

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

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## Sharing the Bible

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## EDITORIAL

# Hopeful Thanksgiving

DICK BENNER  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

**G**ive thanks in all circumstances, counsels the Apostle Paul to the new Christians at Thessalonica in ancient Greece, *for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Paul was addressing the anxieties of this new church, who, as part of their conversion and the excitement of a new spirituality guiding their lives, was expecting Jesus' imminent return. The apostle had to lower their expectations and ask them, instead, to live in hope and to encourage and love each other meantime. In today's vernacular it would be, simply: "Quit star-gazing and practice your faith here in the grim realities of life. Get a grip!"

Not everyone is nice, Paul would further elaborate, and the times can be depressing. So, what God, through Jesus, really wants you to do is to focus on loving rather than hating or criticising your sister or brother; live in the hope that despite the depravities of the world around you, know that God as the creator and sustainer of the cosmos, is working on a larger plan of redemption than is now apparent.

This is the kingdom **now**; it is not an escape to some place of golden streets and white-robed saints singing hallelujahs 24/7.

As I write this on Thanksgiving weekend, Paul's admonition brings me up short. We are being called, not by the

faith community, but by our country, to set aside a time to formally and systematically be thankful, to take a break from our normal work routines and gather family and friends around our tables for reflection and bonding. What an irony

that many of us will turn that celebration into eating too much, then turning into inactive TV spectators or movie-goers!

Not exactly what our good ancient teacher and prophet had in mind.

Before we smile and smirk at the unenlightened Thessalonians of that ancient civilized world, let's examine our own lives 2,000 years later to see if some apocalyptic yearnings aren't bubbling next to the surface as we live in a world spiralling downward in violence and environmental degradation, working with co-workers or fellow "saints" in the congregation who sometimes betray and backbite, listening to and being victimized by government leaders who lie and mislead for their own partisan gains, suffering loss of health or losing close and dear friends through death.

Amid all this grief, who wouldn't welcome the words of John the Revelator as he describes, in glorious details, the habitat of the New Jerusalem? Deliverance from this present evil mess would be true redemption indeed!

But wait, this is not what we are called to do. Rather, we are asked to help clean up the mess, roll up our sleeves and get

to work at countering all this violence and degradation. Be alert, perceptive and vigilant to the evil around us. Work systematically and tirelessly at reversing the downward spiral by employing the forces of love and hope, says the apostle, in appealing to our better angels in this struggle.

In that regard, please join me in focusing, on this Thanksgiving Day, on the encouraging signs of life and hope around us. Rise above our disillusionments and cynicism about our world—a place where many valuable and important values and structures are in disarray—and concentrate (be thankful) for the forces for good ("salvation" in pietistic parlance) in a darkening world.

Things like our children, for instance. When I see up to 25 to 30 come up to hear the children's story every Sabbath at our congregation, I am inspired and full of hope. These are beautiful little people with big imaginations whose parents, far more than in my days of parenting, are equipped and dedicated to develop those delightful unfinished human products into creative and contributing adults.

Moving it up a notch, I am also inspired when I see what the writers in our new Young Voices section are sinking their teeth into—addressing issues with insight and courage and calling, in some cases, their elders to account.

When I see what our teachers, biblical scholars and denominational leaders are providing the congregations for spiritual formation and development, I am encouraged. Never mind some of the diminishing numbers; I rather see an emerging spirituality that is both contemplative and muscular. That, in its own quiet way, will counter some of the entrenched forces of tradition that have inhibited our spiritual imaginations.



## ABOUT THE COVER:

**On the mountaintops of Guatemala, children from marginalized families are excited to learn about the Bible. Shina Park, a Goshen College student from Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, B.C., met the children when she spent the summer in Guatemala. See story page 33.**

PHOTO BY SHINA PARK

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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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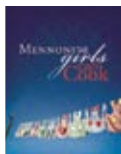
Mennonite Church Canada invites its congregations to become involved in discussing biblical interpretation. The Being a Faithful Church Task Force co-chairs, **Rudy Baergen** and **Andrew Reesor-McDowell** reflect on two of the twelve pathways to biblical interpretation.

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# Ethiopian Church grows in maturity

*Meserete Kristos Church follows New Testament pattern*

DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

PHOTO COURTESY OF FANOSIE LEGESSE



*Church leaders pray for Steve Brnjas and Fanosie Legesse (kneeling) before they began their teaching tour in Ethiopia in May.*

As Fanosie Legesse and Steve Brnjas were driving through a small village in rural Ethiopia, their car slowed to pass through a narrow street when suddenly a boy darted into the car's path, and was hit. His body flew and landed a few feet away. The driver stopped, though hesitantly, sensing there might be trouble. The passengers got out to see how they could help. It didn't look good.

Legesse of Fergus, Ont., and Brnjas of Waterloo, Ont., were in Ethiopia on a teaching assignment with the Meserete Kristos Church (MKC) in May and June of this year. *Meserete Kristos* means "Christ the foundation." Legesse and Brnjas team-taught about leadership with Brnjas giving Biblical examples of leaders while Legesse, an Ethiopian now living in Canada, gave application in the local situation.

Brnjas has pastored in both the Brethren in Christ and in Mennonite churches in Ontario. He most recently worked for Mennonite Central Committee Ontario in their Circles of Support and Accountability. But before all that he was a police officer working for the Waterloo Region. He knelt beside the boy and checked—vital signs absent. Unless there was immediate intervention, the boy was dead.

Legesse responded in an Ethiopian way. Unlike Brnjas he could understand the gathering crowd. "The father is coming. He has a gun." Vendettas and revenge killings are an unfortunate commonplace in Ethiopia. They were in big trouble. Legesse prayed at the top of his lungs in Amharic, the main Ethiopian language,

beseeking God in the name of Jesus to bring this child back. The boy's eyelids fluttered; he drew a breath. As the father arrived the crowd was in awe—instead of a dead child needing to be revenged, Legesse and Brnjas handed him his very-much-alive son. Alive because of Jesus' intervention.

### **Spirit-active church**

The MKC has been lumped together with the other Protestant/Evangelical churches in Ethiopia as *Pente*—charismatic. Some MKC leaders disdain the name, wanting to differentiate themselves from the other churches. But many North American visitors are hard pressed to see the differences, finding the worship and theology in the MKC to be very akin to Pentecostal or charismatic theology.

Founded in 1951 following six years of Mennonite relief work including the development of a hospital, the MKC has always followed its own path. From the beginning covert evangelism was taking place in areas where neither the missionaries nor their converts were to be operating. But it was the *Derg socialist* period from 1974 to 1991, a period when the church came under increasing pressure, that made MKC what it is today.

Soon foreign missionaries were sent home, property was confiscated, gatherings were banned and religious life frowned upon. But the MKC Christians, believing they needed to follow the higher authority of God in Christ, organized congregations into groups of five people



*Fanosie Legesse poses with the child hit by their car while travelling in Ethiopia.*

to meet regularly, pray, study scripture and encourage each other. The church, numbering around 5000 in 1982 when it was officially "closed," resurfaced in 1991 numbering 34,000.

According to Alemu Checole and Samuel Asefa, writers of the *Global Mennonite History Volume One: Africa*, during the years of persecution the church also moved toward a charismatic orientation. While this had begun earlier under indigenous teachers and preachers, the fervour and power found in a Holy Spirit orientation sustained the Christians and churches when they could not openly identify as Christians. But even then questions arose about how charismatic

they should be. Alemu Checole was not healed of his blindness, in spite of fervent prayer. Was he a Christian? Or was healing not always accessible? He writes, "The Lord used the charismatic movement to bring dynamism and vitality into his church" (p. 254). This was exemplified by confession of sins, trust in spiritual work, and the sacrificial giving of time, talents and money.

John Peters, retired professor of anthropology and sociology at Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, and a member at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, was amazed on his first trip to teach at the MKC College in Debre Zeit in 2006. Students in his classes spoke naturally of healings, exorcisms and other acts of the Spirit. This was out of his ken in a Mennonite Church environment.

Tim Reimer, pastor at Danforth Mennonite Church in Toronto, noted that speaking in tongues was a normal occurrence during worship when he was teaching Old Testament at MKC College in 2012. Palmer Becker, a retired teacher and pastor living in Waterloo has also taught at MKC College. He wrote in an email in February 2012, "MEDA was to have the chapel this morning but they cancelled due to illness and at last minute I was asked to speak. President Nagash suggested that I should share my experiences with exorcism! I shared two stories from my ministry. Students



*(From left) Doug Roth Amstutz, Tewodros Beyene (MKC Church Chair), Kenna Dula (MKC General Secretary), Wanda Roth Amstutz.*

said that this was the first time that they had ever heard a North American talk about the Spirit-world. They are asking me to continue tomorrow so I prepared this afternoon by rereading “Even the Demons Submit,” with articles by Paul Hiebert, Willard Swartley and others. This is leading to some very interesting conversations!”

### **Holistic gospel**

Others point to significant differences between the MKC and other groups. Carl Hansen in an article in *The Mennonite* earlier this year paints a picture of a church which has both strong roots and a hopeful future in Anabaptism. Doug and Wanda Roth Amstutz, both pastors in Ontario, spent 2007 to 2011 as country representatives for MCC in Ethiopia. They note that the older generation of pastors and leaders, mindful of MKC’s roots in Mennonite mission work, self identify as Anabaptist. Younger generations, especially as they are educated at MKC College are rediscovering those roots, and applying Anabaptist thinking to the Bible and life.

The Amstutzes note that whatever MKC does, including evangelism, is very holistic, not just focussed on spiritual conversions. They point to the extensive prison ministry with over 7,000 prisoners and families being cared for. The ministry works with prisoners and their

families, bringing the good news of Jesus, but also supplying mental, emotional and physical support. MKC is also involved with MCC in HIV/AIDS education and support, a national women’s ministry, schools and a peace office. The peace office was established at a time of conflict within MKC itself and the application of mediation and other peace work averted a split, something Amstutzes say is all too common among the Protestant churches in Ethiopia.

A joint project of MKC and MCC in Mehal Meda in central Ethiopia worked with prisoners who had committed crimes of vengeance and retribution. Material from South Africa was translated into Amharic and made available to the Ethiopian Orthodox priests in the area. After studying the material the priests noted that while they had extensive knowledge of the Old Testament their New Testament knowledge was limited. They had taken the material and checked the scripture passages used to support peace work with their own Bibles and found that the same material was there. Working together with MKC workers, reconciliations took place and the retributive killings stopped.

Tim Reimer tells the story of teaching the story of Elijah and the widow’s son in 1 Kings 17. Re-enacting the story in an MKC College class with one student playing the part of the dead son lying on a

desk, the student playing Elijah stretched himself over the other three times as in the text. Just as he finished and the “son” was resurrected, a jet from a nearby military airport roared overhead. This led to interesting conversations with the students who obviously thought that military might was not the way of Christ who brought a gospel of peace.

### **Strained relationship with Orthodox Church**

The Amstutzes did note that it is not common for MKC to work with the Orthodox as sometimes the Orthodox directly, and often indirectly, bring pressure against any of the Protestant churches, including the MKC, and often MKC pastors and mission workers target Orthodox believers with evangelism, hoping to bring them into the MKC fold. Legesse himself grew up Orthodox but at age 17 went through an experience of receiving Jesus as his personal saviour. He felt this as a freeing experience, lifting a bondage he had felt. Many Protestants or Evangelicals think of the Orthodox as focussed on a distant God and the Virgin Mary, but without a personal relationship to Jesus.

Becker wrote in an email, “Although most Orthodox adherents may lack a personal relationship with Christ, they are very serious in their worship and prayers.” This would be a common

PHOTO COURTESY OF DOUG ROTH AMSTUTZ



*Wanda and Doug Roth Amstutz with (from left) Abigail, Sophia and Amani.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF DOUG ROTH AMSTUTZ



*(From left) Doug Roth Amstutz, Yeshiareg Yohannes (MCC Ethiopia office administrator; secretary), Solomon Teferi (MCC Ethiopia Assistant Program Manager), Don Peters (MCC Canada Executive Director), Mekonnen Dessalegne (Program Manager).*

perception. Reimer, worshipping in an Orthodox church, noted that he heard the name of God and of Mary often in the liturgy and preaching but seldom did he hear of Jesus.

An email news release from Jewel Showalter, a writer for Eastern Mennonite Missions in Salunga, Pa., in May of 2012 noted extensive evangelistic work happening among Orthodox adherents by MKC workers and members, quoting MKC's Yemiru Tilahun, director of the evangelism and missions department. When questioned about this Legesse, Peters and the Amstutzes were aghast at Showalter's open report. While there is nominal freedom of religion in Ethiopia, there are many semi-lawless areas where such work or conversions could result in serious repercussions for the MKC and its workers. The same news release wrote similar glowing reports of evangelism work among Muslims and Becker also noted of conflict between conservative and liberal groups within Ethiopian Muslims, resulting in some liberals becoming Christians. While reports support this information, detailed dissemination is seen as problematic by some expecting push-back from both Orthodox and Muslims.

