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EDITORIAL

Our electronic world

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

There is something eerily sad about summer coming to an end. One difference with living in Canada is somewhat more satisfying and uplifting than living in warmer climes—the warmth of the summer months seems to re-charge the human spirit, get one in touch with nature and families and unwind from the demands of a whirling, electronic-driven world.

Our kids go off to camp and are forced to leave behind their computers and smart phones. Families escape to the cottage beside the lake, connecting with the yodel of the loon, the rhythmic drilling of the woodpecker on a gnarly old pine, the chatter of the chipmunk—all mixing with the happy sounds of children splashing in the lake and teenagers screaming as they push each other off the raft into deeper water.

It's all so restorative and healthy, appetites growing bigger and bigger with the ripening of fresh veggies and fruit from the garden or farm market. Conversation, sometimes suspended with the rushing to meet schedules and other community/church demands other times of the year, comes easy and often as the long days give us time to reflect and share family stories.

And then, just as fast as it came, away it goes at the beginning of September, giving way to stocking up on school supplies, deciding on school outfits, attending endless sports and drama events, getting

into the routine of classes and homework, into office protocol, making room for church committee meetings, meeting newly-set goals of a profession or business, marshalling our talents and skills to improve and advance.

And the computer, taking a rest, too, during this respite, again becomes a central part of our lives, enveloping our waking hours with Facebook, emails, YouTube and zillions of apps that fill us to the brim with over-information and noise.

Aye, yes, the computer and smart phone—both a bane and blessing of our modern life.

A blessing because, thinking back 20 years, we can't imagine how we functioned without them. We don't have to wait two weeks for a letter from a family member coming through snail mail. Or to inform family members and friends of an emergency. We can now do that with the click of a mouse, the sending of a 140-character text.

We have reduced our carbon footprint in our institutional and workplace lives by having virtual meetings via Skype and other internet gatherings, can communicate with family, friends and associates around the globe without giving up precious time and using fossil fuels to get to far-flung places.

Medical, emergency and financial services are all delivered with much greater efficiency, the transfer of all goods and

services much more smooth and fast because of the internet.

And yet, how has our quality of life improved? With all this increased efficiency in living, we should have more time for reflection, for spending time together with family and friends, for a measured, thoughtful discernment process in our congregations, for more poetry and art in our discourse, more gratitude and less complaining and conflict.

Instead, our public discourse has grown more coarse and partisan, our attention span narrowed to about 3-4 minutes, our yearning for escape into entertainment and celebrity worship growing exponentially. Online adult entertainment, says author Bill Tanger in his book *Click*, has grown to a \$97 million-a-year industry. Facebook and Twitter account for billions of messages a day. Yet these are all one-way communications, shorn of smiles, hugs, intonation, laughter and tears.

Has the computer made our faith stronger, our vision sharper, our communities of faith wellsprings of grace, strength and joy, sanctuaries for the downtrodden and marginalized, centres of healing and hope for our tired souls? Are we impatient with the five-year Being a Faithful Church process designed for our congregations by Mennonite Church Canada because it doesn't spit out data and answers in five minutes, giving us a blueprint for action and a listing of belief and practice on a spreadsheet?

Our ecstasy and dependence on the computer has to be reigned in. We need to get in control of it and not let it dictate our lives and our spiritual well-being, becoming a dominant life force. We need to know when it becomes a curse on our shalom.



ABOUT THE COVER:

Zweiback, writes Marlene Epp, held great meaning for her Russian Mennonite ancestors as it "sustained them through tragedy, loss and fear . . . [I]t helped them maintain their hope in God. As long as there was zweiback, God existed," she writes in the feature article on page 4.

PHOTO BY DICK BENNER

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

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Industrial or Ecclesiastical?: **BLOG BY CHERYL WOELK**

Are we eating 'Just' Food?

Reflections on Food, Faith and Culture

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MARLENE EPP



Marlene Epp teaches History and Peace & Conflict Studies and is director of Mennonite Studies at Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo. Among other things, she teaches a course on "Food, Culture, and History." This article is based on a talk at the 37th annual Kitchener-Waterloo Inter-faith Community Prayer Breakfast, May 9, 2012.



Monique Kamwanya (left), Astride Kakongo (kneeling) and Anastasie Muswayi (right) cook fofou.

My partner Paul and I were vacationing in Mexico with friends in February and one afternoon, after a morning of whale-watching in the Bay of Banderas at Puerto Vallarta, we stopped at a Walmart to pick up some groceries.

Wandering through the cheese section, I found, not completely to my surprise, a large display of *queso menonita*—Mennonite cheese. I was not completely surprised because I knew that Mennonite cheese was a popular national foodstuff in Mexico, prized for its soft texture and mild flavour. Ironically, the production of Mennonite cheese in Mexico began when a group of conservative Mennonites in Manitoba chose to leave Canada in 1922 because they wished to remove themselves from a modernizing culture and establish separated communities in a country that more or less left them alone to live out their religious beliefs. Over the past 90 years, their cheese has become renowned in the country.

Here we see food, faith and culture intersect in interesting and perhaps odd ways. A group of people with distinct cultural characteristics and religious beliefs become known for a particular foodstuff that they produce; it is sold at a popular tourist destination, where spirituality is mostly at low tide, and by a corporate giant, Walmart—often critiqued for its “unjust” economic practices and for globalizing western consumerism in a manner viewed as unethical by some.



Laotian Mennonite sticky rice.



Congolese fofou.



Russian Mennonite zwieback.

My mind was momentarily dizzy with the intersection of ideas and images here.

For me, that *queso menonita* was not “just food” that would be tasty melted on a black bean burrito. It represented the faith-based migration and sojourn of a particular people that I consider my “denominational cousins”; it represented a symbol of their cultural and economic success in a context where they are often vilified for their isolation and church-based legalism. Its presence on this occasion in a Walmart at Puerto Vallarta, and priced higher than most other cheeses, made me wonder whether most Mexicans could even afford *queso menonita*.

The phrase “just” food was introduced to me in a travelling art exhibit that was in Waterloo last year in which 13 visual artists from around the world reflected, in their artwork, on the question of food “justice” and the right to food, framed in a human rights context. Sponsored by the Mennonite Committee on Human Rights and curated by Winnipeg artist Ray Dirks, the exhibit prompted a whole range of questions that begged a faith-based response to global hunger.

But another way to think of the phrase is to ask, are we eating “only” food? The short answer here is no. When we eat

certain foods at specific times and for particular reasons, we know that food is imbued with cultural and religious meaning. The famous phrase “you are what you eat” or, as one author turned it around, “you eat what you are” says a great deal about the linkages between our self-identity and the food we consume.

More than ‘just food’ when we eat mindfully

We are probably all familiar with current ideas about “mindful” eating—although it is first of all interesting to think about the fact that we can engage in the luxury of mindful eating in a way that was different for our ancestors who spent the better part of their waking hours in food production and preparation. And also different for the many people around the world today who are “mindful” every minute of the day about the source for their next meal. Today, mindful eating, and “just” eating, emerges in multiple concerns that we have about our food.

Spiking food prices combined with depleting food resources (or the inequitable division of those resources), has fuelled our anxieties about a “hungry planet.” We have been alarmed by exposés about the impact of “fast food” diets, a spreading

epidemic in obesity, and the increase in related diseases like diabetes. Our fears have increased about e-coli-tainted produce, meat and water; listeria; mad cow disease; and other outbreaks. In Canada as elsewhere, we have witnessed protests against genetically modified foods, pesticide-drenched foods, human-made famines, and the use of food for biofuels.

In response to these fears and uncertainties, many people, households and communities have become food activists. So-called “ethical eating” has led to a growing popularity in vegetarianism (and all its variants) and to the adoption of other food practices as eating local, urban and community-supported agriculture, organic eating, and the slow foods movement. For many people, this is grounded in spiritual beliefs about caring for the planet and God’s will that no one go hungry.

My guess is that we have all thought about these issues, and some of us have acted on them, with varying degrees of success. Indeed, I am one of those whose kitchen counter features Martin’s Ambrosia apples bought in February at Bailey’s Local Foods, cosying up to Dole bananas from Central America bought at Sobeys grocery store. Topics like “food

security” and “food sustainability” have become urgent agendas for experts and populists alike. Many people now call themselves “foodies”—people with a passion for eating, talking, and thinking about what we eat.

All of this is “mindful eating,” so that what we purchase and consume is not “just food.” But as one food scholar said, being overly mindful about one thing can lead to becoming mindless about another. So that our efforts to eat local, organic, and so on and our willingness to pay the costs of that, might make us less mindful of the food issues faced by others in the world.

And so food is not “just” food when we think about the disparities in the world today and acknowledge that there is no food justice when one out of six people in the world are malnourished. When Canadians spend perhaps 10-15 percent of their income on food, it may seem like “just” food; but certainly not so for Angolans or Tanzanians who spend up to 80 percent of their income on food.

Acknowledge food’s religious and cultural meaning

For anyone who is part of a faith community, we know that food is involved at some point, whether it is the community-building that happens at potluck meals, or the daily or seasonal religious rituals that are central to faith practise, or in the living out of beliefs through food charity. For faith groups that are also tied to particular cultural traditions, whether those are contemporary or ancestral, food holds extra meaning as a material and spiritual “thing” that ties us to our religious beliefs and our cultural identity.

In May I went to the annual spring roll fundraiser of the Grace Lao Mennonite Church in Kitchener. After purchasing 7 of the 700 dozen they would cook and sell that day, I went into the church basement where about 40 women, men, and youth were at long tables laughing and visiting while stuffing and rolling tasty pork and vegetables into rice paper wraps. The sale is at the heart of this congregation’s community life. Interestingly, the woman I sat beside who taught me to scoop up fiery papaya salad with balls

of sticky rice (what they were eating for lunch), talked to me about how her religious identity and the food practices she followed were both Christian-Mennonite and Buddhist together.

Other recent food experiences reinforced for me the essential connection between faith and culture. After the horrific killings at a Sikh Gurdwara in Wisconsin in August, I went to a vigil at the local Gurdwara where several hundred people visited over a delicious meal in one area while prayer continued on the other side of the temple. I was impressed with the last-minute preparations that must have been involved, but was reminded that food hospitality is central to Sikhism, so that a free meal is served every week at the Gurdwara.

Just a week later, I was invited to Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church where the local Turkish Muslim community served the *Iftar* meal that signals the end of daily fasting during Ramadan. I delighted in the passion of the fellow sitting next to me, whose enthusiasm for the food we were eating (he had all the ingredients listed on his Blackberry) matched his eagerness to dispel myths and misconceptions about this central Muslim ritual. I learned a lot.

My own Christian Mennonite faith tradition, in its desire to simplify or indeed eliminate religious ritual altogether, does not have such faith-based food customs other than the twice-a-year communion service. Yet, in our human yearning to imbue our spiritual expression with everyday practices, and vice versa—to sanctify our daily routines—we have managed to connect certain moments in the Christian year with our cultural foodways. So that during the Christmas season, my mother makes peppernuts, a traditional German cookie. And at Easter, we eat paska, that egg-based sweet bread from eastern Europe that symbolizes the breaking of the Lenten fast (although we neither fast nor avoid much at all during Lent). But perhaps more importantly for Mennonites, it links us to the cultural and religious past of our parents and grandparents in Ukraine.

Other foods from my faith heritage have different meanings: zwieback, a



Joung Srithongpan (left) and Max Opas cook spring rolls at Grace Lao Mennonite Church.

small, two-levelled yeast bun, is a simple non-exotic foodstuff but one that holds great meaning for my Russian Mennonite ancestors. It was a food that was baked, double-baked and packed in large amounts as Mennonite refugees fled their homes in the 1920s and 1940s as the violence of first civil war and then World War II overtook them. Since it sustained them through tragedy, loss and fear, I think it took on symbolic religious meaning as it helped them maintain their hope in God. As long as there was zwieback, God existed. For Laotian Mennonites, the same is true about sticky rice, I’m told. And, after a recent visit to Africa to join Congolese Mennonites in their centennial celebrations, I think that perhaps *foufou*—their diet essential made from manioc and maize—has the same meaning.

The spiritual role of food during times of death and despair is, I suspect, in the histories of all faith communities. In Nazi concentration camps, Jewish women sustained themselves by talking about and exchanging recipes for their favourite foods. Discussing and sometimes arguing about the best methods of preparation for various delicacies was comforting to the women who were starving—they called this “mouth cooking.” Before she starved to death at Theresienstadt, Mina Pachter compiled a handwritten book of recipes—a cookbook—and entrusted it to a friend who survived and brought it

to America.

Notably, it is on the role of food rituals and customs, and the importance of food charity and food hospitality, where much commonality exists between the world's faith communities. It is often at the food table where inter-faith dialogue thrives. The significance of food is universal.

Food is where conflict occurs and peace prevails

We know that wars are fought over resources, including food. And that in the midst of war, food is often used as a weapon to slowly starve soldiers and civilians into submission. I think of the siege of Leningrad during the Second World War when the Nazi army surrounded and starved that city for close to 900 days so that people were resorting to drastic measures such as boiling and eating their fur coats, or licking the wallpaper for paste, or worse. The close-to-four-year-long siege of Sarajevo which began in 1992, saw the residents lose on average 30 pounds due to food shortages. Food is often the cause of violent revolutions, such as the French Revolution. Remember Marie Antoinette's comment about starving peasants who could not afford basic bread: "Let them eat cake," she said. Food, in particular salt, was the issue that galvanized Gandhi's movement for self-rule in India. Food is also a site of conflict between peoples of different cultures, ethnicities, and faiths. We stereotype and develop racist or "othering" ideas about people because of their foodways. Such as when we talk about the French as frogs, or the Germans as Krauts, for instance. In Canada there is a history of racial stereotyping through food as each new group of immigrants arrived in Canada: in the 1950s it was the Italians as smelly garlic eaters; in the 1990s it was the South Asians as smelly curry eaters.

A 1999 legal dispute between neighbouring Toronto households over the smells produced by a Chinese-Canadian family's wok-cooking quickly became, in the media anyway, a clash of cultures over whose food was more "legitimate" or normal. In more recent news, United States President Barack Obama was maligned for eating dog as a child in

Indonesia, a choice of food which confirmed for some Americans, their racist notion that the President was indeed a Muslim and a foreigner.

But peace and reconciliation also happens when food is present, and food exchanges that lead to mutual respect and understanding are perhaps the most powerful examples of eating as more than "just food." This happened in the Sikh and Muslim meals I mentioned earlier. It is true in neighbourhoods, often places of unplanned diversity and where disputes over basketball nets or property lines can be smoothed over by the sharing and exchange of food.

On my own small street, whose residents are of multiple faith and cultural backgrounds, it is when we gather over food that the unfamiliarity of different histories breaks down. So that the Christian, steaking-eating, multiple-generation Canadian enters into a conversation about food and thus a relationship with the Muslim Palestinian new-Canadian woman who has brought rose-water infused tea and pistachio baklava. The experience and memory of these food exchanges thus provides an entrée for conversations to come.

Such peacebuilding conversations happen around the downtown Toronto street-food cart of Marianne Moroney, who sells hot dogs and gives away care

and compassion to the diverse assortment of people who frequent her cart. In particular, she works at encouraging attitudes of openness and acceptance amongst the "club" of children who are among her regulars, teaching them her trademark gesture—peace together forever. So now there is even a website, of a hot dog vendor, titled by that name: peace together forever.

