

CANADIAN MENNONITE

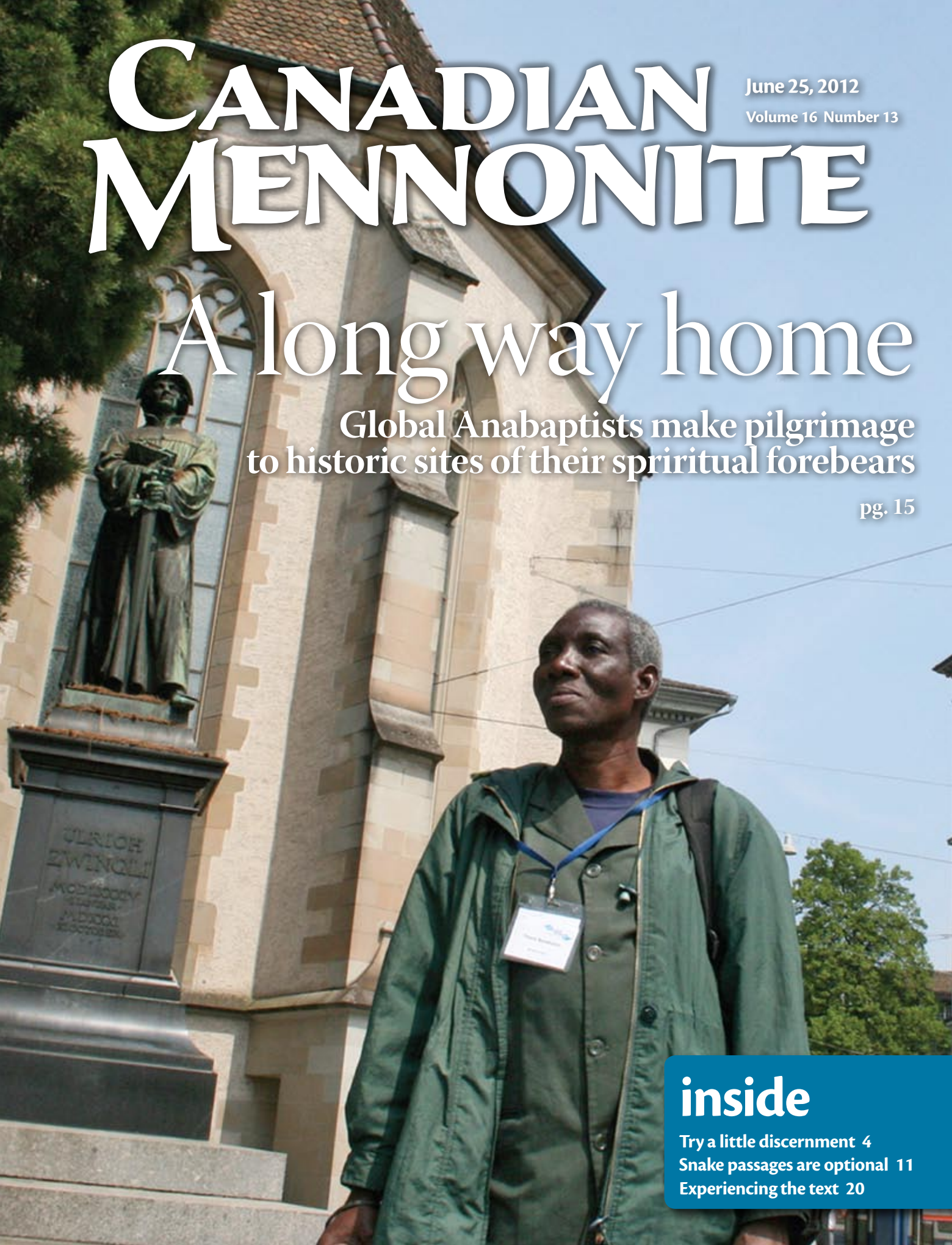
June 25, 2012

Volume 16 Number 13

A long way home

Global Anabaptists make pilgrimage to historic sites of their spiritual forebears

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EDITORIAL

Discernment front and centre

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

“Discernment,” a word in vogue right now among church leaders and theologians, can seem abstract, almost pedantic, and elusive as an operative term for the person in the pew. We seem to use it a lot these days as we wend our way through issues that confront us as followers of Jesus in the 21st century.

What does it mean? It sounds important and impressive, something we should take seriously.

Our writer, David Rogalsky, attempts to break it down in our major theological feature (page 4) by pointing back to the contentious Jerusalem Council as described in Acts 15. If we think that facing thorny issues in the church is unique to our day and time, take time to review what the first Christian leaders, Paul, Barnabas and Peter, were up against in shaping the early church centuries ago.

Their teaching about Jesus’ acceptance of all new believers, regardless of creed, was hitting a brick wall with some of the orthodox Jews who had become Christians. Steeped in the orthodoxy of the Torah, these new converts, while wanting to accept the “worldly” gentiles, were certain there should be a higher price of discipleship in becoming members of this new family of God. They insisted that the newly converted gentiles, with no religious background,

be circumcised as a sign they were truly committed to a new way of life.

Sound familiar to any of our discussions today? Do you hear an echo? A division between the traditionalists and those who want to push the edges for acceptance in a post-Christian world.

In the case of the early church, the only saving factor in this contentious division, was, as Rogalsky points out, the council heeding Paul’s call for unity rather than someone being right: “Paul’s teaching did not choose between the factions, but allowed these deep differences to exist in the church as a way of encouraging mutuality and fellowship, a unity in diversity.”

That process of prioritizing unity is called discernment. In the apostle’s view, it was more important to hold the body together than to decide which side is the most “right.” Then, as it is today, this “agreeing to disagree” is a sign of spiritual health, a measure of the strength and durability of the fabric of the church or a congregation.

The Mennonite church today, born of a protest movement nearly 500 years ago, is facing a plethora of issues as it strives to be faithful to Jesus in a world growing more and more estranged from things “Christian.” In our struggle, we are often tempted to go after each other rather than to focus on what we have to offer “together” to a world of lonely persons, a world of

violence, of growing poverty and injustice, a planet steadily degrading its environment.

Because we proudly separated ourselves from the state church 500 years ago as a protest to its corruption and authoritarian hierarchy, we seem to have “protest” in our religious genes. We have been extremely fractious over the years, forming many separate groups as sons and daughters of Menno. When disagreeing on doctrinal/ethical issues, we have tended to just walk away from each other and form another more “purist” group.

This is something we need to get over. How do we progress to a greater maturity? By placing the discernment process front and centre. It is more important that we stay together than it is to be right. Many of our theologians get it; now we as the body politic must get it, too.

One of our theologians, Ted Grimsrud from Eastern Mennonite University, said it well when writing for the Anabaptist-Mennonite Scholars Network, back in 2001: “I believe the central tension we face today is best seen in the church’s openness to understanding its mission in the framework of the centrality of ongoing *discernment* (italics mine) and dynamic engagement with a changing world.

“When the church understands its work in this creative way, it will welcome the contributions of all its members, each exercising one’s gifts in service of the discerning work of the church. These needed contributions include the work of our theologians. If the church, instead, takes on the task of simply defending past orthodoxies and protecting its social status, then it will stifle many of its gifted members—not only theologians.”

That’s taking discernment out of the classroom, or from the pulpit, and putting it squarely in the pew—a core belief of past and present Anabaptists.



ABOUT THE COVER:

Thioro Bananzoro of Burkina Faso stands at the foot of a statue of militant Reformed Church leader Ulrich Zwingli in front of the Wasserkirche (Water Church) in Zurich, Switzerland. See stories about the recent Mennonite World Conference General Council meetings beginning on page 15.

PHOTO: TIM HUBER. FOR MEETINGHOUSE

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490 DUTTON DRIVE, UNIT C5

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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

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

Barb Draper, Editorial Assistant, edassist@canadianmennonite.org

Dan Johnson, Graphic Designer, designer@canadianmennonite.org

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

Emily Loewen, Young Voices Co-Editor, eloewen@canadianmennonite.org

Rachel Bergen, Young Voices Co-Editor, ca@canadianmennonite.org

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

Correspondents:

Will Braun, Senior Writer, seniorwriter@canadianmennonite.org

Amy Dueckman, B.C. Correspondent, bc@canadianmennonite.org, 604-854-3735;

Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, Alberta Correspondent, ab@canadianmennonite.org,

780-436-3431; **Karin Fehderau,** Saskatchewan Correspondent, sk@canadianmennonite.org,

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

mb@canadianmennonite.org, 204-745-2208; **Dave Rogalsky,** Eastern Canada

Correspondent, ec@canadianmennonite.org, 519-579-7258.



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MELISSA MILLER

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The wounded heart of God: **CHERYL WOELK**

THEOLOGICAL FEATURE

Try a little discernment

But don't expect it to solve all church disputes . . . at least not immediately

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

EASTERN CANADA CORRESPONDENT



The people doing the choosing—or discerning—needed to voice their opinions on the suggested candidates based on the requirements they had set: the need for a twelfth witness to Jesus' life, death and resurrection; and wise men of good standing who could be trusted with the food distribution.

Discernment is a common topic in our congregations these days. We discern a pastoral call, a building program, theology and biblical texts. Using the word “discernment” is a shift from a more modern decision-making paradigm to a postmodern one. In the modern paradigm, right or wrong answers would be found through discussion, fact-finding and, finally, a vote. Discernment, on the other hand, points to a more fluid, multi-faceted and potentially nuanced end point—or perhaps no end point, just further process.

Discernment in the Bible is a process of testing or proving, of putting something to the test and examining the results. The word in Romans 12:2—*“be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect”*—has this meaning of testing. It's like checking to see if the water in the pool is warm enough for a comfortable swim. We use a thermometer and then dip in our foot to discern if we want to venture further.

This kind of discernment is seen in a movie about medieval times when a character bites a gold coin to see if it is gold all the way through or only brass coated with gold. Discernment is a process of finding out if something is dependable, true or supportable.

The church in the Book of Acts had to discern a number of important things: In Acts 1, the church needed to find a replacement for Judas to return the number to twelve apostles. In that time, this person needed to be a man, and needed to have accompanied Jesus from his baptism until his resurrection. The group proposed two men who fit the bill and then chose between them

PHOTO BY LAMAR MAST, MORGANTOWN, PA.



Because of their belief that everyone was a 'priest' in discerning biblical truth as members of the body of Christ, the first Anabaptists of the 16th century were forced to meet in caves, such as this one outside of Zurich, Switzerland. Their modelling of a 'truly fraternal polemic' (John Howard Yoder) was such a threat to the papal authorities that they had to find secret places like caves in which to worship and discern the Bible. Modern Mennonites frequent the cave in their tours of Europe, such as this group in 2007.

by using some form of chance—drawing straws or rolling dice. But they first determined that they needed a witness. In other words, there were requirements for this position on which the discernment was based.

Five chapters later, some of the widows in the church were being missed in the daily distribution of food. The work had gotten so large that the apostles could no longer get it done, so they proposed that the community choose seven men to do the work. (I suspect that was how many men would be needed to do the work.) But they suggested that these men should be of “good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom” (Acts 6:3). The congregation then chose the particular men based on these suggestions.

In both cases, there were requirements in solving the issue. The people chosen needed to fit those requirements in order to do the work well. The people doing the choosing—or discerning—needed to voice their opinions on the suggested candidates based on the requirements they had set: the need for a twelfth witness to Jesus’ life, death and resurrection; and wise men of good standing

who could be trusted with the food distribution.

A New Testament approach

In either case, the congregations could have challenged the proposed requirements. In Acts 15, though, the church went through a process of discernment where the requirements themselves were at issue.

Paul, Barnabas and Peter had been going around teaching and preaching about Jesus as God’s anointed servant. In the course of this work, all of them had moved to accept non-Jews into the church when they believed in Jesus, even when they did not first become Jews.

But some members and leaders in the church found this in contravention of previously held and revealed requirements to be part of the people of God. Luke tells us that “some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and said, ‘It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses’” (Acts 15:5). Gentiles can be Christians after they become Jews, some thought, while others thought that God has accepted them as they are, and they

don’t need to first become Jews. Luke tells us that there was significant debate, perhaps even argument and disputation, around this, first in Antioch and then in Jerusalem.

There were a few steps to their process of discernment:

- **THE ISSUE** was identified.
- **THEN THERE** was vigorous debate.
- **NEXT THERE** was a chance for the key people to tell their stories. Barnabas, Paul and Peter each got a chance while the others listened in silence.
- **THEN JAMES**, as leader, spoke to the situation, using Scripture they had not understood in this way before, to the point that God was looking to accept gentiles as God’s people.
- **JAMES DECLARED** his decision, which was then accepted by the whole gathering.
- **THIS DECISION** was then communicated back to the gentiles through Paul, Barnabas, Peter and two other men: one with a Latin name, Silas from Silvanus, and a Jew, Judas Barsabbas, seemingly representing the two sides of the argument.

Tips to get discernment right

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

- **TRUST THAT** God is with us throughout the discernment process no matter the decision.
- **FIGURE OUT** what the issue is. This is really important! We can spend a lot of time trying to discern something without knowing what the issue is.
- **FIND OUT** if there are clear requirements to solving the issue, or if the requirements from the past may be the issue.
- **BRING THE** congregation into the process at many points along the way.
- **ALLOW LEADERS** to propose ideas and even solutions.
- **MAKE SURE** all are heard on the issue. Listen to each other.
- **REMEMBER THAT** everyone in the discussion is our Christian sister or brother.
- **SPEAK AND** debate—even argue—in ways that promote fellowship and unity.
- **COMMUNICATE THE** decision and any stipulations attached to the decision.
- **DO NOT** expect the decision to hold forever. It will be re-examined again and again. At some point we may have to agree to disagree.
- **DON'T EXPECT** that we can force a decision on others at a distance from us. When we are together, we are to act in mutual submission, but do not try to force adherence to a decision when we are not together.