### **MKC continues to grow**

Lives are being changed and the MKC is growing. It is now the single largest church in Mennonite World Conference and is growing by leaps and bounds—over 17,000 baptisms in 2011. This growth is fuelled by careful planning and by dependence on God's Spirit, as well as sacrificial giving and work by its members. Some North Americans wonder how to bring the fervour and Spirit-dependence home, but Legesse has a different view. He sees what is happening in Ethiopia as a parallel to what happened in the early church as recorded in the New Testament. The signs and wonders found there decreased within the time the books were being written and by the second century were nearly absent.

Legesse believes that this is a time when God is working through signs in Ethiopia but that time will end, probably soon. What is needed is support for

the church in this unprecedented time to continue their mission and evangelism work, and the training of teachers, pastors and other leaders to carry the many new believers into mature faith for the years ahead when the signs will no longer be present. This kind of support includes individuals going to teach and preach at MKC College and the many places around the country where leaders, mostly men but increasingly women, gather to be taught.

It also includes financial support. The Amstutzes put an interesting spin on financial support. They note that the MKC is almost alone among African churches with Western roots in that it does not depend on foreign funding to pay leaders, pastors or educators. While they were in Ethiopia they were discouraged by MKC leaders from monetarily supporting individuals or individual congregations, though funding for buildings and some major programs, like the national women's program, were accepted. Currently building is going on at both MKC College and at the national offices

in Addis Ababa. The latter building is intended to house the national offices on one floor and rent space on four others to generate income for the church.

Prayer is the other way that MKC would like support from Western sisters and brothers. The deaths of Orthodox Church Patriarch Abune Paulos on August 16, and Prime Minister Meles Zenawi on August 20, usher in the potential for either positive or negative change in the country. Zenawi began as a freedom fighter during the Derg socialist regime, and after serving as leader of the transitional government after the Derg's fall, he was elected Prime Minister in 1995, a position he had held ever since. He was seen as personally responsible for much of the stability in Ethiopia over the past 20 years and his passing leaves a vacuum.

From all reports, MKC is an Anabaptist church, perhaps more like the 16th century Anabaptists, sometimes called the charismatics of the Protestant Reformation, where the Spirit gifts of evangelism and witness were strongly present. ☼

**T**here are many Ethiopian Christians who have moved to Canada and established churches here. Look for a report on the Ethiopian Church in Canada in a future issue of *Canadian Mennonite*.

### **/// For discussion**

1. What do you find most amazing about the story of the Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia? Does the Mennonite Church in North America have any comparable stories? What is appealing about a charismatic church?
2. How would you describe the difference between the MKC's experience of the spirit world and that of your church? Do you wish that your church was more charismatic and in tune with the spirit world? What prevents that from happening?
3. How would you explain the phenomenal growth of the MKC? How much of the growth is because the Ethiopian church is open to the work of God's Spirit, and how much is due to a special blessing of God? Do you think Legesse is right that we shouldn't expect to see the same signs and wonders continue or be exported to other parts of the church?
4. What can the Mennonite Church in North America learn from the Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia? What things hinder us from copying their success? What are the characteristics of a church that God values most?

## VIEWPOINTS

## /// Readers write

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

## ✉ Russian Mennonite survivors had admirable resilience

Re: "Community as counsellor," Sept. 3, page 13.

I am the son of immigrant Russian Mennonite parents who came to Canada in 1947 as well as a grandson of grandparents who also came to Canada at that time. They survived the Russian revolution,

the atrocities of the anarchist Nestor Machno and of Joseph Stalin. This group of people, and their predecessors of the 1920s, encountered unimaginable hardships. My father, uncles, and their friends all served on the front lines of war-torn Europe in a world that had seemingly gone mad. Terms like post-traumatic stress disorder were unheard of. There were no grief counsellors, no government assistance programs to help them get by.

They arrived here due to the benevolence of family and friends who had left the Soviet Union in the 1920s, who took them under their wing and helped them start a new life. They seemed to leave tragedy and horror behind them and appreciated what this new life and freedom had to offer. Hearing my mother tell my aunt that my father had been yelling in his sleep when I was already 14 years old, or the father of a friend telling his friends how he relived the *Schlacht Feld* (killing fields) of World War Two when he came out of surgery, suggest that the memories, although buried, were still there.

These survivors displayed a resilience that is admirable and through all of this turmoil never lost their faith in God. Dad and my uncle Ben had a Low German saying when things went wrong, "*Na jo, so jeit et*," and they would "take one on the chin," pick up and carry on. It humbles me when I recall my complaints over "hardship," in light of all they endured



### Canadian Mennonite Health Assembly October 25 – 27, 2012

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## /// Corrections

The letter "Dress codes help provide respect and order" (Oct. 1, 2012, page 9) was incorrectly identified as written by Henry Neufeld of Delta, B.C. It was written by Henry Neufeld of Winnipeg.

In the story "Woolner Passionate about climate change" (Oct. 1, 2012, page 22), Glen Woolner was incorrectly identified as a member of Erb Street Mennonite Church, Waterloo. He is a member of First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, not Erb Street.

In the obituary story of Delphine Martin (Oct. 1, 2012), it was incorrectly stated that Wanda Wagler-Martin has been executive director of Shalom Counselling since 1977. She began in that position in 1997. In a similar misconstruction in the story, it appears that Delphine Martin held several administrative positions and as counsellor of Interfaith Pastoral Counselling Centre for 20 years. That is also incorrect; she served in that capacity at Shalom Counselling.

*Canadian Mennonite* regrets the errors.



and the fact that they never gave up, and I am increasingly grateful for their efforts, because without them I would not have the freedom that I have today.

—HENRY DYCK SR., KINGSVILLE, ONT.

### ✉ Investments must reflect our values

Recently our “Issues Class” at Charleswood Mennonite Church, viewed the sad story of Enbridge, with its oil spills, and its hazard and safety violations. We were appalled and devastated. This company, with its grimy record, wants to build pipelines to the USA and also to the west coast of BC. How can we sit idly by and watch this happen when our own federal government is in favour of this project?

Not only is this company surging ahead with these projects, the stock in this company is also soaring on the stock market.

Here is our sad addendum: We owned stock in this

company. In speaking to our RRSP account adviser, he was excited. “Your stock in Enbridge has grown by 102 percent since you purchased it. Isn’t that great?”

My response was to sell immediately. Could we, in all good conscience, hold stock that is tainted with violations and oil spills? Would we care to be associated with such a fund and think of ourselves as responsible investors?

Our investments are tied to our charitable giving. Would I be happy to see Mennonite Foundation connected with money from this source? We are of the opinion that our actions and our words must be witness to what we believe. It does matter how we earn and spend our money, especially in building the Kingdom of God.

Salvation came to the house of Zaccheus when Jesus helped him put things in order. Pray that this Salvation can come to us.

—LEN WIEBE, WINNIPEG

## FROM OUR LEADERS

# Greeters are an important aspect of church ministry

JANETTE THIESSEN

**H**ave you ever entered a church and felt invisible? It probably happens more often than we would care to acknowledge. Having a greeter ministry in your church is extremely important, and having greeters who are willing to step out of their comfort zone to strike up a conversation with strangers is invaluable.

I attend Crossroads Community Church in Chilliwack, B.C. where my husband Ernie and I are part of the greeting ministry. At Crossroads, which meets in a school, we enter the building in the cafeteria area where we have coffee, tea and hot chocolate available for our folks to enjoy. On the first Sunday in our greeter rotation we are on “floating” duty where we keep an eye out around this cafeteria room for people who are newer to the congregation and aren’t engaged in conversation with anyone. I have to admit it

takes me out of my comfort zone to talk to people I don’t know, but I value the importance of making sure people feel welcome when they come to church.

On the second Sunday of our rotation we greet at the door and hand out bulletins. It is on this Sunday that we greet everyone who comes to church that day and converse with many of them. We



also make sure new people are connected to a floater who can show them around, directing them to the coffee stations and/or the Sunday School area should they have children with them.

The greeting doesn’t just extend to new people, but also to our regular attendees. Everyone needs to feel welcome and you never know when a simple friendly gesture can make a difference in someone’s day that perhaps just didn’t start out right. Being a greeter has helped me to get to know the people in the church, especially

those who are not in my age bracket.

At Crossroads, in our desire to get to know our church community better, we just embarked on putting together a photo directory. I’m involved in coordinating the photo sessions. What an absolute privilege this has been. I get to meet and talk to each Crossroads family as they come for their photo session. I consider myself quite lucky to be helping out with this task.

Like many churches, Crossroads also has potluck Sundays. Many of us bring food in crock pots which get plugged in before the service, and when the service is finished we all sit down together and have lunch. This also is a great relationship-building time.

The key in all of these connection points is that I have to leave my comfort zone and go sit with and talk to people I don’t normally talk to. People stay in a particular congregation if they have built relationships with people, so let’s make sure everyone in our congregation is connected and in relationship with someone else in the congregation. Be on the lookout on Sunday mornings and strike up a conversation with someone who is new or looks like they’re alone.

*Janette Thiessen is the office administrator of Mennonite Church B.C.*

## ✉ Rumours about Armstrong never substantiated

I appreciated the message of Phil Wagler's column, "The Man in the Yellow Jacket" (Sept. 17, page 9). He asks, "Is it okay to cheat, so long as you do something good with it?" However, I am very disappointed that Lance Armstrong is being held up as a person guilty of that ethical faux pas.

Although accused by the United States Anti-Doping Agency, stripped of his victories and perhaps convicted by some in the court of public opinion, he has

not been convicted in a court of law, nor have any rumours of his "cheating" been substantiated. Yes, he finally gave up the fight to clear his name, but I suspect many an innocent person has quit the battle long before that kind of pressure ever came his way.

Innuendo is hardly a reason to castigate a person in our church periodical. We tend to adulate some athletes who roll over their competition (the Jamaican sprinter, Bolt, comes to mind) without a thought of how they obtained their phenomenal accomplishments, and others we condemn on the basis of hearsay. —LES FRIESEN, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

## OUTSIDE THE BOX

# Being God's architecture

PHIL WAGLER

The world is full of amazing architectural creations and the most impressive stuff takes the longest to pull off. Barcelona, Spain's famous Sagrada Familia church began construction in 1882—they hope to finish the job around 2026! It'll be due for some renovations by then, I'm sure, not to mention the changes the congregation will have gone through over the span of that gargantuan building project.

A piece of architecture that lasts becomes a community icon. It stands as a memorial to what was, is, or is hoped to be. City skylines become famous

for towers, skyscrapers, domes and spires and eventually some such spaces receive heritage markers while others get a wrecking ball.

Architects see their task as greater than mere bricks and mortar. Moshe Safdie—the architect of Vancouver's library square which looks like a Roman Coliseum redux—said: "As architects, we are responsible for shaping not only a project's program, but also its larger civic role of enabling and enriching the community." Bing Thom—a Canadian architect and moving force behind a new urban movement known as Vancouverism that seeks to make the most of limited space through

mixed use of the retail and residential and heavy reliance on public transit and pedestrian traffic—has now been commissioned to redesign Washington D.C.'s Southwest area. Southwest was shaped in the post-World War II era—institutional, concrete, blocky, and not people centered—of which Thom pronounced, "This can't be the way to build cities." Many are saying the same things these days about the church structures and methods



*Thom's vision for the civic architect, to look after the public space, is a window into the call of the church . . .*

we have shaped over the last number of decades too.

In the architectural arena Thom is re-thinking things. He says, "The developer will always look after the private space. Who looks after the public space? It's the difference between a good city and a bad city . . . My client is more than the person who pays me. My client is society and the public" (*Washington City Paper*, Aug. 24, 2012). That's pretty idealistic to be sure, but I would argue that Thom's vision for the civic architect, to look after the public space, is a window into the call of the church and just may be what keeps our churches from growing tired, stale, and

redundant in our communities.

The New Testament, beginning with Jesus in Matthew 16:18, chose a rather peculiar word to describe their identity: *ekklesia*. In the culture of the first century that word was applied to a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public space for the purpose of deliberating. They understood themselves as having been called out by God through Jesus Christ who died for the forgiveness of sins and reigned as Lord of all to deliberate and be about the work of the Kingdom of God in the midst of whatever locale they inhabited. They were, as Paul reminds the Corinthians, "God's temple" (1 Corinthians 3:16). They were God's architecture, built by the Spirit of God, for

the glory of God and the good of the place and space in which they live.

So, what would it look like to be this type of *ekklesia* in the place you live? And how should the public space and its challenges become more core to your deliberations as those called-out ones who are being formed as God's building in your community?

*Phil Wagler lives in Surrey, BC where he is one brick in a building of people learning what it means to be with and for the place they live. He is a contributor on Mennonite Media's Shaping Families.*

# Conversation with a Republican pastor

BY WILL BRAUN  
SENIOR WRITER

America is again ablaze with partisan divisiveness. As two men square off to be king of the biggest castle on earth, I am both captivated and disturbed by the crescendo of polarization.

For Christians, the religiously charged U.S. election campaign raises an obvious question: what role should church play in the battle zone?

"To bring truth," says Gus Booth. He is the pastor of a nondenominational church in Warroad, Minnesota, 10 kilometres south of the Manitoba border. Booth does not shy away from battle. Speaking by phone from his office at Warroad Community Church, he says in relation to the upcoming election that just because something is polarizing doesn't mean Christians should "crawl in a little hole and keep truth to ourselves."

