits as an important extension of the church. He receives many calls for visits to the closest hospital in Pine Falls, as well as to Winnipeg hospitals.

"I think we are a unique community," he says of Manigotagan. "The churches work together. We have taken down a lot of denominational walls that have existed here for years. On a recent Sunday, the Catholic Sunday service was over and we were just starting the service in our chapel when the Catholic priest and another parishioner



*Norman Meade divides his time between co-pastoral duties at Manigotagan Community Fellowship and his work as coordinator of Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba's Aboriginal Neighbours Program.*

walked in and joined our service. They just came to sit and be part of us."

"God has been good to us," Meade says. He hopes that through the blessings the fellowship has received it can assist other church communities that are struggling.

The fellowship continues to value its ongoing relationship with Steinbach Mennonite Church through the Partnership Circles program of MC Canada and MC Manitoba. Meade personally feels tremendous gratitude for the Mennonites who have worked closely with his community over the past 50 years. "Without them, we wouldn't have the teachings and the programs we have today," he says. "Their patience, love and kindness, including monetary contributions over the years, have made this possible."

He has a message for the non-aboriginal Mennonite community, however: "I would ask the Mennonite community to please be understanding of the aboriginal people. Be open-hearted in the sense that you try to understand where they come from and how the residential schools and other issues have impacted them, because that is so important. Be open-minded and let us grow." ❧

# Comedic exegesis coming to Assembly 2012

BY DEBORAH FROESE  
Mennonite Church Canada

**T**ed Swartz studied to become a congregational pastor, but discovered that his true calling placed him on stage rather than behind a pulpit, using “comedic exegesis” to encourage scriptural understanding.



Swartz

“It wasn’t my intention to become an actor and a writer, but that was what happened,” Swartz says. He is the founding member of Ted and Company, a team of players who use humour to explore Scripture and social justice issues. He’s producing two video sketches specially commissioned for Mennonite Church Canada’s Assembly 2012. A live appearance wasn’t possible due to a previously arranged family commitment.

For Swartz, the assembly theme, “Dusting off the Bible for the 21st century,” evokes a strong visceral response that has influenced his sketches. He points to King Josiah’s encounter with the long-forgotten book of God (II Kings 22). “I’m envisioning a cluttered back room and dusty scrolls . . . a quirky prophet who is misunderstood and a bit of an outcast. He’s the kind of guy, that if you saw him coming, you’d move to the opposite side of the street.”

Another sketch, drawn from the “road to Emmaus” story (Luke 24), inspired the character of an old Jewish man who recounts a story passed down over four generations. “What was so intriguing for me about this story is that when bread is broken, Jesus is revealed,” he says. “That’s astounding. When something is broken, something is discovered. In this case, God is revealed. There’s humour and a certain amount of pathos in that.”

So how did a fellow who wanted to become a pastor find himself writing, performing and producing comedy? Swartz says it happened in 1987 when he began his pastoral education. While studying

drama with Barbra Graber at Eastern Mennonite University and Tom Arthur at James Madison University, he discovered that “the acting and theatre world connected with me more deeply than anything else I had ever done.”

Around the same time, Swartz met fellow actor and comedian, the late Lee Eshleman. Swartz had been invited to perform for a youth retreat, but his scheduled partner cancelled just a few days before they were to leave. A friend introduced Swartz to Eshleman and just a couple of days later they were on the road. They received a number of wonderful responses to their performance, and their writing and performing partnership began. “Lee and I worked together on ideas that made us laugh,” Swartz says. “We were comedic soul mates.”

Despite his success on the stage, Swartz spent a number of years feeling angst over

his strong attraction to theatre. His congregation at that time, Plains Mennonite Church in Lansdale, Pa., was funding the pastoral education that fuelled his desire to write and perform.

“Initially they weren’t happy about it,” Swartz says. “From a very pragmatic Swiss-German perspective, they weren’t getting what they paid for.” Today the congregation is one of Ted and Company’s biggest supporters. “Once they saw and understood what was coming out of seminary and my relationship with Lee and the biblical story, they saw it as a completely different approach to theology, but still something sustainable and useful,” he says.

Most recently, Ted and Company took its production, *Id Like to Buy an Enemy*, to the road on a “Peace Pies and Prophets Tour” fundraiser for Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT). A playful pie auction interrupted stage performances and raised more than \$15,000—along with priceless awareness—for CPT. The tour was so well received that Ted and Company has committed to another 30 performances.

Swartz’s memoir, *Laughter is Sacred Space*, is expected from MennoMedia in September. ❧

## /// Briefly noted

### Canadian appointed chair of AMBS board

On May 5, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) announced its name change to Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary effective Aug. 28, and elected a new board chair. Bruce Baergen, a member of First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, where he conducts the choir and is the current congregational chair, served as secretary of the AMBS board for three years, and is well versed in the workings of the seminary. He was board chair of Canadian Mennonite Bible College during its transition into Canadian Mennonite University, and has served on an education task force of Mennonite Church Canada. Baergen believes the binational nature of the seminary is of particular importance in maintaining connections between Mennonites, keeping the two countries involved in the larger world together. He is optimistic about ongoing discussions of partnership with Mennonite schools as well as the changing nature of seminary education. “Things are happening that have some real hope,” he says. “The institution is quite excited about that. It’s going to be a crucial two to five years for the seminary. The Canadian voice, in terms of how to build the program, is good for everybody.” The five Canadians on the 15-member AMBS board are appointed by the MC Canada Christian Formation Council. At least one Canadian is required on the executive committee.

—BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD



Baergen

# From Japan to Canada: 'Domo arigato'

*Women come to thank, share, fundraise*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent  
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

**Y**uko Tojo and Tomiko Minomo, two women from a group of Japanese Mennonite churches, have come to Canada to say "thank you" to the Mennonite churches in North America for sending missionaries to Japan, for help rendered during last year's tsunami, and to ensure churches have not forgotten the people of Japan, who suffered much in the disaster.

A benefit concert in Abbotsford on May 11, with an additional contribution from the Japanese Christian Fellowship in Surrey, raised \$3,025 for continued relief efforts coordinated by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) through the Japanese Mennonite Fellowship (JMF) association of churches.

Joel Brandt, Tasha Janzen and Savannah Davis, young musicians from host Emmanuel Mennonite Church, began the program with singing, piano and guitar performances. Then musician Minomo Tomiko of Japan shared her singing and

piano-playing talents. Tomiko volunteers once a month to perform for displaced people still in temporary housing due to last year's disaster.

"When I told them I was coming to Vancouver, they said, 'Please say thank you to them for their healing efforts,'" she told the audience.

Following the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami, members of the Japanese Mennonite Fellowship churches felt overwhelmed. Christians comprise only 1 percent of Japan's population, and Mennonites are a very small percentage of that. With only about 50 small congregations in the JMF, the Japanese Mennonites didn't feel they could respond as effectively as larger groups.

Then representatives from MCC and the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) visited Japan and encouraged the Mennonites there to unite to do what they could. "If you get involved, we will support you," the MCC and MWC officials told the Japanese churches. This was the impetus needed for the JMF to see how it could help, and it subsequently formed leadership teams to assist with disaster relief. It was the first time all four Anabaptist Mennonite groups in Japan had come together for such a cooperative effort.

"When the devastation hit last year, at first we thought there was nothing we could do, but the delegation from MWC and MCC came, and that was such an encouragement for us," said Yuko Tojo.

The first phase of relief, according to JMF chair Takanori Sasaki, included dispatching volunteers to affected areas for distributing food, cleaning mud and debris out of houses, and visiting school and nursing homes. Continuing efforts include assistance to residents of temporary



*Japanese Mennonite musician Tomiko Minomo performs at a benefit concert at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, B.C., for victims of the 2011 Japanese tsunami.*

housing, construction of durable housing, and schooling for children. The musical concerts by Tomiko are also part of this phase of assistance.

Tojo also shared her testimony at Emmanuel on Sunday morning. Tojo was a university student in Oita, Japan, in the 1970s when she came to know Christ through Mennonite missionaries Peter and Mary Derksen and their daughter Vangy. After serving as a staff member of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship in southern Japan for several years, she was married to Takanobu Tojo, a Brethren in Christ pastor, who is considered to be the leading Anabaptist scholar in Japan.

Tojo wanted to come to Canada to visit Peter Derksen, who is in ailing health, and was thrilled when Tomiko decided to come with her. Together, the two women have also been raising awareness of the continuing after-effects of the Japan tsunami.

"Help us by praying for us, please," the women pleaded. ☸



*Reunited again in Canada, Vangy (Derksen) Thiessen, left, Yuko Tojo and Mary Derksen relive memories of Japan, when Tojo became a Christian through the ministry of the Derksen family.*



# Rekindling a mission vision

*Zion Mennonite Fellowship celebrates 25 years of ministry*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
ELMIRA, ONT.

In 1987, several congregations north of Kitchener-Waterloo were bursting at the seams. Formed primarily by members of Bethel and Elmira Mennonite churches, the plan was for Zion Mennonite Fellowship to both be an outreach and reduce the need for building.

Some in the community of Elmira wondered why another congregation would be formed in the town which already had 16 other congregations. But Zion Mennonite Fellowship planned to be different. Meeting for its first seven-and-a-half years in the local Legion hall caught the attention of the local paper as “bridging two solitudes.” There was also a hope to offer a different

Mennonite worship style and to be an outreach in the downtown core.