It's interesting that James's decision included three stipulations on these gentile converts: no strangling slaughtering of animals (that left blood in the meat); no eating food sacrificed to idols; and an encouragement for them to "abstain . . . from fornication." These three things were based on first-century Jewish biases against gentiles: namely, that all of them were idol worshippers; that the preferred method of killing an animal for sacrifice was through strangling, leaving the blood in the meat; and that gentiles were all sexually immoral.

If the gentiles continued with any of these practices, Jewish Christians could not have table fellowship with them. But if they stopped doing these things, then table fellowship was possible. The material was put into a letter and sent with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch and to the places where they had gone on their journey of spreading the news of Jesus.

Discerning the Jewish-gentile issue

Interestingly, we have no other reference to this letter or its contents in the New Testament, except perhaps one in Paul's letter to the Galatians. Through the years, there were Jewish Christians who kept on demanding that gentiles first become Jews before they could be Christians,

Paul's teaching in response was nuanced and difficult. Those who felt free, as he did, to eat meat offered to idols, were to forbear and be patient with those who could not eat. This was specifically designed to keep the various factions in fellowship with each other.

because they were not convinced by the discernment process. They did not feel it was "the Holy Spirit" who was guiding James and the church. Paul had to deal with them over and over, and the references in the seven letters to the church of Revelation to "synagogues of Satan" may be references to Jewish Christians who were claiming to be more God's people than the uncircumcised gentiles decades after the Jerusalem Council.

On the other hand, gentiles were included in the Christian church, but these stipulations were not demanded. In fact, Romans 14:5-6 points to the ongoing difficulties in the church between believers on some points of Jewish law: *"Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honour of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honour of the Lord, since they give thanks to God, while those who abstain,*

abstain in honour of the Lord and give thanks to God."

It would seem that there were Jews in the Roman church who felt that they could exercise their Christian freedom and buy meat in the market which had first been offered to an idol. There were other Jews who had such deep aversion to this meat that they identified it with the idolatrous worship itself and could hardly sit at the same table with one who was eating it.

On the other hand, there were gentile Christians who, feeling their freedom in Christ, could eat the meat, since the idol was really nothing. But there were gentile Christians who had such deep-set memories of idol worship that any whiff of idol-offered meat made them feel that they had contravened their new-found allegiance to Christ.

These two groups in the church—the eaters and the abstainers—were each believing that they held to the true good

But both the results of the Jerusalem Council and Paul's teaching in Romans were to the effect that fellowship was more important than personal likes or dislikes, or personal beliefs.

news of Christ, and the others were missing the truth. Similarly, some felt they could worship on either the Jewish Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, or on the day of resurrection, the first day of the week. Others were not so flexible.

Paul's teaching in response was nuanced and difficult. Those who felt free, as he did, to eat meat offered to idols, were to forbear and be patient with those who could not eat. This was specifically designed to keep the various factions in fellowship with each other.

I do not expect that this meant that the eaters were expected to abstain when the abstainers were not present. The directive was to make fellowship possible in a manner similar to the rules handed down by the Jerusalem Council in regard to Jews and gentiles. Paul's teaching did not choose between the factions, but allowed these deep differences to exist in the church as a way of encouraging mutuality and fellowship, a unity in diversity.

How do we hear God today?

Some would say a clear scripture passage can be found on issues and we need to obey. But when Paul wrote to the Corinthians about their worship, he challenged the idea that it is easy to hear God. When prophets in Corinth prophesied—spoke words they were hearing from God—they were to take turns, and they were to allow the other prophets and the gathered congregation to weigh or judge what is said (I Corinthians 14:29). Even direct words from God needed to be discerned.

I suspect that different prophets, like different preachers, had their pet topics on which they expounded, topics and opinions influenced by their temperament, background, theological leaning and personal history. Some scholars believe that the whole Bible is made up of such texts that need similar “weighing”

and cannot be taken literally without it.

Derek Suderman, professor of Old Testament at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., noted at a Bible study seminar in January, that both Jonah and Nahum are prophetic books about Israel's enemies, the Assyrians, with their capital at Nineveh. But in Jonah, the Ninevites come off better than the Jews, while in the other they will be destroyed because of their sexual immorality and their practice of enslaving others (Nahum 3:4)

Paul's guidance to the church in Rome would seem like no answer to us who are used to living our lives as individual Christians with little regard for our sisters and brothers in Christ. Most of what we do and believe is done in private, away from the view of others. As Mennonites, in particular, we have divided and re-divided over a myriad of issues, choosing to break fellowship over things we thought

important.

But both the results of the Jerusalem Council and Paul's teaching in Romans were to the effect that fellowship was more important than personal likes or dislikes, or personal beliefs. The Christians of the first century were to choose self-denial of Christian freedom for the sake of the deeply felt beliefs of fellow Christians, for the sake of unity and fellowship.

Using a biblical model of discernment, then, will not necessarily lead us to agreement on deeply held issues. It may, in fact, lead us to keep our individual positions because of different histories, experiences, traditions and methods of understanding the Bible. But Paul believed that unity in the body was of highest importance. When faithful Christians come to different conclusions on significant issues, the promotion of unity while holding divergent views, and a willingness to continue discussing and challenging each other, are the actions we are encouraged to take. It would seem that, for Paul and the early church, being in continuing fellowship with each other was the key requirement in any discernment process. ❧

/// For discussion

1. How does your congregation go about making important decisions? Do you use discernment language? How do you listen for the voice of God when you are wrestling with an issue? Who takes leadership in discernment? What is the relationship between discernment and decision-making?
2. Dave Rogalsky refers to the discernment process described in Acts 15: 1-35. How important were the stories of Paul and Barnabas in the process? Why do you think the apostles and elders followed James's advice? Was it a compromise? What are the important lessons we should learn from the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)?
3. How important is it to have a variety of voices in discerning a correct course of action? How important are patience, listening, and a sense of mutuality and fellowship in the discernment process? What are some other characteristics that can benefit discernment?
4. Under what conditions is it possible to agree to disagree? What are the challenges to mutuality and fellowship when there are deep differences in a church? How can discernment help us to be unified in spite of diversity?
5. What issues need discernment in the church today? What do you think might be the issues of tomorrow?

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.

✉ Mennonites need to engage politicians 'creatively and critically'

RE: "MENNONITES CAN serve Jesus Christ . . . or Stephen Harper" letter, May 28, page 8.

I'm not a big fan of the Conservatives either, but I think the writer made some huge mistakes in his logic. First of all, it was not the Conservatives that led Canada into Afghanistan.

Second, the other political parties are not promoting Christian nonviolence as a foreign policy/strategy, and so, by the writer's own logic, we can't rightly follow Christ and vote for any of the Canadian political parties.

And third, all the major Canadian political parties will take our tax dollars and use the money to senselessly kill unborn babies, even up to the final trimester of pregnancy.

We live in Babylon. Get used to the idea that our

FROM OUR LEADERS

I am a multi-lane bridge

BRENT CHARETTE

In the fall of 2010, congregations in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick expressed yearning for a stronger multi-lane bridge of connection with the wider church—namely Mennonite Church Canada and MC Eastern Canada. One year later, I am helping to build that bridge.

The role of church engagement minister may be new, but bridge-building dates back to the early church. Consider the Apostle Paul, who strove to connect the diverse congregations of his day.

Representing both MC Eastern Canada and MC Canada is not a one-way, one-lane bridge. The mission and vision of both bodies are complementary. Rather than resorting to blueprints like organizational charts or mission and vision statements to illustrate how this bridge works, I'll use practical language: It's all about fostering real relationships with real people.

I do this by bringing stories across the river. For example, to help people understand the work of MC Canada, I speak

of Waterloo's Palmer Becker, who has, in recent years, taken on several special assignments: teaching in Ethiopia, the Holy Land, Korea, China and Thailand. To describe how MC Eastern Canada mentors and supports new pastors, I talk about people who experienced the Transitioning into Ministry (TiM) program. The program has become so successful in Eastern Canada that it is being adapted for use across the country through a partnership with the national church.



Listening is just as important as storytelling. What do individuals and congregations need from the wider church? I've discovered that, while some highly value their connection to an overseas Witness worker, others are more focused on the support their pastors receive. Some congregations treasure learning opportunities offered through various annual events or the materials found in resource centres, while others place great value on local and international opportunities for their youths.

By sharing inspiring stories and

listening to congregational needs, I act as an information bridge for both MC Eastern Canada and MC Canada, facilitating better traffic flow between all church bodies. In this way, we can find ways to ensure vibrant, healthy relationships that move beyond writing cheques.

My role also allows me to connect with the exciting work of our schools, camps and service partners—and their challenges. I think of it as something of an ambassadorship; my bridge crosses invisible, human-made borders.

And that's what Paul did. As we know from his letters, he often shared about the faithful witness of one community with another. When writing to the Galatians, he shared stories from Antioch; when writing to the Philippians, he shared stories about Timothy's missionary work; when writing to the Colossians, he shared stories about his work among pagans.

God's work is vast and varied. I feel blessed to be a multi-lane, multi-directional bridge that shares stories with the power to inform, educate, rejuvenate, and perhaps inspire congregations and individuals to greater engagement with God's great project in the world.

Brent Charette is MC Canada/MC Eastern Canada's church engagement minister.

government leadership ignores Christ. It's only the beginning.

That said, let's speak creatively and critically to our elected officials, using also the tools of democracy—voting—to do so. But the writer should refrain from the generalizations about Christian voting practices suggested in his letter unless he equally condemns voting for all parties because of this issue.

MARCO FUNK, GRETNA, MAN.

Originally posted at www.canadianmennonite.org.

✉ Voluntary service: an idea whose time has come again

RE: "A 'PRESENCE' ministry" reflection by Ike Glick, May 14, page 24.

As one who was an associate director for 10 years with Mennonite Voluntary Service (MVS) while it was part of the General Conference and Mennonite Church Canada, I am pleased to see some local congregations continuing a VS component rooted in the local congregation. I must admit I still lament the fact that there is not a national ability to help

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Speaking of inheritance

BY MIKE STRATHDEE

Wills and estate planning are hot topics of conversation, and while it may seem like we hear about them a lot these days, it is certainly not new news, either in content or importance.

The Bible has a lot to say on the subject of inheritance. In the New International Version translation, there are 500 references to inheritance. While some Bible scholars suggest that the New Testament commonly uses ideas of inheritance in a spiritual sense, even the literal references to passing on material goods often hinge on right relationship and faithfully walking with God. There is also a caution that passing on wealth too soon, without adequate instruction, or to people who aren't capable of handling the windfall, can have tragic consequences.

I've heard a number of stories of squandered inheritances, often because money was made available as soon as the beneficiaries reached the legal age of majority, but before they had the capacity to thoughtfully deal with the windfall. As U.S. estate lawyer Nathan Woolman puts it, "Giving money to someone who can't handle it, in hopes it will improve their financial situation, is like trying to put

out a fire with lighter fluid."

In recent years, charities, researchers and financial advisors have frequently cited the topic of inheritances. Many write hopefully about an alleged trillion-dollar transfer of wealth expected in the coming generation. That prediction overlooks the impact of Canadians living longer lives. The reality is that people aged 65 and in good health today have a 50 percent chance of living to 100, while a third of seniors go into retirement with significant debt. Many of these folks will leave no wealth to be transferred.



American studies conclude that 90 percent of inherited wealth evaporates within three generations.

Successful wealth transfers require values transfers as well. That recognition is leading some families to make conscious efforts to encourage philanthropy in their children and grandchildren, sometimes by matching the younger person's donations. Others set up a fund and allow young relatives to choose recipients of gifts that flow from the fund.

American studies conclude that 90 percent of inherited wealth evaporates within three generations. "From shirtsleeves to shirtsleeves within a few lifetimes," as

my favourite university professor was fond of saying. A *Wall Street Journal* article suggests that wealthy families often breed reckless spenders, in part when expectations about the responsibility to be generous aren't modelled.

The document written to explain what should happen after we die was once called a last will and testament because it provides the last opportunity for us to testify to our beliefs. Some years ago, I witnessed a conversation around differences in giving patterns between generations. An older businessman lamented the fact that his children weren't being as generous as he and his wife had been. "How much did you talk about your giving?" he was asked. "We didn't, but they had to have known," was the reply.

Can the practice of generosity be caught by another generation if it is not taught? What does your will say about your values? Is sharing beyond the immediate family circle part of your plan?

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

these congregations and the many people, mostly youths, who are looking for this type of meaningful engagement.

The service world I was involved with in the 1970s no longer exists. Contexts change. However, the concept of having VSers rooted in a local congregation is still clearly a missional church model.

Given this, do we find ourselves at a time for MC Canada to re-engage in a conversation about VS? What would VS look like in the 21st century in Canada? Who will take leadership in this, so that future generations will also look back at their VS time as a formational faith experience?

BRAD REIMER, FANNYSTELLE, MAN.

FAMILY TIES

‘Should I live with my boyfriend?’

MELISSA MILLER

No one ever asks me if I think it’s a good idea for them to begin living with their boyfriend (or girlfriend). If they did, I would say, “No! That’s a dumb thing to do.”

Well, I imagine giving advice with that kind of sharp clarity. It’s more likely that I would respond with gentle nuance, in large part because of the many years I’ve worked as a counsellor. In that context, I’ve learned a great deal about respecting people’s choices, about the complexity of decisions related to sexuality and intimacy, and about the limits of my influence against strong forces.

We live in a time when many young adults are choosing to live together as a married couple without marriage. Some of these young people have been raised in Christian homes. They have been taught that the deepest sexual intimacies are reserved for marriage, as ordained by God.

As a pastor, I will continue to preach and teach this ancient wisdom from our tradition.

Our young adults know that their parents and grandparents would prefer that they marry before living together. Still, they make their choice, deciding with

each other what they are willing to commit to, finding an apartment and moving in together.

They are driven by a number of factors that shape their decision. Cohabitation is growing in Canadian society; currently, approximately 18 percent of couples choose to live together. In that sense, it is more normal and accepted than in previous generations. Individualism is a compelling force. Young adults have less loyalty to institutions like the church, and less willingness to follow institutional directives. Furthermore, media and entertainment have shaped values with respect to marriage and cohabitation.