Food, and the customs associated with it, provide powerful moments of civility and interruption to degrading wartime environments. I recently read *Peace Meals: Candy-Wrapped Kalashnikovs and Other War Stories*, by Soviet-born war journalist Anna Badkhen, who describes surprising moments of peace and humanity that occur in war-torn Afghanistan and Chechnya when food and drink is obtained and shared. She describes the food-based hospitality she received from Afghan families and warlords alike.

Food is never just food. It isn't just food when we are mindful of the ethical impact of our food choices on our shared earth, with all its living things, and on people around the world. It isn't just food when it is imbued with the tradition, hope, celebration, and charity of our spiritual lives. And it isn't just food when it brings difference together and when it creates a space where peace can happen. ❧

/// For Discussion

1. What foods evoke memories of your childhood, your family or your church? If you have special foods for holidays such as Easter or Christmas, what role do they play in your life? How strong are your connections between food and culture or food and religion?
2. How important is "ethical eating?" What motivates vegetarians to avoid meat? What other foods do people avoid because of the ethical implications? To what extent does the food you purchase affect worldwide justice?
3. How can food help to build community? Why is eating together important? What role do potlucks play in your congregation? What role does food play in times of celebration or times of grief? Can a wedding or funeral be complete without food?
4. Do you agree with Marlene Epp that, "food holds extra meaning as a material and spiritual 'thing' that ties us to our religious beliefs and our cultural identity"? As our Mennonite Church becomes more culturally diverse, what does that mean for the future? How will the next generation respond to the idea of "Mennonite food"?

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.

✉ Canadians in 1812 were patriotic

In Jonathan Seiling's series, "Landscapes of War, a People of Peace," he raises a few matters which are open to debate. Most Upper Canadians were loyal to the crown; many of them were United Empire Loyalists who came as refugees after the American Revolution. They began to arrive in the early 1780s and from that moment onward they were constantly faced with the threat of war from the United States.

Seiling argues, as does American historian Alan Taylor, that in 1812 Canadians did not have a sense of patriotism and identity which was solely Canadian. This theory can be discredited in one song entitled "Come all ye bold Canadians" which was written in 1812 after the Battle of Detroit. At the Battle of Queenston Heights, of the 1366 British who fought, 653 were Canadian militiamen. The British government was preoccupied with

the war against Napoleon in Europe and Sir Isaac Brock knew he had to rely heavily on the Canadian militia and Aboriginal allies to defend the province.

There were some disloyal Canadians; the most notorious was Joseph Willcocks, a Member of Parliament and republican newspaper editor. Willcocks was born in Ireland, not America, and was a friend of Brock. He remained loyal to Upper Canada until the American occupation in 1813 when he decided it would be best to side with the Yanks. Willcocks was instrumental in the burning of Niagara (Niagara-on-the-Lake) on December 10, 1813. He and his men torched 200 buildings, leaving 400 women, children and elderly to freeze in a blizzard.

The people of Upper Canada did not want war—the peace churches were not alone in their abhorrence of violence—but neither did they want their property stolen by the American invaders. War is not something to be glorified, but it is something we as Mennonites should learn about in order to reinforce our belief that war is morally wrong. Those who lived through the War of 1812 experienced terrible atrocities. Did they choose to become victims of American aggression? Absolutely not. We must remember them and learn the truth about their suffering.

—JULIE MCCABE, ST. CATHARINES, ONT.

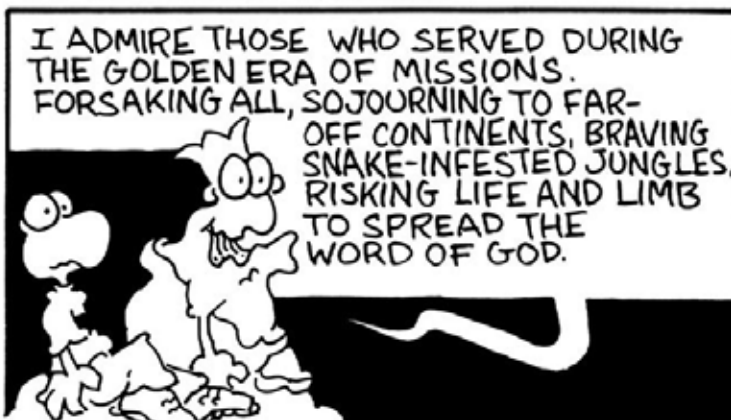
✉ Dress codes for those in leadership could help

I read with interest the two letters to the editor concerning respect for women and women's dress in the August 20 issue. I was particularly struck by the comments attributed to the female pastor who asserted that every woman has the right to dress as she pleases. Although it is not a problem I have noted personally, I have some sympathy with Mr. Kipfer's comments that people in the pew don't know where to focus their eyes, given the dress of some women in leadership.

While I certainly feel that many women could use



Pontius' Puddle



better judgment, I agree that a woman has a right to dress as she pleases—in her private life. However, as anyone who works in the corporate world will tell you, this right does not necessarily extend to her professional life. Every organization I have ever worked for has a well-defined dress code for both men and women, regardless of their position in the company, and managers are expected to ensure their teams comply. The policy of one of my previous employers was to send offenders home to change if the infraction was especially egregious. As someone who has given “the talk” on numerous occasions, I can assure you it is embarrassing but effective.

Surely it is not unreasonable for a church, or perhaps even Mennonite Church Canada, to provide at

least general guidelines, if not a specific dress code, for appropriate attire for both men and women in leadership roles. If guidelines are already in place, then an Elder or Church Council member must take responsibility for addressing problems as they arise.

ARLENE REESOR, STOUFFVILLE, ONT.

✉ Special women have shaped care-giving

Re: “Legacy of a holy hostess,” July 9, page 12.

While reading this article I found myself agreeing on so many points. There is also a group of women at my church who are aging and I too fear that this legacy will be lost with them. As a young stay-at-home mom

OUTSIDE THE BOX

The Man in the Yellow Jacket

BY PHIL WAGLER

Lance Armstrong, the man who wore the iconic yellow jacket seven times as winner of cycling’s Tour de France and one of the greatest athletes of the past two decades, has provided the perfect ethical case study for the world as we now live it. The American has achieved rock star status, and only partially because of his cycling exploits. Armstrong really hit it big when he conquered cancer and then amazingly won his seven Tour de France titles after surviving the deadly disease!

Having overcome cancer and the Pyrenees, Armstrong was able to parlay both successes into a foundation and branding that has raised millions for cancer research and other charities. All this is very good and quite remarkable.

But then in August it all got complicated. Turns out persistent rumours of Armstrong’s cheating were well-founded and the United States Anti-Doping Agency not only brought forward charges of doping and trafficking, but summarily stripped him of his victories. Armstrong, who never gave up in his battle for life, threw in the towel in this one essentially caving to the weight of the evidence. The man in the

yellow jacket was publicly shamed, but he didn’t even seem to blush, and many have run to his defense. Canadian thespian William Shatner tweeted, “I’m so sorry this is happening to you,” while myriads of others are looking past his unethical approach to sport because he’s doing the highly ethical thing of helping people with cancer. In the weeks following the charges, Armstrong was a keynote speaker at a conference in Montreal and, I suspect, the sales of his merchandise and yellow LIVESTRONG bracelets will not be hurt in the least by these recent revelations.

So, here’s the big question that



Is it okay to cheat, so long as you do something good with it?

requires some careful thought and cultural and biblical exegesis: Is it okay to cheat, so long as you do something good with it? It would seem in the case of the man with the yellow jacket this is where we’re at.

Something has shifted in the cultural landscape and while no one could argue that raising money for cancer research is

a bad thing, it is rather startling that for the most part we shrug off Armstrong’s unethical treatment of his sport because he’s doing a good thing with the fame the cheating garnered.

As Christians we ought to converse over this one a while. Not only will it keep the conversation heated while the coffee cools, but it provides an interesting window into how our culture thinks about doing good and doing justly. It also stirs big questions about how we perceive human brokenness and sin and what constitutes right and wrong. Furthermore, Armstrong has demonstrated no public remorse or repentance. It would seem the good outweighs the bad and, therefore, all is well. The scales will tip in a cancer fighter’s favour, won’t they? Hasn’t he, of all people, earned a pass on what everyone else was doing?

The nature of salvation suddenly comes into play, for as this cultural case study is beginning to reveal, to be on mission with Jesus who calls people to repent and enter the Kingdom of God will

require plenty of explaining in a world where what is unethical in a yellow jacket is ethical if you wear a yellow bracelet.

Phil Wagler is a pastor in Surrey, BC. The only yellow jacket he ever wore was of the rain variety. He is author of Kingdom Culture and a contributor on Mennonite Media’s Shaping Families.

I found myself more than agreeing with the article. I found in myself a desire to reflect and imitate the gracious hospitality of these women in my own life and home. As I look at my lifestyle and priorities I realize that something needs to shift to accommodate such an open and giving lifestyle.

Thank you for acknowledging these very special women who have shaped care-giving in our churches, most of whom are so humble they will fail to recognize themselves in this article. They are a wonderful example to us and I pray that my generation will glean all we can from them before we lose them.

REBECCA PENFOLD, TAVISTOCK, ONT.

✉ Move to sustainable energy urgently needed

The planet is warming and the climate is changing in dangerous ways. This has happened before, but this time it is caused by humans.

On Aug. 20, 2012 the American Meteorological Society stated, "There is unequivocal evidence that Earth's lower atmosphere, ocean, and land surface are warming; sea level is rising; and snow cover, mountain glaciers, and Arctic sea ice are shrinking. The dominant cause of the warming since the 1950s is human activities. This scientific finding is based on a large and persuasive body of research. The observed warming

will be irreversible for many years into the future, and even larger temperature increases will occur as greenhouse gases continue to accumulate in the atmosphere. Avoiding this future warming will require a large and rapid reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions."

These climate disruptions are hurting the poor and vulnerable first. This is doubly unjust because they are the ones who have contributed the least to the aggregate human activities which are causing the growing climate emergency. In reflecting on poverty and the environment, Ugandan Bishop Zac Niringiye says that the problem is not poverty but greed, and the global North's excessive use of earth's resources. He calls us in the North to change the slogan, "Make poverty history" to "Make greed history"

In addressing this threat to the planet, Haluza-Delay is right to say that "simple lifestyle changes are only a piece of the puzzle." As a society we need to quickly transition from a fossil fuel-based economy to a clean, sustainable energy economy. Fortunately the technology needed is already at hand to significantly improve energy efficiencies, and to generate much more power from renewable sources like solar, wind, geothermal and biomass. We can start this transition by removing the \$1.4 billion in annual tax subsidies to the profitable fossil fuel industry, as Federal Environment Minister Kent has repeatedly promised to do. We can put a price on carbon emissions and rebate those funds directly to Canadian households so they can finance their own transition to clean energy, as B.C. has begun to do.

"The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof" (Psalm 24:1), and God placed us in the garden "to till it and keep it" (Gen. 2:15). Creation reflects the love and provision of the Creator. Our respect and care for creation reflects in turn our love for the Creator.

DOUG PRITCHARD, TORONTO ONT.

✉ Fifty years of Peace

This is the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of the first novel, *Peace Shall Destroy Many* by Rudy Wiebe. Many Mennonites, especially Mennonite Brethren, were caught up in a wide range of responses to the novel. Some felt deeply dismayed by its appearance, others felt liberated. The *Canadian Mennonite* magazine of the day, edited by the late Frank Epp, made space for their responses.

In preparation for a historical assessment of the reception of *Peace Shall Destroy Many*, I am seeking people's memories and understandings of reactions to that event a half-century ago. Please email your recollections to me at ptiessen@wlu.ca or mail them to me c/o Department of English and Film Studies, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo ON N2L 3C5.

PAUL TIESSEN, KITCHENER, ONT.

from the past...
into the future

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission
Centennial Celebration Banquet

Friday, September 28, 2012 | 6 p.m.
Heartland Community Church
Landmark, Manitoba

Complimentary tickets
available at the
Evangelical Mennonite
Conference office
440 Main Street
Steinbach, MB
204-326-6401

WOMEN WALKING TOGETHER IN FAITH

Figuring things out brings surprises!

BY WALTRUDE GORTZEN

The status of Women's Ministry in Mennonite Church British Columbia was last reported on more than two years ago (see Jan. 25, 2010 issue). Back then, we were knee-deep in "breaking up fallow ground" and trying to decide which crops would bring the richest harvest in a new season. Much has happened since we "cleared, levelled, dug and broke up the land," and, step by step, bit by bit, we're figuring things out.

Rekindling the sisterhood between Women's Ministry of Mennonite Church British Columbia and Mennonite Women Canada has probably been the most difficult issue needing our attention since being reinstated as a full member of the larger body in 2010. It has generated lengthy conversations and required some serious "outside the box" thinking but we believe that we have come up with a few solutions.

The most frustrating question involved finances. How could we possibly contribute \$\$\$ towards MW Canada's budget when we ourselves no longer have any income, given that there are hardly any congregational Ladies Circles (past financial resource base) still active in B.C.? Asking them to send in contributions once again, was not an option!

After much discussion, the only alternative left was to somehow make fund-raising part of our two annual events. Sending a portion of the Inspirational Day offering to MW Canada was an "easy" solution. But finding a way of incorporating our financial plan into the retreat weekend was more challenging. Thankfully, God has granted new insights here as well.

Next, we needed to find a new way to use the women's "Bible Study Guide" (BSG) that is jointly sponsored by MW Canada and MW USA, which means B.C. too, is invested in this project. Fortunately, God, in His wisdom, often uses unexpected conversations and grants us "aha" moments of enlightenment to guide our thinking. Consequently, the BSG will be a vital component of this year's retreat weekend, and hopefully, at future retreats, thus further connecting us with the larger sisterhood.

While keeping track of attendance and age statistics for our two annual events takes some effort, it's also essential in helping us see where we're headed and two surprising

results are starting to emerge. First, the Inspirational Day has been the bigger of our two events for decades; it still is but—the age of the women participating has started to shift. For the past two years we've seen an increasing number of younger women enjoying this event. Very encouraging indeed! But we are facing a new and unexpected challenge—securing a hosting church is becoming more difficult with each passing year, due to aging and/or increasing busyness of participants.

So, has the time arrived to resuscitate some old strategies? Strategies, which seem to have been lost over time but were cleverly used by our mothers and grandmothers? Wondering how they did it?

Simple! The women would plan the event and set things in motion but on the day of the event, most of the physical work was done by either the male population of the congregation or by the young people who, often used the occasion as a fundraiser. It was a congregational effort! Our hope is that it could become that again in the future and keep this ministry going.

The second surprise has been that the fall retreat is showing signs of revival as our numbers have started to climb, ever so slightly, over the last few years. Almost 100 first-timers registered in the last two years. Our hope is that they'll all return and fill Camp Squeah to capacity.

And nothing was more encouraging and uplifting at the retreat than being asked, "Waltrude, who are all these women? I don't nearly know them all!" This, simple yet inspiring question, from a long-time participant, was such a strong confirmation—the retreat has caught the attention of a new generation! This gave the committee a tremendous boost to continue on the path of trying to chart a new course which is not always easy, but sometimes necessary!

We pray that the Lord will continue to bless our efforts with more surprises as we seek to figure out what will grow best in Women's Ministry in MC B.C., now and in the future. ✎

Waltrude Gortzen is the MC B.C. Women's Ministry representative and serves on the MW Canada executive. She's a member of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford.