The Legion offered worship space, but it wasn't until the congregation renovated an empty grocery store on Elmira's main street that the church felt able to offer weekday programming that includes a youth drop-in centre and a day care service for young children, as well as being visible during community events such as the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival and the yearly Moonlight Madness Sale. This building, christened “The Junction,” has served the congregation well over the past 19 years.

On Feb. 5, many former members, leaders and others from the community joined to “celebrate God's goodness.” Dale Bauman, former pastor at Elmira Mennonite, preached on I Corinthians 4:10, encouraging the congregation to recapture the spirit of willingness to take risks that was so evident 25 years ago, and to be willing to become “fools for Christ” in order to see Christ's kingdom grow in Elmira.

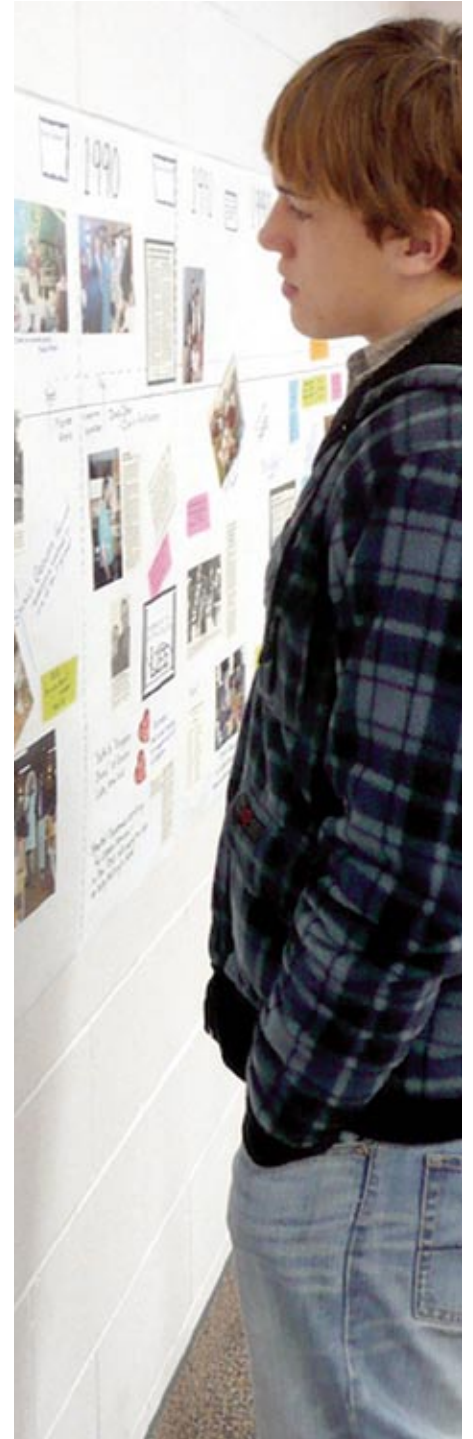
This is the dream that co-pastors Dawne and Ken Driedger continue to have for Zion. As part of his supervised experience in ministry, which is part of Conrad Grebel University College's master of theological studies program, Ken will be sitting in local meeting places—a coffee shop and a tavern—this summer to meet people and to “renew a sense of mission” that he has felt declining in himself the past few years. The congregation's leaders, as well as his supervisors at Grebel, have encouraged this “foolish” activity.

The congregation's membership and active attendance have declined over the past few years, leading many in the congregation, as well as both pastors, to believe that there is a need for a new vision for the congregation to go forward. Both pastors have taken time to study, preparing and renewing themselves for the task. ❧

## /// Briefly noted

### Providence offers new double major

OTTERBURNE, MAN.—Providence University College, working in cooperation with the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences at the University of Manitoba, now offers a new four-year double major in business and agriculture. This new initiative enables students wanting to make a career in agriculture and business to take courses both at Providence University College in Otterburne, and at the Agricultural and Food Sciences Faculty on the UofM campus in Winnipeg. The first Providence student participating in this new initiative is Jordan Siemens, a young farmer and entrepreneur from Horndean. “This degree is helping me develop the skills and knowledge I need to return to our family farm and help ensure its continuing success over the coming decades,” says Siemens.  
—Providence College



*Chris Driedger looks at the timeline depicting the history of Zion Mennonite Fellowship at the congregation's 25th anniversary in February.*

# 21 elephants in the room

*Pamphlet series on tough issues comes to an end after five-year run; sales top 72,000 copies*

BY CYNTHIA LINSCHIED

MennoMedia

Most Christians, including Mennonites, would probably rather not talk about issues like child abuse, alcoholism or pornography—especially at church.

Yet “Close to Home” pamphlets published by MennoMedia have brought these difficult topics and many more right into the front foyers and hallways of churches—where some people feel such issues need to be addressed most of all.

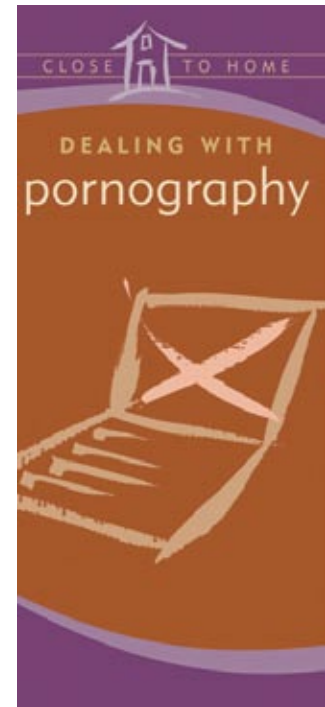
The series was developed as a resource to help congregational caregivers reach out to people struggling with personal issues that are hard to talk about. Each 12-page pamphlet includes an introduction to the issue, a true story of someone facing the issue, exploration of how the Bible and the Christian story can offer hope, and practical steps toward healing, including how to find professional help. Also included is a list of resources for further information

and help.

Twenty-one “Close to Home” pamphlets have been published since 2007, with copies sold for the whole series currently exceeding 72,000 units. The last two pamphlets planned, “Dealing with Teenage Pregnancy” and “Dealing with Self-Harm,” became available from MennoMedia in March. Top sellers for the series are “Dealing with Pornography,” with more than 9,700 copies sold, and “Dealing with Depression,” with just over 7,500 sold.

Many Mennonite congregations order new titles as they are published, and make the pamphlets available for free pick-up by members and visitors.

Byron Rempel-Burkholder, a MennoMedia editor who helped develop the series and has edited many of the pamphlets, found it rewarding to work with the group that conceived the “Close to Home” project back in November 2006. “I



was amazed at the level of good will and interest shown by them, and by all the people we asked to help as writers and consultants,” he says. “Everyone seemed happy that we were facilitating conversations about ‘elephants in the room’ that church people find hard to talk about. They also affirmed the way we were trying to bring congregational care together with professional help and biblical reflection.”

Rempel-Burkholder has been especially touched by the individuals who have shared their personal stories of struggle and healing that open each pamphlet. “Several people even asked that their real names be used,” he says. “Opening themselves in this way was therapeutic for them, and they recognized that doing so would help others share their stories, too. I was also gratified when I would see the pamphlets on literature racks of churches I visited, or when I’d hear pastors and counsellors express appreciation for the pamphlets.”

One pastor used the pornography pamphlet in a series of sermons about sexuality. Another ordered enough copies of “Dealing with Depression” to hand out to everyone in the congregation as they addressed the issue of depression together.

The pamphlets may also be used for group study, with free study guides available at [www.MennoMedia.org/CloseToHome](http://www.MennoMedia.org/CloseToHome). ☘

## /// Briefly noted

### Centenary of first female pastor’s ordination celebrated

THE NETHERLANDS—The Anne Zernike Fund was established late last year in honour of the first female Mennonite pastor in the Netherlands, to mark the centenary of her ordination on Nov. 5, 1911. She was also the first female pastor ordained in any church in the Netherlands. The fund aims at two goals: “[T]o encourage and empower Mennonite and Anabaptist female pastors all over the world in their calling to God, and to add, if necessary, a limited financial support to their scholarship”; and “to encourage Mennonite and Anabaptist congregations around the world to value the skills and talents of women theologians by giving them a paid position according to their education and capabilities as an ordained pastor, and honour the congregation with an award when they first ordain a woman pastor.” Three of the women who established the Anne Zernike Fund are ordained pastors serving a congregation within the Algemene Doopsgezinde Sociëteit (Mennonite Church in the Netherlands), a Mennonite World Conference member church; the fourth chairs the Dutch Mennonite sister circles. Further information and application forms for funding for women pastors are available from the fund’s board secretary, Coot Winkler Prins, Keulenstraat 7, 8017 KR Zwolle, Netherlands.

—Mennonite World Conference

God at work in the Church

# Snapshots

PHOTO BY MARIA KLASSEN



*David Brubacher, left, hosted the Mennonite Economic Development Associates' Niagara chapter breakfast on May 8 in St. Catharines. Ted Loewen, right, was the featured speaker, who shared his faith story in the workplace. Loewen and his wife Darlene founded Jolica, a fair trade company that imports jewelry, scarves, purses and other accessories from entrepreneurs in developing countries and sells them at house parties in Canada.*

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



*Mel and Pat Jantzi and Vernon and Doris Cressman were among 35 seniors who listened to presentations on 'Entering a seniors community' at Parkwood Mennonite Home, Waterloo, Ont., on May 17. Linda Burridge, a case manager from the Waterloo Wellington Community Care Access Centre, noted that living in seniors communities does not give a person automatic access to the long-term care beds in those institutions; current waiting lists for healthy seniors can be years, while emergency placement can take as long as five months. Ted Giesbrecht, a local lawyer with experience working on both property and personal care powers of attorney, wills and elder abuse, focussed on signs of abuse happening to a senior and the need to report this to police or healthcare professionals. In particular, he noted that if access to someone is suddenly limited by a caregiver, the isolation is a sign of potential abuse.*

## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

# 'You have blessed us'

*MDS ends historic seven-year recovery effort in New Orleans*

By Sheldon C. Good

Mennonite World Review  
NEW ORLEANS, LA.