The church hasn’t always offered a healthy model of marriage or holistic understandings of sexual expression. The church’s silence—or the confusing

message, even if it was more hidden than it is today. Young people value honesty and shun hypocrisy; cohabiting is seen as having more integrity. In some cases, financial factors play a part. The couple pool resources by living together or they put off marriage until they have funds set aside for their wedding.

Some young people come to marriage hesitantly, having witnessed their parents’ divorce. Living together is a way to “test the waters,” or to take a step towards a permanent commitment. (Those who think living together will help test or cement a commitment are more likely to experience a break-up. In short, cohabitation doesn’t help a couple progress toward a stable marriage.)

It can be challenging, even painful, to listen openly and respectfully, especially when their decision seems to be such a “dumb idea.” At the same time, we don’t want to be so critical and judgmental that we drive our children away or put a hard wedge between us and their chosen partner. May God give us grace to know how to speak deep wisdom and truth in such situations, and how to walk with those



Some of these young people ... have been taught that the deepest sexual intimacies are reserved for marriage, as ordained by God.

message that “sex is bad and . . . ought to be saved for marriage”—has left young people poorly informed and reliant on secular resources.

Another factor can be found in the example of previous generations. Many young people know that their parents’ peers were sexually active outside of

who choose a different path than the one we want for them.

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

LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Snake passages
are optional

BY TROY WATSON

Last month, a 44-year-old snake-handling preacher from West Virginia named Mark Randall “Mack” Wolford was bitten by a yellow timber rattlesnake during a Sunday evening church service. He died hours later. What makes this story even more extraordinary is that Wolford watched his own father die the same way in 1983. He was 15 years old at the time.



as threats to true faith. My childhood pastors dealt with alleged contradictions, inconsistencies and practical impossibilities in the Bible with oversimplified annotations. For example, one pastor demonstrated the plausibility of Noah fitting all the animals of the world into the ark by

gathering only baby animals.

These trite explanations were enough to convince me when I was 10 years old;

The fact that many actually mock these snake handlers as backward fanatics strikes me as erratic and duplicitous. Why are believers who take up literal serpents labelled crazy, but believers in a literal hell are labelled doctrinally sound?

Where does this bizarre religious ritual of worshipping with deadly snakes come from? Serpent handlers quote the Bible. In Mark 16:17-18, Jesus says, “*And these signs will follow those who believe: In my name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them.*”

In Luke 10:19, Jesus says, “*Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions . . . and nothing shall by any means hurt you.*”

You may be wondering why any Christian would take these words literally.

According to a Gallup poll in 2005, more than one in six Canadians labelled themselves as biblical literalists, meaning they believe every word in the Bible is the actual word of God and is to be taken literally. This is a surprisingly large number, more than 10 times the number of Canadians registered to play hockey!

What is most shocking to me about this statistic is that there are so few snake-handling churches in Canada. I jest, but, of course, there is truth in jest.

I, too, was raised to believe the Bible is the inerrant, infallible, inspired, literal word of God. Critical thinking, science, logic and academia were often treated

however, as I aged I saw an increasing number of holes in the biblical literalist position. For instance, what do we do with strange passages encouraging us to pick up snakes as signs of our faith? For the most part, it seems, we simply ignore these and other problematic passages. I have heard countless sermons on the last words of the risen Jesus found in the final chapters of Matthew, Luke and John. Why have I never heard an Easter message exegeting the ending of Mark’s gospel?

When I first heard about snake handlers, I, like most Christians, including biblical literalists, thought they were crazy. Yet after giving the matter more thought, I came to believe that these reptile-wrapped risk-takers present a serious challenge to a biblical literalist worldview. They might be crazy, but at least they’re consistent. Are they not merely acting on the belief that every word of the Bible is

the literal word of God? Does it not stand to reason that a biblical literalist would take Jesus literally at his word when he proclaims taking up serpents is one of the signs of genuine Christian faith?

What is puzzling is how the rest of the nearly six million Canadians who claim to believe every word in the Bible is the actual word of God don’t act on these words of Jesus. The fact that many actually mock these snake handlers as backward fanatics strikes me as erratic and duplicitous. Why are believers who take up literal serpents labelled crazy, but believers in a literal hell are labelled doctrinally sound?

Many proponents of biblical literalism regularly accuse progressive liberals of picking and choosing what parts of the Bible they adhere to. But isn’t this what we all do? Isn’t this what 99.9 percent of biblical literalists do by ignoring or downplaying the words of Jesus in the

final verses of Mark 16?

To complicate matters further, there is general consensus among most biblical scholars that Mark 16:9-18 is a later addition to the gospel. I suppose this helps resolve the serpent-handling dilemma, but doesn’t this raise a greater problem for biblical literalism? It did for me. If these verses in the Bible are not the actual words of God, what else isn’t?

I believe the Bible plays an enduring role in the faith and spiritual development of Christians today, making our task of discerning a meaningful approach to Scripture especially paramount. So what is the best approach?

To be continued . . . ❧

Troy Watson is the spiritual life director of Quest Christian Community, St. Catharines, Ont. This is the first in a series on ‘the role of Scripture’ in the lives of postmodern believers.

THE WAR OF 1812: PART I OF III

Landscapes of war, a people of peace

BY JONATHAN SEILING

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

The War of 1812 is important to commemorate for many reasons. As the only defensive war fought on Canadian soil in the last two centuries, it was also the first testing of the historic peace churches' position of conscientious objection in Canadian history. Arguably, it led to the birth of Canadian nationhood, and at the same time it was the most devastating blow dealt to First Nations' hopes for sovereignty.

If our reflection upon this historic event results in patriotic fervour, then our national allegiance and the pride we might feel in "our" alleged victory will bespeak the degree to which we defer to the state over the church. If our primary loyalty was to God, we would probably not try to own the military victory.

Patriotism may also confuse any sense we might have had of the futility and senselessness of that war, or of war in general; it may disguise the reality that Upper Canadians were quite often disloyal to Britain, and we risk glibly burying the issue of the virtual devastation of first nations as sovereign peoples. Then there's the fact that peace church members fought pretty hard for the right not to fight. So, what are we, as Mennonite Canadians, supposed to be proud of? Can we, with dignity, embrace a non-patriotic version of that history?

Increased attention to the details of the war has raised Canadians' historical awareness recently. People are learning that much of what we thought we knew about the causes, developments or even the outcomes of the war, was—or still is—mixed with a heavy dose of mythology. We are learning how disloyal and non-supportive, and even treasonous, many of the Upper Canadians were.

Many of us grew up with the notion that "we Canadians"—not the British army and first nations—defeated the Americans when they tried to take over "our country" (British and first nations' territory). The closer we look at the details, the more mythological this notion becomes.

Commemorative celebrations in this bicentennial year seek to focus on the

The actual whereabouts and experiences of Mennonites during this period include some surprising accounts ranging from . . . upholding non-resistance, to . . . servility to the state, even including enlisting in the militia.

"200 years of peace" between Canada and the United States. A sceptic might raise several issues with that notion, not least of which is the fact that the United States was not at war with Canada, but with Great Britain. Debates over who won the war seem misplaced when we consider that all sides lost the war, some worse than others.

No one won, except, perhaps, the moral victory of those who insisted that the war should not have been fought to begin with! When a war ends due to the exhaustion of resources with no real gains for any party, perhaps it is those who refused to support the war in the beginning whose cause is vindicated.

Those who resisted

Among these pilgrim pioneer war-resisters we might include the historic peace churches (Quakers, Brethren in Christ and Mennonites) plus many Methodists, Moravian Brethren and a small group called the Beverly Reformed Christians, among others. Many more residents

of Upper Canada and the United States were still battle-weary from the American Revolution. Most of them in the Niagara District were recently arrived economic migrants from the U.S. Their allegiance to the Crown was nominal at best. These pioneers wanted peace and economic growth. They did not want to fall prey to the American "War Hawks" and imperial powers.

Yet mythology is not the sole domain of warmongers. Among Mennonites, there may be some assumptions underlying mythologies concerning our forbears' whereabouts and activities during the War of 1812. There are probably some of us who would be content to envision the Quiet in the Land, those who locked themselves into their homes and waited until it was over.


Of course, this wasn't generally an

option, except in a few cases where men literally hid in forests or caves to avoid being pressed into service. The actual whereabouts and experiences of Mennonites during this period include some surprising accounts ranging from bold tenacity and upholding non-resistance, to accommodation, perhaps profiteering at times, and servility to the state, even including enlisting in the militia.

Conscientious remembering

What was the "Mennonite experience" during the war? How diverse were Mennonite responses to the demands of the war? Why don't history books tell us more of the details of those experiences?

In my role as historian, and increasingly as genealogist while finding my own family history interwoven into parts of the narrative, I have attempted to collect and document those experiences. In two subsequent articles, I will share many of the details. For them, the War of 1812 was largely a time of loss and insecurity, the likes of which few of us have known in Canada. ❧



Pontius' Puddle



IN INDONESIA, 500 OF OUR CHURCH BUILDINGS HAVE BEEN DESTROYED AND MANY OF OUR MEMBERS MARTYRED FOR THEIR BELIEFS. SO HOW ABOUT YOU IN THE WEST?



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VIEWPOINT

Short answers to complex questions

BY ELLEN PAULEY

It's complicated.

That could be the answer to most questions asked as I recently visited with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) partners in the state of Chiapas, Mexico.

• **IT'S COMPLICATED** to try to build bridges between Catholics, Protestants and indigenous groups.

The tensions among these three segments of society run high in Chiapas. It is not easy to find shared understandings. Coming together to address the issues of poverty, ecological challenges and violence is complicated. Yet MCC's partner, Instituto de Estudios e Investigación Intercultural, is finding ways to do just that. For 15 years in the town of San Cristobal de las Casas, the institute has worked strategically at forging partnerships, highlighting common goals and creating shared sacred spaces.

• **IT'S COMPLICATED** to befriend migrant

women caught in the sex trade in towns along the Mexico-Guatemala border.

For women who don't have enough money or the correct paperwork, their hopes of crossing Mexico to enter the United States or Canada end at the migration checkpoints that are prominent in these border towns. It's complicated to befriend these women, as many in the towns look down on them or ignore them completely.

It's complicated, but Maria (a pseudonym), an MCC friend, is sharing conversation, friendship and hope with these women. Maria is leading by example, showing the townspeople, churches and businesses how to model kindness.

• **IT'S COMPLICATED** to understand the complexities of the mining industry and the changes mining companies can bring to the communities they operate in.

Layers upon layers of connections exist between local authorities, mining company personnel and local citizens.

The mines sometimes bring hope and opportunities in the form of employment and development. But sometimes their actions also result in environmental destruction, irreparable familial tensions and the corruption of local authorities. It's complicated to educate community members about the realities of mining, whether positive or negative.

And so I find myself, an MCC summer intern, smack dab in the middle of these deeply complicated and challenging circumstances and opportunities. While I know I won't be able to grasp the intricacies of these issues during my short time here, I am humbled to be a part of this work. I consider it a privilege to work with people who willingly say, "It's complicated," yet refuse to turn away. Indeed, just as the Mexicans who live with these complicated realities every day, so we, as fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, live with these realities as well. ☿

Ellen Pauley is an intern with MCC's Latin America Caribbean Advocacy Department from May to July. When she is not an intern, she works as the communication assistant at MCC Canada in Winnipeg. She is an international development studies student at the University of Winnipeg.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Baldwin—Luke Jamin (b. May 8, 2012), to Nick and Christa (Enns) Baldwin, Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Carter—Simon Steven (b. April 24, 2012) to Steve and Pam Carter, Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Corriveau Friesen—Vanessa June Luise (b. May 1, 2012), to Tom Friesen and Caroline Corriveau, Ottawa Mennonite.

Junge—Kelsey Anne (b. April 26, 2012), to Jason and Julie Junge, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

McCrimmon—Micah Samuel (b. June 5, 2012), to Dan and Amanda McCrimmon, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Montgomery—Grace Anne (b. May 25, 2012), to Greg and Lara Montgomery, Foothills Mennonite, Calgary.

Nakoneshny—Abigail Lily (b. June 3, 2012), to Daren and Caitlin Nakoneshny, North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Thiessen Unger—Nathaniel Don (b. April 20, 2012), to Vivian Unger and Jeff Thiessen, Hope Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Baptisms

John Schellenberg—Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., April 15, 2012.

Erika Rempel, Meighan Klippenstein, Meredith

Enns—Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., May 27, 2012.

Rebekah Brubacher, Devin Friesen, Evelyn Kampen,

Tobian Penner, Julia Wiens—Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, May 27, 2012.

Nicole Redekop, Eric Zamrykut, Anna Goertzen-

Loeppky—Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., June 10, 2012.

Sarah Bryden, Hanna Martens, Danielle Klassen, Art Regehr—Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, May 27, 2012.

Nathan Doell, Adam Friesen—Hague Mennonite, Sask., June 3, 2012.

Molly Schaefer—Hope Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., May 27, 2012.

Daniel Tissen, Melissa Fyfe, Zachary Janzen—Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., May 20, 2012.

Megan Friesen, Sydney Finlay, Kendra Sawatzky—Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., May 27, 2012.

Tiera Goertz—Wildwood Mennonite, Saskatoon, May 27, 2012.

Kyla Martens—Wildwood Mennonite, Saskatoon, June 10, 2012.

Anna Hildebrand, Calvin Sawatzky, Annie Wall—Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., May 27, 2012.

Rachel Dueck—Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask., May 27, 2012.

Marriages

Bowman/Boylan—Jennifer Bowman and Mike Boylan, Wilmot Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont., at Victoria Park, Kitchener, Ont., June 2, 2012.

Dyck/Franz—Ben Dyck and Hilda Franz, at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., May 20, 2012.

Dyck/Wideman—Josh Dyck and Katie Wideman, Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, May 26, 2012.