Booth suggests that Jesus was "one of the most polarizing figures in history." His tough talk contrasts with his free-flowing, small-town congeniality. His tone is more that of a friendly neighbour than moral warrior. But in 2008 he became the first minister in U.S. history to pick a fight with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) over the Johnston Amendment, a 58-year-old piece of legislation that says entities exempt from federal income tax cannot participate or intervene in a political campaign. That means churches jeopardize their charitable tax-exempt status if they endorse or oppose specific candidates for public office.

During the 2008 Democratic primaries, Booth critiqued Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama from the pulpit. Later that year, he called on his parishioners to vote



for Republican John McCain. He sent both sermons to the IRS in the hopes that it would provoke a legal battle that would ultimately clarify the lines between government jurisdiction and the pulpit. The IRS took the bait, but later dropped the investigation, to Booth's dismay, due to unspecified "internal procedural issues."

I wanted to talk to Booth because I believe in trying to understand people who have a different take on truth. The trap of polarization is to yell louder, to argue more vehemently, to demonize and defeat the other side. But the only real winner of that battle is divisiveness itself.

I don't like the negative sentiments the U.S. election campaigns evoke in me. I don't like it that the messaging is designed to fuel disdain and deepen divisions. I knew speaking with Pastor

*The trap of polarization is to yell louder, to argue more vehemently, to demonize and defeat the other side. But the only real winner of that battle is divisiveness itself.*

Booth—who I had interviewed before—would have the opposite effect.

The only way I can see to turn down the heat of polarization is to reach out to people of differing views in an honest attempt to understand. I don't share Booth's views on the "socialistic" nature of Obamacare, but genuine human interaction tends to blur the lines that divide. Plus, he's the kind of person who's hard not to like. Instead of arguing with him, I asked him what he would say to a room full of liberal Christians?

"I don't hate you. I don't hate homosexuals. I don't hate abortionists." He

speaks emphatically, pleadingly. He says conservative Christians get "labelled" very quickly as "hateful bigots." This pains him. While he acknowledges that there are "railing" Christians who speak with anger, Booth says his views on certain issues simply do not equate hate. He emphasizes that truth must be spoken humbly and lovingly, as Jesus exemplified.

Though Booth believes in fighting for truth and says divisiveness is "a fact of life," he still sees some value in conversations across lines of division within the church.

"We need to be able to love each other in spite of our differences," he says. "My own secretary is a very liberal Christian who doesn't even attend church here," he adds, "and I respect her."

On Oct. 7, Booth will again urge his parishioners to vote Republican and he will send his sermon to the IRS. Over a thousand other American preachers are expected to do the same thing on that day, which is designated as Pulpit Freedom Sunday, an initiative endorsed by James Dobson.

Speaking with Booth didn't change my political views, but it gave me a respectful understanding of him and it reminded me of a simple fact: we are all on this earth together. We need to find healthy ways to be together. A recent op-ed in *The New York Times* said both

Democrats and Republicans succumb to the impossible notion that the other side will somehow disappear altogether if they lose the election—that winning the battle will preclude the hard work of collaborating across differences.

As Christians we also need to resist the temptation to overlook the essential togetherness of humans. Instead of looking down on others or looking away from them, we need to do the hard, humble work of creating a Church in which there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, liberal nor conservative. ❧

## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Hoch**—Ainsley Rose (b. Aug. 1, 2012), to Richard and Lee-Anne Hoch, Bloomingdale Mennonite, Ont.

**Jacomen**—Macy Deanne (b. Sept. 13, 2012), to Jaime and Tom Jacomen, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

**Kathler**—Aaron John (b. June 16, 2012), to Michael and Wendy Kathler, Arnaud Mennonite, Man.

**Kathler**—Sam William (b. Aug. 1, 2012), to Jonathan and Kimberly Kathler, Arnaud Mennonite, Man.

**Koepke**—Sienna Natalia (b. April 30, 2012), to Daniela and Michael Koepke, West Hills Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

**Loewen**—Bryce Lewis (b. Sept. 20, 2012), to Jeanette and Paul Loewen, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**McFarlane**—Ruby Elizabeth (b. July 21, 2012), to Andrea and Kyle McFarlane, West Hills Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

**Snyder**—Samuel John (b. June 16, 2012), to Murray and Teena Snyder, Bloomingdale Mennonite, Ont.

**Stevanus**—Isaac Daniel (b. Aug. 6, 2012), to Aaron and Anne Stevanus, Bloomingdale Mennonite, Ont.

### Baptisms

**Jana Barkowsky, Kadya Barkowsky**—Kelowna First Mennonite, B.C., Aug. 26, 2012.

### Marriages

**Barrowman/Kaethler**—Nick Barrowman and Yvonne Kaethler, Ottawa Mennonite, Ont. at the Long Island Conference Centre, Manotick, Ont., Sept. 15, 2012.

**Dyck/Warkentin**—Ashley Dyck and Brad Warkentin, Nordheim Mennonite, Winnipegosis, Man., Sept. 22, 2012.

**Harnack/Horst**—Timothy (Tim) Harnack and Christina Horst (Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont.) at Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Aug. 17, 2012.

**Leis/Minor**—Becky Leis (Crosshill Mennonite, Ont.) and Patrick Minor in St. Mary's, Ont., Sept. 15, 2012.

**Miller/Tusch**—Jonathan Miller and Courtney Tusch, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont., Sept. 21, 2012.

**Teichroeb/Wiebe**—Daniel Teichroeb and Justina Wiebe, Laird Mennoite, Sask., Sept. 15, 2012.

### Deaths

**Epp**—David, 81 (b. Jan. 2, 1931; d. Sept. 25, 2012), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Dyck**—Eva (nee Sawatzky) (Wiebe), 96 (b. May 19, 1916; d. Sept. 22, 2012), Olivet Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

**Gerber**—Jeremy, 36 (b. Aug. 30, 1976; d. Aug. 31, 2012), Poole Mennonite Church, Ont.

**Hamm**—Jacob, 88 (b. April 4, 1929; d. Aug. 12, 2012), Kelowna First Mennonite, B.C.

**Heinrichs**—John, 71 (b. Sept. 17, 1940; d. Sept. 15, 2012), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

**Klassen**—Isaac, 82 (b. Feb. 4, 1930; d. Sept. 19, 2012), Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask.

**Martin**—Delphine, 78 (b. Aug. 10, 1934; d. Sept. 5, 2012), Waterloo North Mennonite, Ont.

**Metzger**—Peter, 74 (b. May 2, 1938; d. Sept. 18, 2012), St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

**Nickels**—Elfrieda (nee Gossen), 76 (b. Feb. 28, 1936; d. Sept. 23, 2012), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

**Pastorius**—Iva, 85 (b. Oct. 31, 1926; d. Sept. 1, 2012), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

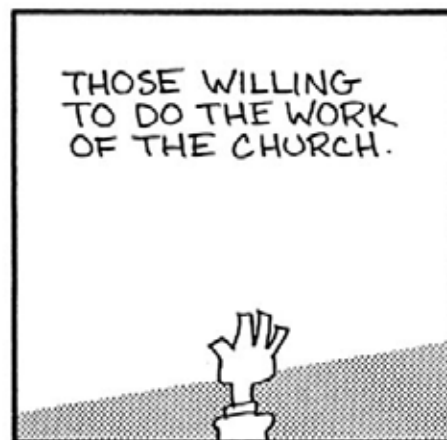
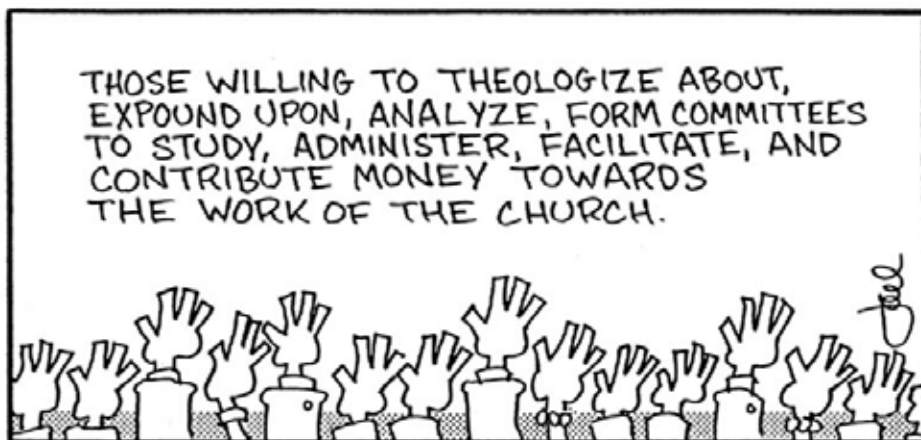
**Regehr**—Esther, 66 (d. Sept. 25, 2012), Waterloo North Mennonite, Ont.

**Schmidt**—Lydia, 83 (b. July 26, 1929; d. Sept. 7, 2012), Crosshill Mennonite, Ont.

**Snyder**—Naomi, 92 (d. July 9, 2012), Bloomingdale Mennonite, Ont.

**Snyder**—John W. S., 97 (d. July 22, 2012), Bloomingdale Mennonite, Ont.

## Pontius' Puddle



## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

# Being a Faithful Church

## *The paths and ditches of Biblical interpretation*

BY RUDY BAERGEN

Co-chair, Being a Faithful Church Task Force

**T**oo often, Christians use scripture in unhelpful ways to advance a particular point of view. As Mennonite Church Canada we want to honour Scripture and use it with integrity.

Since 2009, Mennonite Church Canada has been on a journey of better learning the heart of God by strengthening our grasp of scripture for our time. The most recent leg in this journey took place at the July 2012 Mennonite Church Canada Assembly, where delegates approved *Being a Faithful Church 4 (BFC4)* for study by congregations, Area Churches, groups and individuals. BFC4 summarized the feedback received from congregations, scholars and individuals to the *Scripture and Discernment Tool* of Oct., 2011. BFC4 uses the metaphor of a hike, identifying 12 paths and 6 ditches of Biblical Interpretation.

In Sept., 2012, an additional study tool was sent out to congregations and Area Churches to help guide the process. To further stimulate thought and discussion, the BFC Task Force is preparing a series of articles on each of the 12 paths of the Biblical interpretation hike.

If the BFC process is new to you and/or your congregation, you will find it helpful to review the progress that has led us to this point. Visit [www.mennonitechurch.ca](http://www.mennonitechurch.ca) and follow the "Being a Faithful Church" links. Because some of the paths are related to each other in many ways, we will not necessarily follow the numbered paths sequentially.

### **Pathway #1: How is Jesus the key to interpretation?**

"The life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus are central and serve as the critical lens of interpretation that helps us understand all of Scripture."



Mennonite  
Church  
Canada

Through the centuries Mennonites have been guided by Menno Simon's Christ-centred foundation for Scriptural interpretation and ethical discernment. The verse, "For no other foundation can be laid, than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 3:11) often found inscribed on the title pages of Menno's writings, gives focus to this conviction. It was no surprise then that when congregations and individuals were asked about the assumptions, principles, and guidelines that are helpful in the interpretation of the Bible, they pointed again and again to the centrality of Jesus. We highly value all Scripture but want to interpret it through the lens of Jesus Christ.

In responding to the tool that led to the formation of BFC4, one congregation wrote that, "We must seek interpretations that mirror Christ himself." Another suggested that the early Anabaptists, perhaps more

so than other Christians of their day, clung stubbornly to the life and teaching of Jesus, culminating in his death and resurrection, as the lens by which to interpret the rest of the Bible. In his context, Menno Simons insisted that all prophecy had to be tested by Christ, and that Christians needed to look to what Christ had taught about warfare, violence, and vengeance. "If Christ fights his enemies with the sword of his mouth, if he smites the earth with the rod of his mouth, and slays the wicked with the breath of his lips; and if we are to be conformed to his image, how can we, then, oppose our enemies with any other sword?"

One respondent cautioned against disconnecting Jesus from his own Scriptural roots. BFC4 names that tendency as one the "ditches" that we want to avoid. We can't understand who Jesus was, his teachings and life choices apart from the Old Testament. Even so, God's Son is the focal point for our salvation, for our ethical discernment and our understanding of God's purposes in creation. In the words of Hebrews 1:1-2, "Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds." What difference does it make in our interpretation of Scripture if we hold Jesus in the centre? ❧

## Pathway #4

### *How does Jesus use the Old Testament?*

BY ANDREW REESOR MCDOWELL,

Co-chair, Being a Faithful Church Task Force

"Jesus also interprets Scripture. One response focused exclusively on trying to understand the 'hermeneutics of Jesus,' i.e., how the Gospel writers portray the way Jesus uses and interprets the Old Testament. It is evident that we can learn much from that in our own reading of Scripture."

**A**t Hagerman Mennonite Church, the adult Sunday School Class is working through the BFC4 paper on the paths and ditches of Biblical Interpretation. In the discussion of how Jesus interprets what we know as the Old Testament (Path #4), Pastor Gary Harder drew attention to the

Isaiah 61 passage verses 1 and 2, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me..."

We then compared this with what Jesus says in the Luke 4:18 passage. We saw that Jesus leaves out the phrase "... and the day of vengeance of our God." Gary also pointed out that at the same synagogue

service in Nazareth (verses 25-30), Jesus tells two stories. First Jesus says that in the day of Elijah there were many widows, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when there was a great famine over all the land, and Elijah was sent to none of these widows, but only to Zarephath in the land of Sidon. Second, there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha and none of them was cleansed but only Naaman the Syrian.