After spending seven years and \$8 million responding along the Gulf Coast to hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) has formally closed its last project in the region. About 70 MDS personnel, Mennonite leaders and local pastors, disaster response workers and community members gathered on May 16 at MDS headquarters in New Orleans for a commemoration ceremony.

The "Passing the Torch" event celebrated MDS's work along the Gulf Coast, the

longest continuous effort in its 62-year history. Hurricane Katrina—the costliest and one of the five deadliest hurricanes ever to strike the United States—ravaged the Gulf Coast in late August 2005. Days later, MDS volunteers began clean-up work. Less than a month after that, Hurricane Rita—the fourth-most intense Atlantic hurricane on record—struck much of the same area.

At the May 16 event, Pastor Charles Duplessis, who lost not only his house but also the meeting place of his congregation,

Mount Nebo Bible Baptist Church, thanked MDS for its work. "Individually and collectively you have blessed us," he said. "I want to thank you for loving God and for loving people, whether they know God or not. God has been good to you because of your service. God has been good to us because of your service."

MDS volunteers built Duplessis a new home, which currently doubles as the congregation's meeting place. His former house was swept away when a wall of water broke through a levee and surged through New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward.

Like Duplessis, each person on the Gulf Coast has a unique story from 2005, the most active Atlantic hurricane season on record, which led to an estimated 3,913 deaths and record damage of \$159.2 billion.

So does MDS executive director Kevin King. The May 16 event turned sombre as King recalled the day Katrina began striking New Orleans and southern Mississippi. "As the news came in, I was glued to the TV," he said. "I was pacing around like a caged cat."

King called previous MDS directors, who said he needed to visit the area immediately. A private airplane flew him up and down the Gulf Coast 300 metres above sea level. "Never in my history of 21 years of disaster work did I fly in one direction for an hour-and-a-half and not get out of the disaster scene," he said. "And that's when I knew this was huge."

The scope of MDS's response to the two hurricanes was unprecedented for the organization, based in Lititz, Pa. More than 17,000 volunteers worked 126,400 person days throughout the effort, completing 194 clean-up sites, 739 minor repairs, 183 major repairs and 549 rebuilds.

MDS operated 19 projects along the Gulf Coast after the back-to-back hurricanes. The largest project was in New Orleans, where the most deaths occurred. The organization received \$8 million: \$6 million designated for the storms and an additional \$2 million in general donations.

"Passing the Torch" marked a unique transition for MDS. Although the organization consistently moves in and out of locations across the U.S. and Canada, perhaps never before has it developed such deep relationships with local pastors and

MDS PHOTO



*Nick Blais of Fort Erie, Ont., right, and other MDS volunteers work in New Orleans, La., in January.*

ministries.

King honoured the vision of Canadian Jerry Klassen, MDS's disaster response coordinator, to "start with the churches." "And today, we are celebrating emerging partnerships with churches," King said.

Donald Boutté, pastor of St. John Baptist Church, said Mennonites have shown peace in a city plagued with violence. "Mennonites have given the gift of reminding us that the way of peace is essential in this recovery," he said. "Historically, we've done nonviolent change. . . .

Mennonites have reminded us to re-establish the city around peace, justice and reconciliation."

King concluded by thanking the many people involved with the recovery effort. "God is still in the business of looking for people to make a difference," he said. "We can be, and are, God's hands and feet." ❧

*Originally published in the May 28, 2012, issue of Mennonite World Review. Released by Mennonite Disaster Service with permission.*

## Historic connection now in danger

*Gradual exodus of Christians from Middle East prompts plan of action*

Mennonite Central Committee

Christian and Muslim religious leaders and academics met recently at a symposium supported by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) to discuss

issues contributing to the emigration of Christians from the Middle East.

The interfaith symposium was held in Amman, Jordan, in March and was organized by the Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies in cooperation with MCC and the Syrian Orthodox Archdiocese of Aleppo.

Presentations focused on the challenges faced by Christians and the fact that Arab Christians in some countries in the region feel their rights as citizens are being denied. Participants agreed on a plan of action to address the need for equality, human rights and religious freedom of all citizens of the Middle East.

Attending part of the two-day symposium was Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan, who stressed the importance of cooperation between Muslims and Christians.

Daryl Byler, an MCC representative in the region, said the prince, a Muslim, was an excellent listener and seemed to garner the trust of the participants. "At one point, one of the Christian leaders told Prince Hassan, 'We have placed our problems in your hands; we hope you will do something with the stories we have shared,'" said Byler. "With his stature throughout the region, Prince Hassan is well-positioned to help address some of the recommendations."

Byler said it would be tragic for Christians to lose their historic connection to the Holy Land, noting, "The Middle East is only one part of the world where Christians are the minority faith, and thus potentially vulnerable and marginalized. As the birthplace of the three 'Abrahamic' faiths—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—the Middle East can potentially be the model for how faith can be a bridge for peaceful co-existence, rather than a weapon for destroying those who are different."

When Prince Hassan asked Byler why MCC supported the conference, Byler told him, "MCC partners throughout the Middle East have for years expressed concern about the emigration of Christians, and MCC believes a strong and vibrant Christian community is part and parcel of a strong and vibrant Middle East." ❧

MCC PHOTO BY RAZEK SIRIANI



*Mennonite Central Committee staff Daryl Byler, left, an MCC representative in the Middle East; Nada Zabeneh, MCC Jordan program coordinator; and Suzi Khoury, MCC Jordan administrative assistant, are pictured with Prince El Hassan bin Talal, right, at an interfaith symposium in Amman, Jordan.*

God at work in the World

# Snapshots

*Women from First Hmong Church, Kitchener, Ont. make and sell spring rolls at the 46th annual New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale on May 26. This year's sale raised more than \$335,000 through the donations of food, quilts, plants, services (such as refrigerated trucks from Erb Transport), a Run for Relief, and the time of a couple thousand volunteers.*

*Under the motto, "A dollar spent is a dollar sent," every dollar spent by visitors at the sale is being sent to Mennonite Central Committee. For more photos, visit [www.canadianmennonite.org](http://www.canadianmennonite.org) and follow the 'Photo' link to 'Candid scenes from relief sale.'*

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



PHOTO BY WILL BRAUN



*School is out, but the work has just begun. Delayne Toews and Jeanette Sivilay plant onions on a May afternoon at the CMU Farm, a half-hectare market garden on the grounds of Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg. Toews and Sivilay, along with Kenton Lobe and Megan Klassen-Wiebe, the farm collective's other members, aim to sell 22 shares, with recipients getting weekly deliveries of in-season produce. This is the farm's second season. (See Focus on Creation Care section on page 28.)*

PHOTO COURTESY OF SOUTH VIHAR WELFARE SOCIETY FOR TRIBALS



*Sanjay Tigga of Lowatoli village in Jharkhand state, India, began cultivating flowers after he attended a 2009 training session on horticulture organized by South Vihar Welfare Society for Tribals, a partner of Mennonite Central Committee that reaches out to indigenous people. By selling the flowers in the nearby city of Ranchi, and establishing connections with buyers who come to purchase his flowers, Tigga says he easily pays for the education of his two sons at a nearby Christian school. He is teaching other farmers how to raise flowers too, and he has big goals: 'With the help of my farmer brothers, I will supply flowers to the big market. I want to help the tribal community, and flowers should bring happiness and more colour into the life of my own family and community.'*

MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA PHOTO



*Soccer and compassion make a difference in Thailand. The Compassion ministry of Living Water Church in Borabu, where Mennonite Church Canada worker Rad Houmphan ministers, hosted a sports tournament earlier this year. Six other churches also participated in the event, which drew more than 200 people together for a day of worship, play, laughter and fellowship. Living Water's Compassion ministry is an outreach program for children who live in the town and villages around Borabu; it provides opportunities for social interaction with other children, physical activity and sporting events, Bible instruction, and more. Recently, seven children and two parents of Compassion children made the decision to be followers of Jesus. 'Rejoice with us that more people have come into the kingdom of God,' Houmphan says.*

## GOD AT WORK IN US

# The heart of a servant

*Building bridges, building trust with inmates*

BY KARIN FEHDERAU

Saskatchewan Correspondent

PRINCE ALBERT, SASK.

**D**ale Schiele sees value and worth in that segment of society that most people would rather shun. At age 60, he'll be retiring from a 30-year career as director of Person to Person (P2P), a volunteer-based prison ministry in Saskatchewan.

Beginning work with high-risk sex offenders at a time when many people could barely say the word without feeling uncomfortable, Schiele has often walked a lonely road. Raised in the United Church of Canada, he came into contact with Mennonites through a high school friend who encouraged him to attend Swift Current Bible Institute.

Following that, Schiele began work at McKeracher House, a halfway house in Swift Current run by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Saskatchewan. "The idea of restorative justice was just circulating then," he says. "MCC provided a forum for early prison workers."