Indzeoski/Neabel—Steven Indzeoski (Wildwood Mennonite, Saskatoon) and Esther Neabel, at Wildwood Mennonite, June 30,

Kuepfer/Wijnands—Christa Kuepfer and Kyle Wijnands, Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont., June 2, 2012.

Pellitteri/Peters—Rachael Pellitteri and David Peters, at Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., April 28, 2012.

Deaths

Bergen—Susie, 88 (d. June 2, 2012), Lowe Farm Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Bowman—Annie, 91 (b. Aug. 22, 1920; d. May 29, 2012), Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Braun—Anne (nee Siemens), 75 (b. Feb. 16, 1937; d. June 1, 2012), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Enns—Meta, 93 (b. Aug. 1, 1918; d. April 23, 2012), Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Epp—Henry J., 86 (b. Jan. 19, 1926; d. April 25, 2012), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Gibney—Kay (nee Sekulich), 91 (b. Feb. 17, 1921; d. June 7, 2012), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Hallman—Catherine, 97 (b. Dec. 9, 1914; d. May 23, 2012), First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Neufeld—Arnie, 67 (b. June 16, 1944; d. May 28, 2012), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Peckford—Melvin John, 74 (b. Nov. 4, 1937; d. May 27, 2012), Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Peters—Pete, 93 (b. July 22, 1918; d. May 19, 2012), Level Ground Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Schellenberg—John, 82 (b. Sept. 19, 1929; d. May 26, 2012), Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Shantz—Willard, 77 (b. Jan. 11, 1935; d. May 31, 2012), Wilmot Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Strempler—Magdalena (Maggie), 78 (b. May 17, 1934; d. June 4, 2012), Foothills Mennonite, Calgary.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones

announcements within four months of the event.

Please send Milestones announcements by e-mail to

milestones@canadianmennonite.org, including the

congregation name and location. When sending death notices, please include birth date and last name at birth if available.

COVER STORY

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH



Ambroise Kabeya Kanda Mwanda of the Democratic Republic of Congo looks across the Limmat River as it passes through Zurich, Switzerland, where Anabaptist martyr Felix Manz's death sentence was read on Jan. 5, 1527.

A long way home

Global Anabaptists make pilgrimage to historic sites of their spiritual forebears

STORY AND PHOTO BY TIM HUBER

For Meetinghouse
ZURICH, SWITZERLAND

Walking along the bank of the Limmat River, Thioro Bananzoro ponders the challenges Anabaptists have turned into opportunities over the last five centuries.

Pausing by the statue of militant Reformed Church leader Ulrich Zwingli on a tour of Zurich during Mennonite World Conference (MWC) General Council meetings last month, the delegate from the Evangelical Mennonite Church of

Burkina Faso notes that how a Christian responds to trials can have long-lasting effects. His own experience started in his Muslim family; as the oldest of 23 children, he suffered for 17 years after he became a Christian because his father did not consider Christians to be pure.

Bienenberg Seminary history professor and tour leader Hanspeter Jecker notes a tension that has accompanied Anabaptists around the world in their interactions with

neighbours or the state since Anabaptism started in 1525. Does one be radical and leave, or stay and work for local change?

Bananzoro stayed and worked for change in a different way than Zwingli, whose statue depicts him with a Bible and a sword, representing his death in battle. (*See front cover.*)

“My dad even totally changed his mind,” Bananzoro says. “What he noticed from me is totally different from what he thought about Christians.”

Although Bananzoro’s father is still Muslim, 10 of the 23 children are now Christians. “My father says to his children, ‘If you cannot be a good Muslim, follow your older brother,’” Bananzoro says.

On working to bring people to reconciliation in his West African context, Bananzoro stresses that a Christian should be a witness because people trust what they see more than what they hear. “People can really

MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE REPORT

persecute you,” he says. “If you don’t fight back—even if you don’t succeed—people will understand and say your God is powerful. This is why we should not fight back.”

Most of the 175 MWC tour members had never been to Switzerland before. Walking in the footsteps of early Anabaptists in places like Schleithem and the secret “Anabaptist cave” tucked behind a waterfall near Baritswil is a powerful experience.

The outing is of significant value to Ambroise Kabeya Kanda Mwanda of the Democratic Republic of Congo. “It is a big discovery to be here, to get to know my origin of Anabaptism,” he says while standing on the present bridge at the location where authorities read Felix Manz’s death sentence, the penalty for performing renegade adult baptisms. “I have read a lot in books, but to be in it, present here, to see the places, means a lot to me.”

His countryman, Joly Birakara Ilowa, echoes similar sentiments while looking

out over the Limmat in the direction of where Manz performed that first baptism on Jan. 21, 1525. “If I were not already baptized, I’d like to be baptized here,” he says.

Francisco Martínez, president of the Brethren in Christ Church in Cuba, reflects on the relationship of his church to early Anabaptists and a heavy-handed government after visiting Zurich and Schleithem. Schleithem is where Michael Sattler led the first Anabaptist assembly on Feb. 24, 1527, resulting in the Schleithem Confession, a watershed document articulating a distinctly Anabaptist confession of faith. Sattler was executed a few months later, in May.

“To be in Switzerland is to continue the legacy that Christ planted and sowed in the hearts of a group of people who became martyrs for following the teachings of Jesus,” Martínez says. “It feels like a privilege to walk freely in these streets where there were men and women who confessed the same faith we do and suffered

oppression because of it.”

He knows a bit about that. Missionaries brought Christianity to Cuba, but after the communist revolution, pastors and church leaders were mistreated and forced to do hard labour.

“Intelligent, wise Christians were not able to complete higher education and be appointed to jobs for which they were qualified,” Martínez says. “Our situation has been improving since the 1980s, though there are still restrictions.”

Nearly half a millennium has passed since the first Anabaptists took new steps of faith in Switzerland’s hills and valleys. While the lives of the European founders remain in the past, their spirit continues today around the world.

“Everything I learned, everything I saw, I am taking back,” says Madeleine Mvele Kikoso Mvele of Kinshasa, Congo. “My daughter has studied and had training, and I will show her. We, as Anabaptists, have come a long way.” ❧

‘The gift we hold together’

MWC papers add clarity to global Anabaptist identity

BY TIM HUBER

For Meetinghouse
BASEL, SWITZERLAND

In three presentations at the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) General Council meetings last month, theologians and historians revisited the Anabaptist vision in a global context and sought input from meeting participants.

Growing out of conversations at Assembly 16 in Asunción, Paraguay, in 2009, the series of three papers sought to respond to a call for clarity about what it means for MWC member churches to live in the Anabaptist tradition.

MWC’s Faith and Life Commission appointed Goshen (Ind.) College history professor John Roth as project secretary. Pointing out the significance of meeting in Switzerland, home to five centuries of Anabaptist tradition, Roth said the documents are not meant to replace Shared Convictions, a set of seven foundational

tenets adopted by the MWC General Council in 2006.

“We share much with the broader Christian church, but every group has a particular lens through which they understand their identity,” he said. “This is helpful for us to understand how we occupy our corner of God’s kingdom.”

In his piece on holistic vision, Paraguayan theologian Alfred Neufeld offered theological grounds for MWC’s four commissions: Peace, Mission, Faith and Life, and Deacons. One image that has grown out of his paper is how the four commissions work together like the chambers of a heart as they beat together while each performs an important role for the living body.

Swiss seminary professor Hanspeter Jecker’s paper on Anabaptist tradition faced the challenge of condensing 500 years

of history into three pages. He gave special focus to a section on weaknesses and deficits, which he connected to the concept of the back of a coin. “Often strengths and weaknesses are related to each other, that’s why I like this expression,” he said.

While some groups have historically emphasized retreating from the world, “others would stress that we are in the world and go into ‘over-conformity,’” Jecker said.

Tom Yoder Neufeld, a professor at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., and a member of the Faith and Life Commission, presented the third paper, “Koinonia: The gift we hold together.” The document looks at the biblical basis of community, a strong component of Anabaptist identity.

Among the many images of community found in Scripture, Yoder Neufeld highlighted the community that happens when Christians join in communion with the divine Trinity. “Don’t look up at the dome or onto the image on the screen,” he said of searching for Jesus in worship. “Look around, because he is within us. . . . He stands among us and proclaims to God, ‘Here I am, and here are the children you have given me.’”

Other concepts included giving and receiving, partnerships and solidarity.

“Paul understood *koinonia* as we having this vision of being chained together, in chains of peace,” Neufeld said. “When Christ takes us and chains us to each other, we are tall and short, we are fast and slow,

we are impatient and meek, and together we are chained together, and we have to learn to walk together. The *koinonia* of Christ never walks in a nice way. It stumbles and trips together”

Neufeld and Jecker had previously gathered input for their papers at MWC

Executive Committee meetings in Taipei, Taiwan, in May 2011.

The three documents will continue through more revisions before coming back to the Faith and Life Commission for further polishing. ✎

U.S. pastor elected as next MWC president

Indonesia conditionally approved as 2021 assembly host

BY TIM HUBER

For Meetinghouse
BASEL, SWITZERLAND

It took three impromptu songs to count the ballots and confirm the results, but Anabaptist leaders from around the world elected J. Nelson Kraybill as president-elect of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) at the organization’s General Council meetings from May 20 to 27 in Basel.

Kraybill is a pastor at Prairie Street

Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind., and was president of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, from 1996 to 2008. He will replace Danisa Ndlovu of Zimbabwe three years from now at Assembly 16 in Harrisburg, Pa.

“We almost had a tie, but we do have a simple majority,” Ndlovu said of the choice

between Kraybill and Markus Rediger of Switzerland.

It is the first time a president-elect has come from outside General Council membership. The MWC constitution had been modified at a previous meeting to allow for a wider field of candidates. Although not a delegate, Kraybill was involved in crafting MWC’s Shared Convictions document.

“I can sense in just the short time I’ve been with you, this has been a worshipful time together,” said Kraybill, who arrived in Europe only a couple of hours before the election. “I think the most important thing we do as Mennonite people is worship and call people together into a relationship with Jesus Christ.

“What an honour and challenge to be called to this role,” he said. “I look forward to learning from you, Danisa. Please be patient with me.”

Members of the MWC Executive Committee and the North American delegation offered prayers of support for Kraybill and thanks for two strong candidates. After the prayers concluded, Rediger made his way up to the stage, where he and Kraybill shared an embrace to thunderous applause.

“In the church there are no losers,” said Ndlovu. “We are all winners in Christ Jesus.”

A fair share

Much of the continental caucus and delegate sessions were dedicated to discussion of proposed “fair-share amounts” MWC members and associate members are being asked to financially contribute from 2013-15.

The amounts are based on church membership and each country’s per capita gross national product (GNP). For example, Mennonite Church U.S.A. is one of the larger churches, with 103,245 members, and the U.S. has the highest per capita GNP:



Larry Miller, left, general secretary emeritus of Mennonite World Conference (MWC), and Thobekile Ncube of Zimbabwe hold a quilt that was given to Miller at the MWC General Council meeting in Switzerland in May. Every delegate brought a piece of fabric, and in three days the pieces were assembled.

MWC PHOTO BY JAMES KRABILL

MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE REPORT

MWC PHOTO BY MERLE GOOD

\$41,557. Based on MWC's 2013-15 needs of \$2.98 million, MC U.S.A.'s fair share is 33.75 percent, or just over \$1 million. MC Canada's fair share is 8.67 percent, or nearly \$259,000.

The U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches' share is 11.6 percent, and the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches' share is 9.13 percent. Those and other North American members' shares total 78.67 percent of MWC's requested income.

Most other fair-share percentages are at or far below 1 percent. MWC tends to receive less than half of the fair-share amounts it requests.

Many delegates expressed deep reservations about meeting the expectation. The proposed amounts were only approved with the inclusion of the possibility for negotiations about individual member's obligations.

"We recognize that the formula used is not a perfect formula," said MWC chief operating officer Len Rempel of Canada. "Using one number for a whole country, we recognize that is not the most accurate approach."

MWC vice-president Janet Plenert of Canada agreed that conditions can vary from region to region in a country, and



Church leaders pray for J. Nelson Kraybill, second from left, president-elect of Mennonite World Conference (MWC). Also pictured from left: Danisa Ndlovu of Zimbabwe, MWC president; Ervin Stutzman, Mennonite Church U.S.A. executive director; and Janet Plenert of Canada, MWC vice president.

hoped some members recognized an ability to negotiate a higher contribution. She also noted a widespread desire for a new formula. "We will record carefully that we have heard a significant call for that," she said.

Assembly 17

Departing from traditional procedure, General Council delegates conditionally accepted an invitation from the Asian caucus to host Assembly 17 in Indonesia in 2021. The Indonesian churches asked nine years early—instead of the normal six—to help with their preparations.

An official decision is contingent upon a feasibility study looking at travel, facilities and infrastructure.

"Only if there are significant problems would we go back and change that," Plenert said.

Delegates also affirmed the Executive Committee's decision to confer the title of general secretary emeritus on Larry Miller, who served as general secretary from 1990 until the end of 2011.

MWC's General Council meets every three years. The Basel meetings drew 207 participants from 48 countries. ❧

Tim Huber is associate editor of Mennonite World Review. He wrote this and the accompanying two articles for Meetinghouse, an association of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ publications.

/// Briefly noted

Warmth, honesty mark Mennonite-Adventist dialogue

Representatives of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) and the General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists met in dialogue from May 28 to 31 at the Bienenberg Study and Conference Center in Liestal, Switzerland. The four days of conversation were characterized by both Christian warmth and frank exchange of perspectives. In this dialogue, major papers were presented from each communion on eschatology, non-conformity and hermeneutics. In addition, shorter discussions took up questions raised by each communion prior to the meeting. Mennonites responded to issues of pacifism, Sabbath, salvation and obedience, personal lifestyle, ordinances, hermeneutics and eschatology. Adventists addressed questions of military service, Sabbath, contextualization, justice and discipleship, the role of women, church discipline and eschatology. At the conclusion of the dialogue, the second in two years, the representatives worked on a statement summarizing the values of the discussion for each side, and also recommendations concerning the dissemination of the materials generated in the conversation. This paper will be referred to the respective authorities of each communion that authorized the two-year conversation. Canadian Mennonite representatives were Robert J. Suderman and Tom Yoder Neufeld.