These two stories were deeply offensive to those listening. In the Luke account, Jesus takes the Isaiah message of preaching the good news to the poor, proclaiming release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind and setting at liberty those who

are oppressed, and he gives to it a new and expanded interpretation which now draws the Gentiles into the story.

In another example is the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), where Jesus speaks not of abolishing the law or the prophets but of fulfilling them. Then he declares: "You have heard it said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, but I say unto you..." In so doing he finds the heart of the Scripture and he gives it a new life-giving interpretation.

Having a good understanding of how Jesus uses and interprets Old Testament Scripture will strengthen our overall capacity to understand God's purposes over time. ❧

## Peace, but no quiet

*UN Peace day celebrated across the country*

BY RACHEL BERGEN AND DAVE ROGALSKY

"Could we simply light a candle; Could we give them half a chance; Could we teach them how to read; Could we teach them how to dance?" Local actor Ted Follows read Henry M. Bechtold's 2010 words from "Children of Darkness" on the front steps of the Elmira (Ont.)

library. The site was one of fourteen in and around the town to celebrate the United Nations International Day of Peace.

The churches of the Elmira community called their peace festival, "Peace, but no quiet." Floradale Mennonite Church held a service of music and readings and Zion



*Mary and Cliff Bauman sing at Floradale Mennonite Church on Sept. 21 as part of a community-wide peace celebration on the United Nations International Day of Peace.*

Mennonite Fellowship sponsored a concert. Local Mennonite musician, Jeff Enns, wrote a new piece, "Dona Nobis Pacem/Make Peace Not War" for the concert at the library.

Project Peacemakers held an event at the Winnipeg Free Press Café that day with skits, history lessons and songs relating to the War of 1812 and the \$28 million being spent to commemorate it. One skit, by Geoff Hughes, entitled, "The Minister and the Member" told the story of Arnold Neufeldt-Fast, of Stouffville, Ont. who, along with much of the Stouffville community, opposed the town's emphasis on celebrating the War of 1812.

Diane Cooper of Project Peacemakers called on those in attendance to express their concern for the emblem that is sewn on the Canadian military uniforms that say, "That others may kill." She also encouraged people to suggest alternative ways to spend the \$28 million set aside to celebrate the War of 1812. The evening also featured peace activism songs performed by Tom Penner and Jill Cooper.

The University of Waterloo's Peace and Conflict Studies program at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont. commemorated the day by hosting a Mennonite martial artist as a speaker. According to a Grebel press release, Steve Thomas, who

PHOTOS BY DAVE ROGALSKY



*Seated at the piano, local Mennonite musician Jeff Enns leads (front left) Michael Purvis-Smith, Angela Ishaka, Shannon Purvis-Smith, Donna Lenz and Martin Bauer in his piece "Dona Nobis Pacem/Make Peace Not War" for the concert at the Elmira library.*

was a victim of bullying throughout his childhood, decided to learn Tae Kwon Do as an adult to “stop violence when words didn’t work.” He created an organization called Peacemakers to empower people and to transform conflict.

As well as his presentation, “Making Peace with Personal Violence: The Use of Assertive Force in Active Nonviolence,” Thomas led a bullying prevention workshop on the following day.

At Regent College, the seminary

located on University of British Columbia’s Vancouver campus, a concert and poetry reading event honoured Peace Day on Sept. 28. The poems of Richard Whitfield were interspersed with music by John Friesen, a cellist, Jeffrey Gilliam, a pianist, and Walter Schwede, a violinist, all on faculty at Western Washington University.

“Anything that promotes peace promotes the people that God wants us to be,” said Iwan Russell-Jones, Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at Regent. ❧

Betty Lyn explained. Dr. Edmund Pries, also a GSF member, preached on “Anniversary markers: milestones, millstones or tombstones?,” reminding us that as today’s “wise elders” of the congregation, we are now the ones who must be the leaders in advocating a welcoming inclusiveness, and a spirit of unselfish servanthood.

In response to the worship theme, members and guests of the Adult Sunday School class spoke of the difficult choices that had to be made sometimes, when a couple needed to agree on which church to attend. As Bob Bergey (husband of Linda Penner) put it, “We Mennonites from New Dundee, with our summer sausage and cook cheese, weren’t so sure at first about those *ware-neki* and *borscht* folks from Russia!”

Old-fashioned charades, and quiz questions from the current events of decades ago, as well as lovingly-preserved memorabilia from 1962, challenged our memories. The GSF continues to provide fun and service opportunities for its members on a monthly basis. It has also been a significant portal for welcoming newcomers to the congregation. ❧

## Church club celebrates golden anniversary

BY KARL DICK

KITCHENER-WATERLOO, ONT.

The “young married couples” in a largely German-speaking congregation represented a problem in 1962. As Betty Lyn Enns recently put it, “The young men of Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church started dating so-called ‘English’ girls.” Betty Lyn was one of these girls. As a result seven couples agreed to start a club.

The George Street Fellowship (GSF), as the group now calls itself, recently celebrated 50 years of activities. Some 40 of

the members gathered to lead a Sunday worship service, to reminisce, and to celebrate with a lunch. “The camaraderie, fun and support that we provided each other over the years has been a blessing to many,”



*Hertha Enns and Pauline Nickel, both “English girls,” examine the hats that all women were expected to wear in the 1960s.*

IN SUPPORT OF FRASER LAKE  
CAMP, THEATRE OF THE BEAT  
PRESENTS

**GADFLY: SAM STEINER  
DODGES THE DRAFT**

THE TRUE STORY OF A MENNONITE REBEL, HIS UNDERGROUND NEWSPAPER AND THE WAR THAT DROVE HIM TO CANADA.

COMMISSIONED BY CONRAD GREBEL  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

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# “Celebrating God’s Faithfulness— Finding us faithful”

*East Zorra Mennonite Church celebrates 175th anniversary*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

TAVISTOCK, ONTARIO

“The year was 1837, one hundred and seventy five years ago. Something happened in Upper Canada which captured the newspaper headlines in Toronto, Montreal, New York and London. . . . A hot-headed, Scottish-born, Toronto newspaper editor, by the name of William Lyon Mackenzie, agitated for social and political reform and the Scottish, Irish and American immigrants erupted in rebellion. . . .

“At the same time a small band of Amish Mennonite settlers were quietly and peacefully coming into this country in search of economic opportunity and religious freedom. Their surnames were Bender, Jantzi, Roth, Ruby, Lichti, Jutzi, Schlegel, Wagler, Zehr. First they pioneered the virgin forests of Wilmot Township. When that area was full, they spilled across the Nith River and settled the flatter, fertile lands of South Easthope and East Zorra townships. These

Amish settlers from Alsace-Lorraine had no interest in rebellions. They were glad to get away from France and its revolutionary calls for liberty, equality and fraternity. In France, Revolution brought the guillotine, the tyranny of the masses followed by Napoleon’s dictatorship. Revolutionary France had little patience for non-resistant Anabaptists and forced the Amish into military service or costly exemption penalties. But here they carved a home in a wooded wilderness. Fighting off bears and winter’s harsh cold was far better than dealing with Napoleon and the chains of European poverty. . . . [I]n 2012, 175 years later, . . . [t]he rebellion of 1837 is dead and forgotten, but this congregation is alive and celebrating!”

The sanctuary on the 16th line of East Zorra township, west of Kitchener, was filled with songs, words of worship and the sound many children as Fred Lichti, who grew up in the congregation, preached his sermon. Lichti, one of ten or more pastors whom East Zorra spawned in the past three generations, now pastors the Elmira Mennonite Church north of Waterloo.

Pastor Ray Martin led the congregation into this final celebration saying, “Our history is filled with stories—some of them good stories that are fun to tell, stories that recount our faithfulness as a people of God; but some of our stories are not so fun to tell, they are stories that remind us that not all was good over the last 175 years. . . . The church that God has called and is building is a human church, and over the last 175 years we have been human. Yet we are here celebrating because we come back again and again to the God who has called us and is nurturing us and is patiently transforming us into a people who can find themselves faithful. . . . It is



*Edward Schwartzenruber holds the red oak tree as children fill the hole with soil at East Zorra Mennonite Church’s 175th anniversary service, Sept. 23.*

God’s faithfulness that we celebrate today; it is God’s faithfulness that draws us to worship.”

Celebrations began in the spring with “the Storytelling Man” who told stories to the congregation of its history. An “Amish Barn Service” took the congregation back to its Amish roots, complete with plain singing, white bean with cinnamon soup and dorta pie for lunch.

The Mennonite Youth Fellowship (MYF) celebrated its 50th anniversary. Finally the weekend of September 21-23 saw storytelling, singing through the many decades, and Sunday’s service, potluck lunch and tree planting.

Edward Schartzenruber, who chose the red oak wrote, “Frost will turn the oak leaves red which is indicative of salvation. Surrounding trees lose their leaves early. The oak’s leaves stay on longer but can’t compare to the Word of God, it endures forever.” Martin noted, “Planting a tree is a sign of faith and hope and an investment in the future. Planting a tree is an act of partnering with God in adding beauty, color and shade and life to this world.” Children and anyone else who wished were invited to help fill the



*Pastor Tanya Dyck Steinmann of East Zorra Mennonite Church leads the children in a blessing of the tree that was later planted on the church grounds.*



hole around the tree with earth.

Leaders have planned to follow up the anniversary theme of “Celebrating God’s Faithfulness—Finding us Faithful” with a series on “What is an Anabaptist Christian?” using both Palmer Becker’s book of that name and Stuart Murray’s *Naked Anabaptist*. Pastors Martin, Tanya Dyck Steinmann, and Scotty Zehr all spoke about wanting the congregation to be “present in the community” around them, holding on to heritage but also letting go to welcome new ideas and people, witnessing to their faith. Clare Schlegel, current congregational chair, spoke of wanting the church to be “vibrant and relevant to the community” around them, finding a balance between heritage and new ideas. Marvin Yantzi, chair of the pastoral care team, expressed the hope of “being in tune with God’s leading, being willing to stay centred in faith” and “open to new directions that God may be leading.”

Martin prayed at the final act of planting the tree, “God of growth we plant this tree today as an expression of our thanks for your faithfulness through 175 years. . . . As we continue to celebrate your faithfulness may you empower us by your Spirit so that we grow in faithfulness, so that we mature so that we bear fruit in this world to your honour and to your glory. Faithful God, find us faithful, through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.” ❧

### /// Briefly noted

#### Two congregations lose members by drowning

Two families and two Mennonite congregations were devastated by two deaths by drowning on the shores of Lake Huron over the Labour Day weekend. Jeremy Gerber, age 36, drowned while swimming with family at Sauble Beach on Friday afternoon, Aug. 31. He ran into distress due to high winds and waves. Although bystanders administered CPR and he was rushed to a local hospital, Jeremy died of drowning. Jeremy and his parents, Bud and Ruth Gerber, are members of Poole Mennonite Church near Milverton, Ont., where his funeral was held on Sept. 5. In an unrelated incident, 52-year-old Gordon Van Dyke of Atwood, Ont., drowned while swimming off his boat on Lake Huron just south of Bayfield on Sept. 2. Gordon and a friend jumped into the water for a swim, but wind and waves quickly separated the pair from the boat. The friend was rescued but Gordon’s body was not recovered until four days later. Gordon and his wife Mona are members of Listowel Mennonite Church. Gordon’s funeral service was held at the church where he grew up, Bethel Christian Reformed Church, Listowel, on Sept. 10.

—MAX Mutual Aid Ministries

## Altona cairn remembers conscientious objectors

STORY AND PHOTO BY ELMER HEINRICHS  
ALTONA, MAN.

**O**n a pleasant fall day in Altona, about 100 men were joined by spouses and friends to dedicate a cairn commemorating the Conscientious Objectors (COs) and their service. Bernie Loeppky chaired



*Menno Funk takes a closer look at the new cairn dedicated to the 3,021 young men from Manitoba who served as Conscientious Objectors by doing alternative service.*

a dedication program on Sept. 9, and led in a prayer of dedication. Archivist and historian, Conrad Stoesz, has delved into the history of COs and noted that 10,800 men across Canada have served as COs.

Menno Funk, a CO from Altona told about his personal experience almost 70 years ago, working at the St. Boniface Hospital, even prior to his call to enlist. He appeared before a judge, and then continuing to work there after his call, first as an orderly, then in the kitchen through 1944. He worked at a meat packing plant in 1945.

In a message to the COs, Altona Mennonite Church pastor Dan Kehler, referred to Jesus words in Matthew 5, saying, “God calls us to be peacemakers,” and added that this stone (cairn) is dedicated to the peacemakers, the young men who chose the way of peace. Rev. Jake Krahn, of the Sommerfelder Mennonite Church, led in a cairn dedication prayer.

Last year, noted Conrad Stoesz, was a monumental year for the telling of the conscientious objector (CO) story in Manitoba. On Sept. 11, 2011, the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, in partnership with the Evangelical Anabaptist Fellowship, unveiled the Wall of Remembrance in Winkler. A total of 3,021 bricks, represent the number of men from this province who served as conscientious objectors, by performing alternative service during the Second World War.