In 1981, after studying social work, he was approached by the Christian Service Committee of what was then the Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan (now Mennonite Church Saskatchewan) to consider P2P, a relatively new venture that had only been going for seven years.

"When I started with P2P, MC Saskatchewan provided a budget of about \$50,000," says Schiele, noting that Saskatchewan Mennonites were interested in helping to put feet to Jesus' words, "When I was in prison, you visited me."

In the early years, he admits struggling more to accept the prison staff than the prisoners themselves. The staff, many of whom came into corrections work from an army background, he found difficult to deal with.

Prisoners, on the other hand, inspired

him. "I was always motivated by the prisoners," he says. "I saw a lot of changes taking place." The warmth and generosity of the P2P volunteers also kept the fire alive in his heart. "There were so many caring volunteers [who] invited the prisoners into their lives," he says.

## Moving outside prison walls

Initially, Schiele, a father of three, thought he could only give five years to the program. But something in those weekly prison visits sustained him. Fifteen years into the work, he began Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) for released offenders, moving from contact within prison walls to friendship on the outside. Falling under the rubric of restorative justice, the Circles tended to focus on helping child sex offenders, as these have the worst tendency to reoffend.

Robin Wilson, a former psychologist for Correctional Service Canada, explains the importance of restorative justice on the CoSA Canada website ([www.cosacanada.com](http://www.cosacanada.com)). "While many legislators, law enforcement personnel and members of the community have worked to increasingly monitor and decrease access for sexual offenders, others have attempted to build bridges to the population."

Building bridges is what P2P does, and Circles of Support actually reduce future crimes, Schiele says, citing "an 83 percent reduction in the recidivism rate for these offenders" who have CoSA support on the outside.

## Balancing work and family

Despite moments of danger, he says that his job has been beneficial to his family. "The children got to know about 50 different offenders," says Schiele, who often

brought prisoners home for dinner.

LaVera, his wife, speaks about the reaction from people at their church. "People were fascinated because [the job] was so unusual," she says. But she acknowledges that it hasn't always been easy for people at Grace Mennonite Church to accept the visitors that her husband brought to church.

Ed Olfert, a long-time volunteer, says many in the congregation do volunteer for P2P. "It has been good for the church, a good reminder for the church to be relevant to the situation you live in," he says. "By and large, we have seen huge acceptance [of core members of the Circles program]."

## Tough on crime

With the government promising more prisons, and bringing in tough-on-crime legislation, Schiele is sceptical that longer sentences are the answer. "I am not a fan of bigger and more prisons," he says. "Incarceration has never been proven to be an effective means of preventing crime. I think the amount of money used to build more large penal institutions could be better spent on addressing some of the underlying causes of crime, namely poverty, lack of education, and family and community dysfunction."

## What will the future bring?

In the months leading up to his retirement, Schiele prepares a soon-to-be-released offender for his involvement in a Circle of Support. When the offender meets the CoSA volunteers, he responds as many do, "They should put a bullet through my head for what I've done."

Most people would be unsettled by that remark, but the veteran worker knows what lies behind those words. "The offender is basically saying, 'Am I worthwhile?'" Schiele explains. In his servant's heart, Schiele knows the answer to this question. The volunteers also know, and they welcome the offender to begin a new life outside his prison bars. But now the released offender is no longer alone; he has friends.

Unfortunately, interest in the work of P2P has dwindled over time, resulting in a drop in financial support and volunteer base from the MC Saskatchewan community.



“P2P has evolved into more of an ecumenical program,” Schield admits, adding that P2P has received more funding from sources outside MC Saskatchewan while pulling volunteers in from a broader church community. ❧

❧ Staff change

**New program director hired for Segue Career Options**

WINKLER, MAN.—Debra Stockwell has been appointed to the position of program director of Segue Career Options by Eden Health Care Services. Stockwell comes to this leadership position from Robertson College’s Brandon, Man., campus, where she served as director. She brings extensive experience in program and curriculum development and human resource management, and understands the value of appropriate education.

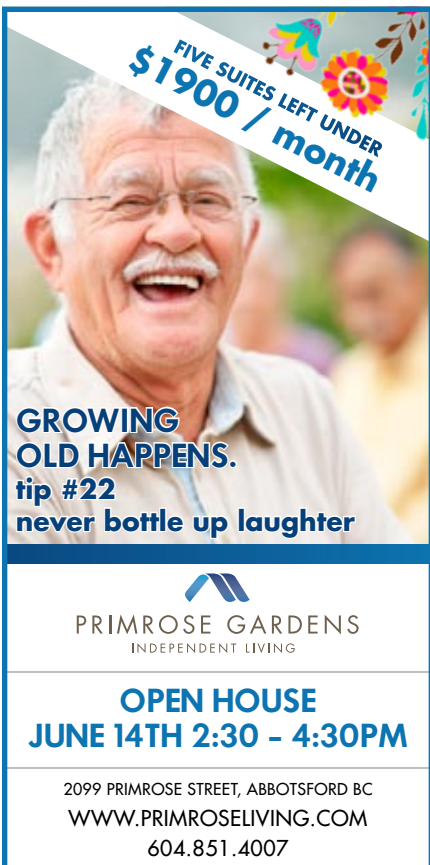
—Eden Health Care Services

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## ARTBEAT

## FILM REVIEW

# More superheroes ... or a Saviour?

Marvel's *The Avengers*.

Screenplay and direction by Joss Whedon. Starring Robert Downey Jr., Chris Evans and Scarlett Johansson. A Marvel Studios/Paramount Pictures release, 2012. Rated PG.

REVIEWED BY VIC THIESSEN

When an army of nasty aliens in giant reptilian ships threatens to take over the Earth and enslave all of its inhabitants, one superhero is not enough to stand in the way. For a threat of this magnitude, a group of six very diverse superheroes is called for, a group calling itself *The Avengers*, the title of what is already one of the biggest blockbuster films of all time.

The six superheroes in question, all of whom were introduced in other films released over the past four years, represent different aspects of humanity and are worthy of a brief description:

- **THOR:** the godlike alien with the sense of mythic responsibility.
- **IRON MAN:** the self-centred scientific genius.
- **CAPTAIN AMERICA:** the selfless, compassionate old-fashioned hero.
- **THE HULK:** with his anguished and angry internal struggle.
- **BLACK WIDOW:** the strong confident female.
- **HAWKEYE:** the quiet man in the background.

It is the differences represented by this unlikely mix which makes *The Avengers* special. Ironically, the most sympathetic hero is the innocent selfless Captain America, who seems to represent the U.S. as it would like to see itself, or once saw itself.

Marvel's *The Avengers* is a well-made film, with superior acting and cinematography, and a strong score. Joss Whedon is a

master of characterization and sharp witty dialogue, so when our six superheroes are given a chance to talk to each other, the film is hugely entertaining. Unfortunately, much of the film revolves around the unimaginative plot, mindless action and overblown special effects, which I found incredibly boring. That violence is viewed as the only way to defeat the evil invaders and save the world—the myth of redemptive violence—goes without saying in a superhero film, but the violence is not taken seriously and few will notice this fact.

Why has Marvel's *The Avengers* been so extraordinarily successful? Was it the brilliant marketing campaign or was it our apparently insatiable demand for superhero films? Batman and Spider-man will be returning to the big screen this summer and will almost certainly be blockbusters as well.

I grew up reading superhero comics, so I know something of the attraction of superheroes. I fantasized endlessly about being a superhero myself and saving the world—at least the damsels in distress—from all manner of villains. I'm sure that remains part of the attraction for young filmgoers today, but there must be more to it.

One explanation I have heard is that people are overwhelmed by their powerlessness in a world facing random acts of terrorism, and environmental and economic crises. Governments and mere human abilities do not seem capable of dealing with these evils, so we need to dream of superheroes to give us hope for finding a quick, and usually violent, solution to



society's problems.

I agree that superhero films give people hope at a time when fear and despair are prevalent, but I believe the above list of Avengers points to something more insightful; namely, that each of us, flawed humans though we may be, is called to be a hero and we all possess unique abilities that we can contribute to saving the world.

*Smallville* was a long-running recent TV show about superheroes, with a young Superman as the protagonist. Superman struggled incessantly with his destiny to be the saviour of humanity, to be the light which would show humanity the way. In one episode, Hawkman quotes Nietzsche when he tells Lois Lane that each of us is called to be a superman (*uebermensch*) by embracing what life has given us and making our life and the world around us better.

I am reminded of the musical *Godspell*, which has Jesus wearing a Superman shirt. Do we who follow Jesus not see Jesus as the Saviour of humanity, as the light to show us the way? Is it possible that the increasing popularity of superheroes is related to living in a secular society that has largely forgotten Jesus? Without Jesus as our role model, do we need to be regularly exposed to other super-human role models who are willing to sacrifice their lives to save

humanity, role models who will inspire us to be better and make the world better?