Waltrude Gortzen works on a project with her granddaughter, Anna Jade Williams.



/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Dueck—Makayla Justina (b. May 8, 2012), to Mari Ann and Uwe Dueck, Springfield Heights, Winnipeg.

Fehr—Myla Elizabeth (b. Aug. 18, 2012), to Faylin and Ryley Fehr, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Froese—Kaleb Tysen (b. April 27, 2012), to Lorlie and Marcella Froese, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Funk—Brooklyn Shantel (b. July 21, 2012), to Alice and Leonard Funk, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Garcia—Hudson Matias Paetkau (b. Aug. 6, 2012), to Heidi (Paetkau) and Jorge Garcia, Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Hachler—Maele Nicole (b. Aug. 31, 2012), to Andrea and Kevin Hachler, Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont.

Janz—Lincoln Theodore (b. Aug. 7, 2012), to Chris and Whitney Janz, Rosenfeld Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Kuepfer—Blake Gerald (b. Aug. 16, 2012), to James and LeeAnn Kuepfer, Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.

Peters—Henry Zane D. (b. Aug. 16, 2012), to Curtis Peters and Valerie Dueck, Ottawa Mennonite, Ont.

Wittenberg—Katherine Marie (b. Aug. 16, 2012), to James and Rosanna Wittenberg, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver.

Baptisms

Brittany Struthers—Brussels Mennonite, Ont., at Falls Reserve Conservation Park, Benmiller, Ont., Aug. 19, 2012.

Emma Horvatis, Will Horvatis, Selena Sack—Hamilton Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 19, 2012.

Carly Annis—St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 19, 2012.

Sandra Hatton, Dallis Klassen, Joris Klassen—Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, May 27, 2012.

Abby Scheerer—Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Aug. 12, 2012.

Marriages

Armstrong/Edgar—Laura Armstrong and Peter Edgar (Listowel Mennonite, Ont.), in Brussels, Ont., July 28, 2012.

Beare/Hage—Graham Beare and Corinne Hage, Listowel Mennonite, Ont., July 7, 2012.

Dick/Palmer—Shannon Dick and Dustin Palmer, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., Aug. 11, 2012.

Drudge/Kocalevski—Ryan Drudge (Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.) and Jaclyn Kocalevski, Aug. 4, 2012, in Markham, Ont.

Dueck/Minions—Janelle Dueck and Alex Minions, Foothills Mennonite, Calgary, Alta., July 28, 2012.

Duke/Teichgraf—Henry Duke and Doris Teichgraf, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., Aug. 18, 2012.

Dyck/Kampen—Erika Dyck and Kevin Kampen, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, June 30, 2012.

Enns/Hiebert—Rachel Enns and Lee Hiebert, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, Aug. 17, 2012.

Gibson/Steinmann—Josh Gibson and Sara Steinmann, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., July 7, 2012, in Chatsworth, Ont.

Guenther/Litzenberger—Brent Guenther and Marie Litzenberger, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask., Aug. 4, 2012.

Horst/Mulder—Jamie Horst (Listowel Mennonite, Ont.) and Annalee Mulder, in Drayton, Ont., Aug. 25, 2012.

Howorth/Yantzi—Allison Howorth and Andrew Yantzi, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., Aug. 4, 2012.

Indzeoski/Neabel—Steven Indzeoski (Wildwood Mennonite, Saskatoon) and Esther Neabel at Wildwood Mennonite, Saskatoon, June 30, 2012.

Krahn/Mirasty—Rebecca Krahn (Wildwood Mennonite, Saskatoon) and A.J. (Andrew) Mirasty at her parents acreage near Saskatoon, Aug. 25, 2012.

Mulholland/Quiring—Reginald Guy Mulholland and Amanda Thoman Quiring, Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont., Aug. 11, 2012.

Penner/Rogalsky—Melissa Penner and Josh Rogalsky, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, Sept. 1, 2012.

Schindel/Warkentin—Chris Schindel and Caitlin Warkentin (Wildwood Mennonite, Saskatoon) at Forest Grove Community Church, Saskatoon, Aug. 3, 2012.

Deaths

Derksen—Peter R., 88 (b. Sept. 3, 1923; d. Aug. 11, 2012), Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask.

Funk—Helen, 72 (d. Aug. 4, 2012), Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Fuhrman—Mary (nee Kroeker), 87 (b. Sept. 8, 1924; d. Aug. 10, 2012), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Gerber—Eva (nee Erb), 95 (b. Feb. 14, 1917; d. Aug. 11, 2012), Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Gossen—David (Jim) William, 88 (d. Aug. 12, 2012), Zoar Mennonite, Waldheim, Sask.

Heintz—Beulah (nee Stauffer), 87 (b. Dec. 24, 1924; d. Aug. 17, 2012), First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Hildebrandt—Willy, 80 (d. July 17, 2012), Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Janzen—Evelyn, 93 (b. May 15, 1919; d. Aug. 14, 2012), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Janzen—Jacob D., 84 (b. March 26, 1928; d. Aug. 14, 2012), Bergthaler Mennonite, Altona, Man.

Penner—Johann, 88 (b. Jan. 8, 1924; d. Aug. 22, 2012), Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver.

Wagler—Raymond, 74 (b. Feb. 2, 1938; d. Aug. 13, 2012), Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Wieler—Diedrich, 85 (b. Apr. 7, 1927; d. Aug. 14, 2012), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Wiens—Art, 65 (b. Nov. 20, 1946; d. Aug. 28, 2012), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Youth create their own film to tell VBS stories

BY DAVE SARARUS
HANOVER, ONT.

Vacation Bible School (VBS) at Hanover Mennonite Church has been an inspiring ecumenical endeavor year after year, but the dramas of the MennoMedia curriculum were always a challenge. When it seemed in 2012 as though the VBS dramas were on the brink of collapse, the idea of having the youth film the dramas turned out to have the youth wholeheartedly engaging the Scriptures.

In past years we had the privilege to host a VBS troupe (a group of trained youth that travel around to various churches in Ontario through the summer) who modelled engagement with children and interest in the Bible as they led VBS. When we were unable to use the troupe, organizers turned to “in-house” talents and gifts. We had a photographer in our midst who added something special by sending each child home with photos of themselves and their group. One lively pastor enthusiastically led memory verse challenges and a songwriter created VBS theme songs that he found in his heart for the kids.

But dramas were a challenge. We enlisted keen participants to read parts, but peering down at notes stifled the movement in the drama, and many dramas weren't heard well. It was fun, but the dramas were not as effective as the well-rehearsed ones the VBS troupe delivered. We wondered how we could give an exciting skit of the scripture and faith lesson, while not demanding too much time, effort and commitment.

Then came 2012 and the idea was floated to the youth at Hanover Mennonite that maybe they could help. To address some of the challenges, we decided to film the dramas. Filming would allow those involved not to have to commit to the week of VBS and learning lines could be minimized with the use of off-camera cue cards. A third benefit was that we used the

curriculum Scriptures and faith focuses as Sunday school material. Each week we read through, discussed the Scripture and then brainstormed how we could write it up into a script that would relay our findings to the VBS kids.

The youth wholeheartedly engaged the Scriptures for the purpose of filmmaking, digesting them so as to feed them back to

others. The film series concept had a documentary host interact with the characters of each Bible passage (either through interview or interruption) and they called their series “Holy! Water.”

Truly the Spirit moved through this project in the fun and humour the youth had with the Scriptures, through their discernment of what the Scriptures are saying, and in the growth of working together.

The irony of it all was, in the end, the youth wanted to be at VBS to help in person. I guess they caught a glimpse of God's love in their work and it energized them to want to serve. Like the woman at the well in the Gospel of John, sometimes we find living water in the least expected places. The youth are already anticipating next year's VBS! When God's love rains it pours! ☘

PHOTO BY ANNIKA DYCK



Owen Sararus and Andre Wiederkehr act out a Bible story as Theo Wiederkehr films, Dave Sararus directs and Lydia Dyck supervises. The youth at Hanover (Ont.) Mennonite Church were very involved in their congregation's Vacation Bible School program as they made films for each day's Bible story.

Process begins for new Martyrs Mirror

By Kaeli Evans

Goshen College
GOSHEN, INDIANA

More than 35 people from seven countries gathered at Goshen College on August 5-8 for an international consultation on the theme, “Bearing Witness: A New *Martyrs Mirror* for the 21st Century?” Hosted by the college’s Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism, the international gathering explored the possibility of a major story-gathering initiative, focused especially on the theme of “costly discipleship.”

According to conference organizer and Goshen College Professor of History John D. Roth, Anabaptist-Mennonite groups have had a long tradition of story-telling, particularly stories of those who have suffered or died because of their convictions. In 1562, Anabaptists in the Netherlands secretly published a collection of martyr stories, known as *Het Offer des Heeren* (*Sacrifice Unto the Lord*). The book appeared in many subsequent editions, culminating in 1685 with an expanded version of stories called the *Martyrs Mirror*. The *Martyrs Mirror* is a richly-illustrated collection of narratives, hymns, confessions and devotional reflections with the theme of suffering for faith.

Since 1685, no further expansions of the book have been published, even though many Anabaptist groups continued to suffer for their faith. Suffering continues today, including in places where the church has expanded internationally, like Indonesia, India, Zimbabwe, Congo and Colombia.

Roth invited scholars and church leaders from a wide range of groups to discuss the possibility of gathering stories of costly discipleship. He described three main reasons for the consultation.

“First, we hope that the project might encourage deeper faithfulness to Jesus among all those who encounter the stories,” he said. “Second, the project should strengthen relationships within and beyond the global Anabaptist church. Finally,

we think it is important to stand in solidarity with those who have suffered for their faith, particularly the vulnerable and the voiceless who are easily forgotten in history.”

Participants in the consultation affirmed the project, encouraging Roth and co-moderator, Bluffton University Professor of Communication Gerald Mast, to cultivate a broad base of support for the research and gathering phase. The group also identified several important challenges that will need to be addressed as the project continues.

“There can be a danger,” said Jack Suderman, former General Secretary of Mennonite Church Canada, “of speaking about victimization from a perspective of power, or that we use the suffering of others to bolster our own positions.”

Other participants noted the logistical

and practical challenges of gathering stories from a global body numbering 1.7 million members. Participants also wrestled with the question of who “qualifies” for inclusion in the project. Some argued for narrow definitions—focusing the initiative only on individuals from Anabaptist groups who had died for their faith. The majority favored a broader scope that would include some stories of nonresistant Christians outside the Anabaptist tradition, as well as those whose suffering did not necessarily result in death. Roth noted that the title of the consultation, “Bearing Witness,” was an effort to shift the focus from physical suffering to the deeper reasons behind the suffering.

“Originally, the word ‘martyr’ simply meant ‘witness,’” he said. “This project should not be seen as an attempt to make a fetish out of torture, suffering or victimhood. Rather, we are trying to encourage the church to continue to ‘bear witness’ to the faith, even if it should entail great cost.”

A high point of the consultation came on Tuesday morning when various participants shared stories from their own experience. In addition to stories from the church in Ethiopia and the former Soviet



Robert (Jack) Suderman (left) was among 35 people from seven countries gathered at Goshen College to begin the process of gathering stories about costly discipleship.

Union, Alix Lozano, a Mennonite theologian from Colombia, related a story from her country of what she called “living martyrs.” For more than a decade, paramilitary groups and the national army of Colombia have fought to control the land owned and farmed by a small rural community in the southern part of the country. Recently, a multinational company also expressed interest in the land, since it is situated in an area rich in minerals.

Last December, the local pastor, who also serves as a community leader, was told that he and his community would need to leave. When he refused, he and his family received a series of death threats. Initially, he took the counsel of outside supporters who encouraged him to take refuge. Recently, however, he has decided to return to his community, accepting the risk of death.

“He has returned despite all these threats,” Lozano said. “The situation right now is very difficult for him and his family because these armed groups are persistent in moving him and his community. In these communities, their land is their life. When you take their land from them, you take their lives from them as well. This is a story of this community. They’ve opted for a nonviolent way, even if it means individual sacrifice. They are the living martyrs in our context. Even though they are physically alive, the strategy of those who want to remove them has undermined their spirits and threatened their lives.”

When the members of the consultation listened to these stories, Mast said, “we became spiritually united as brothers and sisters in Christ. This experience of growing spiritual closeness convinced me that gathering and sharing stories of costly witness in the coming years will strengthen relationships throughout the global Anabaptist family of faith.”

Gathering these and other stories, Roth said, “will require an enormous amount of work along with great sensitivity and care.” But he and Mast are optimistic about the future and hope to continue moving the project forward.

“We heard from many people from all kinds of settings that they need this resource in their churches and schools and families,” Mast said. “This need was often

expressed with some urgency and with the counsel to move beyond discussion toward action and organization and accomplishment of the emerging vision.”

Although the ultimate outcome of

the “Bearing Witness” initiative has not been defined, Roth hopes to make significant progress by 2025, which marks the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Anabaptist movement. ✎

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID HICKS



‘Senior’ cycles for Mennonite Disaster Service

BY DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent

David Hicks has Mennonite Disaster Service in his blood. After four short term stints in New Orleans, Louisiana over the past four years, his family—spouse, four children and a daughter-in-law—will accompany him on a short term mission with MDS as his 65th birthday present sometime this winter. In the meantime, between Sept. 8 and 20 he will be cycling about 1200 km, beginning and ending at home in Milton, Ont. (near Toronto), travelling through Buffalo, New York, and following the Erie Canal Bikeway to Albany.

From there he will turn north, following the Champlain Canal Bikeway to Plattsburgh, and then turn west via Lake Placid, Watertown, NY, Kingston, ON and Toronto. He writes that he expects to cycle anywhere from 100 to 140 kms per day “except perhaps through the Adirondacks. ☺”

“I’ll be riding my trusty touring bike which is a 1980s “old school” 14-speed bike. I’m camping out for the two weeks. The load I’ll be carrying will be somewhere between 20 - 30 lbs. I always do my trips solo although a church friend is going with me for the first day.”

Hicks attends the Meeting House, a Brethren in Christ Church, has a masters in counselling and another masters in special education. With both degrees, he’s been a counsellor to high school students identified with special needs as well as a special ed teacher for 33 years. As a certified mediator he has had a private mediation practice.

Mostly sponsored by family and friends, Hicks welcomes others to pledge to MDS via davidhicks@teksavvy.com. ✎

MCC PHOTO BY SILAS CREWS



Godswill Muzarabani of Zimbabwe teaches English in Laos as part of an assignment with the Young Anabaptist Mennonite Exchange Network (YAMEN!). Some of the same students he teaches are part of the peacebuilding club, Mittapab, that he works with on weekends.

Bridging Laos and Zimbabwe

YAMEN! participant from Zimbabwe develops respect for religions and expands understanding of peace in Laos

BY LINDA ESPENSHADE

Mennonite Central Committee/Mennonite World Conference

Godswill Muzarabani grew up straddling two cultures in Zimbabwe. His father was from the majority ethnic group, Shona, and his mother was Ndebele, the minority ethnic group, classifications that have led to a recognized distinction at best and violence between the groups at worst.

"I became a person who can relate to everyone," he says.

That ability served him well when he went to the Laos—formally the Lao People's Democratic Republic—with the Young Anabaptist Mennonite Exchange Network (YAMEN!) last year. There, he learned to respect different religions and different understandings of peace, and still value and relate to each person he came in contact with.