Under a heading, “Blessed are the Peacemakers’—Jesus,” the wording on the Altona cairn reads in part, “They served in hospitals, farms, Clear Lake National Park, mines, lumber camps, remote schools and other assignments. Supported by their families and churches, they served various lengths of time from 1941 to 1946, months after the war ended. These men, after the war, returned to their homes with a new vision for service in and beyond their communities.” ❧

# The long journey to bring their son home

*Mother's terminal illness creates greater urgency*

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent  
WINNIPEG, MAN.

News about the beleaguered economy and political unrest in Greece slips easily off many Canadians' radar, but for Dick Hiebert the news has critical relevance. His son, Kevin, 38, has been languishing in a Greek prison for 13 years. Hiebert is the first to say that he does not want to exonerate his son, but he cares deeply for him and wants to see him repatriated to Canada so that he can complete his sentence here and can say goodbye to his dying mother.

Kevin was arrested in Greece in 1999 at the age of 25 and charged with smuggling about 2 kilograms of drugs into the country. Until his arrest in Greece, he had no criminal record.

"When the news hit 13 years ago I was devastated that this was our son and that it was in a different country, so far away. I was completely devastated," said Hiebert, who was part of the Mennonite community in Steinbach at that time, but now lives in Winnipeg.

"Life was just settling back to normal for me after a prolonged legal battle with MPI (Manitoba Public Insurance) resulting from a motor vehicle accident while on company business. Both our kids were on their own and I was preparing for retirement. At that point we were financially secure."

All that security has vanished in the past 13 years as they have struggled to repatriate Kevin, fought to see the court transcripts, petitioned for a partial pardon, and tried to provide some of the necessities of life for Kevin including food which must be bought in the Greek prison. "At first my view was that he got himself into trouble, he would have to get himself out. My viewpoint changed when I realized that Kevin's support system had deserted him."

There are no educational opportunities or rehabilitation programs and there are many unexplained deaths and beatings in the crowded prison conditions in Greece. "There are frequent prisoner demonstrations and riots to bring attention to the inhuman conditions of prisoners. Kevin has never participated in these demonstrations and is considered a model prisoner," said his father.

This has all taken a steep toll on the family. As the website [www.letsbringthem-home.ca](http://www.letsbringthem-home.ca) states, Kevin's father has stress-related physical symptoms and still sees a psychiatrist on a regular basis. His mother developed stress-related health issues putting her on long-term disability. Although Kevin's parents are now divorced they are united in their efforts to bring Kevin back

to Canada. This summer Patricia, Kevin's mother, was diagnosed with terminal cancer and has been given a year and a half to live. She would desperately like to see her son again.

John Hutton, member of Hope Mennonite Church and director of the John Howard Society in Winnipeg, said the family has been in touch with him several times. "We work with men who are incarcerated. We are certainly prepared to offer support to Kevin when he is transferred back here.

"The Hieberts would be the first to say Kevin broke the law but it seems like there have been an awful lot of challenges from having the trial only in Greek and without a translator, to deals that were made but not explained to him. Certainly there should have been consequences for his actions but it seems he has served a much longer, tougher and horrendous sentence than what the situation called for."

In 1983 the Canadian Government signed the Convention of Strasbourg Treaty which states that those who have committed a crime, "should be given the opportunity to serve their sentences within their own society; and . . . that this aim can best be achieved by having them transferred to their own countries." Kevin has



*Kevin Hiebert*

applied for such a transfer several times and each time it has been denied. "This summer's efforts finally have gotten the Canadian Government to sign the transfer agreement which has been presented to the Greek Minister of Justice by the Canadian Ambassador to Greece. It now needs the Greek Minister to look at it and make their decision," explained Madge Ferguson, an advocate for the family.

In 2008, Kevin was given a brief "holiday" from prison. His father flew out to visit him but had to return one day before Kevin's holiday was over. Kevin went underground into Europe for 11 months. "He wanted an opportunity to go back before a judge somehow instead of the frustrating process of dealing with politicians," said Hiebert.

Kevin has also applied for a partial pardon. The application requests to have the sentence converted to 20 years from the ambiguous "indeterminate life sentence." These latest applications are currently stalemated due to political unrest in Greece and there is no indication when they will be resolved.

Kevin phones home regularly, a privilege he has received for being a model prisoner, to update his parents. Ferguson reported recently "Kevin called his mother . . . (and) advises that everything in Greece is operating at a snail's pace due to the worker's strikes and economic unrest. This includes the prison. The dinner for Kevin yesterday was an apple, tomato and a piece of bread! . . . His days rest heavy with nothing to occupy his mind. Money his father sent him a week ago via the Embassy has still not arrived."

His father reports that Kevin has changed over time. "He realizes his mistakes in life. His interest now is in growing his own food as he has learned he has to eat healthy to stay strong. At one time he offered to "end this all" to make it easier on us, but of course we begged him not to. He is emotionally strong, has strong resolve, looks to the future. He has faith that gives him strength."

"Faith, family and friends are what has helped me through all this," said Hiebert. Patricia also clings to the hope that she will be able to see her son one more time as she undergoes chemotherapy and regular blood transfusions. ❧



PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

**Kuen Yee (pronounced Quen),** the newly hired English pastor, stands with Thomas Pham, lead pastor at the Edmonton Vietnamese Mennonite Church in Edmonton, Alta. Yee has a doctorate in ministry from ACTS Trinity Western University in Langley, B.C. She is married and has four children ranging in age from 15-22. Asked about her vision for ministry, she said, "To see members of this church become grounded in their faith, obedient to God and loving one another. To equip them to use their gifts to serve God by serving one another and bringing others to Christ where ever they go." Yee began the half time position on Sept. 1. An installation service is planned for Oct. 14.

## We're hiring a family!

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# Opening the door to Jesus

*Should Mennonite churches provide sanctuary to refugees in Canada*

BY EMILY LOEWEN

Young Voice co-editor  
TORONTO

Over the coming months changes to Canada's refugee system will be implemented. The Southern Ontario Sanctuary Coalition believes many refugees will receive unfair rejections as a result. These families will need sanctuary in order to avoid deportation, and the coalition hopes that Mennonite Churches will take up the task.

That was the message at a mid-September meeting in Toronto where members of local Mennonite churches heard from the coalition, churches who have already provided sanctuary as well as the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support (MCRS).

"We are facing a very serious situation," said coalition member and Romero House founder MaryJo Leddy, "there are already some people in sanctuary, we anticipate more."

When a refugee family faces deportation, churches need to consider what actions they can take, said Michael Creal, chair of the

coalition. "In terms of the faith community, how does one respond to people whose lives are in danger in a situation where they're likely to be sent back," he asked.

Sanctuary is a last resort for refugees that the government has denied and who anticipate deportation to potentially dangerous situations. Churches provide a place to live while they examine other legal means to stay.

Bill C-31, passed this summer, provides a new set of guidelines for Canada's refugee process. The main concern for advocates is that the processing time for many applicants will speed up, leaving refugees without enough time to make their case.

Sometime a refugee cannot explain their whole case right away, said Eunice Valenzuela, Executive Director of the MCRS. When a family she knew from Congo filled out the original forms "they didn't write the whole story," she said, "because the trauma was so big that they

couldn't tell what happened to them." But after time and counselling they provided the whole story to the committee deciding their case. She worries that if the processing time gets faster families will be unfairly rejected.

Creal agrees. "The chances of mistakes being made are enormous," he said.

That said, congregations should not take on sanctuary lightly. While the government has traditionally respected churches, and some affiliated buildings, as places of sanctuary, no law officially protects that right. And while the coalition believes it abides by the Geneva convention, which Canada has signed, it also expects a legal challenge on sanctuary rights at some point, Leddy said.

And when asked how likely it is that churches will be watched she said, "I think you should assume you'll be under surveillance and I certainly know I've been at different points."

Perry Bartel, pastor of Hawkesville Mennonite Church, shared his congregation's experience providing sanctuary, both positive and negative. "It's a difficult but empowering process for a congregation to embrace," he said. One family they supported was successful, is on track for citizenship and legally lives and works in the country. In their second case, however, the individual was detained after leaving

PHOTO BY EMILY LOEWEN



*Michael Creal, left, and Mary Jo Leddy are members of the Southern Ontario Sanctuary Coalition.*



*Eunice Valenzuela, left, is executive director of the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support. Perry Bartel is pastor of Hawkesville Mennonite Church.*

sanctuary to work with the government on his humanitarian application.

In addition to that disappointment Bartel said the energy required to provide sanctuary tired out the congregation. "I'm not sure if we will be ready to provide sanctuary again for a while, but we are hopeful that others will help to refuel our energy banks."

Creal also noted that providing sanctuary is a long-term commitment. While it is not a permanent solution and should only be used in cases with hope for a positive citizenship outcome, it can take years for an applicant to receive a decision.

The audience wondered about required accommodations, the legality of sanctuary and if it needs to be a church building or if related property might work.

Leddy suggested that access to a bathroom and a place to cook and eat are the minimum requirements. Given the absence of sanctuary laws she believes some off-site church-owned property might work, but she would add a chapel and a bible to make the connection stronger. When it comes to insurance and location, Leddy summed it up saying, "I do think in the end most people say, well it might not be totally covered but let's go with it."

Despite the difficulties of providing sanctuary, Leddy told the group that faith should guide churches in deciding to help. "Our hope this morning is our faith that if we open our door the person on the other side is Jesus," she said, "I don't mean they're a Christian, it's that this knock is Jesus summoning us and commanding us today." ❧

going to continue to bless AMC"

The deacons wanted time for personal sharing of stories and memories about former pastors and asked one person to say a few words about each pastor and then invited anyone else to share as well. This was a time full of laughs, touching moments and a few tears. Following this the congregation joined together in communion to celebrate God's gift of grace and love.

The potluck after the service was a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with old friends and meet new people. In the afternoon, a special service remembered Pastor Omar Martin, who had died suddenly on Sept. 19, 2002, at the age of 48. After some time of sharing, the congregation gathered in the cemetery to dedicate his new headstone, selected from a field by his widow, Lynne Martin. It was a truly healing experience for the family and the church congregation.

It is easy to get caught up in the future or to get stuck in the past. This service gave the congregation an opportunity to step back for a moment and get a look at the bigger picture, to see how much AMC has changed but also to recognize its current vibrancy and potential. The service enabled the congregation to celebrate its past and look forward to a new future. ❧

## Arnaud Mennonite celebrates former leaders

By KATHRYN BOSCHMANN  
ARNAUD, MAN.

Whether large or small, every church experiences times of joy and times of grief. There are moments when members are spiritually fed by their church and congregation, and others when they are wounded by loss or conflict. In June 2012, Pastor Albert and the deacons of Arnaud Mennonite Church (AMC) planned an evening in which members of the congregation could gather to reflect and recognize their hurts, make a commitment to bring them to God and move forward to healing. This was a meaningful service for many.

As a follow-up, the congregation held a special service to joyfully celebrate past leaders whom God had called to serve at AMC. All former living pastors and their families were contacted and invited to join the congregation on Sept. 23.

The service began with a reminder that all leaders—pastors, deacons, Sunday School teachers—are human and imperfect, but God builds his church through people. As Pastor Albert stated in his welcome, "We recognize that God has blessed

AMC through the call of all of these servants of God and so we can celebrate the gifts of each; we can give thanks for each and we can look forward to how God is



*Former pastors and spouses at Arnaud Mennonite were celebrated on Sept. 23, 2012. (From row, from left) David Wiebe, Abe and Irene Neufeld, Agatha Lepp, Lynne Martin, Esther Durksen, Helen Funk. (Back row) Melita and Byron Rempel-Burkholder, Brian Dyck, Dave Lepp, Albert Durksen, Jake Funk. Not pictured are Lynell Bergen and Melissa Miller.*

## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

# Reclaimed hotel becomes intentional community

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent  
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

**B**y turning a former flophouse into a cozy community living space, young adults in Abbotsford have found a way to recycle and build community at the same time.

The Atangard Community Project, housed in one of downtown Abbotsford's oldest buildings—originally the Atangard Hotel dating back to 1927—is now a residence for up to 25 young adults. They live in 18 single and double occupancy rooms on the second floor of the former Fraser Valley Inn, which not long ago had a reputation for housing derelicts. The residents, either students or young professionals, range in age from 19 to mid-30s and are learning what it means to share and invite others into their lives.

Co-founder and resident director Sophia Suderman says the project came about because several people recognized a need for such a community. The former old brick hotel building became available, but was in such poor condition it was considered

virtually unusable. However, a group of visionary founding members invested in the project, first getting rezoning permission and then totally fixing up the inside, ripping out the carpets, redoing the plumbing and renovating the rooms. The whole project took two years; the first residents moved in Sept. 2009.

Although being Christian is not a requirement to live in Atangard, many of the residents are Christian and some are from Mennonite churches. It is set up much like an intentional community or voluntary service unit with individual rooms and shared bathrooms and laundry facilities. The large kitchen/dining room allows for cooking on one's own or for meals eaten together, with each person taking turns preparing meals for the whole group once or twice a month. The group also has regular house meetings.

The fee for living at Atangard is affordable, with monthly rent ranging from \$375-\$500, depending on unit size. The

group has strict standards: it is smoke free and drug use is forbidden. Many residents ride bicycles, or pool rides in vehicles. They share laundry facilities and operate a garden. Discussions and creative endeavours such as music are abundant.