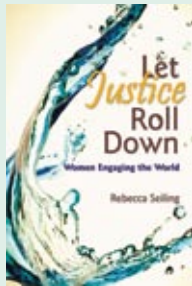
If so, we need to remember that there is a profound difference between Jesus and superheroes: Jesus renounced the use of violence, superpowers and the quick fix as means of saving humanity. In a society hungry for superheroes and salvation, our task may be to remind people that the word “super” may be a stumbling block and that there is a Saviour who can inspire us to be real-life, nonviolent, compassionate heroes working at filling the world with God’s shalom. ❧

*Vic Thiessen is MC Canada’s chief administrative officer and Canadian Mennonite’s regular film reviewer.*

/// Briefly noted

**New Bible study urges participants to seek justice**

A new Bible study guide sponsored jointly by Mennonite Women Canada and MW U.S.A. highlights issues of justice around themes from the book of Amos. *Let Justice*



*Roll Down: Women Engaging the World* is a flexible 12-session study by Rebecca Seiling. Topics include the prophetic voice, the church’s witness in the world, consumption and generosity, and the relationship between worship and justice. “Amos shakes, disturbs and pushes our comfort zones,” writes Seiling of Waterloo, Ont., in the study’s preface. “If you are content with the life you’re living, do not read Amos. If we follow Amos’s example, we will speak out against the injustices in our time.” MW Canada and MW U.S.A. coordinate to produce a new Bible study each year. The studies are published by MennoMedia, publishing agency for Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A.

—MennoMedia

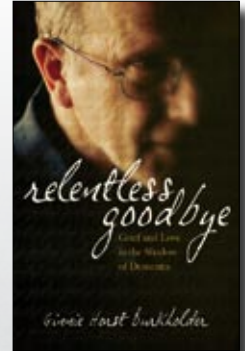
# New from MennoMedia

## Relentless Goodbye

Grief and Love in the Shadow of Dementia

by Ginnie Horst Burkholder

This powerful memoir is the author’s story of caring for a spouse who is slowly slipping away to Lewy body dementia (LBD), revealing how she handles the constant challenges through humor, love, and faith, without glossing over the pain and loneliness. This book is about the gritty and glorious substances of life—how illness and health, faith and doubt, grief and acceptance all flow together in the river of change.



Published through MennoMedia’s book imprint, Herald Press.

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[www.MennoMedia.org/RelentlessGoodbye](http://www.MennoMedia.org/RelentlessGoodbye)

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## FOCUS ON CREATION CARE

# Something new under the sun

BY JANE SNYDER

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

There's nothing new under the sun, the writer of Ecclesiastes tells us, but in Waterloo Region, Ont., there are lots of new things under the sun: solar projects, that is!

For the past several years, Mennonite churches and institutions have been investigating—and installing—solar photovoltaic panels. Mennonite-based solar projects include Erb Street Mennonite Church and Mennonite Savings and Credit Union's branch, both in Waterloo;

Hillcrest Mennonite Church, New Hamburg; Elmira Mennonite Church; and Rockway Mennonite Collegiate and the House of Friendship's Eby Village, both in Kitchener.

Representatives from the credit union and the Elmira and Hillcrest congregations spoke about their solar programs at the May 12 "Powerful Investing" conference in Kitchener that was organized by REEP Green, Community Renewable Energy Waterloo (CREW) and Greening Sacred

Spaces Waterloo/Wellington/Dufferin.

In addition to being involved in their church or institutional solar projects, however, many Mennonites are also involved in renewable energy organizations such as CREW ([www.crewzone.ca](http://www.crewzone.ca)) and LIFE Co-op ([www.lifecoop.ca](http://www.lifecoop.ca)), a renewable energy cooperative based in Kitchener.

"With the passing of the Green Energy Act, Ontario is now one of the most attractive jurisdictions in North America for individual home owners, businesses and co-ops to

## A green heritage

*Jane Snyder continues to 'green sacred spaces'*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

WATERLOO, ONT.

Jane Snyder chose the local Seven Shores Urban Market and Café in Uptown Waterloo to meet. Within walking distance of her home, and featuring local produce and fair trade coffee, it met many of the principles to which she, her husband, parents and work hold.

Snyder remembers her father choosing to live near both of his jobs: at Erb Street Mennonite Church and for his brother, Peter Etril Snyder, a local Waterloo painter. Years earlier, he had been director of Mennonite Central Committee Ontario. Her mom has a recipe in the original *More with Less Cookbook*.

Snyder's green heritage continues in her work with the Greening Sacred Spaces Network, where she encourages churches, mosques and temples to do light and energy audits; install insulation, solar panels and efficient heating and cooling systems; and reorganize their paper use, garbage, recycling and more. She urges congregations to plan Sundays when people come to worship on foot or by bicycle. Following in her parents' footsteps, she both lives and encourages faith-filled people to be stewards



*Jane Snyder enjoys a cup of coffee at the Seven Shores Urban Market and Café in Uptown Waterloo.*

of the earth God has given to humankind.

With many years of passionate and faith-filled work behind her, Snyder rejoices in every small step that faith-filled people and religious institutions take.

With her family, Snyder lives around the corner from her father, and within walking distance of Erb Street Mennonite Church, where they worship.

"There's no bad weather" for walking, she says. "Just bad clothing." ❧

start producing their own clean energy and making a difference for the environment,” commented Glen Woolner of CREW.

Community-based cooperative renewable energy projects are gaining ground. Both CREW and LIFE Co-op are organizing clean, renewable energy investment opportunities. LIFE Co-op investors receive a rate of return comparable to the interest rates being offered by lending institutions on investment vehicles such as GICs, money market funds and high-interest accounts.

Guelph is home to Ontario’s largest community-financed solar cooperative, Hall’s Pond, coordinated by Guelph Solar. RRSP-eligible, Hall’s Pond promises rates of return starting at 5 percent. Future Guelph Solar projects include installations at faith-based institutions such as the Ignatius Jesuit Centre and the Wellington Catholic District School Board.

Mennonite Savings and Credit Union sees the 7kw solar array on its Waterloo branch as an important way to “walk the talk” after introducing its Creation Care loan program to members. “The Creation Care Loan is offered to individual members, churches and farms for solar, geothermal or other projects as part of an eco-energy upgrade,” said Ben Janzen, the credit union’s stewardship in action advisor. Erb Street Mennonite Church recently secured a Creation Care loan to finance its solar array that was installed last month.

Inspired by solar projects? Consider joining the Greening Sacred Spaces Network to keep up to date on the latest clean energy trends, projects and events, or checking out Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario’s Creation Care Crossroads blog.

“The Creation Care Crossroads blog [www.mcco.ca/creationcare] offers inspiration for God’s creation by telling stories of simple living, climate justice and peace with creation,” said creator Darren Kropf. “Rather than dwell on the problem, let’s focus on the creative solutions, and the type of future we believe God has in store for us.”

*Jane Snyder is the Waterloo/Wellington/Dufferin coordinator of the Greening Sacred Spaces Network (www.greeningsacredspaces.net/waterloo).*

PHOTOS BY DAVE ROGALSKY

*Erb Street Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont., had new solar panels installed last month.*



*Solar electric panels at Hillcrest Mennonite Church, New Hamburg, Ont. (2011).*

## Creation Care Solar Solutions



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## FOCUS ON CREATION CARE



*'The Last Supper,' by Leonardo da Vinci (1451-1519); tempera and mixed media on plaster; 4.6m x 8.8m. Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan, Italy. What did Jesus really serve his disciples at the first communion service?*

### VIEWPOINT

# What would Jesus eat?

BY JOHN BORGER

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

Like most North Americans, I grew up in a household where no meal was complete without a serving of meat, although I didn't really know where the meat that I ate came from. But when I got a job at 18 in a meat-packing plant, where I was exposed first-hand to the cruelties and violence that are perpetrated on sentient animals as a matter of routine, it was an in-your-face kind of experience that I could no longer ignore.

It is clear from numerous passages in both the Old and New Testaments that God grants his compassion to animals as well as humans. As Proverbs 12:10 says quite plainly, *"The righteous care for the needs of their animals, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel."* Paul commands Christians in Colossians 3:12 to clothe themselves with *"compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and*

*patience."*

How many of us truly consider the lives and experiences of the animals who end up on our dinner plates? Animals may once have been raised with care and love on family farms, but the modern reality is very different. The rise of factory farming in recent decades has drastically changed the way society produces meat. Family farms have been taken over by corporate industrial operations that treat animals as mere units of production. The more animals they can churn out, and the faster they can do so, the higher the profit margin. This sets up a system with a strong incentive to ignore the welfare of the 10 billion farmed animals we kill each year.

Another devastating consequence of eating meat and other animal products is that, while westerners grow increasingly

obese on these foods, more than a billion people around the world go hungry. North Americans and Europeans import vast quantities of feed grain from Second and Third World countries to support our meat habit. Nearly half of the corn, soy beans and grain we produce each year is fed to livestock, fattening up the animals so they can be slaughtered quickly.