YAMEN! is a joint program of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Mennonite World Conference (MWC). It places young

adults from MWC-member churches in the Global South in other countries of the Global South for cross-cultural learning and service.

Muzarabani's biggest concern about going to Laos was how he would adjust to living among Buddhists and Hindus after growing up in a country where people predominantly identify themselves as Christian. "I thought it was going to be impossible," Muzarabani says. "I thought, 'Imagine living with someone who doesn't believe the same as me.' When I came, it was even worse because we even work with Buddhists."

It didn't take very long in Laos for Muzarabani to respect Buddhists for their peaceful way of living. From the kind way they respond to a mistake to the way they perceive conflict, Buddhists are even more peaceful than Christians, he concluded.

In Zimbabwe, physically fighting is a

common way to resolve political or personal conflicts, he says, but in Laos conflict is about the heart. The belief there is, "If you say something bad about someone, be careful because you might hurt their heart." This belief, however, means that Laotians tend to allow people to take advantage of them and rich people to exploit them, he explains.

"If I could take the two societies and mesh them together, Laotians wouldn't go out and fight, but they would still know how to protest and do it nonviolently," he says. "If people in my country would think about the heart as much as these people do, they wouldn't be fighting, but they would probably go and protest. Soldiers wouldn't beat up people because they know it will hurt them inside."

Muzarabani's assignment through YAMEN! was to teach English in a secondary school and to teach peacebuilding through Mittapab, a peacebuilding club for secondary school students. He graduated from Solusi University in Zimbabwe with a bachelor's degree in peace and conflict studies.

As students grew to respect him, and as his Lao improved, they discussed differences, like skin colour, but they also found many similarities: poverty, music and the value of extended family. They also discussed religion.

"Here, some are Muslim, some believe in spirits," he says. "They can sit down and discuss their religion and share. In some cases, people change to become Christians because of the example of the next person. I've learned how to give someone space to change, instead of pointing and judging and trying to convert them."

Next year, Muzarabani will be an MWC intern in MCC's United Nations Office in New York if his visa is approved. Eventually, he wants to return to Zimbabwe and stay there for a long time, he says. As the eldest son, he is responsible to care for his immediate family and contribute to his extended family, an obligation he wants to fulfill. He is also eager to bring together what he has learned in Laos and will learn in the U.S. with his own Ndebele and Shona cultures, working to build peace among youths and in his church. ❧

AMBS becomes Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MARY E. KLASSEN
ELKHART, IND.

The first day of classes signaled not only the beginning of a new school year, but also the roll-out of a new name as Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary became Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

“Much of our name is continuous with our past; we continue as Mennonite Biblical Seminary,” Sara Wenger Shenk, AMBS president, said at the beginning of her morning chapel message. The term “Associated” refers to a history in which two seminaries, one from the former Mennonite Church and one from the former General Conference Mennonite Church, came together to form one institution.

Wenger Shenk named four ways in which the seminary provides opportunities for people to grow to become trustworthy leaders of communities of shalom: to be deeply formed by the biblical story, becoming interpreters who can proclaim the biblical story with Christ as “the center of gravity”; to become fluent in the language of faith—theology, able to talk clearly and persuasively about what we believe and why; to be astute discerners of culture who can guide discernment around difficult issues; and to grow in spiritual maturity, willing to be honest with our longings, failures, and joys. These qualities are weakening in many of our faith communities



AMBS faculty, students, staff and friends wearing t-shirts with the seminary's new visual identity enjoyed a moment of celebration at the end of the “birth day party” for Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

which makes the mission of an Anabaptist biblical seminary ever more critically important, Wenger Shenk said.

The day of celebration began with an early morning prayer service. Gathering outdoors in the bright morning light, 23

faculty, staff and students shared Scriptures that have been encouraging during times of transition and change.

A “birth day” party in the afternoon introduced the seminary’s new visual identity. The new AMBS logo reflects themes of worship, community, trinitarian faith, gathering to learn and reaching out to witness and serve. All who attended the party could select a t-shirt with the new visual, with encouragement to wear it to help share the new name with the communities in which each worships, works and lives. ☘



Sara Wenger Shenk, AMBS president, led the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary community in a refrain, claiming the seminary's new name and logo in an afternoon party on August 28.

☘ Briefly noted

MC Canada hires Short-Term Ministry Coordinator

Cheryl Woelk has joined Mennonite Church Canada staff as Short-Term Ministry Coordinator for a part-time, term position until Feb. 1. Her assignment will initially focus on establishing guidelines, policies, and candidate review procedures for short-term service assignments. Her appointment responds to an increasing interest in short-term ministry assignments, said Tim Froese, Executive Minister of Witness programs. “Persons from young adults to retired seniors are expressing greater interest in using their gifts, but are not able to commit to long-term service. And we have wonderful international partners from whom we can learn so much,” he added. Cheryl grew up in Sask. and studied at Canadian Mennonite University. She served with MC Canada at the Korea Anabaptist Center in South Korea, and received an MA in Education and a graduate certificate in peace building from Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Cheryl is married to Hong Soek (Scott) and will work from a home office in Saskatchewan. She also writes a blog for *Canadian Mennonite*.
—Mennonite Church Canada



Woelk

European Mennonites inspired to reach across borders

BY SYLVIE GUDIN KOEHN

Mennonite World Conference
SUMISWALD, SWITZERLAND

Borders, they are everywhere around us and in us," observed Louise Nussbaumer, president of the French association of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) and former MWC Executive Committee member, at the Mennonite European Regional Conference (MERK) earlier this year.

"It is argued that they protect us," she said. "In fact, they isolate us and leave us alone and poor. Social, political, ethnic or cultural boundaries block relationships." But, she added, "Hands reaching across borders [is also] to recognize invisible, never-named borders in our lives, and find the courage to cross them."

The more than 850 participants at the gathering, held every six years, were often reminded that to reach out is an act. Many personal stories from Europe and beyond punctuated the plenary meetings. Some were spectacular, but all bore witness to the faithfulness of God when people were ready to reach out their hands.

During the gathering, many experienced firsthand the opportunity to reach out to the other: to the one who was there for the first time, to the one whose language was not understood and whose story had to be discovered.

In order for hands to be truly extended, the Mennonite Mission Services of the Swiss Mennonite Church sponsored an aid project for the marginalized Roma people of Serbia and Albania. It was an opportunity to learn to cross borders of prejudice with regard to the Romas, and to help break the cycle of poverty.

Each participant at MERK had been asked to bring knitted socks, underwear, school kits and emergency health supplies. And they responded with 190 school kits, 54 pails with emergency health supplies and with more than 500 pairs of knitted socks. A truck was hired to deliver the items to Christian organizations that will

take care of the distribution.

For Mari Friesen, each pail was like a seed that can bring forth fruit. Mathias Hofer remembered how one elderly woman came, bright-eyed, with 20 pairs of socks that she had knit. "Finally," she said, "there is something I can do with my hands, and I do it with all my heart." ❧

From reports by Elisabeth Baecher and others.



MERK PHOTO

A stairwell in the main hall of the Sumiswald Forum, where the 2012 Mennonite European Regional Conference was held, is decorated with 'hands reaching across borders.'

Pastor installed at Calgary Chin Christian Church

BY HENRY EPP

Special to Canadian Mennonite
CALGARY

The Calgary Chin Christian Church installed a new pastor, Leng Nawn Thang, on Aug. 19. Dan Graber, Area Church Pastor for Mennonite Church Alberta, officiated. Pastor Thang, his wife Hnin Tida, and their three children participated.

The Chin people are Christians, originally from Burma (Myanmar). The Calgary Chin congregation requested membership in Mennonite Church Alberta at the delegate sessions in March. They are worshipping in the Calgary Vietnamese Mennonite Church on Sunday afternoons with about 65 people, including many children.

The installation service included contemporary as well as some traditional hymns and the worship leader emphasized the importance of music in worship. The positive atmosphere and up-beat attitude of the congregation was impressive. Graber's sermon was on healthy, peaceful teamwork based on 1 Thessalonians 5:11-22.

Following the service participants celebrated with a fellowship meal, serving a new kind of incredibly good Mennonite food. ❧



Dan Graber installs Leng Thang as pastor of Calgary Chin Christian Church. Thang's wife, Hnin Tida was also involved.

MDS responds in wake of Bible camp tragedy

Severe windstorm killed young boy

By AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Volunteers from B.C.'s Lower Mainland who helped clean up Pines Bible Camp are grateful they could be of help following a windstorm that felled trees and killed an 11-year-old camper earlier this summer.

Pines, a Mennonite Brethren camp located near Grand Forks, B.C., suffered great damage in late afternoon July 20 when a severe freak windstorm ripped through the area, felling 150 trees in the camp. A tree came down on a hut, trapping a camper inside and causing fatal injuries. The camp had to close for the rest of the summer.

A Mennonite Disaster Service team consisting of Gerald Dyck of Chilliwack, Peter Andres from Agassiz and Vic Janzen from Chilliwack initially went up to make an assessment at the end of July. They met with Gene Krahn, the camp director, to see if and how they could be of help, and decided it would be a good project for Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS).

MDS then sent eight volunteers from southern B.C. to the camp to assist with the cleanup operations. The MDS workers facilitated registration of all the volunteers, including those from the area and others with connections to the camp who wanted to give back. Both adults and youths answered the call.

Much of the work involved removing and stacking logs, removing debris and putting it into piles, and taking away large debris with a front end loader. Many logs were taken either to be chipped or milled into lumber.

Miraculously, the new camp dining room was hardly damaged, so food services workers could prepare meals for the many volunteers eating in the dining hall.

Jake and Phyllis Epp of Abbotsford were assigned as project directors and spent

two weeks at the camp, living out of their RV. The Epps have previously worked with MDS on projects such as Los Angeles following the earthquake in the mid 1990s, the fires in Barriere, B.C. in 2003 and on the Gulf Coast following Hurricane Katrina in 2006.

Usually the Epps' work with MDS has

involved rebuilding homes after a disaster, so this was a different experience, but the couple find giving of their time through MDS rewarding every time.

"When you see devastation, when it's people's houses, their home is their castle and their self-worth goes with it," says Jake Epp. "When you rebuild houses, you can see that self esteem restored. It's rewarding just to see them come alive. Often then they will say, 'I feel good enough now to help my neighbour.'"

Although they already had plans to go camping in Oregon in August, the Epps knew they had to say "yes" when MDS called on them to minister and share with others. "The Lord uses tragedy as well to change our lives," Phyllis Epp noted.

MDS work at Pines finished at the end of August. ☿

PHOTO COURTESY OF GERALD DYCK



Volunteers with Mennonite Disaster Service clean up the damage from fallen trees at Pines Bible Camp near Grand Forks, B.C.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DICK HILDEBRANDT



On the first Sunday of the Olympics, Dick Hildebrandt led the children's time at the United Mennonite Church, Black Creek, B.C. He told the children about the importance of training and running the race to win, as the apostle Paul told us to do. He presented each child with a "gold medal" (chocolate wrapped in gold foil) and introduced them as the "Black Creek United Mennonite Church Gold Medal Team." From left: Jordan Merrick, Mackenzi McGrath, Kammi Ogston, Hudson McGrath, Tara Moon, Caley Beaton, Tyler Moon, Isaac Mohler. In the background are Michael Harrison and Wendy Carter .

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVE ROGALSKY



The closing program of Ontario Mennonite Music Camp on August 24 included Joseph singing in "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat." Ontario Mennonite Music Camp 2012, sponsored by and held at Conrad Grebel University College, Aug. 11-24, involved eight staff and more than 40 campers in an intensive two weeks of music and camp activities, including daily spiritual growth activities.

PHOTO BY DOUG BOYES



Those who met in August for a 50th reunion of the North Battleford, Sask., Voluntary Service unit included: (back row, left) Ruby (Isaak) Harder, Mary (Banman) Duerksen, Elsie (Hiebert) Siemens, Helen (Hildebrand) Ho, Rubie Penner, Diana (Zacharias) Poetker, Betty (Braun) Butterfield, (front row) Agnes (Voth) Regier, Anna Marie (Toews) Boyes, John Butterfield, Mary (Froese) Hildebrand, Sarah (Guenther) Guenther. In 1962, from May to Sept., they worked at the Saskatchewan Hospital. On Sunday, Aug. 19, 2012, the former VSers visited Hope Mennonite Fellowship in North Battleford where they attended in 1962. As young people they participated in youth activities, and taught Sunday School and Daily Vacation Bible School. Two members of the group were baptized at Hope Mennonite. The former VSers had the opportunity to tour the Saskatchewan Hospital where they saw many changes—the patient population has declined from 1,400 to 140. The group praised God for the opportunity to meet again as some had not seen each other for 50 years.

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

MCC PHOTO BY J. DARYL BYLER



Jameel Dababneh, Caritas Jordan's emergency response coordinator, welcomes a young Syrian refugee. MCC partners with Caritas Jordan, one of the organizations that welcomes refugees, offers material resources and links them to services.

Welcoming the stranger in Jordan

By J. DARYL BYLER
Mennonite Central Committee
AMMAN, JORDAN

At the corner grocery in our Jabal al-Webdah neighbourhood of Amman, a Syrian man in his early 20s now runs the meat and cheese counter. Ahmed (not his real name) is one of more than 150,000 Syrians who have fled to Jordan since his country's violence began in March 2011.

Young males seeking to avoid mandatory military service are one of the largest groups leaving Syria.

Ahmed wires his wages to his family in Syria and calls them each evening to be sure they are still safe. "The situation inside Syria is even worse than reported in the news," he laments.

A recent Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) report notes that, increasingly, Syrians are arriving in Jordan with only the clothes they are wearing and with few economic resources after months of unemployment.

I met Salwa, a Syrian woman from Homs, at a Caritas Jordan centre in the northern city of Mafraq. It is one of several sites where

young Jordanian volunteers are distributing Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) material resources shipped from Canada and the United States—thousands of relief kits, hygiene kits, school kits and blankets.

Salwa came to Jordan with her husband and four small children in early 2012, after two neighbours were killed and her husband's grocery store was taken over by Syrian security forces.

In Mafraq, they are renting a small flat for \$140 per month. "Everything is more expensive in Jordan than in Homs," Salwa observed. Her husband has not been able to find work in Mafraq. She said her family's most urgent needs are security, milk and mattresses.

Jordan has a long history of welcoming the stranger. Because of the harsh desert climate, the Bedouin offered three days of hospitality to anyone who passed by their tents. Amazingly, this hospitality was to be extended even to one's enemies.

Well over half the population of Jordan is made up of newcomers who have arrived

during the past 60 years. With a total population of only 6.5 million, Jordan has opened its arms to 2.7 million Palestinians (the original refugees from 1948 and 1967 wars, and their descendants); half a million Iraqis; thousands of Somalis, Sudanese and Libyans; and now to more than 150,000 Syrians.

This hospitality is remarkable given Jordan's current economic (unemployment rate above 13 per cent), political (weekly demonstrations demanding government reforms) and infrastructure (among top 10 countries globally for water scarcity) challenges.

Such generosity is not without risks. Jordan has long had a reputation as one of the most stable countries in the Middle East. But some analysts say ferment is growing. They fear that the new influx of Syrian refugees might push Jordan's tottering social stability over the edge. Indeed, many Jordanians have begun to complain about rising food and housing costs which they believe are linked to yet another wave of refugees. Others fear that groups like al-Qaeda will infiltrate the refugees and attack targets in Jordan. There are also reports of skirmishes on the Syrian-Jordanian border, as Jordanian forces help refugees enter the country and the Syrian regime responds.