Resident Chad Doerksen says he appreciates the chance to live in what amounts to an extended family, helping and supporting each other with various personal and emotional needs. "As in any intentional community, respect for others sharing the same living quarters is vital. You learn about personal space and the advantages and disadvantages of living with other people," he says, adding that "conflict is minimal."

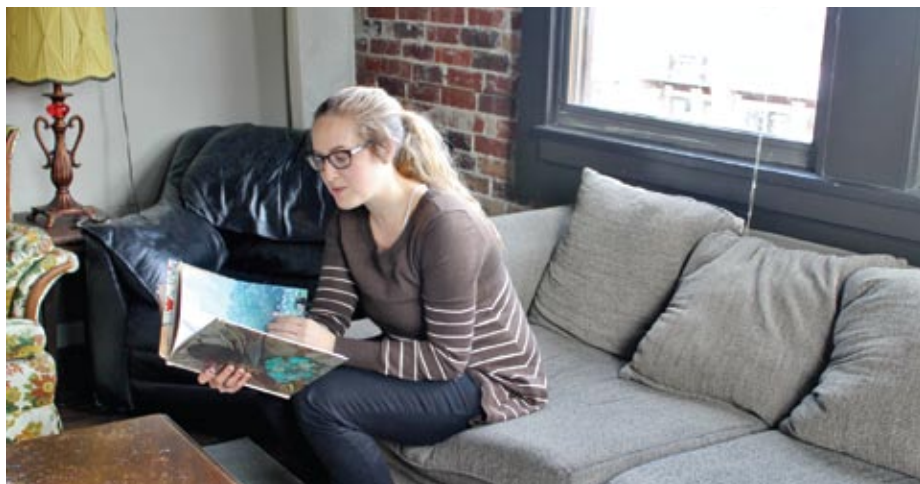
Suderman says she is privileged to work with a "really wonderful group of people" at Atangard. "It has been one of the hardest things in my life, but one of the most valuable, and always challenging."

For more information on Atangard Community Project, including how to apply as a housemate, contact Atangard at 604-850-1545 or email atangard@gmail.com. ❧

## ❧ Briefly noted

### Postcards swamp House of Commons mail service

Tens of thousands of postcards mailed to Members of Parliament this summer in support of Motion 312 backed up the House of Commons mail system. Reports from several MPs confirmed that it would take weeks for the House postal staff to sort through this enormous volume of mail. Motion 312 asked for a review of the Criminal Code regarding when a child becomes a human being. Between early June and the end of August a group called MP Postcards printed and distributed 69,000 postcards all across Canada. When the organization heard that the postcards were not being received, they began to ask questions and traced the problem to the House of Commons mail room where summer mail volume is usually much lower. Motion 312 was defeated  
—MP Postcards



*Resident Jen Born relaxes in the Atangard lounge. The former Fraser Valley Inn was converted into community housing for young adults.*

# Los Angeles to Lowe Farm

*in support of Manitoba women's shelter*

STORY AND PHOTO BY WILL BRAUN

Senior Writer

LOWE FARM, MAN.

As he walks past harvested fields along a quiet highway east of Lowe Farm, Man., Steve Braun tells me the story of his great-grandmother. It's a story that has inspired him for a third consecutive year to return from Hollywood, where he is an actor and acting coach, to walk from Winkler to Winnipeg in support of a southern Manitoba women's shelter.

After lunch with 20 others in the basement of Lowe Farm's Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Braun heads back out on the road with his wife and a few relatives who have joined him. Braun, 36, grew up in Winnipeg but has roots in Lowe Farm. "I would come back here all the time to visit my grandparents who just lived down there," he says, pointing along a street as we leave town.

His late grandmother, Justina Braun, is the one who told him the story that has brought him back here.

Late one October evening in 1933, Steve's great-grandfather returned to the family's Lowe Farm area home. "He came home drunk," Steve retells the story, "he had a shotgun and he said [to his wife], 'You get out now.'" He forbade her from going to the neighbours as she had on previous occasions when he had forced her out.

"So she had no choice but to go to Abraham Braun's place, which was in Altona," Steve says. "That was a 10-mile walk in the snow, in slippers, in the middle of the night, without her children." Steve had retraced that route, in reverse, earlier in the day.

"She was gone for three days," he continues. "My grandmother [who was 16 at the time] didn't know where [her mother] was or whether she'd be coming back." Because there was no shelter, Steve's great-grandmother was sent back to her abusive,

alcoholic husband. "She had no other options." The couple eventually split.

As we approach the sunny prairie cemetery where Steve's great-grandmother and grandmother—who passed away last February—are buried, he recalls his grandmother telling the story: "She still had fire about it."

Some of that fire has clearly been passed on. "It got me thinking about where women would go today," Steve says. For him, the logical extension of his great-grandmother's story was to contact Angela Braun (no relation to Steve or the writer), who heads Genesis House, a shelter for abused women and their children. Based in Winkler, it serves a large portion of southern Manitoba. That contact led to the Walk for Shelters, an effort to raise awareness of domestic violence and money for Genesis House.

The shelter started in 1983, in response to the needs of Mennonite families immigrating from Latin America. Now, less than a quarter of its clients are Mennonite, and while it operates in a largely Mennonite area, it is not directly affiliated with the church.

Domestic violence is a sensitive issue, but Genesis House has successfully engaged the broader community, including churches. Angela praises the area churches, including the Lowe Farm Mennonites, for their support. Last year, the shelter received money and other goods from 29 Mennonite churches and 22 United churches in the area.

In recent years, the shelter's outreach efforts have extended to the hockey rink. Each November, local teams, including the Junior A team, wear the shelter's "Peace Begins at Home" jerseys for a game. Angela says the reception has been good.

The broader aim is to move away from the perception of domestic violence as a women's issue. Angela says the walk also helps "open that door." Reaching out to men is "tricky," says Steve, in part because of the perception that "some women's revolution [is] coming after men for their indiscretions."

"That's not it," he says. Steve's message to men is simple: "It is our issue. These are our daughters, our sisters, our mothers, our grandmothers and great grandmothers and it affects us."



Steve Braun (second from left), with his aunt Clara Wiebe, wife Amber Borycki, cousin Jennifer Wiebe and her daughter Amelia at the grave of his great-grandmother near Lowe Farm, Man.

Angela says to men: “Raise your children, coach your teams without using derogatory comments about women.” Promote respect. And if you see behaviour that is questionable, “speak out... the community must speak out.”

And for men who have any questions about their behaviour—if reading about domestic violence triggers any doubts—she says to reach out to someone, whether a doctor, pastor or other support person. “Start having that conversation.” She emphasizes the conversation is not about “shame or blame” but taking collective responsibility for the safety of our communities and homes.

Steve and the other walkers wrapped up this year’s trek with a rally at the Manitoba Legislature on Sept. 28. He says he will walk again next year and invites readers to visit his site, [walkforshelters.com](http://walkforshelters.com) (which is populated by a host of Hollywood stars), to participate in the photo campaign on the site and to donate to a local shelter. ☞

## Canadian delegation observes humanitarian crisis in the Sahel

Canadian Foodgrains Bank  
WINNIPEG, MAN.

**B**urkina Faso’s countryside is green, and the crops are growing. But that hopeful scene belies the food crisis that still grips millions in that country, and across the Sahel region of West Africa. That’s the observation of Canadian Foodgrains Bank Executive Director, Jim Cornelius, who visited Burkina Faso in September as part of delegation led by Canada’s new Minister of International Cooperation, Julian Fantino.

“Driving through the countryside, it is hard to believe that there is widespread and deep hunger in the many villages across the Sahel region of West Africa,” says Cornelius. “But although crops may

be growing in the fields, hunger is still a reality for millions of people following the crop failures in 2011.”

Adding to the problem are high food prices. Although the rains have come to Burkina Faso and other countries in the Sahel region, the harvest is still weeks away. With crops from last year’s meager harvest long since consumed, the price of food in the market has been driven up.

For the new Minister of International Cooperation, visiting a refugee camp in Burkina Faso opened his eyes to the food crisis in the Sahel.

“Today, I saw first-hand a true humanitarian crisis. I heard about the hardship that women, men and children are facing through these incredibly difficult times,” Fantino told reporters. Fantino spoke with mothers bringing their children for nutrition screening at a clinic which monitors the nutritional health of the children and makes sure mothers receive nutrition education and supplementary food for undernourished children. A chart on the wall showed the dramatic rise in malnutrition as the food crisis deepened.

According to Cornelius, one of four heads of Canadian NGOs who travelled with Fantino in Burkina Faso, the new Minister was encouraged by the work that these nutrition programs are doing to stabilize the situation and prevent long-term harm to children.

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank has received substantial support from the Canadian International Development Agency for its response to the food crisis in the Sahel. ☞

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## New volunteers respond to questions about Mennonites

MennoMedia  
HARRISONBURG, VA.

**A**ngela and Erwin Rempel of Harrisonburg, Va., are serving as volunteer respondents to questions about Mennonites sent to Third Way Café and Mennonite Church USA websites. Third Way Café ([www.thirdway.com](http://www.thirdway.com)), receives inquiries from all over the world about Mennonites or the Amish, spiritual guidance, or information for school projects.

Erwin and Angela retired in 2008 after 40 years of various ministries with the Mennonite church. Beginning with pastoral ministry, they then served in Brazil with the former Commission on Overseas Mission of the General Conference Mennonite Church (COM). That was followed by Erwin serving 12 years as the executive secretary of COM based in Newton, Kansas, while Angela did a variety of work

with communications for church entities. From 1994 to 2000 they served in Botswana with Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission and Mennonite Central Committee. Prior to retiring, Erwin became a senior executive of the newly formed Mennonite Mission Network while Angela worked for the communications and church relations department of Mission Network.

Most recently, Erwin volunteered hundreds of hours with MennoMedia to help manage a “song survey” by assembling data from Mennonite congregations on the music sung in their services. This data will be used in preparing the next Mennonite song or hymn collection.

The Rempels replace Jodi Nisly Hertzler, who for 10 years answered Mennonite questions from her home. In



*Angela and Erwin Rempel will answer questions about Mennonites sent to Third Way Café.*

2009, Cascadia Publishing published her book, *Ask Third Way Cafe: 50 Common and Quirky Questions about Mennonites*. Since moving to Harrisonburg in 2011, the Rempels have become part of Ridgeway Mennonite Church. ☸

## MEDA invests in Haiti's insurance sector

Mennonite Economic Development Associates

**M**ennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) and Sarona Asset Management joined the Clinton Bush Haiti Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank in making investments in the Alternative Insurance Company (AIC). The Clinton Bush Haiti Fund and Sarona/MEDA are each investing \$1 million in equity in the Haitian multiline insurance company.

AIC has products fit to cover a range of customers, from commercial enterprises to low-income individuals. The investments will provide AIC with capital to strengthen its portfolio of insurance products and better prepare the Haitian population for unforeseen circumstances.

While 2010 was critically challenging for Haiti's insurance industry, AIC honored all

of its claims after the Jan. 12 earthquake. For the last two years the company has focused on growing its business and creating innovative new offerings.

AIC products range from commercial, auto, life, and health insurance to lower-cost insurance products, known as micro-insurance, targeted toward middle- and low-income clients. One micro-insurance product is AIC's funeral insurance, Protecta, which provides families with a safety net. An AIC survey shows that a funeral costs on average 11 times the monthly income of a low-income family. Without insurance, families must cover this expense by borrowing money or selling the few assets they have.

“We are pleased to partner with AIC for the betterment of the poor in Haiti,”

said Julie Redfern, Vice President of Financial Services at MEDA. Sarona Asset Management is the investment arm of MEDA. “Philosophically, we are well-aligned with shared values, solid business experience and a commitment to bottom-of-the-pyramid clientele.”

Sarona Asset Management's COO, Serge LeVert-Chiasson, explained that its decision to support the investment made by MEDA in AIC was driven by the quality of its senior management team, its leadership position within the insurance industry in the country and its focus on developing micro-insurance products for the working poor in Haiti. ☸

PHOTO BY EMMA STAHL-WERT



*Larisa Zehr, a recent EMU grad, worked alongside Colombians seeking to emerge from decades of warfare and destitution.*

## EMU graduates serve in war-torn areas of Colombia

BY STEVE SHENK

Eastern Mennonite University  
HARRISONBURG, VA.

Months after earning their undergraduate degrees from Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in 2011, Jessica Sarriot (Silver Spring, Md.), Larisa Zehr (Pittsburgh, Pa.) and William C. Morris (Charlottesville, Va.) headed 2,000 miles south to work alongside Colombians seeking to emerge from decades of warfare and destitution. They joined seven others for two years of service in Colombia under the Seed program of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

According to Witness for Peace, Colombia has the largest refugee population in the world. "More than 5.2 million Colombians have been internally displaced by right-wing paramilitaries often working in conjunction with Colombia's U.S.-funded and trained military, left-wing insurgents, indiscriminate aerial fumigations, large-scale extractive industries and agro-fuel production," says the Witness for Peace website.

"At every turn, U.S. corporations have benefited from the violence and mass displacement, most notably Coca Cola, Chiquita, Dole and Drummond Coal."

A variety of peace-and-justice groups, including Justapaz of the Colombian Mennonite churches, are helping with the

recovery effort at the grassroots level.