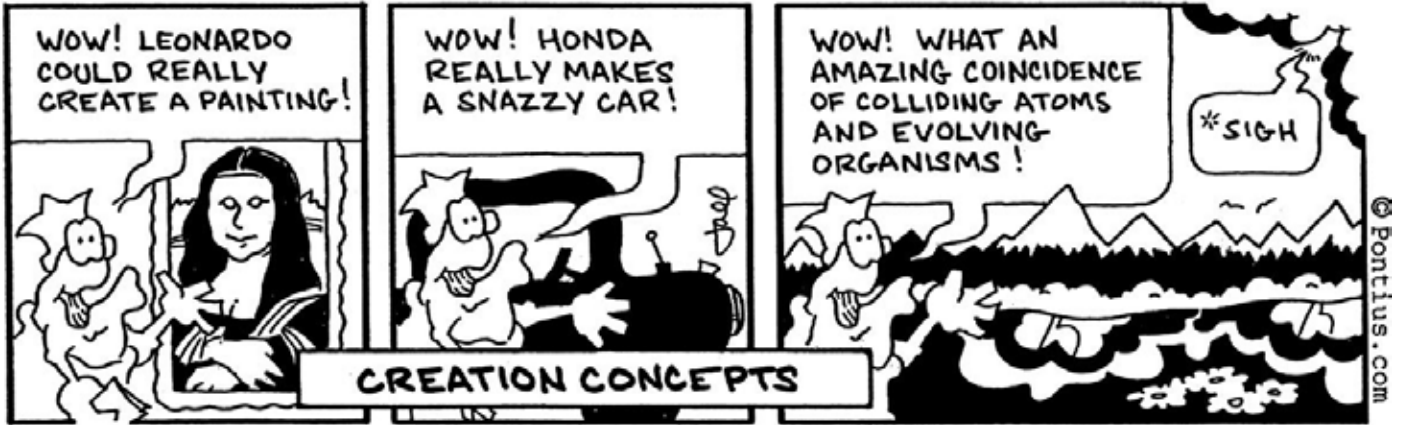
Obviously, feeding food to animals first, instead of directly to the people, is a terribly inefficient use of resources. To produce just one kilogram of beef, it takes an average of 10 kilograms of grain. Instead of feeding grain and other food to animals, we could cut out this step and distribute the food directly to the poor and the hungry. By going vegetarian, we could each help feed many more hungry mouths and eradicate world hunger.

Eating meat also takes an enormous and devastating toll on the Earth, over which God has given us stewardship. Our planet is plagued with numerous environmental crises, including soil, water and air pollution; water shortages; resource depletion; species extinction; and, worst of all, global warming. This issue first came to light in 2006, when a UN report revealed that raising animals for food is responsible for 18 percent of total planetary greenhouse gas emissions—more than the entire transportation sector.

Further, animal agriculture causes biodiversity loss when land, like Brazil's rain-forest, is cleared for more pasture space or to grow more grain to feed animals. The land used to feed animals accounts for 70 percent of all agricultural land and 30 percent of the Earth's surface. The environmental havoc wreaked by the animal agriculture system is fundamentally incompatible with our role as stewards of this beautiful and unique planet created for us by God.

And all of this for what? It's certainly not for our health. As we learn more, it's becoming apparent that eating meat and other animal products is making society sick. Meat has been strongly linked to heart disease, diabetes, cancer, stroke, obesity and a whole host of other preventable diseases. The recent hit film,

## Pontius' Puddle



*Forks Over Knives*, shows us how many of these diseases can be controlled, or even reversed, simply by shunning meat.

Meat eaters often look to Jesus to validate their dietary choices, arguing that because he ate meat, so should we. But I ask you to consider the differences between the world Jesus lived in and the world of today. Then, people ate relatively

little meat; it came from healthy animals raised on small farms, and everything was local. Factory farming hadn't been invented and we weren't facing an ecological crisis. If Jesus were to return tomorrow, it's hard to imagine that he would choose to eat meat under modern conditions. ❧



*John and Fany Borger live on a farm near De Winton, Alta., and attend Trinity Mennonite Church there. They both work for human and animal rights and social justice.*

PHOTO BY ANN HEINRICHS



*Mennonite Church Canada executive members expressed support for resistance to the development of Enbridge's Northern Gateway pipeline at the Manitoba Legislature on May 5. Executive director Willard Metzger, left, chief administrative officer Vic Thiessen, and director of Native Ministry Steve Heinrichs hold signs at a locally organized public auction to support the Yinka-Dene Alliance of First Nations of northern B.C. that are opposed to the pipeline that will link Alberta's oil sands with the West Coast. The following day, a water ceremony took place in Winnipeg at the Forks' Oodena Celebration Circle as part of a cross-country demonstration by the Yinka-Dene Alliance. (See 'Is Canada's ethical climate changing?' on the next page.)*



# Is Canada's ethical climate changing?

*Churches enter pipeline debate*

BY WILL BRAUN

Senior Writer

**T**he battle over the proposed Northern Gateway Pipeline will shape Canada's evolving approach to the environment and indigenous rights. If built, the \$5.6-billion project will transport bitumen from the Alberta oil sands across the territory of dozens of First Nations to the B.C. coast to be loaded on super tankers headed mostly for Asia.

The Conservative government has proposed new laws that will likely make it easier for Calgary-based Enbridge to build the pipeline, and federal officials have branded opponents of the project "radicals" and virtual enemies of the economy.

Meanwhile, aboriginal opposition to the project is growing beyond anything seen in Canada for years. "I'll stand in front of a bulldozer if that's what it takes," says Chief Jackie Thomas of the Saik'uz First Nation.

She's not alone. Although Enbridge spokesman Todd Nogier says that around half the 40 to 50 aboriginal groups along the pipeline corridor are in favour of the project, the company faces stiff opposition. Both the Coastal First Nations, a coalition of 10 aboriginal groups on the B.C. coast, and the Yinka Dene Alliance, a group of six interior First Nations—including Saik'uz—are determined to stop the pipeline. Dozens more First Nations throughout B.C. have stated their opposition.

Their primary concerns are that oil spills could ruin some of the roughly 1,000 waterways the pipeline would cross and that a shipping accident in the narrow channels between the terminus of the pipeline at Kitimat and the open seas could destroy large tracts of marine habitat.

"Knowing the risks that it involves, we have to say no," Gerald Amos said during a February presentation at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg. Amos is an elder who speaks for the Coastal First Nations. He lives down the road from where the super tankers would dock.

Nogier, speaking by phone from Calgary, says that Enbridge has "complete confidence" the project can be operated "very safely and sustainably."

Enbridge hopes to start construction of the 1,177-kilometre pipeline in 2014. Nogier emphasizes the economic benefits of the project, including an estimated \$270-billion boost to the Canadian GDP and \$2.6 billion in tax revenues over 30 years. Enbridge has offered aboriginal groups construction contracts and the chance to purchase a combined 10 percent share of the project, which could net them up to \$300 million over 30 years.

Adding to the high stakes of the project, many of the First Nations along the corridor never signed treaties or otherwise

gave up rights to their lands. These constitutionally recognized rights give them solid legal standing. "It will end up in the Supreme Court," Thomas says of the pipeline battle.

Church leaders are slowly entering the debate. Katy Quinn of Kairos—a social justice organization representing seven of Canada's largest denominations—says the issue has potentially profound implications for ecological sustainability and indigenous rights. She travelled to B.C. in March to attend public hearings into the project.

As for other church involvement, Quinn says that churches seem to be keeping a "fairly low profile," other than the Anglican bishops of B.C. and the Yukon, who issued a Good Friday statement calling for a robust public review process and special attention to aboriginal concerns.

"I think it is important for the church to express solidarity with those who are not feeling heard," adds Willard Metzger, executive director of Mennonite Church Canada. "Because we view creation as a gracious gift of God's love, any action that threatens the health of the earth and its environment should propel the church to request serious reconsideration."

Sue Eagle, co-coordinator of indigenous work for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada, says that an essential



PHOTO BY KEVIN KONNYU



Three B.C. chiefs, including Jackie Thomas of the Saik'uz First Nation, right, attend the Enbridge annual general meeting in Toronto on May 9, to state their opposition to the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline project.

principle in cases like this is aboriginal consent. While MCC is a member of Kairos, and works on broader issues that apply to the pipeline situation, it is not engaging the pipeline issue directly.



Aboriginal consent is something Enbridge is seeking, but Nogier acknowledges the company is unlikely to gain unanimous approval.

Would ongoing aboriginal opposition stop Enbridge? "I don't think any one entity has a veto," Nogier says. But he adds that the federal government, not Enbridge, will ultimately decide whether or not the project is approved.

He emphasizes that Northern Gateway is about more than a company or a pipeline. "This is a nation-building project similar to other nation-building projects in Canada's history," Nogier says.

Amos sees equally broad, although different, implications. He says this is a chance for Canada to show the world how to get relations with indigenous people right, by which he means placing indigenous rights ahead of corporate aspirations. "If we can't get this relationship straight in a country like Canada, where else on Earth do we have a hope?"

"At the very least," he says, "we should give ourselves the opportunity to have a conversation about where it is we want our country to be going." ❧

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## VIEWPOINT

# A time to re-imagine the seminary?

BY CHRIS LENSHTYN

SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRIS LENSHTYN



**T**he seminary is important. For years the standard has been, “If ministry is in your future, then so should seminary.” But I’m not sure if I will be going to one because I think the seminary needs to be re-imagined.

Things are changing. Church budgets seem to be shrinking to align themselves with declining donations. Mennonite Church Canada has been hard pressed financially for the past few years. Churches are ever struggling with ways to engage a young adult demographic that is seemingly disconnecting from institutional churches. We are moving into a post-Christian world where the story of Jesus is becoming largely “unknown,” and the systems that have kept the church strong seem to be coming into question.

Yet there is tremendous movement and hope. Many churches are starting to wonder what it looks like to connect with their neighbourhoods and speak of beautiful peace, grace and redemption. Many people are exploring different ways in which to be church together.

In light of these changes—and what seems to be the status quo of our seminaries—here are some healthy topics for conversation as we re-imagine what it looks like to train our future ministers of the gospel.

### **Debt**

During my undergraduate studies I racked up \$20,000 in student debt. I recently had a conversation with a friend

and prospective seminary student who indicated that, with living expenses and tuition, he will be staring down the barrel of \$50,000 worth of student debt.

What makes these numbers more significant is the difficulty many are facing finding church jobs that pay enough to work off the debt.