Still, Jordan continues to follow an open-door policy and provides health care and access to public education for Syrians who register with UNHCR. But the Jordanian government and U.N. agencies cannot meet all the needs. The U.N. has received only 10 per cent of the \$40 million needed for Syrian refugees in Jordan through the end of September. Local charities like Caritas Jordan, an MCC partner organization, have become key players in extending hospitality to Syrian refugees.

Remembering our own stories of vulnerability is the key to extending generosity and justice to strangers. As Western Christians, we have much to learn from the Bedouin of Jordan. ❧

J. Daryl Byler of Washington, D.C., is a representative in the Middle East with his spouse Cindy for Mennonite Central Committee, based in Amman. This piece was first published on sojo.net, the website of Sojourners. Used with permission.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MENNONITE MISSION NETWORK



Benjamin Mubenga Wa Kabanga, president of Communauté Évangélique Mennonite au Congo, blesses one of the 16 pastors ordained during the Golden Jubilee celebration. White powder is a sign of spiritual blessing that family showered on the pastoral candidate during the celebration.

From refugees to church planters, Congolese Mennonites celebrate 50 years

BY LYNDA HOLLINGER-JANZEN, WITH REPORTS

Meetinghouse

MBUJI MAYI, CONGO

P rime-time television news, amplified guitar riffs and deep-throated traditional drums announced to the city of Mbuji Mayi that *Communauté Évangélique Mennonite au Congo* (Evangelical

Mennonite Church of Congo) was celebrating its 50th anniversary from July 23-27. These festivities, like the celebrations a week earlier of the church's mother denomination, *Communauté Mennonite*

au Congo (Mennonite Church in Congo), combined worship with teaching and fellowship.

In his opening address, the head of the church, Benjamin Mubenga Wa Kabanga, introduced the 20 Mennonites from three continents who travelled to participate in the denomination's 50th anniversary, as "real brothers and sisters—not strangers."

The two Mennonite church groups have a shared history until the time of independence in 1960, when inter-ethnic violence erupted. Luba Mennonites, attracted to West Kasai province by jobs with Belgian rubber and mining companies, were forced to flee back to their home province, East Kasai. Both denominations trace their roots to 1912 when Congo Inland Mission—now, Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission—arrived in the country and began ministry in West Kasai province.

Though the Luba refugees tried to maintain ties with the Mennonite headquarters in West Kasai, the polarized political climate, difficulties of travel and non-existent means of communication made this unworkable. In 1962, today's denomination, Evangelical Mennonite Church of Congo, was born out of necessity imposed by these constraints. Evangelical Mennonite Church of Congo holds fast to its Anabaptist identity, especially cherishing the peace stance, perhaps because the denomination has experienced so much conflict in the past half century.

During the Golden Jubilee celebration, a troupe of Mennonite actors re-enacted the life of the early Evangelical Mennonite Church of Congo where sharing with those

CEM ordains first woman pastor

LYNDA HOLLINGER-JANZEN

Meetinghouse.

MBUJI MAYI, CONGO

A lthough *Communauté Évangélique Mennonite au Congo* (Evangelical Mennonite Church of Congo) voted to ordain women as pastors in 1993, it took nearly 20 years for that decision to become reality. Mimi Kanku Mukendi was among the 16 pastoral candidates ordained on July 26, 2012. "The Holy Spirit came upon me in a way I never experienced before," said Kanku about her ordination when church leaders laid hands

on her and prayed. "I felt overcome by power." Belarman Ngalula Tshimanga, Kanku's husband, is a government financial officer in Bandundu province, hundreds of miles from his family. He also serves as an evangelist for *Communauté des Églises de Frères Mennonites au Congo* (Community of Mennonite Brethren Churches in Congo). In the short-term, Kanku will continue to pastor a congregation in Kinshasa where she lives with the couple's two children, although denominational leaders soon hope to assign Kanku to a church location near her husband, so the family can be re-united.

in need was an effective form of evangelism. The hospitality and generosity that allowed the refugees to survive and then thrive as they became a church continues. This daily witness has helped the denomination to grow to 25,000 members in 110 congregations operating about 100 schools.

Despite the emphasis on solidarity and peace, division continues to challenge Evangelical Mennonite Church of Congo. Efforts are being made by a mediator from the mother church, Mennonite Church in Congo, to reconcile the current leadership conflict.

Willard Metzger, Executive Director of Mennonite Church Canada, attended the celebrations. "It is important that we display our support for our global sisters and brothers. Conflict does not disqualify the church from celebrating a significant, milestone anniversary and expecting the

global church to join in giving thanks for God's faithfulness."

Dissent, past and present, could not dampen the spirit of praise during the

Golden Jubilee, however. The joyful melodies and irresistible rhythms compelled even North American Mennonites to dance. ☘

/// Briefly noted

Campaign to end global hunger

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank is inviting Canadians to become part of a Recipe for Ending Global Hunger campaign by sending a postcard to Prime Minister Harper, acknowledging the government's important role, and asking them to remember the needs of people around the world who don't have enough to eat. "The Canadian government plays an important role in ending global hunger," says James Kornelsen, Public Engagement Coordinator at the Foodgrains Bank. "By sending a postcard, people show that hunger is an important issue to Canadian voters," says Kornelsen. More than 70,000 postcards have been ordered by the Foodgrains Bank member agencies. "While sending a card may seem like a small action for one person, many people sending them will send a strong message to our government," says Kornelsen. Cards can be ordered at www.foodgrainsbank.ca/recipe. Canadians are also encouraged to write a handwritten letter to their member of Parliament, asking for continued support for the Food Assistance Convention. A letter-writing guide and more information is available at www.foodgrainsbank.ca/letters.

—Canadian Foodgrains Bank

/// Briefly noted

Mennonite Disaster Service seeks volunteers

Mennonite Disaster Service urgently needs Caretakers to be a presence at the MDS Hayne Blvd. building in New Orleans in November. A cook is needed in Birmingham, Alabama, Nov. 4-30. MDS continues to monitor the damage due to Hurricane Isaac and will continue to update the MDS website. Short-term volunteers are needed this fall in Bastrop, TX, Birmingham, AL, Cordova, AL, Joplin, MO, Minot, ND, and West Liberty, KY, beginning in October and there will be a need for foundation and framing crews in numerous locations this fall. Short-term groups for the fall projects (Oct.-Dec.) are now being booked. Booking for winter projects (Jan.-Mar.) will begin in October. The British Columbia Unit began work on a Partnership Home Project house in Minot, ND, where volunteers work with the B.C. Unit to demolish the remains of the damaged home and finish an incomplete foundation. Construction of the home began Sept. 3.

—Mennonite Disaster Service

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2012 TOURS

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)
 HOLY LAND TOUR with TRACY SPROAT (March 13-21)
 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)
 ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (July 23-August 3)
 RUSSIA and UKRAINE: The MENNONITE STORY (September 4-16)
 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)
 ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR RICH BUCHER (November 5-14)
 EUROPEAN CHRISTMAS MARKETS (December 9-15)

2014 TOURS

THE AMAZON RAINFOREST and GALAPAGOS ISLANDS (January 16-26)
 EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 15-27)
 SPECTACULAR SCANDINAVIA and its FJORDS (June 13-26)



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VIEWPOINT

The face of climate change: Reflections from Bangladesh

BY CAROL THIESSEN
CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK

Monjila Begum has become the face of climate change for me. Three years ago Cyclone Aila ravaged southern Bangladesh causing massive flooding and mudslides. Whole villages were swamped, salt water inundated fields and hundreds of people died. Hundreds of thousands more lost their homes and livestock.

Cyclone Aila destroyed Monjila's home, but she lost much more than that. Her husband now suffers from the trauma of the storm and can't work. She moved her family to her father's village of Gabura, a river island near the Bay of Bengal, hoping for a better future, but she hasn't found it yet. "Day by day we are becoming poorer," she told me through an interpreter.

To understand how a changing climate is affecting people in some of the poorest places in the world, I travelled to Bangladesh where I met Monjila. The 40-year-old mother of four showed me her small home constructed from mud and sticks. What struck me most was its location—mere steps from the powerful river, and on the wrong side of the mud embankment protecting much of the community. "If any storm happens my house could be washed away again," she said.

Monjila and her 17-year-old son eke out a dollar or two a day when they can find work. They often eat just one meal per day—and only rice. Koinonia, a Foodgrains Bank partner in Bangladesh, is helping people in Gabura get clean drinking water and sanitation facilities and Monjila is able to get clean water at least. It's hard for me to imagine living as Monjila does—constantly worried about her next meal, the security of her home, and the future of her children.

The story of the whole country is



Monjila Begum stands beside her house that is in a precarious position near the river

harrowing. Some 150 million people are packed into a low-lying country less than a quarter the size of Manitoba. Three mighty rivers flow through the country, branching into hundreds of tributaries that surge into the Indian Ocean. It's hard to tell where earth ends and sea begins. Up to 70 percent of the country gets flooded during heavy monsoons.

Bangladesh has made huge strides in fighting poverty in recent decades, but this is now being threatened. Beyond the challenge of geography, there are disputes with India over water and concerns over shrimp farms that damage nearby properties.

Now throw in risks from climate change. Bangladeshis are already noticing higher temperatures and rising sea levels. More severe storms are hitting, and

storm surges mean fields get inundated with salty water. Increased soil salinity is making it harder for farmers to grow their crops. While it is still difficult to directly attribute one weather event, such as Cyclone Aila, to climate change, scientists are increasingly able to link the increasingly weird and violent weather experienced around the world to climate change.

"When I see these people, it really hurts me how vulnerable they are," said Milton Bonik, a program manager for Koinonia, as we pattered down the river towards Gabura in a small fishing boat. "In some places we have droughts and flooding," he continued. "So we are very vulnerable to climate change."

Others in Gabura tell us their stories too.

"Now the total weather has changed," said Mohammad Mujibur Rahman, 52, through an interpreter. "When I was young there were storms, but it was not so strong. Now we see it is becoming stronger. The water level is rising day by day."

Mohammad used to grow rice on two acres of land near the village. After Cyclone Aila swept away his home and inundated his field with salt water, he struggled to get back on his feet. He had to sell his field to a distant relative. He lives hand to mouth. "In this area many people are just sitting idle. What should we do?"

"Before Aila I had a boat and nets. With that I could fish and earn my livelihood," says Ziad Ali, 24, also through an interpreter. "I could go in the deeper seas and sell fish to market." He lost the boat, the nets and his house in the storm, but says, even if he still had them, he wouldn't risk the more lucrative fishing in deep seas. He's afraid of worsening storms.

The Foodgrains Bank and other international development organizations are calling on the Canadian government, and other developed countries, to give more money to help developing countries like Bangladesh adapt to these changes. ❧

Carol Thiessen is a senior policy advisor for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank. She travelled to India and Bangladesh in March.

Rally raises awareness of missing, murdered women

By GLADYS TERICHOW

Mennonite Central Committee Canada
WINNIPEG, MAN.

It has been nearly a year since Susan Caribou's niece disappeared. An accused serial killer has been charged with the murder of her niece, Tanya Jane Nepinak, but there's been no funeral because the body has not been found.

"We want her back, we love her so much," said Caribou at a recent rally to raise awareness of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada.

Speakers at the rally said more than 600 Aboriginal women have gone missing or been murdered in Canada since 1990; about 80 of these are Manitobans.

Norman Meade, coordinator of Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) Aboriginal Neighbours program in Manitoba, calls it a national and provincial tragedy. He says it is rooted in issues such as systemic discrimination and poverty. The response, he explains, must be rooted in unconditional love.

"When we think of God's love, a good neighbour is a loving neighbour," says Meade. "We need to care, we need to love. Without love we don't have a footing to do the rest." Aboriginal women living in poverty, he says, are extremely vulnerable and experience high levels of violence. It is not uncommon for them to come to Winnipeg from rural communities looking for a better life. "They don't come to Winnipeg to live on the streets," says Meade. However, due to lack of education, affordable housing and other resources, some end up on the streets and eventually fall into addictions.

In addition to protecting vulnerable women from violence, Meade encourages congregations and non-Aboriginal people to gain greater awareness of broader issues, such as the support needed by families of the missing and murdered women. He would also like to see greater cultural sensitivity on Aboriginal traditions and spiritual beliefs concerning death, burials and the afterlife. For Indigenous Peoples,

he says, it is important to find the missing women so their families can put their spirits to rest.

This is also what Nepinak's family wants. "We organize our own searches—the last time we went searching was last week," said Caribou. "It is hard not to have a body to bury. We want to find closure for Tanya so that we can put her to rest."

Visit mythperceptions.ca for more information about MCC's work with Indigenous Peoples. ❧



Norman Meade at a rally in Winnipeg to raise awareness of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada.

MCC PHOTO BY KELLEY EWERT

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MCC PHOTO BY CHAI BOUPHAPHANH



During a 2011 visit to Saskatoon, Issa Ebombolo, executive director of Peace Club, a MCC partner organization in Zambia, shares Stephane and Leonie's excitement about being reunited in Saskatoon.

Family reunited after 16 years of separation

BY GLADYS TERICHOW

Mennonite Central Committee Canada
SASKATOON, SASK.

For more than 16 years Leonie Lwamba maintained hope that one day she would see her husband Stephane again. Her prayers were answered in 2010, when the family was reunited in Saskatoon.

"I feel like a bride," says Leonie. "From the moment I saw Stephane, I have had peace of mind. I feel joy." Their separation dates back to the 1990s, when the couple, along with their children, fled from violent conflict in Zaire, now Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). They sought refuge in Kenya.

Eventually, Stephane returned to DRC to help other family members escape. But once there, the conflict made it impossible for him to leave again. When he finally returned to Kenya, he learned that his family had found safety in Canada. Leonie and her four children were in Saskatoon. They arrived in 2004 through Mennonite Central Committee's (MCC) refugee assistance program, sponsored by Mount Royal Mennonite Church.

Stephane applied for refugee status in Canada, but waited six years for his application to be approved. "Before coming here, I was about to die—it was the stress of missing my family," he says. In Saskatoon, Leonie also waited. "Every Sunday, the church prayed that our family would be reunited and I knew that one day we would be together again because of the prayers and emotional support."

In 2010, Stephane arrived in Saskatoon, also sponsored by Mount Royal Mennonite Church. "The most joyful time for me is when I'm with my wife. I am so grateful to find her healthy and alive," he says. He's pleased with how quickly their children

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This family is among 70,000 refugees who have found hope for a better future through MCC Canada's refugee assistance program. It enables congregations and community groups to fund one-year sponsorships for refugees who qualify for resettlement in Canada. ❧

PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU



❧ Briefly noted

MEDA competes to win GlobalGiving challenge

WATERLOO, ONT. — MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates) has joined GlobalGiving's Open Challenge, a fundraising challenge for non-profits working to bring positive change to people living in poverty around the world. MEDA has the opportunity to attract funding for the EDGET project (Ethiopians Driving Growth through Entrepreneurship and Trade), which is helping 10,000 farmers and weavers to create more sustainable livelihoods. In just 30 days, from Sept. 1 - 30, MEDA strives to raise a minimum of \$4,000 from at least 50 unique donors. MEDA is also eligible for a permanent spot on GlobalGiving's website, an international marketplace for philanthropy connecting donors to their favourite causes. There are three donation options: \$25 will help a rice farmer in the Amhara state access seed and training in crop management; \$50 will help 20 members of a weaving group buy cotton thread at lower prices through bulk purchasing; and \$75 will provide 60 members of a village savings and loan association with training in savings skills. Donors can also choose their own donation amount or to make it a gift in honour of someone else. For more information, check out MEDA's project page at www.sparkingrowth.com.