—Mennonite World Conference



'In my culinary tradition, the noodles should taste good, not just the sauce,' says Walter Bergen of his mother's egg noodles.

Russian Mennonite noodles become 'fine dining'

BY AMY DUECKMAN
B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

An old recipe from Russian Mennonite culinary tradition has made its way to the tables of one of Vancouver's finest eateries.

The award-winning Hawksworth Restaurant in downtown Vancouver's Hotel Georgia is making homemade

noodles from a recipe courtesy of Maria Bergen, a member of Abbotsford's Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church.

Son Walter Bergen of Six Masters Farms in Yarrow suggested the recipe to chef Kristian Eligh when he struck up a conversation while delivering his farm's organic

produce to the restaurant. He passed on the recipe for his mother's egg ("wedding") noodles when he heard Eligh was preparing a dish that he thought would be a good match.

"In my culinary tradition, the noodles should taste good, not just the sauce," says Walter.

Maria, who came to Canada in 1946 as a refugee from Nieder-Chortitza, Ukraine, adds with disbelief, "Here is me who was refugee hoping to own two dresses in my life at one time, and my recipe for wedding noodles gets to be in a high falutin' restaurant!" ❧

'Love is the binding mortar'

Clearbrook church celebrates two anniversaries and a birthday

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN
B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Members of Clearbrook Mennonite Church held a triple celebration on April 14. The church turned 60 years old, Pastor Siegbert Zukowski celebrated his 85th birthday, and he and his wife Irmi also celebrated 60 years of marriage.

Zukowski, who immigrated to Canada from Germany, originally ministered in the North American Baptist Conference. He was ordained to the ministry in 1976 and also served previously at King Road Mennonite Brethren Church in Abbotsford.

German continues to be central to Clearbrook Mennonite and serves as the primary language of worship. The

congregation, currently with a membership of just over 50 senior citizens, was founded in 1952 as a daughter church of West Abbotsford Mennonite Church. In 1960, a number of members left Clearbrook Mennonite to form the all-English-speaking Olivet Mennonite Church.

Zukowski feels a real calling to continue in the ministry, despite being well into his retirement years. He also acknowledges the gift of his wife working alongside him. "I preach from the pulpit; she works 'under the pulpit,'" he says. "The Lord is so generous to me; he gave me [the gift] to visit people in hospital, to stand by people to



Clearbrook Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, B.C.

the end. Love is the binding mortar in a congregation."

Mennonite Church B.C. executive minister Garry Janzen gave a meditation based on Psalm 103:4, acknowledging how the congregation has been a blessing in the Clearbrook area since 1952. ❧

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Experiencing the text

Theological studies conference teaches how to use the Bible for enrichment and guidance

STORY AND PHOTO BY RYAN DUECK

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

“Everyone claims to take the Bible as it stands. In reality, we all take the Bible as we understand it.”

These words from Perry Yoder, professor emeritus of Old Testament at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., served as both a caution and an invitation for those gathered at Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary, for a theological studies conference organized by Mennonite Church Alberta. The theme of the event, which took place from May 9 to 12, was “Experiencing the text: Using the Bible for individual and group enrichment and guidance.”

Yoder helped the 20 or so participants to consider the various biases, assumptions and agendas that we might bring to the task of interpreting the Bible and how these might lead to partial, inadequate or

to read responsibly and with contextual awareness.

Unsurprisingly, the majority of our time together was spent reading and discussing the Bible. Each morning, participants were given the assignment of creatively re-presenting a text to the rest of the group.

We had one hour to spend alone with our Bibles, a few sheets of paper and some crayons. Our task was to attend to the text—to read it slowly, carefully, deliberately—and then write or draw it out in a way that reflected what we thought the passage was trying to communicate.

While not all had the same level of enthusiasm about displaying their artwork to the rest of the group, this exercise invariably led to new insights and discoveries in the text. Many spoke of being “forced” to engage with Scripture in this

[Perry] Yoder urged us to get back to ‘just reading’ Scripture even as we do our best to read responsibly and with contextual awareness.

incorrect interpretations. This was the “caution” part.

He also offered a plea to return to actually reading the Bible, to dig into it, to dwell in the narrative, to allow it to ask questions of us rather than merely being the subject of our interrogation. This was the “invitation” part.

Too often, our preoccupation with the myriad uses and abuses of Scripture can cause us to simply abandon our Bibles, he said. Yoder urged us to get back to “just reading” Scripture even as we do our best

unfamiliar manner as one of the highlights of the conference.

Our afternoons and evenings were spent delving into more of the issues around responsible interpretation of Scripture. Yoder showed us how to use online biblical tools, reflected on historical factors that shed light on our reading, and discussed how texts from different parts of Scripture informed and engaged each other. There were also lively discussions about theological and ethical issues arising from the passages Yoder had



Perry Yoder, professor emeritus of Old Testament at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., led a theological studies conference in Alberta last month on the theme of ‘Experiencing the text: Using the Bible for individual and group enrichment and guidance.’

chosen: theories of atonement, the nature and practice of nonviolence, and the relationship of righteousness and justice, among others.

Yoder’s evening lectures, which were open to the public, discussed the ways in which the Bible has been, and continues to be, used and abused by Christians, and how we can use Scripture to evaluate ethical issues.

The main theme presented throughout the conference was an encouragement to experience Scripture—both in its complexity and in its simplicity. Yoder acknowledged that it is not always easy to read the Bible well, and that there are parts of the Bible that all of us find difficult. But this should not dissuade us from reading it as an act of devotion to the God to which Scripture points.

It was encouraging and inspiring to hear him say that, after a life spent wrestling with and teaching the Bible, “I can’t think of a more delightful way to spend my life than in the study of Scripture.” ❧

Ryan Dueck is pastor at Lethbridge Mennonite Church, Alta.

Growing old is good, retired ministers told

BY DORIS WEBER

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
NEW HAMBURG, ONT.

It is good to slow down and reflect, for wondering reflection leads to wisdom, a group of retired ministers of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada learned at their retreat on May 29. This event, held annually at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, is a time of renewing friendships and spiritual refreshment for participants. This year's speaker was Don Morgenson, professor emeritus of psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ont., who addressed the theme, "Wonder, wisdom and spiritual growth."

Morgenson reminded the retired ministers that the transcendence of life can easily be missed. Surrounded by constant

stimuli in the world today, he told them that they need to remember that satisfaction is found in tranquillity and accomplishment, and that "haste leads to chaos" (one of his many pithy truths).

Growing old is good, he said, as it brings significance and reflects a life that has been fully nourished. He also quipped that "growing old is crystallized intelligence."

Imagination spurs people on to wonder and spiritual growth. Through imagination and intelligence, Morgenson said, seniors can deal with life's experiences and find the harmony that wisdom gives. From this place of wonder and wisdom they can develop empathy for themselves and

empathetically imagine the other.

Morgenson's address and the following discussion were affirmed as life-giving and stimulating by participants.

The retreat ended with updates from David Martin, MC Eastern Canada's executive minister, about new churches and other events, and a closing prayer by Muriel Bechtel, who is concluding her many years of service as the area church's conference minister. ☺

/// Briefly Noted

Westgate gets city go-ahead for redevelopment

WINNIPEG—Westgate Mennonite Collegiate is ending this school year on a note of excitement and anticipation. Its redevelopment proposal was approved by the City of Winnipeg Board of Adjustment at the end of March, but a subsequent appeal was filed by some of the school's neighbours in Armstrong Point. That appeal was rejected on June 7. "I am very pleased with how the councillors weighed the information and boiled it down to the realities," says principal Bob Hummelt. "They saw it as a common-sense-based plan." Without increasing the school's footprint or its enrollment, the plans intend to improve accessibility and services. With final approval from the city, Hummelt has already begun the process of finding an alternate facility to house the school's activities and its approximately 340 students during the construction period. Completion is slated for fall of 2014. Even with this recent victory, Westgate will remain mindful of its neighbours, according to Hummelt. "This last round with the neighbourhood has only sharpened my interest in building relationships with the community," he says. Opposition to the plan focused on increased traffic flow in the neighbourhood. Hummelt anticipates ongoing work with the school community and the neighbourhood residents to mitigate these concerns.

—BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

HIDDEN ACRES PHOTO BY CAMPBELL NISBET



Retired pastor Doris Weber, left, visits with Muriel Bechtel, who will soon be retiring as Mennonite Church Eastern Canada conference minister, at the area church's retired pastors retreat held at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg, Ont., on May 29.

Silver Lake fundraiser tops \$500,000



Two new camper cabins were constructed at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp as part of a half-million-dollar capital project. Both are insulated for year-round use.

New staff lounge dedicated in memory of long-time camper supporter

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ERB
Silver Lake Mennonite Camp
HEPWORTH, ONT.

Silver Lake Mennonite Camp has surpassed its capital fundraising goal of \$500,000. At the camp's annual general meeting on May 12, it was announced that the total amount raised was \$532,000.

As part of Silver Lake's 50th-anniversary celebrations last year, a decision was made to embark on a major capital upgrade of facilities to acknowledge the half-century of camping ministry to children.

Before the campaign was launched, a fire destroyed the dining hall and did extensive damage to the kitchen in February 2011.

The fire forced the board to re-evaluate its plans. While proceeds of the insurance covered most of the reconstruction costs, there were numerous upgrades required, such as windows and insulation, to meet current construction standards. In addition, the board was committed to its original vision of upgrading existing facilities. While \$500,000 seemed to be a very aggressive goal, the camp board felt the time had come for significant upgrades to occur.

The dining hall and kitchen have been restored to their original design prior to the fire and are ready to receive campers this summer. An addition to the dining room and kitchen includes a new medical centre, washrooms, programming office and extra bunks. Two new cabins for campers have been constructed as well as a staff lounge.

At the annual spring work weekend in early May, the staff lounge was dedicated in memory of Laura Rourke, a camper, staff member and long-time volunteer who died on May 21, 2011. ❧

ASK SOMEONE WHO HAS TRAVELED WITH US!

2012 TOURS

EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (July 10-23)
LANDS of the BIBLE: JORDAN and ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR TYLER HARTFORD (July 19-28)
ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (August 23-September 3)
TOUR to LITHUANIA (in partnership with LCC International University) (September 12-19)
MENNONITE STORY in POLAND and UKRAINE (September 18-29)
SCENIC AUTUMN CRUISE: CANADA and NEW ENGLAND (October 6-16)
MEDA TOUR to ETHIOPIA and TANZANIA (October 12-24)
SERVICE TOUR to ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR JAMIE GERBER (October 13-22)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR DOUG KLASSEN (October 17-26)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR KEITH BLANK (November 7-16)
VIETNAM and SINGAPORE (November 12-26)
MUSIC and MARKETS: DANUBE CHRISTMAS CRUISE (December 1-9)

2013 TOURS

JAMAICA - Its PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY and FRUITS (January 11-20)
AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND (February 1-21)
CHURCHES and SAFARIS in KENYA and TANZANIA (February 8-20)
PANAMA CANAL CRUISE (February 26-March 8)
MEDA in MOROCCO (April 2-12)
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR PHIL WAGLER (April 16-25)
MYSTERY TOUR (April 17-26)

LANDS of the BIBLE with PASTORS SEBASTIAN and CAREY MEADOWS-HELMER (April 28-May 7)
EXPLORE the WORLD of PAUL with TOM YODER NEUFELD (May 1-17)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with PAUL ZEHR (May 2-15)
GREAT TREK TOUR with JOHN SHARP (May 7-18)
HESSTON COLLEGE TOUR to EUROPE (May 24-June 6)
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (June 6-19)
ICELAND ECO TOUR (June 10-19)
COLUMBIA BIBLE COLLEGE ANABAPTIST HERITAGE TOUR (July 2-15)
FOLLOWING the STEPS of MOSES with PASTOR NELSON KRAYBILL (July 22-31)
RUSSIA and UKRAINE (September 9-21)
THE BRITISH ISLES (England, Scotland and Wales) with DAVID and JOYCE ESHLEMAN (September 13-25)
BEHIND the VEIL - EXPERIENCING EGYPT (October 17-28)
CHINA and a YANGTZE RIVER CRUISE (November 1-15)
EUROPEAN CHRISTMAS MARKETS (December 9-15)

2014 TOURS

THE AMAZON RAIN FOREST and GALAPAGOS ISLANDS (January 16-26)
SPECTACULAR SCANDINAVIA and its FJORDS (June 13-26)



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New technology on campus

Incoming Goshen College first-year students to get an iPad as part of mobile technology initiative and new general education curriculum

BY RICHARD R. AGUIRRE

Goshen College
GOSHEN, IND.

Beginning this fall, all new first-year students entering Goshen College will get an iPad mobile computing device to use as part of the college's new general education curriculum.

According to president James E. Brenneman, the iPads will be the first phase of the college's new iCore Technology Initiative, a multi-year effort to help students, faculty and staff explore, develop and use cutting-edge mobile technology for educational purposes.

"I'm excited that we are building on Goshen College's tradition of educational innovation to support our core values and mission," Brenneman says. "We believe that the iCore Technology Initiative will help us to use mobile technology to support creative new approaches to teaching and learning. We also hope it will help our students and faculty better connect with one another and with the world."

All incoming full-time, first-year students will receive an iPad to use for their academic, professional and creative endeavours, including the development of multimedia e-portfolios and easy access to electronic textbooks. Integrating the iPad into the new Goshen core curriculum is intended to prepare students for life and work in a rapidly evolving information landscape in which mobile technology devices, including iPad-style tablets and smartphones, are replacing personal computers and laptops as primary computing devices.

All faculty members involved in teaching courses in the Goshen Core curriculum are getting the new iPads, so they can begin to develop iPad-specific curriculum. It is expected that class readings will be done on iPads and that they also will be used for class schedules, communication, writing assignments, and perhaps audio and video projects.