• **DO WE WANT OUR FUTURE CHURCH LEADERS TO BE HELD HOSTAGE BY STUDENT DEBT?**

### **The disconnect**

There is a significant difference between the classroom and the street. While being well versed in classroom academics may have its place, to do so at the loss of on-the-ground learning may be too big of a price to pay.

With churches starting to ask what it means to connect with their neighbourhoods, training leaders almost exclusively in the classroom only facilitates the disconnect.

• **WHERE DO WE WANT OUR LEADERS OF THE FUTURE TO BE TRAINED?**

Yet as we engage in conversations about re-imagining the seminary, there is a need to celebrate two particular strengths. The hope is that these will help inform what a seminary of tomorrow could look like.

### **Intentional structured learning**

Learning takes intentionality. Learning with a group of students under the

direction of a good professor is a significant strength of the current seminary. Wrestling through biblical texts and other valuable material is beneficial to everyone.

• **WHAT DO A RE-IMAGINED STRUCTURE AND INTENTIONALITY LOOK LIKE WHEN WE CHANGE OUR LEARNING PLACE FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE STREET?**

**Network**

Seminaries offer us a place in which to connect with an existing network of people. Personally, in my undergraduate studies I saw tremendous benefit in this. Many of those with whom I studied, professors included, I keep in contact with regularly. This network, this fluid community is a source of strength and encouragement for many, even beyond the academic institution.

• **HOW CAN WE NETWORK OUR STUDENTS AND FUTURE LEADERS?**

I poke and prod at this because the seminary is important. Seminary education needs to be saturated with

excellence, which is the very reason why institutions need to think about some of these conversations. They train leaders who will be foundational to the future of our Mennonite church. This makes it imperative that seminaries do a “better than good” job.

We need well-educated, well-prepared leaders for the changing times before us. We need our leaders to train other leaders. We need our leaders to empower our Believer’s Church communities to be active in this mission of God.

I celebrate what the seminary of yesterday has done to empower leaders and take hope that, as the world around us changes from Christian to post-Christian, the seminary of today and tomorrow will do the same. ✎

*Chris Lenshyn is associate pastor at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, B.C., loves his wife and son, and blogs regularly at [www.anabaptistly.wordpress.com](http://www.anabaptistly.wordpress.com). Share your thoughts on his article and about the future of the seminary online at [youngvoices.canadianmennonite.org](http://youngvoices.canadianmennonite.org).*

## Spreading the gospel of peace globally

*Young B.C. family heads to the Philippines for six years as MC Canada Witness workers*

**BY RACHEL BERGEN**

Young Voices Co-Editor  
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

It has been said that life is a highway. Sometimes that highway leads you out of the country, across oceans and completely out of your comfort zone.

This is the case for Darnell and Christina Barkman and their young children, Cody, two, and newborn Makai.

The Barkmans, who attend Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, will be spending about six years in the Philippines preaching the gospel of peace as Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers. They

were to leave on June 7 for Manila, where they plan on planting a Mennonite church in Fort Bonafacio—a.k.a. the Global City—a highly urbanized part of the capital.

The idea to spend a considerable amount of time in the Philippines in order to plant a church came about when the Barkmans spent a year there with MC Canada as interns. They talked about their peace and shalom theology with some wealthy members at a Bible study there, and when these people were impressed with it and wanted

PHOTO BY RACHEL BERGEN



*Christina and Darnell Barkman, with sons Cody and Makai, are preparing to leave for the Philippines on a church-planting assignment with Mennonite Church Canada.*

PHOTO BY WALTRUDE GORTZEN



*On May 20, Darnell and Christina Barkman were commissioned as Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, B.C. They are pictured with members of their family and support group.*

to learn more, the idea sprang up to plant a church.

“The idea came to plant a church in the heart of the country where decision makers and policy makers live,” says Christina. “Hopefully, the church will spread across the country.”

The Barkmans, both in their late 20s, will be working with the Integrated Mennonite Church of the Philippines, which is made up of several small Mennonite churches. They will work to help find a unifying purpose among the churches and to help resolve conflicts in a country plagued by land disputes for the past 400 years.

Daniel and Joji Pantoja are Witness workers in Davao City, in the poorer, southern part of the country, so, with the two families working together, the Barkmans hope for some real change to happen for the war-torn country. “We need all levels of society working towards peace for change to happen,” Christina says.

Steve and Janet Plenert know what it is like to live overseas with young children. In their early 20s, they moved to the Democratic Republic of Congo, what was then called Zaire, when they were expecting their first-born daughter, Gabrielle. They spent four years there before they moved to Brazil, where they lived for another six years. They had two more daughters, Natasha and Katrina, during this time.

The Plenerts worked for the General Conference of Mennonites, one of the predecessors of MC Canada, as administration workers and leadership trainers. For their family, it was a “very positive, life-giving experience,” says Steve, now the director

of Mennonite Central Committee’s peace program. “For us as a couple and a family, we had the opportunity to learn other languages, to learn interesting things about how others saw faith and experienced faith and church.”

From one family that has been there to another that is about to embark on a similar experience, Steve says, “I think taking your children at this young age is probably the best thing you can do, because in all cultures children are one of the very best ways of breaking down barriers. . . . One of the messages you’re sending is saying that ‘your culture is a good place to bring our children,’ and people respect that.”

“That is one of the best initial ways of expressing the gospel of love and peace,” he adds.

He also thinks that spending considerable time learning the language and culture is time well spent. Both he and Janet, now Region V director of Mennonite Disaster Service, would absolutely do another overseas term.

For their middle child, Natasha, 22, though, the time they spent overseas was very difficult, but it also shaped her worldview. While her experience “made for a lot of upheaval and instability,” she says, “my time overseas was very formative, but also something I took completely for granted, because I never knew anything else. It gave me a lot of opportunities that I would not have had otherwise, and provided me with a very wide worldview.” Despite the difficulties, she says she would consider doing another overseas term, but not as a career or something long-term. ❧

## ***Finding a place in the wider church***

BY AARON EPP

Special to Young Voices

**L**aura Epp is passionate about the Mennonite church. The 22-year-old is the secretary of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan’s Ministries Commission. She has attended the annual MC

Saskatchewan delegate sessions for the last eight years, and in the past has served on the Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization committee and counselled at the Shekinah Retreat Centre.

"I feel that it is important to be involved in the wider church, at the very least to stay informed about what is going on in our conference," says Epp, who is a member at Zoar Mennonite Church, Langham. "But more than that, young people have a real opportunity to voice their opinions and make a difference. Many young adults have formed their own ideas about how the church should be, and need to come forward, get involved and share their ideas."

Willard Metzger is not surprised when

says she does not think much about what goes on at the area and national church levels. "I've never really thought very much about the wider church," says Howie, who attends Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, Vancouver, adding that the same goes for her friends. "We don't talk much about the wider church, so I'm not sure how they feel about these institutions. But from what we have talked about it, I think [some] are engaged and the rest are ambivalent."

Dave Bergen, MC Canada's executive

*[P]robably the most common reaction I experience is one of ambivalence, no expression of eagerness or avoidance, [but] rather simple disinterest and unawareness.*

*(Willard Metzger, MC Canada executive director)*

he hears stories like Epp's. During his time as executive director of MC Canada, Metzger has observed the different ways young adults think about their involvement with the national church.

"Some are quite eager to offer their gifts, some are dismissive of larger church institutions," Metzger says. "But probably the most common reaction I experience is one of ambivalence, no expression of eagerness or avoidance, [but] rather simple disinterest and unawareness."

Josh Baergen counts himself in this last group. The 21-year-old attends Niagara United Mennonite Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., where he teaches Sunday school and is a youth group leader. While Baergen has taken part in MC Eastern Canada's Yella learning tour to the Middle East, that is where his knowledge of the wider Mennonite church ends. He has never attended an area church annual general meeting or an MC Canada assembly.

"It's mentioned here and there," he says of those events. "[But] it's almost like it doesn't pertain to me when I hear it. My church is kind of like a bubble, it seems, and I don't really go out of it." Wider church activities and events are mentioned in the church bulletin all the time, but "I skip over it," he says.

Devon Howie is in the same boat. While she has attended MC B.C. youth and young adult retreats in the past, the 19-year-old

director of formation, encourages young people to not give up on thinking about what it means to be a part of the wider church. It is, after all, simply the next level of the congregation. Being involved in the wider church makes it possible to work with other believers to discern the future of the church and its ministries.

"If you want to take on the world and its issues through the eyes of your faith, what better way to do that than with others like yourself who claim faith in Jesus Christ and want to do the same thing?" Bergen asks.

He adds that if young adults want to get more involved in the wider church, they should pursue what interests them. It does not necessarily mean attending an annual general meeting or sitting on a committee. It could mean something like participating on a short-term service trip organized by an area church or MC Canada.

Epp has had numerous positive experiences being involved in the wider Mennonite church, and believes that it is relatively easy to get involved and be heard. "If a young person would like to have a voice, there are tonnes of people in the Mennonite church who would bend over backwards to hear them," she says. "I know from experience that it is not difficult to get attention if you are a young adult willing to provide some input to the Mennonite church." ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF LAURA EPP



*Laura Epp thinks it is important to be involved in the wider church. 'Young people have a real opportunity to voice their opinions and make a difference,' she says. 'Many young adults have formed their own ideas about how the church should be, and need to come forward, get involved and share their ideas.'*

## Calendar

### British Columbia

**July 21:** Camp Squeah 50th-anniversary event, beginning at the camp at noon. For more information, visit [Squeah.com/50th-celebration](http://Squeah.com/50th-celebration), join the Camp Squeah alumni page on Facebook or call 1-800-380-2267.