—Mennonite Economic Development Associates

Before climbing into their combines to begin harvesting an 80-acre field of canola north of Elm Creek, Man., farmers pause to offer a prayer for those suffering from hunger and for God's blessing on the harvest. On Aug. 14, nine combines harvested this Canadian Foodgrains Bank project in central Manitoba in a field donated by the Wingham Hutterite Colony. In less than an hour they harvested the field with a better-than-expected yield of 38 bushels to the acre. Bill Lepp, one of the combine operators said, "This is probably one of the earliest harvests of canola in a long time." All over Manitoba an early harvest is rolling in for CFGB. "We have 4800 acres in just over 30 grow projects," said Harold Penner, CFGB resource coordinator for Manitoba. Eight years ago when he started his position, grow project donations were about 1800 acres.

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Food crisis in Sahel deepens as people hope for a good harvest

By GLADYS TERICHOW

Mennonite Central Committee Canada
WINNIPEG

More than 18.7 million people, including one million children, are affected by a food and malnutrition crisis in the Sahel region in West Africa, according to reports from an United Nations agency.

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is on the ground and providing emergency food assistance in Burkina Faso, Niger and Mali.

The harvest failed in 2011 and the crisis has been deepening since the start of this year, says Mark Sprunger, an MCC director for West Africa. Through early warnings from partner organizations, MCC has been responding since April.

"This is a very critical time," says Sprunger. "The Sahel is in the rainy season

and it is when food supplies are the most limited. In some places the rains are better than last year. There is hope for a good harvest but until crops are harvested, food supplies will be low."

Referring to reports from the United Nations, Sprunger says prices of basic food throughout the region have increased dramatically. In Mali, for example, the price of the staple food, millet, is 116 per cent higher than the five-year average.

Among the most vulnerable are small farmers who have a few hectares or less and hope to grow enough food to feed their families and a few animals.

"If anything goes wrong, they are in a bad way," says Sprunger. "If they didn't produce enough to last for a year, they use the seeds they were going to plant as a food source. When they don't have access to credit, they have to sell off assets, like their animals. If something happens to the cow that they use for cultivation, they have to

do the cultivation by hand. All these things make small farmers very vulnerable."

Other factors contributing to the crisis include the conflict in Mali that results in families fleeing their homes. In northern Burkina Faso, sparse vegetation caused by deforestation forces traditional herding families to bring their animals further south where violent and sometimes deadly conflicts arise between herders and farmers.

Working through local church development agencies, MCC helps provide food and grain to vulnerable families, strengthens two grain banks that give farmers a local market, supports food-for-work and cash-for-work activities and others.

Most of the projects are funded through MCC's account in Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB). The total value of MCC's response is over \$1 million. This includes contributions to MCC's account from the Canadian government.

For every dollar individual Canadians contribute for the Sahel food crisis to registered Canadian charities from Aug. 7 to Sept. 30, 2012, the government is setting aside one dollar in a matching fund. These funds will be allocated to charities applying for funds from CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) for relief efforts in the Sahel. ☼



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PHOTO BY EMILY CAIN/CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK



Lebane (left) and Umale (right) are part of a community group in their village in south-west Niger that identifies families who need emergency food assistance.

ARTBEAT

BOOK REVIEW

Zweiback Trail book keeps the stories alive

On the *Zweiback Trail: A Russian Mennonite Alphabet of Stories, Recipes and Historic Events*. Lisa Weaver, Julie Kauffman and Judith Rempel Smucker. CMU Press, 2011, 72 pages.

REVIEWED BY FRED REDEKOP

As the son of Russian Mennonites who arrived in Canada in 1924 and 1926, I have a positive bias towards this book which takes the 26 letters of the alphabet and picks one event, recipe or idea from the Russian/Prussian/Dutch experience and relates part of the story. It is packed with historical information, and very well-presented with many fine photographs and different print styles that catch your attention as you leaf through the pages.

If you are a cook, you will enjoy the borscht, the *rollkucken* and *zweibach* recipes. If you are interested in history you will enjoy the letters on Menno Simons, nonviolence and emigration.

The book has been marketed by CMU Press as a children's book, but it would be difficult to read for younger children. I believe it is a book to be read to children, as a way of telling this part of the Mennonite story. Children or grandchildren of Russian immigrants should read the different letters to their children, so that the stories do not get lost.

For me, it reads like a devotional book of "my" story. Each letter is self-contained, so you can jump all over the book depending what aspect you are looking for at the moment. Next time you are making *verenike*, you can take out the book, and turn to V, and find the story of this tasteful food of the Russian experience.

Finally, the book has a very personal aspect to it. On page for Z is the recipe for the dinner roll, known as *Zweibach*. The handwritten recipe for *zweibach* on the left-hand side of the page is the recipe of my grandmother, Lena Woelke Rempel. As



I open that page, I can almost smell the memories of my grandmother, my mom, and my sister as I remember the making of *zweibach*. Thank you to the authors, Lisa Weaver, Julie Kauffman and Judith Rempel

Smucker, for opening a new generation of people to this important story. ☼

Fred Redekop is pastor of Floradale Mennonite Church.

☼ Briefly noted

MennoMedia's first year

MennoMedia, a merger of Mennonite Publishing Network and Third Way Media, celebrated its first year on July 1. The new organization brings together print publishing and electronic media. Herald Press published 16 books within the last year. The *Waging Peace* documentary aired on ABC stations in the U.S. and toured in eastern Canada. Third Way Café (www.ThirdWay.com), a website geared for those exploring Mennonite beliefs, continued its strong tradition. A new curriculum series, "Real Life, Real Families," has been developed out of the *Shaping Families* radio program. This fall a joint book and documentary project will be released, focusing on the life and death of Dan Terry, a humanitarian worker in Afghanistan. MennoMedia is also publishing its first audio books in more than 40 years.

—MennoMedia

The not-so-typical journey of a Mennonite actor . . .

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Herald Press

Herald Press is the book imprint of MennoMedia.

BOOK REVIEW

Kreiders bring prophetic voice to the church

Forming Christian Habits in Post-Christendom: The legacy of Alan and Eleanor Kreider.

James R. Krabill and Stuart Murray, eds. Herald Press and Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2011, 234 pages.

BY DAVE ROGALSKY
EASTERN CANADA CORRESPONDENT

Alan and Eleanor Kreider, recently “retired,” have had a full life of ministry, mostly in the United Kingdom, but with influences throughout the world. Working in post-Christendom and post-modern Europe has given them foresight into what has been developing in North America. Some would see this as God preparing North American Christians with the prophetic and pastoral voice of the Kreiders.

Scholars are often honoured with a *festschrift* at the end of their careers wherein colleagues write scholarly responses or extensions of the honoured scholar’s life work. Lay people read such works as often as they read the scholar’s original doctoral dissertation—generally never. When the Kreiders got wind of this project they requested, “Please make of any such piece something that builds the church, something rooted in the daily reality of God’s people, something that equips and empowers followers of Jesus to live out more faithfully their calling as active participants in God’s reconciling mission in the world.” Krabill and Murray have worked at this in several ways—many of the respondents are common church folk and leaders, not scholars; the themes are immensely practical to the church in North America as it finds itself becoming more and more marginalized in an increasingly post-Christendom society.

Each section begins with an extended quote from the Kreider’s work over the years, which is then responded to by a variety of writers. As in a *festschrift* the writers respond to and extend the themes, but often describe how the theme has been

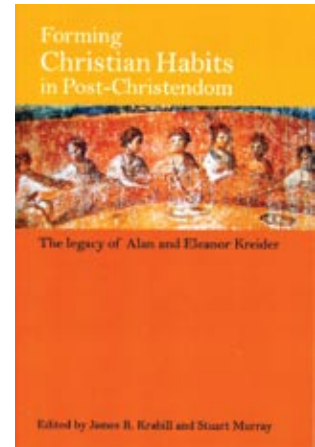
lived out congregational life and ministry.

The overarching theme for the Kreiders, and this book, is that God’s mission has a church. As some respondents note, the church is not God’s only tool in carrying out God’s mission in the world. The *missio dei* is, as Kreiders note, “In all these dimensions—humans with God, humans with other humans, humans with creation—God’s project is shalom, an all-comprehending wholeness (Col. 1:20). God’s mission is peace . . .”

Building on the interlocking themes of theology (Alan) and music and worship (Eleanor), this book notes that the church needs to both inhale—worship—and exhale—go out into the world to act in the many ways God is already at work:

speaking the good news, making peace, creation care, reconciliation, wholeness for the marginalized, and on and on.

The book covers much the same ground as Kreider’s *Worship and Mission after Christendom* (Herald Press, 2011), but the addition of the many other voices in this work, especially the “on the ground” reports from many leaders and lay people, fleshes out the theme of the *missio dei* for congregations and leaders in North America. Kreiders’ many years in Europe allow them to see the fall of Christendom as a gift to the church, healing us of the dependence on the power of society and the state to make our case for God’s healing work in the world. ❧



/// Briefly noted

New titles in Bible study and devotional series

Two new studies from MennoMedia in the With the Word series—on Matthew and Isaiah—offer options for congregations seeking new material for adult Bible study groups and Christian education classes. With the Word provides focused study on individual books of the Bible with accompanying devotions on the same text and theme. Each With the Word study includes eight to ten short study sessions followed by seven brief devotions on the on the same theme. Optional leader suggestions are included, making the studies suitable for groups or individuals. As of August 2012, the series had a total of four studies available: Psalms, Luke, Matthew and Isaiah.
—MennoMedia





James Martin-Carman was the only male to participate. He had some assistance from his wife who has lots of sewing experience.



Bev Raimbault with her mystery quilt.

Mystery quilt-makers learn about trust

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SHERRI MARTIN-CARMAN,
Hawkesville Mennonite Church

As Anna Brubacher was preparing to lead devotions for the Hawkesville Mennonite Church women's retreat, she came across the idea of mystery quilting. As the biennial retreats include piecing a quilt for the Mennonite relief sale, she was using the book, *With Sacred Threads: Quilting and the Spiritual Life*.

Anna was captivated by the authors' experiences of making a mystery quilt. The writers outline the technique in which, "the creator has at least some sense of control over the composition and design and placement of the fabric pieces." However for the quilt-maker it is "necessary to inch forward, block by block, while relying solely on clues distributed by the teacher who has already seen the completed pattern." The authors affirm that mystery quilting is a technique that requires trust in the creator who knows the outcome and surrender to trust in the process while giving up control.

Intrigued, Anna asked Julene Fast to

design a mystery quilt pattern that participants could work on month by month. An invitation went out for participants and Anna was quite surprised when 27 people, including one man, signed on. She had anticipated perhaps six women would make a quilt over the year. Each participant was encouraged to keep a journal about their experiences in the mystery quilt process, to be shared at the final gathering of the year.

Most of the participants were from the congregation, others were friends or relatives. Some were experienced quilters, others were making their first quilt. Some had never used a sewing machine before. Many pieced their quilts alone while others met as a group to cut and sew. Several bought new fabrics for the project, others selected materials from their stash of fabrics. Some struggled to keep up, working on several steps in one month. Others felt impatient as they waited for the next instructions and made more than one quilt.

In June 2012, participants gathered at

the church to share their projects. Julene, the creator, outlined her experience of designing a pattern that could be adapted to wall-hanging, lap quilt or full-bed size. "God-in-you and God-in-me and much beautiful to be found," summarized her development of the pattern.

As each person shared their creation, they offered insights into their mystery quilt experience. "A journey of ups and downs," remarked one first-time quilt-maker. "My stitch ripper became my best friend" quipped another.

The hardest part for many was selecting fabric colours when they didn't have a picture of the whole quilt. One said, "the easiest part was trusting Julene."

"The experience of working in a group was wonderful. When someone lagged behind we were all there to help," commented a quilt-maker.

One mother made two quilts, one for each of her children and likened the experience to parenting, which is also a bit of a mystery. "As I worked on the quilts I journeyed with my kids in mind. You start with the same things but in the end create something unique and beautiful."

Another participant joined the project late and was grateful for assistance from her friend, who had only completed the first step. She commented, "In life we think we can't help each other because we don't know the way. But all Marlene knew was step one . . . and that was enough."

In reflecting on her experience, Anna Brubacher stated, "Taking one step at a time, working slowly was okay. Similarly, if I look at too much, life can feel overwhelming."

In the devotional book *With Sacred Threads*, the authors suggest that in yearning to discover how God is at work in our lives "we proceed, often in the dark, making our way step-by-step. . . We may imagine that we can predict outcomes or control the design or in some way command how life will unfold. As the mystery quilt process teaches us, it is only when we acknowledge our limitations and begin to rely on the Great Teacher that we can relax into God's veiled or mysterious process. It is paradoxically then that life will and does unfold in ways we often cannot possibly foresee." ❧



This painting by Ray Dirks tells the story of Agatha Harms Reimer who escaped from the Soviet Union with three sons after World War 2. It is part of the "Along the Road to Freedom" collection which opens at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery on Sunday, Oct. 14. Agatha, the grandmother of Dirks' wife, lived to be 103.

Art exhibit to tell 'Road to Freedom' stories

Ray Dirks to paint stories of refugee mothers

BY HAROLD JANTZ
WINNIPEG

Ray Dirks, curator and artist, has embarked on a project to paint as many as twenty canvasses to tell the stories of Mennonite women who brought their families out of the Soviet Union amid the confusion and turmoil of the waning months of World War 2. The first selection will be ready for an opening on Oct. 14, at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery

where Dirks is the curator.

He is doing this work at the request of refugee children and grandchildren who wanted to honour the mothers who brought them to safety—and eventually to Canada—nearly 70 years ago. It has been approximately 75 years since the fathers of most of them were taken during the Stalin purges of the late 1930s. The committee consists

of Henry Bergen, Nettie Dueck, John Funk and Wanda Andres, all of Winnipeg.

Dirks will be painting canvasses commissioned by family groups, MCC, and Friends of the Ukraine, in each case incorporating a number of scenes into a canvass. Dirks, who has given much of his attention in recent years to the art of people of African and Asian backgrounds, has long wanted to reflect stories out of his own stream of Mennonite history. He fears they are being lost.

One of his paintings will depict a great-aunt who arrived alone in Canada after World War 2. She bore five children; three died young and two were taken from her when she was fleeing Russia. She never saw them again. Her husband was arrested during the Stalin purges and never returned.

Dirks remembers her as a “gracious, lovely, faithful woman” and that’s how he has tried to paint her. However, hers will be the one painting that has the image of Joseph Stalin on it. Dirks says, “many people who’ve sponsored a painting have said they don’t want them to be horrible; they want them to be positive,” so they don’t want Stalin on it.