Current students and faculty members not involved in the first-year program will get access to iPads via a campus check-out program, so they can explore how to incorporate the device into their courses and co-curricular programs.

After deploying the iPads this fall, the college will focus on exploring, using and eventually developing iPad applications to be used in a wide range of disciplines and such learning assets as reference materials, content-creation tools, controllers,

simulators and more. Faculty members and students are expected to drive innovation and learn from one another.

A committee consisting of teaching faculty members is being formed to address questions of curriculum, pedagogy, the appropriate uses of technology, and how community values and personal connections can be enhanced amid extensive usage of iPads. A second committee, made up of faculty and staff, will continue addressing logistical, technical and policy issues. ☘



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAMP VALAQUA



On June 6, as people gathered at Camp Valaqua for the Alberta Heritage Retreat, rain was swelling the Little Red Deer River. People driving across the bridge just north of the camp entrance noticed it did not feel solid. Later that day, the banks supporting the bridge washed out and the county had to send machines to lift the bridge deck out of the river. While the bridge being out is an inconvenience, Camp Valaqua remains fully accessible from the south side and summer camp programs are not affected. On June 7, the Plains Midstream company announced a leak in its Rangeland Pipeline near Sundre, Alta.

Approximately 3,000 barrels of light sour crude oil was released into Jackson Creek, a tributary of the Red Deer River. Camp director Jon Olfert notes that the leak is downstream of the camp. "It won't affect us at Valaqua," he says.

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD



The opening ceremonies at the Meeting Place featured music and dance from various indigenous communities.

Walking the talk on reconciliation

Truth and Reconciliation Commission event explores the next steps for church-indigenous relationships

STORY AND PHOTOS BY EMILY LOEWEN

Young Voices Co-Editor
TORONTO

How can Canada's churches move past their residential school history into a positive relationship with Indigenous Peoples? That was one question asked during The Meeting Place conference in Toronto, hosted by the Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre with support from the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) earlier this month.

The event featured statement gathering from residential school survivors and others whose lives were affected.

"We stand to learn from, and gain from, what they are able to share with us," said TRC commissioner Marie Wilson, "and to question what do we do with all of that, how do we go forward from here?"

One workshop focused on that question specifically from a church perspective. Leaders from the Anglican, Presbyterian, United and Catholic churches shared steps they have taken towards reconciliation after making formal apologies. The session, titled "How can churches walk the talk on

reconciliation?," also provided a time for churches to learn how they can improve.

"As churches, we're a big part of the story of residential schools," said TRC staff member Lori Ransom as she opened the session.

The Anglican Church has started many initiatives, including a healing fund used for projects like suicide prevention, making all of its residential school documents public to assist with court claims, requiring anti-racism training for committees at the national level, and hiring a national aboriginal bishop to teach church leaders about indigenous cultures, explained Bishop Philip Poole.

The United Church has created the Living Into Right Relations program to build relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians. It also stopped using the term "missionary" and works with indigenous leaders to support their land claims, said United Church representative Brian McIntosh.

Gerry Kelly of the Roman Catholic Church shared about the apology Bishop Reynald Rouleau gave to the Chesterfield Inlet, Nunavut, school. Kelly said it was especially significant because the church developed the apology in consultation with school survivors. "So, in a sense, the apology itself was even an example, if you will, of walking the talk," he said.

Both the Presbyterian and Anglican church representatives suggested that congregations work towards reconciliation by learning about indigenous traditions and incorporating them into worship services.

However, Reverend Andrew Wesley cautioned leaders to take care in adopting indigenous traditions because symbols and teachings from one group may mean nothing to another. "If you want to work with aboriginal people, you have to learn the tribal area you're working with," said Wesley, who works for both the Toronto Urban Native Ministry and the Anglican Church.

While Mennonite Church Canada is not part of the residential schools settlement, Mennonites still need to be involved in the healing process, said Steven Heinrichs, MC Canada's director of Native Ministry.

As a church dedicated to peace, this is a way to live that out, he said by phone from

INDIGENOUS/MENNONITE RELATIONS



Brian McIntosh, centre, shares about the United Church's work on reconciliation, while Jennifer Henry, executive director of Kairos, left, and Steven Heinrichs, director of indigenous relations for Mennonite Church Canada, right, listen.

Winnipeg. "If this is going to help bring peace between the indigenous and settler Canadians, then that's a good thing to be involved in."

But it's also important for Mennonites to recognize that their history includes connections to both residential and day schools. While the church was not directly involved in much of the abuse, there is evidence that Mennonites and related groups participated in running day schools,

boarding houses and residential schools.

Learning more about the residential school history, especially in their own communities, is the next step Mennonites can take towards reconciliation, said Heinrichs. "Once we know the background, we can work with first nations people to determine what comes next," he said. "If we come in that posture, knowing some of the history, there are Indigenous Peoples who are willing to walk with us." ❧

Where are Mennonites at the TRC?

MC Canada must decide what it is responsible for in the Indian Residential School process: Willard Metzger

BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada

"The stories are horrific. You can't listen to them without a sick feeling of disbelief rising in your stomach. It's easy to tell yourself that, because you were not personally involved, you have no blame for what happened. But the feeling of guilt persists."

Willard Metzger, executive director of Mennonite Church Canada, describes his experience at The Meeting Place Truth and Reconciliation Conference in Toronto from May 31 to June 2.

In a subsequent blog post, Metzger recounts statements from a brother and sister that cut him to the core. They were

taken from a comfortable family life to a residential school, where they were beaten for as little as waving at each other.

She was sexually assaulted by a male teacher. Metzger used the sister's own words to describe what happened next: "Eventually I started feeling something grow in my stomach. So once again one night at 11 p.m., they came and took me to the hospital and removed the baby. They told me the baby was dead, but I think she is alive. Sometimes I hear her cry."

Equally disturbing was her brother's story about another boy. The child was ill, yet a teacher forced him to eat. When

he vomited into his soup bowl and onto the floor, the teacher forced him to clean up the mess. Before the teacher left, she demanded that he eat everything in his bowl. But the other boys came to his rescue; passing the bowl among themselves, spoonful by spoonful, they emptied it for him.

"What a contrast of brutal cruelty and gentle tenderness," Metzger writes. "I begged God for forgiveness. I felt ashamed of those who misrepresent God's love."

If the images of what Metzger heard were disturbing, he admits that he was just as unsettled by the fact that Mennonites are not one of the official TRC church participants. "Mennonite Church Canada may not have been directly involved with residential schools," he says, "but Mennonites, as a wider people group, were. In the end, is there a difference?"

Steve Heinrichs, director of MC Canada Indigenous Relations (formerly Native Ministry), also attended the conference. He says that a Chinese-Canadian honorary witness held up a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario Aboriginal Neighbours map outlining Mennonite schools and the indigenous communities impacted by them.

"He told the crowd that there was more work to be done," Heinrichs says. "I understood the sub-text of that comment to be asking where the Mennonites are in all of this. We see the Anglicans and Presbyterians here in an official capacity, but where are the Mennonites?"

Heinrichs says that during the Toronto conference indigenous elders and leaders repeatedly invited allies from the broader community: "They said, 'We need you. Ongoing colonialism and paternalism will not change unless we have more allies on the journey of decolonization, more who will risk—beyond rhetoric and apologies—to seek justice with and for Indigenous Peoples and lands.'"

So how will Mennonites respond now? Metzger is aware that more discussion is needed within the national church before any decisions are made. "Justice Murray Sinclair [chief TRC commissioner] put it well," he says. "In the end, it is not what we are to blame for, but what we are responsible for." ❧



Henry Neufeld, right, a former day school teacher in Pauingassi, Man., presents a talking stick that he crafted to Joan Jack, who is heading up the National Day School Class Action Suit.

Indigenous day school survivors initiate class action lawsuit

Mennonite Pioneer Mission, COs played roles in Canada's day school program

BY DEBORAH FROESE
Mennonite Church Canada
WINNIPEG

Official government apologies and the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) process do not include all prior students of government-funded, church-run schools for Indigenous Peoples, a handful of which have associations with Mennonite communities.

To date, pre-1970s indigenous day school students—whether attending schools on or near a first nation community—remain unacknowledged. They are banding together to remedy that.

On May 2 and 3, the first National Day School Class Action Conference was held in Winnipeg. It was led and hosted by Spiritwind Inc., a non-profit organization of survivors based in Winnipeg, the Joan Jack Law Office, Winnipeg, and the Sandy

Bay Ojibway First Nation on the western shore of Lake Manitoba. Nine representatives from Canada's Mennonite community attended the conference.

Spiritwind emerged in 1986 as an advocate and support group for the Indian Residential School survivors movement. Now it is using that experience to focus on, and advocate for, day school survivors by launching a National Day School Class Action Suit.

Although day school students were able to return home each night, many of them suffered the same indignities as their residential school peers: violent physical and emotional abuse, loss of language, the aggressive imposition of Christianity, and condemnation of their indigenous histories

and traditions.

Those who gathered for the Winnipeg conference heard from survivors as well as indigenous leaders supporting the movement, such as Grand Chief Shawn Atleo of the Assembly of First Nations, and Judge Murray Sinclair, chief TRC commissioner. They also discussed next steps in the class action suit, which has been joined so far by more than 10,000 former students.

Elders and indigenous leaders stressed the need to speak in love and strength, while being mindful that some may dismiss their stories without understanding the significant generational impact of their experiences, or the difficulties they face along the road to healing. They recognized that monetary compensation is a necessary gesture of atonement, but it does not provide healing. Healing must come from within. Indigenous survivors must live as survivors rather than victims.

Mennonites are seeking ways of walking with indigenous communities through the TRC process and in their struggle for acknowledgement of the day school student experience. In July 2010, delegates to the Mennonite Church Canada assembly in Calgary signed a resolution, stating in part that "MC Canada congregations and individual members recognize and confess our complicity in the failing of the Christian church and its role in the tragic physical, emotional, mental and sexual abuse, denial of culture, language and peoplehood of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada."

What is the Mennonite connection?

In the 1940s, Mennonite conscientious objectors were sent to United Church-run day schools in northern Manitoba to work as teachers. Some years later, Manitoba's Pauingassi and Bloodvein communities invited Mennonite Pioneer Mission, a predecessor of MC Canada's Indigenous Relations (formerly Native Ministry), to open day schools within their communities. Some students of the Mennonite schools report a more cooperative approach to education and saw their workers oppose certain aspects of the government's attempted assimilation program by encouraging indigenous language. In some instances, programs at Pauingassi were scheduled to accommodate community

INDIGENOUS/MENNONITE RELATIONS



Elder Elmer Courchene of Sagkeeng First Nation addresses those who gathered for the first National Day School Class Action Conference in Winnipeg last month.

rhythms around the trapping and fishing seasons.

But despite these more mutual approaches, the Mennonite schools operated within the larger paternalistic system that, as a whole, considered itself superior to

indigenous ways.

“As Mennonite Pioneer Mission, we had a lot of learning to do,” says Egon Enns, a former day school teacher in Bloodvein. “Yet over the years, with the help of indigenous friends and partners, we have learned much and changed our programs to reflect such. We are still learning.”

Retired MC Canada Native Ministry co-director Edith von Gunten attended the day school conference. She says the struggle belongs to all of society, not just indigenous communities.

Ultimately, this is a settler problem, according to her, for settlers perpetuated the notion that their religion, culture and politics were superior to that of indigenous peoples, and claimed the right to change Indigenous Peoples. She says that those attitudes of superiority fuelled the assimilation program to “kill the Indian, save the child.” ❧



Steve Heinrichs, director of Mennonite Church Canada Indigenous Relations (previously Native Ministry), says that people like the new name because it emphasizes the need for respectful friendships and conveys the interconnectedness of all peoples.

Native Ministry becomes Indigenous Relations

STORY AND PHOTO BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada

Mennonite Church Canada’s Native Ministry has changed its name to Indigenous Relations effective immediately.

The name change, according to director Steve Heinrichs, has been under discussion since last fall. Heinrichs says that Indigenous Relations and several other possible names were tested with indigenous colleagues and friends, past and present Native Ministry staff, Mennonite Central Committee Aboriginal Neighbours workers, the Manitoba Partnership Circle, and more. All agreed that the name should change, and more than 90 percent expressed support for Indigenous Relations.

“People like Indigenous Relations because it emphasizes the need for respectful friendships,” Heinrichs says. “It also honours a common indigenous prayer—‘all my relations’—which asserts that everything is interconnected.”

According to indigenous and Judaeo-Christian traditions, a name conveys identity. These cultures share the sacred practice of re-naming individuals to represent transformations in life, or profound spiritual experiences that result in a new identity.

Heinrichs cites the name-change of Shawnee leader Lalawethika (“He makes a loud noise”) to Tenskwatawa (“The open door”) after he received a prophetic vision to resist American imperialism in the early 1800s, and the biblical patriarch Jacob, who was renamed Israel after wrestling with the Holy One.

Moreover, Heinrichs says that a growing number of first nations, Innu and Métis communities in Canada and native peoples around the world have voiced a preference for “indigenous” over “native” or “aboriginal.” And while the word “ministry” has a strong biblical purpose, in today’s language it carries government overtones, such as the

Ministry of Child and Family Services, and suggests that non-indigenous Mennonites are serving Indigenous Peoples.

But for indigenous persons especially, it is important that the name reflect the relationship MC Canada has with the country’s Indigenous Peoples, which is much more mutual; it is two-way exchange of friendship, faith-nurture and support between indigenous and non-indigenous individuals and communities.

When the Mennonite church and Indigenous Peoples first connected in 1948 through the efforts of MC Manitoba, the relationship was known as Mennonite Pioneer Missions. In the 1970s, indigenous partners shared their concerns over the name. They felt that it failed to communicate the existing mutual relationship and the words “pioneer” and “missions” both carried unfortunate colonial baggage.

Menno Wiebe, who led the mission on behalf of MC Canada at the time, and other Mennonite leaders agreed, and it was renamed Native Ministry to acknowledge, celebrate and foster the emerging identity.