### Alberta

**Oct. 12-13:** Mennonite Church Alberta festival, hosted by First Mennonite Church, Edmonton.

### Manitoba

**June 23:** CMU hosts a retirement event for Gerald Gerbrandt, at the Loewen Athletic Centre, at 7 p.m.

**July 7:** Cycle Clear Lake bike-a-thon fundraiser for MCC Manitoba. For more information, or to participate, visit [www.mccmanitoba.ca/cycleclearlake](http://www.mccmanitoba.ca/cycleclearlake).

**July 11:** MCC Manitoba fundraising golf tournament at Bridges Golf Course, Starbuck. For more information, visit [www.mccmanitoba.ca](http://www.mccmanitoba.ca) or call Paul Friesen at 204-261-6381.

**Aug. 28:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate fundraising golf tournament, at Bridges Golf Club.

### Ontario

**June 23:** Strawberry social at Nithview Community, New Hamburg; from 2 to 4 p.m. and 6:30 to 8 p.m.

**June 23:** East Zorra Mennonite is hosting a 50-year Mennonite Youth Fellowship (MYF) reunion as part of its 175th anniversary celebrations this year. All former MYFers are invited. Informal visiting begins at 2 p.m., followed by a

barbecue at 4 and a celebration service at 7:30. For tickets or more information, e-mail [ezmyf50threunion@gmail.com](mailto:ezmyf50threunion@gmail.com).

**June 24:** Poetry and music with poet Cheryl Denise (author of *What's in the Blood*) and No Discernible Key, at Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, at 3 p.m. For more information, call 519-669-5775.

**June 24:** Wanner Mennonite Church 175th anniversary commemorative service. Service begins at 10:30 a.m., followed by a potluck picnic lunch.

**June 29-July 1:** Hidden Acres 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. BBQ, Anniversary DVD premiere, floating campfire (30), dedication service Sun. p.m. Registration forms, schedules and accommodation information available at [www.hiddenacres.ca](http://www.hiddenacres.ca) or call 519-625-8602.

**July 22:** Male Chorus Gospel Sing, at Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, from 3 to 4:30 p.m. For more information, call Will Stoltz at 519-696-2805 or Laurence Martin at 519-208-4591.

**Aug. 12:** Third annual Contemporary Music Sing, at Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. For more information, call Will Stoltz at 519-696-2805 or Laurence Martin at 519-208-4591.

**Aug. 25:** Fourth annual Sacred Harp All-Day Sing, at Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. For more information, e-mail Gillian Inksetter at [gillian@inksetter.com](mailto:gillian@inksetter.com).

**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](mailto:calendar@canadianmennonite.org).**

## Classifieds

### Employment Opportunities

#### MUSIC COORDINATOR

Nutana Park Mennonite Church in Saskatoon is looking for a music coordinator and choral director. This is a part-time (.4) position.

Please send all inquiries and/or resumes to: Selection Committee, Nutana Park Mennonite Church, 1701 Ruth Street, Saskatoon, SK, S7J 0L7; or email: [npmc@npmc.net](mailto:npmc@npmc.net). The deadline for applications is **June 21, 2012**.



#### Conrad Grebel NEW TESTAMENT PROFESSOR University College Conrad Grebel University College

Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo invites applications for a full-time regular faculty position in New Testament in the undergraduate Religious Studies and graduate Theological Studies programs.

The appointment will begin **July 1, 2013** at either Assistant or Associate Professor level. Review of applications will begin **August 1, 2012**. The College is committed to employment equity and welcomes applications from all qualified persons. Canadian citizens and permanent residents will be given priority.

For further information about the position, qualifications and application procedures, see: [grebel.uwaterloo.ca/newtestamentfaculty](http://grebel.uwaterloo.ca/newtestamentfaculty)



Mennonite Church Saskatchewan invites applications for a part-time position as **OFFICE AND FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATOR** in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

#### Responsibilities:

Bookkeeping management including accounts receivable/payable and payroll  
Receptionist and administrative duties for Area Church office

#### Required skills, knowledge and competencies:

Experience in Quickbooks Premier software or equivalent and MS Office Windows-based software  
Detail-oriented organizational and strong communication and interpersonal skills

#### Essential Personal Qualifications:

A vibrant Anabaptist faith  
Agreement with the mission of Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church Saskatchewan  
Uncompromising honesty and integrity

Closing Date: July 15, 2012

Send resumes to, or request information from:  
George Epp, Personnel Committee  
Box 148 Rosthern, Sk, S0K 3R0 or [g.epp@accesscomm.ca](mailto:g.epp@accesscomm.ca)  
[www.mcsask.ca](http://www.mcsask.ca)



**Mennonite Mutual Insurance Co. (Alberta) Ltd.**  
**Mennonite Insurance Agency Ltd.**

**Meeting Needs Together**  
**Insurance for Alberta Church Members**  
**Property, Liability, and Automobile Insurance**  
**for Homes, Farms and Businesses**

**Toll Free: 1-866-222-6996**  
**[www.mmiab.ca](http://www.mmiab.ca)**

First Mennonite Church, Burns Lake, a small body of believers in northern BC, is looking for a **PART TIME OR FULL TIME SERVANT LEADER PASTOR**. We desire to find a person who shares our vision and will work with us to fulfill it. Our ideal candidate will have an exceptional ability to inspire discipleship, outreach, and a desire to embrace our community, while holding firm to sound biblical doctrine. Our candidate will agree with the Confession of Faith in the Mennonite Perspective. Please send your resume to FMC c/o Wilf Dueck wedueck@telus.net or Ph 250-692-3455 Cell 250-692-6454



### 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.



### LEAD PASTOR

Steinbach Mennonite Church (SMC) is located in Steinbach, Manitoba. Steinbach is one of the fastest growing, most culturally diverse cities in western Canada. SMC is seeking a Lead Pastor with strong Anabaptist theology to lead us as we strive to continue to develop our relationships with Christ, each other, and the community.

Candidates should have the following:

- Strong interpersonal relationship skills
- Willingness and vision to help SMC meet challenges
- Energy and willingness to lead staff of German and Youth Ministry
- A Master of Divinity Degree or higher education
- At least 5 years experience in a church leadership position is desirable

We have an average Sunday morning attendance of 500 in two services (German & English). Understanding of the German language and Paraguayan culture would be an asset.

Please send your resumes to [4siemens@mymts.net](mailto:4siemens@mymts.net) or contact Jac Siemens at 1.204.326.2697 for more information.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BETHANY MANOR

The successful candidate will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of a 272 unit complex. This complex is owned and operated by Saskatoon Mennonite Care Services Inc. The board of directors, which provides guidance and support for the executive director, consists of representatives from 12 Mennonite Churches in Saskatoon and surrounding area.

Qualifications: Strong leadership, proven management skills, strong communication skills, experience working with government agencies, Post-Secondary education, supportive of the Anabaptist faith.

Please submit cover letter, resume and salary expectations to:  
Bethany Manor  
Attn: Selection Committee  
110 La Ronge Rd.  
Saskatoon, SK  
S7K 7H8  
Competition closes **June 15, 2012**

[www.bethany55plusliving.ca](http://www.bethany55plusliving.ca)



### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TRI-COUNTY MENNONITE HOMES WATERLOO REGION, ON

Tri-County Mennonite Homes (TCMH) is a non-profit charitable organization serving seniors and developmentally challenged individuals in Stratford and New Hamburg. Nithview Community, located in New Hamburg, is home to over 220 seniors in long-term care, retirement living, supportive living apartments, independent living apartments and garden homes.

The Executive Director (ED) of Nithview is accountable to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for optimum resident services being delivered within the parameters of the mission, vision and values of TCMH. The ED possesses abilities in leadership, decision-making and creativity and is responsible for the overall operation of Nithview within allocated resources while achieving all financial and quality targets. The ED is responsible for quality improvement, communication with stakeholders (residents, families, LHIN, MOHLTC, RHRA, CCAC etc.), marketing, team building and performance evaluations.

The ED reports to the CEO, who in turn reports to the volunteer Board of Directors. The ED will possess:

- > Post-secondary education
- > Five years relevant management experience
- > LTC Administrator Certificate
- > Proficient computer skills in Microsoft Office, Goldcare Accounting an asset, Point Click Care an asset
- > Well developed interpersonal skills to interact effectively with colleagues, residents, employees, volunteers and the community at large

Applications will be accepted until Friday, June 22, 2012. Please email your resume, quoting Job #1205EDNV, to [gburton@tcmhomes.com](mailto:gburton@tcmhomes.com).

[www.tcmhomes.com](http://www.tcmhomes.com)



# Truth and reconciliation ahead

*The above sign was placed by the Peace and Justice Committee of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan a couple of kilometres south of Osler on Highway 11 to alert motorists to the upcoming Truth and Reconciliation Commission meetings in Saskatoon later this month. A second sign has been placed at the Shekinah Retreat Centre west of Waldheim. The signs are a reminder that some of the hundreds of aboriginal students from Saskatchewan who attended Indian Residential Schools will be gathering at Prairieland Park from June 21 to 24 to share their residential school experiences with the general public and with the commission. Members of the MC Saskatchewan community will be working as volunteers at the Saskatoon hearings. While Mennonites did not operate Indian Residential Schools, they did support a provincial school at Montreal Lake, Sask., with volunteers, donations and goods in kind. For more information, contact Leonard Doell at Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan at 306-665-2555 or visit [www.trc.ca](http://www.trc.ca).*