"These are amazing EMU graduates, doing great work," said EMU nursing professor and chair of the MCC U.S. Board of Directors, Ann Hershberger, who visited Sarriot, Zehr and Morris earlier this summer. "They are accompanying churches and villages displaced by the violence of the last 10 to 12 years."

Hershberger, who has an oversight role with MCC, was in Colombia as part of an MCC study tour. In the spring of 2013, she and her husband Jim will be leading a couple of dozen EMU students to Colombia for an accredited cross-cultural experience.

Sarriot is based in Medellin, the country's second largest city and birthplace of the drug cartels. A peacebuilding and development major, Sarriot works with the Sanctuary Peace Church Network of Antioquia, which is comprised of 12 evangelical churches and organizations. One of them is an Anabaptist/Mennonite congregation that supports a group of war victims through community-building and workshops on trauma healing.

Sarriot is also running 12 workshops in a men's prison under the auspices of the Prison Fellowship. Likely some of her

students were members of paramilitaries, perhaps even soldiers who victimized those in need of trauma healing.

"One of the things I've realized living in such a violent and complicated urban environment," said Sarriot, "is how important it is as Christians to understand Jesus' call to nonviolence in all aspects of our lives."

She added that Jesus' teachings tend to "conflict with what our culture, media and government tell us."

Morris, a business administration major from Charlottesville, Va., is assigned to the city of El Carmen de Bolivar, where he works for a local church and a regional food cooperative. In both cases he is helping displaced farmers organize projects related to food security and general economic development, such as a newly opened farmers' market. He is also leading youth Bible studies with a focus on life planning and career callings.

Many of the farmers Morris works with were driven out of their farms in the surrounding mountains during the civil war. Morris is involved with community land purchasing for small farmers.

Zehr, from Pittsburgh, works in the remote mountainous community of Berruguita, which got caught in the struggle for territory between paramilitaries and guerillas in 2000. Most of the residents fled the area but many of them have gradually returned.

"My work is accompanying the community as they attempt to organize both to demand their rights as citizens and as victims of the armed conflict," said Zehr, who majored in peacebuilding and development. As an example, Zehr cited their pursuit of improvements to the community's rutted access road. Also, in the spirit of the government's land-reform program, the community is fighting for their right to collective land ownership.

Zehr also helps supervise a small-loan program for local farmers and helps supply produce to the farmers' market that Morris helped launch. In addition, she works with a group of local mediators who are developing another way of dealing with conflict.

"If we aren't careful and if we don't take care of our security," she explained, "the violence could begin all over again." ❧

## ARTBEAT

# A 'cash cow' or an opportunity to share with others?

*Authors of Mennonite Girls Can Cook share personal stories*

BY MELODIE DAVIS

MennoMedia

One businessman had a hard time getting his head around the idea of the *Mennonite Girls Can Cook* authors giving all their royalties to charity. Charlotte Penner and her husband, Tony, live in Winnipeg, Man., and she loves to cook. So Charlotte agreed to cook a meal from the popular cookbook she helped to write, *Mennonite Girls Can Cook* (Herald Press, 2011), at the home of a friend for a group of businessmen.

"The men were very pleased with the meal," Charlotte recalls, "but one of the men commented to me that we were sitting on a 'cash cow' and someday I would be very rich." The cookbook is a bestseller in Canada and altogether has sold over 30,000 copies in a year and a half.

Charlotte responded, "I hope so, but I won't be the one who becomes rich. All the royalties are going to our charity." She explained to him how the group of 10 women who author the *Mennonite Girls Can Cook* blog and book of the same name all decided that the royalties would go to the Good Shepherd Shelter in Ukraine.

The man said, "I can understand you giving a portion of it to charity, but *all* of it?"

Charlotte told him about the Mennonite heritage and how of all the cookbook authors, either their parents or grandparents were born in Russia. Moreover, many of them had escaped under what they felt were miraculous conditions. "I was able to share our story, our Christian faith and how that related to our cookbook. I also said that those of us in North America who own one house and one car make us among 8 percent of the richest people in the world.



How could I possibly want more, when 92 percent of the world *needs* more?"

Working through Mennonite Central Committee, the Mennonite Girls Can Cook authors decided a worthy project was to build a greenhouse on the property of the Good Shepherd Shelter in Makeevka, Ukraine. "The goal is to raise \$67,000 to build and give support to the greenhouse," says the Mennonite Girls Can Cook blog, to "provide a sustainable source of healthy food for the children in the shelter and for the children at risk in the local community."

Charlotte explained that most of the authors' ancestors came from Ukraine. "My parents and grandparents are from Ukraine," explained Charlotte. They had

to flee in 1943. Charlotte's mother lived in a Paraguayan colony of Mennonites for nine years while she waited to immigrate to Canada.

"With all the loss and the tragedy that they experienced during those years, we were a very, very, close-knit family. My husband is from Paraguay and his whole family wasn't around in the beginning of our marriage. Raising our kids has been with an appreciation of having family and church around to call on when needed." The Penners have three children and are members of Douglas Mennonite Church.

"Having visited Ukraine myself, I realize how very blessed I am to be living in Canada," she said. The orphanage provides shelter and basic life needs for neglected and abandoned children including, food, clothing, education, health care, and spiritual and emotional support.

Most readers are happy to have part of their purchase go to charity. Doris wrote on the blog, "I ... appreciate that the royalties are helping children. How very 'Mennonite!'" She went on, "As I flipped through the pages, I began to cry; oh the memories that came flooding back! I have some recipes that I got from my Mom, but the monster that is called Alzheimer's took my mother's memory from her far too soon, so many of the recipes were lost. As I turned each page, a little gasp and a smile: I remember eating that!" ❧

## /// Briefly noted

### The Reach Gallery opens new exhibits

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.—The Reach Gallery Museum opened five new exhibitions on Sept. 27. Among them are "Illuminating Peace" by Edmonton artist Amy Loewan and "Just Food: Right to Food from a Faith Perspective." The "Illuminating Peace" exhibit consists of woven banners suspended from the ceiling and complimented by a large-scale illuminated, eight-panel "lantern" made of woven rice paper strips that contain messages of peace. Throughout the exhibition are similar messages in over 30 languages, both handwritten and computer-generated, painstakingly woven into the banners. The "Just Food" exhibit, curated by Ray Dirks, explores the right to food with work from 18 artists. Six artists from Canada, including a First Nations artist, and 12 from other countries around the world have been commissioned to create two pieces of original art specifically for this exhibition. The contemporary art is woven together with text/photo panels and artefacts detailing and illustrating historic and contemporary perspectives on food issues.

—The Reach Gallery Museum

## BOOK REVIEW

# Letters to the churches bring challenge

*Letters to a Future Church: Words of Encouragement and Prophetic Appeals.* Chris Lewis, ed. InterVarsity Press, 2012.

BY DAVE ROGALSKY  
EASTERN CANADA CORRESPONDENT

In Oct. 2010, Christians from all over North America, and a few from elsewhere, gathered in Toronto to listen to letters. Written by leaders, scholars, media personalities, and average church people, the letters were modelled on the biblical book of Revelation's seven short letters from Jesus, via John the elder, to congregations in Asia Minor (present-day Turkey).

The letters from lay people—unknown, not leaders—were anything but average. Only one letter received a standing ovation—not Ron Sider's, nor Walter Brueggemann's, but Janell Anema's. An unknown waitress from Philadelphia Pennsylvania, she had the gathering from "hello."

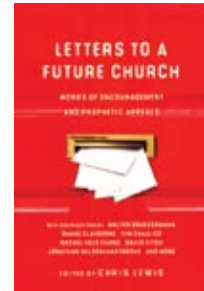
"Dear Church, I love you. You had me at hello." She read excerpts from letters she had written to the church in her journal through the years. From the height of worship and joy, to the depths of despair and doubt, Anema's letters carried the gathering along the rollercoaster of her experiences with the church until we breathlessly arrived with her. "Dear Church, dearest Church: I don't have a formula. There is no plan. But there is a wedding, and we are engaged. We are the beloved. What if, instead of adorning our bodies and our bookshelves with the tattoos and the T-Shirts and manifestos that point to God we write his words on our hearts and we live."

This book uses Anema's words as layers of flavour between the bread of the other letters, each of which expresses the biases and presuppositions of the writers from many different perspectives across the church—from pro-GLBT to human kind's need to confess its original sin, and many places in between. As Andy

Crouch, special assistant to the president at *Christianity Today* magazine puts it in the foreword, "for the most part the letters that weekend exemplified the consideration we all hope for when we open an envelope. They were crafted out of love, thought, pain and prayer." "All these letters,

even the misdirected ones, can be helpful to us. They can sharpen our senses, cause us to sit up a bit straighter and prompt us to listen more intently for the One who truly has addressed himself to us and who will one day return to his bride."

This volume would be useful to anyone who loves, or has loved the church, and would be a useful study for a small group or Christian Formation hour. ❧



MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA PHOTO BY DEBORAH FROESE.



**Elsie Rempel's new book, *Please Pass the Faith: The Art of Spiritual Grandparenting*, hit #1 on McNally Robinson's non-fiction bestseller list for the week of Sept. 2. Although the book was officially launched in Vancouver, B.C. at Mennonite Church Canada's Assembly 2012, the McNally Robinson event brought the book into a larger public arena with its launch on Sept. 5 at their Winnipeg location. *Please Pass the Faith* examines the challenges of relationships between young and old, tending one's own spirituality, and the process of how faith grows and matures.**

# Congo stories give encouragement and challenge

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

MARY E. KLASSEN  
ELKHART, IND.

The words “example” and “encouragement” were used frequently as Pastor Benjamin Mubenga of the Congo talked about the newly released book, *The Jesus Tribe: Grace stories from Congo’s Mennonites, 1912-2012*. The book, featured in a celebration at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary on Sept. 18, marks the centennial of Mennonite witness in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It comprises 88 brief stories of Congolese Mennonite Christians who had life-changing encounters with Jesus.

Mubenga explained that the book uses vignettes of individual people to trace the

history of how the Mennonite Church and Evangelical Mennonite Church began in the Congo. He hopes people today can draw strength and encouragement from it, and when he says this he means both Congolese and North Americans.

At the celebration, Rod Hollinger-Janzen, staff member of Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, described how the book came to be with the contributions of many different people. In 2009, when AIMM staff considered doing this project, the church leaders in the Congo identified seven researchers who then received training in gathering oral histories in the Congolese setting. These

researchers spent one day a week over the next year interviewing people, sometimes in remote communities, and summarizing the resulting 500 stories. Then over the next two years, several Congolese writers and editors joined with North American editors Nancy Myers, Jim Bertsche and Hollinger-Janzen to complete two volumes. A French book, *100 Ans de Mission Mennonite en République Démocratique du Congo, Témoignages des Apports Locaux 1912-2012*, contains 100 stories; *The Jesus Tribe* in English has fewer stories with some added contextual information.

The book is a project of Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, in collaboration with Mennonite Church of Congo, Evangelical Mennonite Church of Congo, the Institute of Mennonite Studies at AMBS, and the Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism at Goshen College.

The *Jesus Tribe* is available for purchase from the Mennonite Cooperative Bookstore at AMBS, [bookstore@ambs.edu](mailto:bookstore@ambs.edu) or 574-296-6251. ❧

PHOTO BY SAEJIN LEE



Pastor Benjamin Mubenga prepares to autograph a copy of *The Jesus Tribe: Grace stories from Congo’s Mennonites, 1912-2012*. The English volume includes 88 stories of people in the Congo while the French version contains 100 stories.

## A Peacemaker’s Journey


# IN AFGHANISTAN

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## Focus On

# Destination Winnipeg

MARY LOU DRIEDGER  
WINNIPEG

**W**e returned to Canada July 18, 2011, after spending six years teaching at the International Christian School in Hong Kong. My husband Dave and I moved into a condo in downtown Winnipeg and prepared for a very different life than the one we had been leading.

Our years working in the transportation hub of Asia afforded us opportunities for nearly 50 affordable travel experiences. Every school holiday we boarded a plane to head off to a new country or city—Rome, Singapore, Beijing, Madrid, Shanghai, Sydney, Kyoto, London, Ho Chi Min City, Kiev, Auckland and dozens more. Some

vacations included service work; building houses for Habitat for Humanity in Thailand, working on a coffee plantation in Laos, teaching English in Cambodia and planting trees in Borneo. We chaperoned our high school students on annual study trips to Europe and the Middle East.

Our return to Canada marked the end of our teaching careers. Living on a pension in a less centralized location meant our travel would need to be significantly curtailed. After years of globe trotting how would we adjust? Winnipeg was a new home for us. For three decades prior to our move to Hong Kong we had lived in Steinbach, Man.

During our six years of international travelling I always tried to learn as much as I could about our new destinations and made a point of journaling about our experiences. I decided to do the same thing for Winnipeg on a blog I called “Destination Winnipeg.” I published reflections about a Winnipeg history course I took and reviews of the books I read about the city. I photographed public pieces of art



*Dave and Mary Lou Driedger skating down the Red River in Winnipeg*

and researched their creators. I wrote stories about historic buildings and streets.

I catalogued our adventures as we tried unique Winnipeg experiences. I described skating down the Red and Assiniboine Rivers and attending theatrical productions at the world-famous Fringe Festival. I did blog posts about exploring Winnipeg’s ethnic diversity during the city’s Folklorama weeks and visiting the Fort Whyte Nature Centre to learn about the First Nations people who camped and traded near Winnipeg long ago.