The faith that God was watching out for them gave many of the women the ability to deal with the fears and losses they experienced. There is a notable sense of “grace and forgiveness and absence of revenge” in the people who lost so much during their years in the Soviet Union, says Dirks. One of the paintings will be sponsored by Friends of the Ukraine, a group organized specifically to assist in Ukraine’s reconstruction after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The name of this art project is “Along the Road to Freedom.” It recalls the trek many families made in escaping the Soviet Union. Mennonites from various scattered colonies in Ukraine joined the retreating German army in the fall of 1943. Among them was Henry Bergen’s family and almost everyone in his village of Gnadenthal, in the colony of Baratov. Provisions and some precious items were loaded on perhaps 60 or 70 carts.

Bergen remembers that after travelling with his mother, two brothers and a sister through mud and snow for a month and a half, they were put on a train and taken further west. He recalls reaching a town on the Oder River not far east of Berlin. His mother was sitting quietly on a pallet of straw in the school where they were being housed as the Russians were shelling the town. Suddenly she told her children, “Now, let’s go.” She gathered her children and led them to a train station where a hospital train was ready to leave. “We were allowed,” says Bergen. “As I understood, we were the last train before the bridge was destroyed.”

The family reached Potsdam, but then went through the terrible bombing of the city in April 1945. From there they lost each other for a time. His sister remained there when the others fled from the city. Bergen and one of his brothers were separated from his mother and other brother. Through the sister the boys and mother were eventually reunited in 1946.

By late 1947, with the help of relatives, the family came to Canada. They were always grateful that they didn’t suffer the fate of many who fled Russia, but later forced to return. Of the 35,000 Mennonite refugees who reached Poland or Germany, approximately two-thirds were taken back, large numbers of them directly into northern Russia or Siberia, where many of them perished.

In recent years Bergen learned that his father was executed soon after his arrest in 1937. Women like his mother faced very difficult decisions, he says. “She carried the weight of keeping the kids together. She said, ‘What will Dad say if I lost my kids?’ Normally couples supported each other, now

the weight was all on the mothers’ shoulders. That story needs to be remembered.”

Each of the 20 paintings in the “Along the Road to Freedom” project will tell its own story. When the exhibition ends in Jan. 2013, the paintings will be available to travel. Churches will also be able to display the paintings at events that tell the stories of the refugee experience. One exhibition is already scheduled for Steinbach, Manitoba. Eventually the paintings will find permanent homes in Winnipeg. ❧

Harold Jantz is former editor of the Mennonite Brethren Herald and a member of River East MB Church, Winnipeg.

New book explores influence of Erasmus on early Reformers

STORY AND PHOTO BY MARY E. KLASSEN

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
ELKHART, IND.

Reformers, Radicals, Revolutionaries: Anabaptism in the Context of the Reformation Conflict, a new book by Abraham Friesen, was released recently by the Institute of Mennonite Studies.

In this new volume, Friesen, a scholar of early Anabaptism, explores the influence of Dutch theologian Erasmus on the early Anabaptists, carrying on from work in his earlier book, *Erasmus, the Anabaptists, and the Great Commission*.

John Rempel, the institute’s associate director, notes that this volume presents additional evidence for the direct influence of Erasmus on the thinking of Swiss and Dutch Anabaptism. “The glowing centre of *Reformers, Radicals, Revolutionaries* is the significance of Augustine’s reinterpretation of the parable of wheat and tares, and the changed meaning he gave to the tares,” according to Rempel.

Friesen shows the Anabaptist challenge to this interpretation and its consequences. The Magisterial Reformers accepted Augustine’s interpretation that both the wheat and the tares represented the church and its identity as a “mixed multitude” of believers and unbelievers. The Radicals insisted, in a literal reading of the text, that



Abe Friesen, author of Reformers, Radicals, Revolutionaries, talks with Ben Ollenburger at a celebration of the release of the new book.

the wheat represented a pure church and the tares a fallen world.

Friesen is emeritus professor of Renaissance and Reformation history at the University of California at Santa Barbara. He also is author of *Reformation and Utopia: The Marxist Interpretation of the Reformation and its Antecedents* (1974), *Thomas Müntzer, A Destroyer of the Godless* (1990), and *In Defense of Privilege: Russian Mennonites and the State Before and During World War I* (2006). ❧

Two Canadian speakers added to Shaping Families roster

Melissa Miller and Phil Wagler join team of rotating radio speakers

MennoMedia



Two new “My Turn” speakers, both from Canada, have been added to a team of commentators who respond to each interview guest on the *Shaping Families* radio program. *Shaping Families* was launched in 2010 to address tough family issues from a faith perspective and includes guest interviewees each week.

Phil Wagler, lead pastor of Gracepoint Community Church in Surrey, British Columbia, and writer of the “Outside the Box” column for *Canadian Mennonite* joins the program for the first time September 8. Melissa Miller, pastor of



Wagler

Springstein Mennonite Church southwest of Winnipeg, Manitoba, also a columnist for *Canadian Mennonite* on “Family Ties,” joins the program on October 13. Their “turns” will occur about every six weeks, depending on topics.

Wagler also writes a blog, *THEOphilUS* on blogspot.com and is author of the book *Kingdom Culture: Growing the Missional Church* published by Word Alive Press, 2009. He graduated from Emmanuel Bible College and Tyndale Seminary and has been a pastor in Ontario. Phil and his wife, Jen, have four children.

In addition to serving as pastor, Miller is currently chair of the board of MennoMedia and a part-time counselor at Recovery of Hope in Winnipeg. She has a master’s degree in psychology from the University of Waterloo as well as a master of divinity degree from Associated Mennonite Bible Seminary. A native of Pennsylvania, Miller has lived in Canada since 1978. She



Miller

and her husband, Dean Peachey, are the parents of one adult son. She is the author *Family Violence: The Compassionate Church Responds* (Herald Press, 1994), and a regular contributor to *Rejoice!* devotional magazine.

Three stations in Canada were recently added to the roster of stations airing *Shaping Families*: Faith FM 94.3 in Kitchener, Ont. on Saturdays at 11:45

a.m., sponsored by the St. Jacob’s Farmer’s Market and Stone Crock restaurant; CFCJ (102.1 FM) in Cochrane, Ontario, airing daily Monday through Friday at 9 a.m., sponsored by Hunta Mennonite Church; and CFED-FM in The Pas, Manitoba, Wednesday evenings.

All programs can also be found online at www.ShapingFamilies.com. The three-minute inspirational responses by Wagler and Miller can be heard and read online after their program air dates of September 8 and October 13, respectively, under “My Turn.” The program is hosted by Burton Buller and Melodie Davis and produced by MennoMedia, an agency of Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada.

A complete station listing can be found at www.ShapingFamilies.com/stations.asp. ☞

Real Life, Real Families: new audio study launched

MennoMedia

MennoMedia has launched a new audio curriculum, *Real Life, Real Families*, developed out of its weekly 15-minute radio program, *Shaping Families*. *Real Life, Real Families: Listen & Talk Series 1* is designed for Sunday school classes, small groups, parenting groups, and any group wanting to deal with family issues.

“We know that family life is important to individuals, churches, and the broader community,” says Amy Gingerich, director of print media for MennoMedia. “We hope this new study piece will enhance conversation using the real stories of families and experts on family topics. The audio pieces can serve as a springboard for conversation—sometimes on difficult topics.” Audio segments range in length between three and eight minutes.

The curriculum features interviews with Ken Medema, Ervin Stutzman, Gloria Rhodes, and Kirsten Klassen, among others.



It also includes inspirational “My Turn” segments by rotating *Shaping Families* speakers, Natalie Francisco, Steve Carpenter, Rebecca Thatcher Murcia, Harvey Yoder, Sam Heatwole, and Emily Ralph.

Structured into three units of four lessons each, the curriculum is flexible so that groups can

use as many or as few lessons as they want. Units include: “Seeds for Healthy Families,” “Raising Children,” and “Families in Today’s Culture.” Topics include marriage, divorce, intergenerational families, memories, early parenthood, working and parenting, media, substance abuse, family meal time, and teaching peace to children. The printed leader’s guide includes Scripture passages, Bible backgrounds, suggestions for gathering times, discussion questions, and ideas for closing moments. The curriculum comes as three audio CDs or in downloadable format. A sample lesson is available at www.MennoMedia.org. ☞

Relationships of laughter and healing

Reflections on our summer in Pauingassi

BY MELANIE KAMPEN

Special to Young Voices

On June 10, Gabriella Neufeld, Sarah Pries, and I were put to work preparing supper for 100 people in Pauingassi First Nation (PFN). It marked the start of a three-day fishing derby put on by Child and Family Services (CFS), and to celebrate CFS was planning a supper at their community cabin.

The three of us arrived with boxes of pork chops and chicken for us to barbecue. There was only one minor problem: none of us had ever used a barbecue before—and neither had the other local women there. But we were determined to try, and to prove ourselves to the community. So we got to work barbecuing the pork chops first.

When we finished we went to show the fruits of our labour to one of the women in charge of the meal. She cut the pork chop in half and took one look at the inside (which was perfectly done) and started laughing. She cut a few more of our perfectly done pork chops and told us that no one would eat them like this, that they were raw.

So back to the barbecue we went to grill them all a second time, throwing our caution to the wind. Then we brought them back to the same woman. We lifted the lid of the pot and once again she laughed—this time at the blackened pork chops. When the derby fishers and their families began to arrive on the shore, we watched our pots of pork from a distance. Slowly but surely they lined up and helped themselves to the chops, and the women serving the food were sure to point to the three white girls standing by the barbecue who had spent the afternoon grilling all the meat for the meal.

The community laughed. We laughed. And we all enjoyed some burnt pork chops and good company. Turns out there's nothing quite like burnt pork chops to build relationships.

Gabriella, Sarah and I found ourselves in Pauingassi for the summer through an initiative of Mennonite Church Manitoba called Partnership Circles. It brings together Mennonite congregations in southern Manitoba with Native communities in the north.

At a Partnership Circle meeting in the fall of 2010, Allan Owen, pastor at Pauingassi First Nation Apostolic Church, invited Grace Mennonite Church in Steinbach to partner with their community. The purpose is to build each other up and learn from one another.

This partnership began in the summer of 2011 with a week of Family Camp put on by the church and PFN, which continued this year, and is in the works for next summer. Our summer work was also funded by a grant through Southeast CFS. This program was meant to engage children ages 5-13 in structured and creative play, learning and practicing new skills, and preoccupying them throughout the long summer days when school is out.

As the story above illustrates, we experienced much foolishness and laughter during our summer in Pauingassi. There is a particular culture of humour in which relationships are built around laughing together at oneself and each other. When someone does something foolish, or makes a mistake, the immediate response of the



Building relationships in Pauingassi are (from left): Sharron, Sarah Pries, Emilio, Gabriella Neufeld, Melanie Kampen, Nikeisha, Hannah, (in front) Blake, and Alyssa.



Caught in a canoe traffic jam are Sarah Pries and Melanie Kampen with children from Pauingassi First Nation (from left): Cole, Cameron, Malichi, Emilio, Layla and Ariel.



Maylynn, Sam, Gabriella Neufeld and Rena spend time together on a barge in Pauingassi.

community is laughter.

In western society this seems strange; in our striving for perfection we tend to hide our mistakes in embarrassment and shame. Or, if someone trips and falls we think we ought to make sure they are alright before we can joke about it—it is a response of concern and anxiety.

But what happens psychologically and emotionally when someone does something foolish and the immediate community responds with laughter? It is uplifting; the fool is compelled to laugh as well. The laughter at the mistakes of others and at ones own foolishness has a healing effect.

In his book, *Seeking Mino-Pimatisiwin: An Aboriginal Approach to Helping*, Michael Anthony Hart writes that humour is an “important factor in the helping process. . . . Humour supports the release of tension and energy. It supports knowledge development since much can be learned from the laughter stemming from particular situations.”

Acknowledging our imperfections, our brokenness as people, and learning to

laugh with each other at ourselves, was one significant way we began to build relationships of trust, sharing, and love with people who live their lives radically different from us. Through experiences like this, we have seen how God is working in Pauingassi, and bringing healing to two different peoples, the local Anishinaabe and Mennonites living in Manitoba. ❧

Melanie Kampen is enrolled in the Masters of Theological Studies program at Conrad Grebel University College. She is a member of Springfield Heights Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.

Gabriella Neufeld is finishing her degree in Education at the University of Winnipeg. She is a member of Grace Mennonite Church in Steinbach.

Sarah Pries recently finished a Bachelor of Science at the University of Waterloo and is taking the next year off to work. She is a member of Grace Mennonite Church in Steinbach.

Things I learned in high school

Reflections on how Westgate Mennonite Collegiate shaped a former student

BY AARON EPP

Special to Young Voices

This past August, my friend and I hosted our 10-year high school reunion. It was fun to reconnect with a number of the 60 people we graduated with from Westgate Mennonite Collegiate in 2002.

Now, if you ask me about math, science, history or language arts, there are only about three things I can easily remember that I learned while attending Westgate from Grades 7 to 12:

1. The moon does not produce its own light, but rather, it reflects light from the sun.
2. When you hand in an assignment, it's a good idea to include a title page.
3. E.E. Cummings wrote some nice poetry.

You're probably thinking it's really too bad if that's the only knowledge I walked away from the school with. But as I was

thinking about the reunion, I reflected on three of the ways Westgate—a Christian school grounded in the Anabaptist tradition—shaped me.

1. At Westgate, I learned leadership skills.

For most of my time at Westgate, I was involved with the Student Council and the school's Peer Support group. I learned lessons that are still valuable for me today in my work as the managing editor of a small newspaper with a staff of 14. Some of the things I learned were fairly minor, like how to come up with a meeting agenda, and how to lead a focused meeting.

But some of the things were definitely more major: How to be a person of integrity; how to actively listen to people

when they are presenting an idea or voicing a concern; how to solve conflicts in a respectful way where all parties involved walk away feeling good about the outcome; how to speak in front of a group of people; how to weigh the pros and cons when making a difficult decision.

If it wasn't for my time at Westgate, I'm not sure I would have gone on to study at Canadian Mennonite University, where I was in leadership roles like being a residence assistant and president of the student council. I'm not sure I would have gone on to preach on occasion at my church. And I'm not sure I would have been prepared to take on the position I'm in now at the newspaper I work at.

2. At Westgate, I learned about the importance of service.

Westgate wasn't the first place where I was taught that helping your community is important, but it's definitely a lesson that was reiterated throughout my six years there. One of the two annual fundraisers that students participate in is a Work-a-Thon, where students get people to sponsor them with money and then they work odd jobs for a day, like raking leaves or helping out at an MCC Thrift Shop.

But the importance of service was highlighted in other ways as well. I can still recall the Red River flooding in 1997. Not only did students, teachers and staff sandbag the school, which lies near the Assiniboine River, but we also went out into the neighbourhood to help other people build sandbag dikes around their homes.

And I'll never forget the spring in Grade 10 when one of my teachers announced to the class that he wouldn't be returning in September because he and his family had

accepted an MCC service assignment in the Middle East. I'd no doubt heard about MCC and its work before that time, but I'm not sure I'd ever known someone who had gone on an MCC assignment before that.

While I haven't done any overseas work myself, the spirit of service that was championed at Westgate has stayed with me, whether I'm helping a neighbour move, teaching Sunday School or volunteering at a local music venue.

3. At Westgate, I learned that Jesus loves me.

Again, I knew this before going to the school. But still, I appreciated that at Westgate we could talk and learn about who Jesus Christ is and what it means to follow Jesus. Often I find myself forgetting that there's nothing I can do to make Jesus Christ love me any more or any less than Jesus already does. I simply have to accept God's grace, realizing there's nothing I can do to earn it.