Citing the words of a Dakota friend, Heinrichs adds that, although no name is perfect, “some are definitely better and more life-giving than others.” ❧

God at work in the World

Snapshots

PHOTO BY BARRY BERGEN



Commemorating the War of 1812 has been on the agenda for many historical societies in recent years. In response, the Essex-Kent Mennonite Historical Association, based in Leamington in southwestern Ontario, responded by creating a peace garden. Located behind the association's building, the peace garden surrounds the site of an existing monument erected in 2000 to commemorate the various Mennonite migrations to the Leamington area. The existing stone now has the words from Isaiah 2 inscribed on it. In keeping with the passage's theme—'they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more'—a plough built by a Mennonite immigrant nearly 100 years ago was restored and also sits on the site. The peace garden was dedicated on June 4 with dozens of well-wishers looking on.

For the last three years, four sisters from across Alberta have used the relief sale as an opportunity to get together to visit and stitch up a quilt to donate. In one day, the sisters—Irene Baergen of Edmonton, Hilda Baergen of Red Deer, Margaret Froese of Canmore, and Alice Klassen of Coaldale—combined fabric scraps and pieced a brightly coloured 'stained glass' style quilt, which sold for \$1,100 at the recent Mennonite Central Committee Relief Sale quilt auction. The purchase itself continued the coming together theme. Joyce Amstutz of Didsbury and her granddaughter, Angelika Mack of Calgary, bought the quilt together. The quilt is particularly meaningful for Amstutz, because she grew up in the same area as the quilting sisters, and was a schoolmate of Froese. Grandmother and granddaughter, pictured, look forward to sharing their purchase.

PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD



GOD AT WORK IN US

Facing the mental health frontier

Chris Summerville reflects on his journey with mental illness

STORY AND PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent

WINNIPEG

All the fear, stigma and social prejudice that surrounds mental illness recently surfaced again in the media when a review board granted Vince Li temporary passes to take supervised walks in Selkirk, Man., where he is hospitalized. Li made headlines about four years ago with the horrific psychosis-induced beheading of a fellow bus passenger.

Chris Summerville, chief executive officer of the Schizophrenia Society of Canada, executive director of the Manitoba Schizophrenia Society and an ordained pastor with the Associated Gospel Churches of Canada, has been visiting Li regularly during these past four years.

"Schizophrenia is treatable and recovery is possible," says Summerville, who, in his nearly 60 years of living, knows first-hand what it is like to live with mental illness.

He was born in Birmingham, Ala., in 1952, into what he describes as being a very dysfunctional family. "We lived by the three rules of dysfunctionality: don't talk, don't feel and don't trust," he says. "We didn't talk about my father's alcoholism, rage-aholism and sex-aholism. We suffered abuse of all kinds."

Eventually, Summerville's mother led his father to a relationship with Jesus Christ, "but he couldn't shake the depression. He struggled with bipolar mood disorder. That's something that runs in the Summerville family," he says. "In 1988 [his father] took his own life out of remorse and guilt. My own journey then has been profoundly impacted by mental illness."

"I was struggling with depression as a teenager, but I thought it was a spiritual problem," Summerville says. "I thought it was a sin problem, that I wasn't praying hard

enough and didn't have enough faith, not realizing the complexities of what mood disorders can do to a person's entire life. So I masked it with workaholism, religiosity and perfectionism, which made it even worse."

Summerville felt the call to pastoral ministry at age 17. "My conversion was a real one, a conversion of understanding," he says. "It was not based on emotion, but there was a warmth about it, a sense of grace, mercy, love, forgiveness, and that Christ's death on the cross was for me. What was missing at that time, though, was a greater clarity around the kingdom of God and social justice."

While pastoring at Redeemer Bible Church, Niagara Falls, Ont., Summerville says, "my workaholism, religiosity and perfectionism, along with increased depression, resulted in burnout." He went on to study clinical pastoral education while still struggling with depression, saying, "At that time I was beginning to see that this was not just a spiritual problem."

"In my pastorates I always spoke freely about mental health and would briefly, quickly reference my own struggle with it," Summerville says. "But at Redeemer Bible Church I came out of the closet. I can remember the Sunday I said to the people that I struggled with depression. The congregation was gracious, but quiet. I can remember them filing out and their heads were down, not knowing what to say. We are not adequately prepared in seminary to deal with mental illness in the church," yet he notes that "Jesus calls us to befriend one another and bear one other's burdens."

In 1995, Summerville began his current position with the Schizophrenia Society.



Chris Summerville in his executive director office at the Manitoba Schizophrenia Society.

"God has used this society in two ways," he says. "Bringing healing in my own life by being able to confront my own self-stigma, and learning more about mental wellness. Second, this is my ministry. Persons with mental illness are the lepers of today. Addressing mental illness and the social prejudice that accompanies it is the last taboo in our society. So I have evolved as a community activist and advocate."

Because of his advocacy work, Prime Minister Stephen Harper appointed Summerville to the board of directors of the Mental Health Commission of Canada in 2007. "Our great accomplishment has been the release of Canada's first mental health strategy this past May," he says of the commission. "I believe in the social model of disability, that what is disabling is not so much the mental illness as it is society's ill response to people with mental illness."

He also expresses the wish that "the church would be able to talk about brain pain, emotional problems and mental illnesses as easily as we talk about cardiovascular diseases. As a matter of fact, more people experience mental illness than cardio-vascular diseases and diabetes put together. We should be able to talk about these issues with compassion and understanding." ❧

A nice Mennonite boy at the CBC

From radio producer to vice-president, Harold Redekopp reminisces about his three decades with CBC

BY ANNE KONRAD

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
TORONTO

“What’s a nice Mennonite boy doing at the CBC?”

With this provocative introduction, the audience at the Mennonite Heritage Club in Toronto recently heard Harold Redekopp talk about his career with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC).

Redekopp, whose father was described by the heritage club’s chair as a caring and engaging teacher at Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg, worked for the CBC for 32 years, beginning in 1973 as a radio music producer and ending in 2005 as vice-president of CBC Television.

He was contemplating a career in music when Walter Unger, executive producer of radio arts and music at CBC Winnipeg, asked him to apply for the job of CBC Radio music manager. Redekopp said he knew nothing about radio production or broadcasting, but after he heard a music producer say that his start came because he knew Morse Code, it did not seem so daunting. The job meant a cut in pay and insecurity.

He moved to Toronto and began what became many makeovers at CBC. He created a new network program, *Mostly Music*, featuring the best Canadian orchestral, chamber and choral performances. He hired Howard Dyck as host and the program became a big hit.

With Redekopp from Winnipeg; Dyck from Winkler; Unger, who was starting a weekday show on FM Radio 2 in Ottawa; and Eric Friesen from Altona coming to Toronto to host *The Eric Friesen Show*, he said it appeared that a “Manitoba

Mennonite Mafia” was about to take over the “people’s network.”

Later, Redekopp oversaw programs that included major music competitions like the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, the Van Cliburn Competition in Texas, and the Banff International String Quartet Competition. Other initiatives included launching Jurgen Gothe’s *Disc Drive*, a Canadian Opera Company series and other national music programs.

When Redekopp was asked to move into senior management in 1986, he said it was a shock. For the next two years he



Redekopp

The public, Redekopp said, ‘went ballistic,’ with anger and disappointment coming from every province. Many local CBC television viewers abandoned CBC.

was endlessly dealing with budgets, labour and staffing issues, and by 1990 he was in Ottawa as vice-president of regional broadcasting operations for English and French radio and television.

Then came what Redekopp called a “dismal chapter,” a serious financial crisis. On Dec. 5, 1990, CBC announced a cut of \$108 million from its budget. Local and regional television stations and programs absorbed the biggest hit, and more than a thousand employees lost their jobs. The public, Redekopp said, “went ballistic,” with anger and disappointment coming from every province. Many local CBC television viewers abandoned CBC.

Redekopp’s next role was as vice-president of CBC English Radio, a role that he explained entailed “being accountable for everything that goes on, every biased comment, every technical problem, all

financial, staffing or labour issues . . . everything.” Also a major strike. The good part of the job, he said, was getting wonderful feedback about the good things CBC was doing. These were his happiest days, he told the heritage club.

New initiatives resulted in the re-branding of radio networks into Radio 1 and Radio 2. Radio 1 delivered news, documentaries, arts and current affairs, with programs such as *Vinyl Café*, *Tapestry*, *C’est La Vie*, *Out Front* and others. The CBC’s “Overnight” 24-hour service was created, and local/regional morning shows across the country were initiated. Meanwhile, Radio 2 offered classical music as well as jazz, folk and world music. It also featured Easter sunrise and other specials, and regular shows like *In Performance*, *Take Five* and *Sound Advice*. Radio 3 was created for younger listeners and digital broadcasting began.

Next, the “radio guy” became vice-president of CBC Television. In this role, Redekopp said that he was advised that commercial CBC Television depended on advertising like that generated by U.S. game shows. Redekopp said that his aim

was to keep CBC TV focused on the public service mandate and *Canada: A People’s History* ran for six hours without commercials because Redekopp convinced the executive producer and board that it would be wrong to commercialize the history of Canada.

He left active service with CBC on his own initiative at the end of 2004, but continued as an adviser for another six months.

In response to the question of how being a Mennonite helped him make tough decisions, Redekopp quoted his friend Eric Friesen, who wrote, “The way I see evidence of his religious belief is, first of all, in the kind of honesty he shows in dealings with human beings. . . . This is an element of plain speaking that Mennonites hold to be important. There is also an ethical aspect to . . . being a Mennonite. . . . I think this sense of duty and service has greatly influenced Harold.” ❧

ARTBEAT

BOOK REVIEW

Prophetic peacemaking in action

Prophetic Peacemaking: Selected Writings of J. R. Burkholder.

Keith Graber Miller, ed. Institute of Mennonite Studies and Herald Press, 2010.

REVIEWED BY DAVE ROGALSKY
EASTERN CANADA CORRESPONDENT

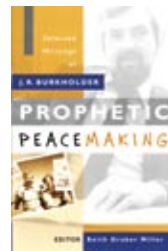
It was January 1989 when J. R. Burkholder taught liberation theology at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. Interterm at AMBS is one course, usually studied over 13 weeks, compressed into less than three, including all the lectures, readings and assignments. In Burkholder's class, students were encouraged to find a way to apply the learnings of the mostly Roman Catholic Latin American theologians to issues of peace and justice in North America.

As the book of selected writings, *Prophetic Peacemaking*, shows through its biographical and published material, Burkholder lived what he taught,

questioning deeply our Mennonite involvement in North American culture.

One afternoon during the course we watched the movie *The Mission* (directed by Fernando Ghia, 1987). Describing the historical destruction of Christianized indigenous people in what is now Paraguay by Christian mercenaries in the 17th century, the movie struggles with questions about who to obey: God, or God's ordained government and church?

In Burkholder's essay in the March 1987 issue of *Christian Living*, he examines the movie's issues carefully, but then moves powerfully into how we, too, face such issues now. Do we give in to our culture, government and churches, or do



we examine them as individuals and groups, seeking to obey a higher calling?

The 29 other essays cover pacifist convictions, Christians and the state, Mennonite social ethics, religion and culture, and "On loyalty, faith and discipleship." A closing essay on "Lessons learned on the way toward peacemaking" describes his many decades in the classroom and pulpit, working to train lay people and pastors in the gospel mandate for peace and justice.

Although Burkholder has not been a big name through the years, his influence on many to consider God's option for the poor and powerless is immeasurable. I, for one, left his class changed, thinking about how in the church and community of Christians we have much to learn about justice, peace and righteousness.

This volume is a trip through Burkholder's life, dipping into the many essays, sermons and articles he has written to move the hearts of Mennonites and others to join God's heart in peacemaking. ❧

PHOTO BY CRAIG BAUMAN



Judith Bean leads the Menno Youth Singers at the Inter-Mennonite Children's Choir's 45th anniversary concert, "United in Song," held at Floradale Mennonite Church, Ont., on May 6. The concert included former conductor Jane Schultz-Janzen conducting the choir's long-beloved "You Shall Have A Song."

BOOK REVIEW

Cross should teach peace, not punishment

Atonement, Justice, and Peace: The Message of the Cross and the Mission of the Church.
By Darrin W. Snyder Belousek. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2012, 668 pages.

REVIEWED BY BARB DRAPER
BOOKS & RESOURCES EDITOR

As a young adult I tried not to think too much about the idea that Jesus' suffering and death on the cross could take away my sin because I found it puzzling. The penal substitution doctrine of atonement, whereby God's justice is satisfied by Jesus' death, seemed to suggest that Jesus' death was important, but his life was not.

In his book, *Atonement, Justice and Peace: The Message of the Cross and the Mission of the Church*, Darrin W. Snyder Belousek thoroughly examines the doctrine of atonement and provides some new and refreshing perspectives.

Snyder Belousek, who lectures in philosophy and religion at Ohio Northern University and Bluffton University, Ohio,

If we see the cross as punishment, then we cannot see God as nonviolent, and the cross is at odds with Christ's message of peace.

argues that the common evangelical understanding of atonement is problematic because it depicts God the Father as a causative agent, acting to cause the death of God the Son, which is theologically offensive to the Trinity. With a careful examination of the biblical text, he claims that the early church did not see the cross of Christ as a punishment or retribution; rather, that God allowed Jesus to be killed and then, through the resurrection, turned that evil into a triumph.

If we see the cross as punishment, then

we cannot see God as nonviolent, and the cross is at odds with Christ's message of peace. The kingdom of God transcends retribution, writes Snyder Belousek, and "we are saved, not by retributive violence, but rather through God's 'transforming initiative' in Christ to freely give his own life rather than take the lives of even his enemies."

Atonement—or reconciliation to God—comes through following Jesus in his life, death and resurrection, not



through Jesus' punishment on the cross. "[A] faith community shaped by the cross, trusting in resurrection, and thus united by mutual commitment to solidarity in suffering, is essential if human beings are to live out the practicable, peaceable alternatives to violence in the face of evil," he writes.