I can't recall being taught that explicitly at Westgate, but it was meaningful for me to go to a school where talking about your faith was encouraged and where I could learn about the history and teachings of the Mennonite Church.

At my 10-year reunion in August, we didn't spend much time talking about the impact Westgate had on our lives. We mostly talked about humorous memories from events that happened outside of class.

But as I look at the group of people that were there—a group that included, among other things, a police officer, a nurse, a mathematician, a historian, a doctor and a pastor—it was clear to see that I wasn't the only person Westgate impacted. ❧

PHOTO BY KARL LANGELOTZ





Michael Turman

Mennonite and Catholic communion

Reflections on an experience at the Bridgefolk conference

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MICHAEL TURMAN

Special to Young Voices



Foot washing is one of the rituals of Bridgefolk, a practice found in both the Mennonite and Catholic Church.



Sacred Heart Chapel at St. Benedict's Monastery, St. Joseph, Minnesota.

I had an experience of God's presence at St. Benedict's Monastery in St. Joseph, Minnesota, in July at the Bridgefolk conference. "Bridgefolk is a movement of sacramentally-minded Mennonites and peace-minded Catholics," says its mission statement. Every year Bridgefolk holds a gathering of Mennonites and Catholics to celebrate, explore, and honour each others' practices and traditions. In practice this happens through friendship and open discussion of shared values. Over the ten or so years that Bridgefolk has been meeting, a committed group has formed. Even though I was attending for the first time, it felt like a family reunion.

In some way, I was among family. The Mennonite and Catholic churches are both like home to me. As the eldest child of a Mennonite and Catholic marriage, I was raised in both churches. I learned the mystery and holiness of the sacraments of baptism and communion from the Catholics and I learned the holy joy of four-part hymn singing and the sacred value of community (and potlucks!) from the Mennonites. I have been spiritually sustained at times both by praying the rosary and by volunteering for Mennonite Central Committee.

With such committed, faithful Christians on both sides of my church family, why must we be Mennonites and Catholics? Why shouldn't the two churches learn from each other? Bridgefolk was an interesting place to share my story. My journey in both churches as a "second generation Mennonite-Catholic" was unique to me but at the same time not unusual among those at Bridgefolk.

The moving moment of the weekend was our worship in the Sacred Heart Chapel on Saturday night. The focus of the service was a double Eucharist (Lord's Supper)—something that Bridgefolk had

never done before. In a single service we celebrated first a full Catholic communion liturgy (mass), led by a Catholic priest, then a full Mennonite Lord's Supper, led by a Mennonite pastor. Though we all participated in both, we could not receive bread from more than one church's table.

The Catholic communion service, though nearly identical to every mass I've attended in my life, made me weep. For me it was a painful reminder of just how separate our two churches are—we may not share bread at one another's table. On the theology of the Eucharist, we are divided.

Yet that worship service was more than painful disunity. It was also astonishingly beautiful. When the song leader began the first hymn of the Mennonite part of the service my face became wet with joyful tears. "What is this place where we are meeting? Only a house, the earth its floor." To sing these deep songs of my heart in a gorgeous sacred space with Christians from both sides of my divided family gave me hope. I knew then that the Gospel I have received from both churches is true, and it is a living Gospel. God was present on that little bridge of friendship between two traditions.

Both the Catholic Church and the Mennonite Church are beloved by God, and part of the body of Christ. I pray with all my being that they may yet be one.

Sometimes I wonder whether the Church actually knows what it's talking about when it talks about God. Is the Church right? At Bridgefolk I experienced God's presence with profound certainty, and felt reassured that the Church, with all its imperfections, points to Christ's presence in the world. Thanks be to God! ☩

Michael Turman is a Master of Theological Studies student at Conrad Grebel University College. He lives in Kitchener-Waterloo with his wife Alicia.

Calendar

British Columbia

Until Oct. 25: 7-week, Embracing Aging series at Menno Place, Abbotsford. Thursdays 7-9 p.m. For more information go to mennoplace.ca.

Oct. 12-14: Women's retreat weekend at Camp Squeah. Theme: "Simply majestic." Speaker: Jackie Ayer, family literacy coordinator for Chilliwack Community Services.

Oct. 13: Pastoral Care and Biblical Perspectives Symposium, ACTS Seminaries, Fosmark Centre, Langley, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Practical steps to respond to domestic violence. Contact endabuse@mccbc.com for more information.

Oct. 27: Columbia Bible College annual fundraising dinner. Visit www.columbiabc.edu/fundraisingdinner for more details.

Alberta

Oct. 12-13: Mennonite Church Alberta festival, hosted by First Mennonite Church, Edmonton. More details to follow.

Oct. 16-18: Pastors/spouses retreat at Camp Valaqua. For more information, contact Tim Wiebe-Neufeld at 780-436-3431 or twimmer@aol.com.

Saskatchewan

Oct. 12-14: Quilting and scrapbooking retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

Oct. 19-20: Sask Women in Mission annual retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre. Theme: "Called to rest, called to renewal." Speaker: Dora Dueck of Winnipeg.

Oct. 27: Equipping Day at Wildwood Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

Feb. 22-23: Annual delegate sessions at Rosthern Junior College.

Manitoba

Sept. 28: Opening program for Westgate Collegiate at Bethel Mennonite Church, 6:30 p.m.

Sept. 28-29: CMU fall festival.

Sept. 29: Westgate Collegiate Cyclathon at Bird's Hill Park.

Oct. 11: Eden Health Care Services fall workshop, "Forgiveness and mental health—a stepping stone to recovery,"

with speakers David Weaver-Zercher and Randy Goossen, at Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church, registration at 8:15 a.m.

Oct. 16-17: J.J. Thiessen Lectures at CMU.

Oct. 19: CMU Campus visit day.

Nov. 2: MCI soup and pie fundraiser and fall concert, at Buhler Hall, Gretna.

Nov. 13: Evening of the Arts at Westgate Collegiate, 7 p.m.

Nov. 23: CMU Campus visit day.

Nov. 24: Christmas@CMU, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Nov. 25: Installation of Cheryl Pauls as CMU President at River East MB Church, 2:30 p.m.

Nov. 26: Westgate Collegiate annual general meeting, 7 p.m.

Dec. 3: Westgate Collegiate Christmas concert at Westminster United Church, 7 p.m.

Dec. 20,21: MCI Christmas concerts, at Buhler Hall, Gretna, at 7:30 p.m. each night.

Jan. 15: Grade 6 day at Westgate Collegiate.

Jan. 30-31: Westgate Collegiate junior high three one-act plays at the Franco-Manitoban Centre.

Feb. 1: CMU Campus visit day.

Feb. 6: Open House at Westgate Collegiate, 7 p.m.

Feb. 7-9: Worship + Imagination at CMU.

Feb. 21: CMU Open House for perspective students.

March 3: CMU Choral Connections.

March 15: CMU Campus visit day.

April 4: CMU spring banquet and fundraiser.

April 8: Jazz@CMU.

Ontario

Sept. 21: International Day of Peace at Conrad Grebel, Great Hall. Steve Thomas, pastor and martial artist presents Making Peace with Personal Violence: The Use of Assertive Force in Active Nonviolence, 8 p.m.

Sept. 21-23: East Zorra Mennonite Church 175 anniversary celebration. Fri., Storytelling at 7 p.m.; Sat., displays and refreshments 4:30-6:30 p.m., Songfest 7 p.m.; Sun. worship with Fred Lichti speaking 9:45 a.m.

Sept. 22: empower Bullying Prevention Workshop: Training Youth to Transform Conflict and Violence with Steve

Thomas at Conrad Grebel Great Hall, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Sept. 24: Seniors retreat at Hidden Acres with presentation by Michael Newark, meteorologist and photographer. Special music by Paul Bowman. Visit www.hiddenacres.ca or call 529-625-8602. Register by Sept. 17.

Sept. 29: Conrad Grebel University College annual general meeting, Great Hall, 2:30 p.m.

Oct. 12-14: Marriage Encounter weekend at Jericho House, Port Colborne. Go to www.marriagecounterec.org or call 519-669-8667.

Oct. 13: "Celebrating Women" with Women of MCEC at Vineland United Mennonite Church, registration at 11:30 a.m. Register with Linda Wiens 905-708-0075 or linwiens@cogeco.ca by Oct. 1.

Oct. 14: Ninth annual Gospel Vespers, at Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, from 3 to 4:30 p.m. For more information, call Will Stoltz at 519-696-2805.

Oct. 14: Hidden Acres Camp benefit concert at Steinmann Mennonite Church, 7 p.m. featuring Daniel Lichti, Brandon Leis, Charlene Nafziger and Cherchez Vivre. For tickets contact 519-625-8602 or info@hiddenacres.ca.

Oct. 18-20: Ten Thousand Villages festival sale at Hamilton Mennonite Church, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. (18, 19) and 9

a.m.-4 p.m. (20). Enjoy soup and dessert at the Villages Café.

Oct. 28: CD release concert for 'Sing for Joy,' the third recording by Lifted Voices; at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, at 7 p.m.

Nov. 1-4: Business as a Calling, MEDA convention at Niagara Falls. Go to businessacalling.org or 1-800-665-7026 for information.

Nov. 2,3,4,8,9,10: Grey-Wellington Theatre Guild and Grand River Blues Society present *Job's Blues: A Blues Opera*, a musical based on the Book of Job with story by R. William Muir, at Harriston Town Hall Theatre. All shows 7:30 p.m. except 2 p.m. on Nov. 4. Call 519-338-2778 for tickets.

Nov. 17: Fairview Mennonite Home handicraft sale with Christmas crafts, decorations and more; 9 a.m.- 2 p.m. with lunch available.

Nov. 25: Acoustic Advent Carols, at Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, 3 to 4:30 p.m. Led by the PMS Singers and No Discernible Key. 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

Announcement

**75th Anniversary
Bethel Mennonite Church**
Winnipeg, MB
November 3 & 4, 2012.
"Come journey through the past
and present to the future."
For details visit
www.bethelmennonite.ca

*Two roads diverged
in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could
not travel both.*

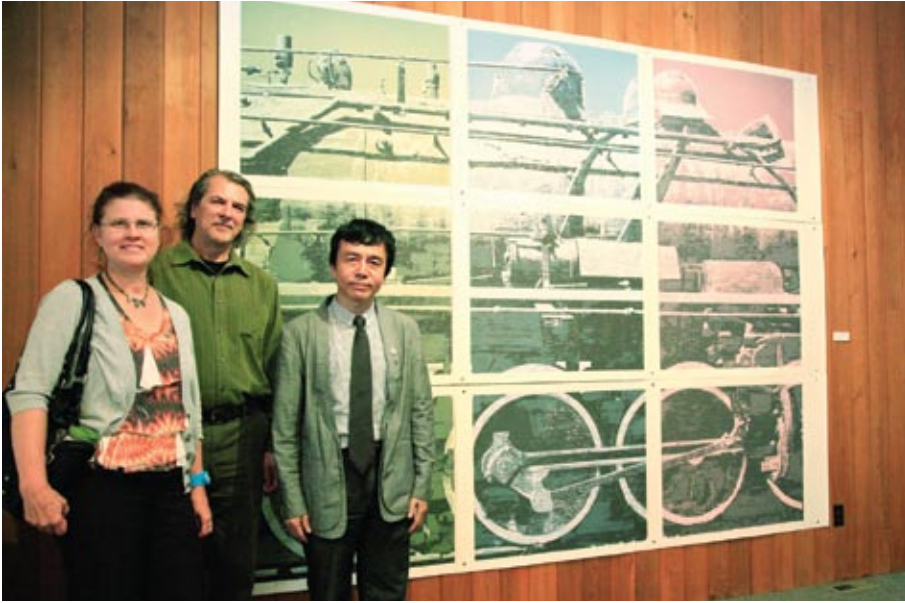
Robert Frost had a good editor.

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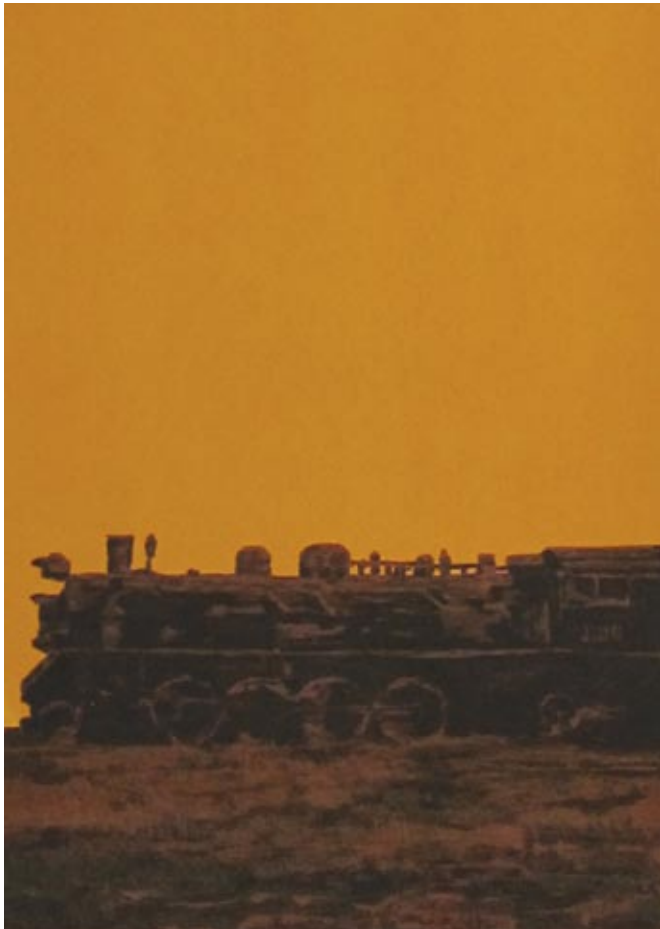
PHOTO BY BEIBEI LU



Karen Cornelius (left), a Winnipeg artist and guest curator of the Prairie Connections exhibit, invited artist Liang Yu (right) to show his art in Winnipeg. Ray Dirks (centre) is curator of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery.

China to Canada: A Prairie Connection

MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA
Winnipeg, Man.



Signal Series III, silkscreen by Liang Yu.

The flat lands of Manitoba's wide Red River valley would seem to have little in common with northern China—unless you've seen the expansive silkscreen prints of Chinese artist Liang Yu. The *Prairie Connections* exhibit of Yu's art at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery immediately resonates with the prairie dweller. Many scenes, featuring old iron from China's Russian-influenced steam locomotive era, would be equally at home in Ninga, Manitoba—a prairie town that once thrived as a result of rail transport.

Winnipeg artist Karen Cornelius, who is guest curator of the exhibit with Geraldine Taylor, has developed some important ties to Chinese artists as a result of several working trips to China. These connections helped bring Yu's art to the Gallery.

Yu, who is described as a renowned painter and printmaker at the peak of his career in China, was selected to contribute art for the cultural component of the recent 2012 summer Olympics in London. His art has been featured at the National Art Museum in Beijing, and he serves as Executive Vice President of the Guangdong Artists Association.

Yu grew up in a prairie landscape in northeast China. His father's work with the railway left Yu with deep childhood memories of trains, rail signaling systems and Russian-influenced train stations. His isolated scenes are dominated by the big prairie sky.

The exhibit advances the Gallery's niche mission of using art to bring together people of different faiths. ❧