In some ways Snyder Belousek has a similar message to J. Denny Weaver, whose second edition of *The Nonviolent Atonement* was recently published by Eerdmans. Snyder Belousek takes a more systematic approach in examining the many biblical texts and various understandings of atonement. Although it is a long scholarly treatise, it is not difficult reading, especially for someone with questions about the traditional understanding of atonement. Snyder Belousek is very thorough and investigates all aspects of atonement, justice and peace, but his conclusions bring a breath of fresh air from a Mennonite perspective. ❧

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PERSONAL REFLECTION

Where are the manly mentors?

BY RACHEL BERGEN
YOUNG VOICES CO-EDITOR

PHOTO COURTESY OF RACHEL BERGEN



The author with her father, Walter Bergen.

“**T**hat woman has really nice shoes,” said a man with whom I am acquainted.

I was at a restaurant in Vancouver with four men. Three of them were talking about women’s shoes, but, in fact, they were referring to certain parts of female anatomy in “code” so they wouldn’t appear rude or lascivious.

This was my experience a couple of weeks ago.

I was sightseeing on Vancouver’s North Shore with these men, one of whom was my friend, and I had specifically come

definition of a real man.

In our conversation, I framed it as a gender-equity issue, but my father thought of it more as a failure of manhood, although gender equity was certainly in question.

He shared with me that boys are a product of the way manhood is demonstrated in their families. Men who show respect towards other men and women in their lives will pass that down to their sons and grandsons, who will then pass it down to theirs.

“It’s a failure of men to teach younger

‘Now, chivalry and respect for women seem outdated in a segment of youth culture.’

(Walter Bergen)

out to visit him. The whole time three of them were commenting on women’s body parts and calling women names that rap singers often use in their songs.

I tried to laugh it off, but I was not impressed. In fact, I was disgusted. After about an hour of this, I called them out on it. I was especially upset because they felt that this was funny, because they were inspired by each other’s presence, and because this was not the first time that I’ve heard such things from men. It has been a regular occurrence.

That evening I vented to my father, who is someone I look up to as a model for respect and loyalty: in short, the

men that respect for men and women is a sign of strength and character,” he said, adding sadly, “Now, chivalry and respect for women seem outdated in a segment of youth culture.”

Recognizing this, my father’s cousin, Arturo Bergen, pastor at Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, initiated men’s retreats some years ago in an effort to teach intergenerational respect and model it. My father, who has been a part of these retreats, said, “I think you have a pastor who sees this as a problem and is seeking to build an intergenerational solution by modelling it. In a few years, I think we’ll see a real difference.”

However, the three men I came in contact with two weeks ago “pretend to have a sense of superiority . . . with women at a distance. They are demonstrating cowardice by not seeking out a real relationship with a real woman,” my father said.

It also has to do with subcultures. According to Dean Peachey, vice-principal of the University of Winnipeg’s Global College, the subcultures within male culture in North America often predict how men speak about women in their presence. “In some of those subcultures, the kind of conversation that you were subjected to is unacceptable,” he told me after I shared my experience with him. “In others, it is fairly standard as long as no one is present who objects.”

Although most of my borderline sexual

harassment encounters with men have been with people outside the faith community, I think it is important for those of us within it to remember the importance of modelling appropriate behaviour and teaching respect for everyone, including women.

“Mentors are an important gift to the community,” my father said. “For example, when I mentor a young man or woman, I benefit because I see values of integrity passed down, but the community also benefits because the values are fostered and people live upright, good, righteous, compassionate lives.”

In my opinion, it would be advisable to have more mentorship programs in churches. ☘

VIEWPOINT

The path towards reconciliation

BY LAUREN HARMS
SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES

Travelling to another country has a way of creating a new lens on life with a vivid new focus, but not in the way that I had expected. As I discovered more and more about South Africa during the three months I was there, I began to see my home in Canada with new eyes.

Along with a group of 33 others from Canadian Mennonite University’s Outtatown program, I soaked up as much of South Africa as I could. We learned about the struggle and oppression people experienced under apartheid and how that horrible system was actually based on Canada’s “success” with first nation communities. Many of us were quite shocked to realize that our country had inspired South Africa’s pain-filled history.

We gained an even deeper perspective when Piet Meiring came to talk to our group about his experiences and

involvement with South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission. That commission was a way to bring healing to the majority of the country’s population that had suffered under apartheid, but it also gave a chance for perpetrators to apply for, and hopefully be granted, amnesty.

How could victims and oppressors move forward and suddenly walk side by side as fellow citizens without at least attempting to create some basis of understanding one another?

After Meiring told his stories, I asked him why nothing like this was happening in Canada for our own Indigenous Peoples? Attending public school in Calgary, I learned about the plight of Indigenous Peoples and the effects of colonialism for as long as I can remember. The atrocities committed in the Indian Residential Schools had been burned into my brain.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LAUREN HARMS



Canadian Mennonite University’s Outtatown group hikes from Mdumbi to Coffee Bay along the south coast of South Africa.

Attending public school in Calgary, I learned about the plight of Indigenous Peoples and the effects of colonialism for as long as I can remember. The atrocities committed in the Indian Residential Schools had been burned into my brain.



Lauren Harms stands on the shore of Robbin Island in South Africa, where many political prisoners like Nelson Mandela were held during the country's apartheid years.

Meiring gently revealed my ignorance when he told me that Canada did indeed have a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and that it was actually happening right now. After that embarrassing moment of learning about Canada while I was in another country, I wondered how many other Canadians were like me. How many others are clueless to the existence of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission? I wondered if our churches knew it was happening and if they were getting involved?

The attitude, I fear, is one of indifference. This attitude says, "Residential schools happened so long ago, why does it matter?" or, "I wasn't personally involved, so I don't need to get involved now."

I hope people begin to realize that residential schools have had a lasting impact on our country, especially for those families that were torn apart. The schools were run by the church and encouraged by government to be used as

a way of assimilating indigenous cultures. Children were forced out of their homes and told that the only culture they ever knew was the wrong one, and this was done in the name of Jesus. The last residential school was closed in 1996, which is a hauntingly fresh date.

In the spirit of Jesus, I want to encourage everyone to spread the word and get involved. The TRC is happening right now in Canada, and our brothers and sisters from indigenous families are telling their stories. As the TRC Canada website says, "The truth of our common experiences will help set our spirits free on a path towards reconciliation."

Please get involved. ✎

Lauren Harms attends First Mennonite Church, Calgary, and is a summer intern at Mennonite Central Committee Alberta. She will begin her second year at Canadian Mennonite University in September.



Volunteer Roma Carlson stands by a table of wooden animals made by indigenous Paraguayan carvers. Sale of the carvings helps Paraguay's indigenous population, says Carlson.

Carrying on traditions

Mennonite communities come together to raise relief funds

PHOTO ESSAY BY BRANDI J. THORPE

Special to Young Voices
NEW HAMBURG, ONT.

Mennonite communities have developed a rich tradition of raising hundreds of thousands of dollars each year at community events like the New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale. This event brings together hundreds of Mennonite families from all walks of life to enjoy each other, the food and auctions, while raising money for Mennonite Central Committee relief programs around the world.

What boldly stands out are the decades-old traditions that today's children and

youths learned and are proud to carry on. From tasty donut ball treats—teaballs to the uninitiated—to Paraguayan native animal carvings, New Hamburg's relief sale hosts some one-of-a-kind traditions that Mennonite youths have come to love year after year.

Young Voices brings you a photo log of those traditions and some of the youths who carry them forward from New Hamburg's 45th year in action. ✎



Philip Cressman, back left, and Alen and Lorelai Vollmer are from Nith Valley Mennonite Church, New Hamburg. All three kids say their favourite Relief Sale tradition is eating the tasty teaballs every year.



Leelind Keary of Kitchener, Ont., has been passing out popcorn samples for the German kettle corn tent for four years, something that has become a tradition for his church. He enjoys all the people he gets to meet, and the food. "We enjoy giving!" he exclaims.



Brothers Noah and James Carr-Pries play a Mennonite Central Committee board game. The brothers are attending their seventh Relief Sale and claim the teaballs as their favourite food.



Josh Chapman shows off his newly bought homemade strawberry pie. He goes mostly for the food, but ever since he was a kid he looked forward to the tradition of going to the Paraguayan tent with its animal carvings. Now that he's older, Josh's brothers carry on the tradition.



Mark Chapman and his wife, Mary (Neufeld) Chapman, left, have made attendance at the New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale a tradition with their children, from left to right: Thomas, Noah and Josh. They have been coming for more than 20 years, ever since they moved to the Waterloo Region. Mary says that it's good to know where the money raised goes.

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The 2012 issue brings together 24 papers by Russian and Canadian scholars for a special focus on Mennonites in Siberia: A Century of Hope, Suffering, and Survival.

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Volume 30, 2012

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To subscribe email: r.loewen@uwinnipeg.ca
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2013 Focus: Anti-Modernity & 'Horse and Buggy' Mennonites

Calendar

British Columbia

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

Manitoba

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

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

July 21: Tractor Trek fundraiser for Eden Foundation's mental health recovery programs. Breakfast buffet at Reinland Community Centre, at 7:30 p.m. Trek begins at 10 a.m. in Reinland, travelling through Rosengart, Neuhorts, Rosetown, Kronsthal and Blumenort,

and finishing at the Gretna Hotspot Festival. To register, call 204-325-5355 or toll-free 1-866-895-2919. For more information, visit www.edenhealth.mb.ca.

Ontario

June 29-July 1: Hidden Acres 50th 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 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.

July 28: 1812 Historic Peace Church Niagara Bike Tour; beginning at The First Mennonite Church, Vineland, at 9 a.m. For more information, or to register, call 905-646-3161 or visit www.mcco.ca/1812biketour/registration.

Aug. 12: Third annual Contemporary Music Sing, at Detweiler

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For more information contact:

Darrell or Florence Jantzi, Tour Leaders,
14 Nightingale Cres., Elmira, ON, N3B 1A8
519-669-4356 or jantzi@golden.net



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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.

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

/// Classifieds

Employment Opportunities



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

Mennonite Central Committee Ontario invites applications for the position of

**ASSISTANT MANAGER - BUSINESS
NEW HAMBURG THRIFT SHOP
NEW HAMBURG, ONTARIO**

This position requires a person with a commitment to Christian faith, active church membership and non-violent peacemaking.

The Assistant Manager - Business is responsible to the General Manager for the overall administrative responsibilities of the New Hamburg Thrift Centre. The Assistant Manager - Business works with the General Manager and the Production Manager to form the Management Team in the operation of the shop to ensure teamwork and a desirable working and shopping environment.

This full-time salaried position begins September, 2012. Application deadline: July 2, 2012.

Complete job description available on MCC's website at www.mcc.org/serve. To apply send cover letter and resume to Michelle Brenneman at michelleb@mennonitecc.on.ca.

Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date	Ads Due
July 30	July 17
Aug. 20	Aug. 7
Sept. 3	Aug. 21
Sept. 17	Sept. 4
Oct. 1	Sept. 18
Oct. 15	Oct. 2



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 or contact Jac Siemens at 1.204.326.2697 for more information.

LIVE-IN MANAGER POSITION JOB POSTING

Menno Court - a 178 unit non-profit, low income, seniors apartment complex in South Vancouver, is owned and operated by the Mennonite Seniors Citizens Society of B.C.- requires a Christian couple for the live-in manager position.

Position Description:

- The position is responsible for all typical manager duties (e.g. rent collection, renting out units, managing tenant disputes, supervising cleaning staff, processing invoices, liaising with trades people, purchasing supplies, et cetera).

Position Requirements:

- The successful candidate couple will have apartment management experience or work experience that demonstrates an ability to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of this position competently; the couple will also have good inter-personal skills and be self-motivated.
- A strong knowledge of the BC Residential Tenancy Act; candidates who demonstrate the ability to quickly become familiar with the Tenancy Act will also be considered.
- Ability to use Outlook, Excel and Word.
- Fluency in English; reasonable fluency in Cantonese and/or Mandarin would be an asset.
- Must be available to respond to urgent calls during evenings and nights from Sunday evenings to Friday afternoon.
- Preference will be given to candidates who have the ability to perform some repair/maintenance work.

Compensation:

- Annual starting salary will be in the range of \$48k to \$50k and be based on the successful candidate's proven experience.
- A one-bedroom unit with a monthly rent of \$440 is provided.

The start date is scheduled to be **September 1, 2012**.

Resumes should be emailed to the attention of:
The Management Committee, at fbuhr@shaw.ca

Only applicants suitable for this position will be contacted.

Winners announced



After winning Mennonite Church Canada's draw for Chris and Selah action figures, Rebecca and Andrew Stoesz place them in the family worship centre. The action figures are based on Mennonite Church Canada's 'At-Home' family worship resources, written by Elsie Rempel, designed by Megan Kamei and sewn by Mary Funk.

A good home has been found for Chris and Selah

STORY AND PHOTO BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada

Chris and Selah have found a new home. The action figures based on Mennonite Church Canada's Advent- and Lent-at-Home resources were awarded to Rebecca and Andrew Stoesz, aged eight and 10, respectively, after a draw held on May 1.

Michelle Stoesz, the children's mother, entered the draw by responding to an online survey about the material. The Stoesz family are avid users of the "At-Home" worship resources and keep them in their family worship centre, located in their dining room.

When Rebecca and Andrew were asked what they planned to do with Chris and Selah, they were quick to respond that they would use them in their worship centre along with the Advent-at-

Home book for 2012 as soon as the season arrives. The children have collected and coloured a stack of Chris and Selah colouring pages, available for download with related resources on the Mennonite Church Canada website (www.mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/1728).

Elsie Rempel, author of the At Home resources, delivered the prize to the Stoesz home on May 30. "I'm happy to know that these carefully crafted action figures have found such a faith-centred home," she says.

The figures were designed by Megan Kamei, Mennonite Church Canada's graphic designer, and sewn by Rempel's sister, Mary Funk. ☘