Responses to my blog from readers around the world made me realize Winnipeg was every bit as fascinating as the foreign destinations to which we had travelled. We didn’t need to get on a plane to see new things and have exciting experiences.

We also became church tourists. We had been to many different places of worship in the countries we had visited. Since we needed to find a new church home in Winnipeg we decided to spend a year visiting all kinds of churches. We went to churches that showed movies and had coffee shops. We attended services in art galleries and tents. Some churches had structured liturgies while others had little organization, letting the Spirit lead them.

We discovered groups that worshipped in small simple buildings and ones that met in huge stone edifices over a hundred years old. We went to Mennonite churches but

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*Dave and Mary Lou Driedger walking the Great Wall in China*

visited other denominations as well. We worshipped with congregations where most people were over 80 years and others with lots of young families. At one church

the electronic music consisted of love songs performed in Japanese by the owners of a neighborhood sushi restaurant. In another, a choir of professional singers and a

well-known organist led us in traditional hymns. In some churches people effusively welcomed us, while in others we were left in solitude.

Visiting such a variety of churches has reminded us we don't need to get on a plane to learn about unique faith groups, or take part in vastly different worship experiences. After a year we have only begun to discover the wealth of things Winnipeg has to offer.

My husband Dave bought a bicycle so he can explore the city in a different way. He comes home full of interesting stories. I've begun volunteering as an education tour guide at the Winnipeg Art Gallery and a clerk at the MCC Thrift Shop. I'm meeting people from different Mennonite churches and developing an appreciation for the culturally diverse neighborhood around the MCC store.

We are looking forward to many more adventures in Winnipeg. This last year has taught us you don't have to get on a plane to travel to an interesting and exciting destination. You can stay right where you are. ☺

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GOD AT WORK IN US

## Elsie Cressman, pioneer missionary and midwife, dies

BY LINDA MOFFETT

Eastern Mennonite Missions  
NEW HAMBURG, ONT.

Funeral services were held Sept. 23, for Elsie Cressman, a former Eastern Mennonite Missions worker in East Africa, who died Sept. 11. Cressman was known for her work among leprosy patients and her work as a midwife both in East Africa and in Canada.

A graduate of Goshen College, Cressman went to Tanganyika (now Tanzania) aboard the Queen Mary in 1954 with the charge to set up a leprosy hospital and accommodations for patients and staff. In the 1950s leprosy was rampant in that region and there was a great social stigma attached to

those with the disease.

The hospital Cressman established eventually served about 400 patients. In a 2010 MetaMedia television documentary about her return to visit Africa as an 86-year-old, Cressman reflected, "I didn't know what I was getting into, but I really enjoyed it."

The daughter of a Conservative Mennonite pastor, Cressman was known for her sense of adventure, courage, and for an independent nature, not always playing by the rules for a woman of her generation. Stories abound of her shooting at hippos and snakes, hiking up Mount Kilimanjaro



*Elsie Cressman, (foreground) the subject of a documentary, Return to Africa: The Story of Elsie Cressman, is pictured with filmmakers Paul Francescutti, and Paula and Paul Campsall, at a screening in Waterloo in 2010.*

in work shoes, and driving around Africa on a motorcycle.

Cressman stayed in East Africa for 23 years. After the local community took over the hospital, Cressman went to England for two years of midwife training. When she returned to Africa in the mid-1970s, she went to Rusinga Island in Lake Victoria in Kenya to set up a health center there. She delivered more than 1,000 babies during her time at the clinic.

Miriam Housman, who served with Cressman in Tanzania, said Cressman was a role model. "I am the woman I am because of Elsie," she said. Cressman told her and others serving at the hospital to "Get out, learn the language, do things, and interact with people."

Her zest for life was also evident to Housman. "If there was a rule against having a dog, she had a dog. If there was a rule against having a scooter, she had a scooter."

Returning to Waterloo Region, Ont. in 1976, Cressman worked as a midwife until her retirement in 1998. She received the Order of Ontario medal, as the government recognized her instrumental role in midwifery.

She attended Grace Mennonite Fellowship Church near New Hamburg. ❧

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## COVER STORY

## Visiting the Children of Guatemala

PHOTO ESSAY BY SHINA PARK

Special to Young voices

For 11 years Rachel Potter de Reyes, a missionary from Scotland, has worked in Guatemala with Mike Black Ministries. Initiated in January 1990 by Pastor Mike Black and his wife, Pat, it consists of two children's programs: one, in the village of Santiago and the other, in El Rejon, a mountain village on the way to La Antigua.

This summer, I spent two months in Guatemala learning Spanish in preparation for Goshen College's Study-Service Abroad program, through which I hope to travel to Peru. Most significantly, I met the children of the Mike Black Ministries—my father's "Education Beyond Borders" project supported education for some of them.

The Santiago program attracts more than 120 children on Sunday afternoons, and the El Rejon program has approximately 275 participants on Saturday mornings. The

activities consist of Bible teachings, songs, games, crafts, and refreshments. Children attending the programs are from marginalized families who live on a basic income of 50 quetzals a day, equivalent to \$1 US. In certain seasons, the number of participants decreases because the children help their family harvest crops. Many kids bring their younger siblings to the program, some even carrying infants on their back. There, on the mountaintops of Guatemala, the children's beautiful singing and chants of Bible verses are heard, echoing. ❧

*Shina Park is a second-year student at Goshen College in Indiana, pursuing an interdisciplinary major of journalism, art, and peace, justice, and conflict studies. Her home congregation is Emmanuel Mennonite Church, in Abbotsford, B.C.*



*Overlooking the village of El Rejon.*



*The worship leader wears a lion costume while Rachel Potter de Reyes and older children hold up signs of Bible teachings.*



# Of competition and community

*Young athletes talk about what it means to compete at sports at Mennonite institutions*

BY AARON EPP

Special to Young Voices

CMU PHOTO



Clare Schellenberg

Growing up playing sports, Brad Thiessen occasionally heard the stereotype that Christians are too meek to care about competing at a high level and winning games.

“I think [some] people view Christians as soft and not wanting to hurt others,” says the 26-year-old. “Maybe not as much today as they used to, but I’ve definitely heard that stereotype thrown around.” That assessment doesn’t ring true for Thiessen, who plays basketball for Columbia Bible College.

“Here at CBC, and as a Christian in general, I’m trying my best all the time,” he says. “I’m playing for God, and why not play to the best of my ability?” While some view competition as sinful, it’s unavoidable—in life, and in sports.

Clare Schellenberg, a volleyball player at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), says competing in sports at the school is less about beating the other team, and more about her team executing a plan to accomplish the goals they have set for themselves.

“Sport at CMU is really about finding unity as a team and celebrating the gifts of each player,” the 21-year-old says. “Rather than focusing so much on what the other team is doing, we focus on what we are doing as a team and how we can work to be the best we can be.”

Laura Tait, who plays basketball for CMU, agrees. Some of her favourite moments from last season were when the team focused on working together and playing to the best of their abilities.

“The goal is never to win in particular, but to execute the things we want to do well, to work together as a team and to always maintain a positive attitude,” the 20-year-old says. “Because if you don’t have a positive attitude, things will automatically fall apart and not go the way you want them to.”

Russell Willms, director of athletics at CMU, says that sports at the university are about much more than competition.

“We try to emphasize that the opportunity to play competitive sports is an opportunity not only to compete, but we try to look at it as, you have the opportunity to be part of a community,” he says.

That sense of community became real for Schellenberg over the past two years as she underwent two knee surgeries because of injuries she sustained while playing volleyball and riding her bike.

“Interestingly, these injuries have also opened me to my deepest questioning of faith,” she says. “Without the support and encouragement of my CMU teammates and my coach, I could not have come through these times with the strength and perspective they have given me. God seemed pretty distant at points, but I believe that without faith and my team community, these experiences would have been far different.”

Thiessen at CBC says that community is emphasized in student life at the college, and it’s a big part of why he enjoys playing sports for the school.

“I like that I get to be on a team and we get to do things together,” he says. “We get to win and lose together. Being on a basketball team allows me and my teammates to practice living in community and being in community with one another as Christian athletes. Not only do we get to enjoy athletics and playing, but we get to learn about each other spiritually. We spend a lot of time together and we get to grow in many different ways.”

Tait says she believes it is possible to be competitive in sport without making it “a violent competitiveness” where the goal is “to win at all costs.”

Schellenberg agrees. “[In the past] I’ve played for many coaches who emphasize the importance of winning,” she says. “In

some ways these coaches and their expectations forced me into a love/hate relationship with volleyball. Transitioning into playing volleyball at CMU, I gained a new love for the sport because even though we share a focus to win, our goal really is to play our best as a team through our ups

and downs.”

“But,” she adds, “even though my major is Peace and Conflict Transformation Studies, I still love the competitive part and the adrenaline rush of absolutely crushing a ball!” ❧



*At one point young adults were asked to share their understandings of the church without comment or interruption from the leadership. Circle of young adults from far left, clockwise: Rebecca Steiner (MCEC), Kate McIntyre (MCM), Krista Loewen (MCBC), Kathleen Bergen (MCA), Ben Borne (MC Sask), Brent Retzlaff (MCA), David Penny (MCEC) and Brittani Gifford (MCBC).*

## National church consults young adults

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada  
WINNIPEG

Young adults have a lot to say about the future of the church—and the wider church is listening. Mennonite Church Canada and the five area churches invited eight young adults from across Canada to Winnipeg for a Sept. 27 and 28 consultation about the future of the church. Betty Pries of Mennonite Church Canada’s Faith and Life Committee facilitated discussions. Participants explored “Why” the church is important in the 21st century, “How” God might be inviting the wider church to structure the support of that vision, and “What” God might be calling the church to do specifically to bring that vision to life.

Consultations were held in confidence to encourage uninhibited conversation. From participant Krista Loewen’s perspective,

that confidentiality was important. The Canadian Mennonite University student says that sometimes young adults are cautious about what they say because they are concerned about the judgement of others. “We’re younger and not as experienced with life. We don’t want what we say taken out of context.”

Ben Borne, also a CMU student and a young adult representative for Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, felt similarly, wishing there was “more time to talk, to engage with the questions and subject matter, and to have a more organic conversation.”

“I think there needs to be a better forum for young adults to discuss their desires for the church. It was hard for us to voice what matters to us with the limited time we had



*Kate McIntyre (MCM).*



*Brittani Gifford, Associate Pastor at Peace Mennonite Church in B.C., and Kathleen Bergen, MCEC young adult representative, continue their discussion during a coffee break.*

to answer the questions the board had for us," he said.

David Penny, a young adult pastor for youth at First Mennonite in Kitchener, Ont., noted that the confidentiality factor created a challenge about how to more broadly share the ideas and comments made during the sessions. In the end the group decided to provide a discussion summary at a later date. Young adults will process the discussion further via teleconference.

Although young adults shared different reasons for attending the consultation, each expressed concern for the future of the church.

Brittani Gifford, a young adult associate pastor at Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond, B.C., says she grew up in the national church and understands it. "I've also seen things that aren't working. I decided I either had to sit on the sidelines and be critical, or step in and do something."

Penny's curiosity about how the church works at national and provincial levels prompted his attendance. "It was enlightening to see the way consensus is built at the executive level of the church and to see how decisions are made," he says. "It is enlivening to know that our voices are being heard."

Willard Metzger, Mennonite Church Canada executive director, said Area Church Moderators and executive staff felt that strong young adult engagement was critical to discussions about the future of the church. "It didn't seem to make sense to us to try and imagine what the future of the church will look like without including

those who will be living out and leading that future reality."

Loewen appreciated being invited into the consultation. One disappointment for her was the fact that she knew other young adults were interested in attending, but space was limited and they weren't sure how they could become involved. She added that she has a number of friends who have no connection with churches, even though they have faith.

"I'm encouraged by the fact that the church is a dynamic entity," Loewen said. "While it struggles to rethink dogmatic practices, leaders are trying to ask 'what's going on?'"

In addition to the young adults, and Metzger and Pries, the following church leaders also participated: Hilda Hildebrand, moderator and Aldred Neufeldt, assistant moderator, Mennonite Church Canada General Board; David Martin, executive minister, and Carol Penner, moderator, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada; Ken Warkentin, executive director, and Peter Rempel, moderator elect, Mennonite Church Manitoba; Patrick Preheim, representing Mennonite Church Saskatchewan; Dan Graber, executive minister and Ernie Engbrecht, moderator, Mennonite Church Alberta; as well as Garry Janzen, executive minister, and Karen Heidebrecht Thiessen, pastor and Area Church representative, Mennonite Church British Columbia. ❧


*With files from Rachel Bergen, Co-editor of Young Voices, Canadian Mennonite.*



*Ben Borne, young adult representative from MC Sask (left) and Dan Graber, Executive Minister, MCA.*

**Schools directory**

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**Calendar**

**British Columbia**

**Oct. 27:** Columbia Bible College annual fundraising dinner. Visit [www.columbiabc.edu/fundraisingdinner](http://www.columbiabc.edu/fundraisingdinner) for more details.

**Dec. 8-9:** Advent Vespers with Abendmusik Choir at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford (8) and Knox United Church, Vancouver (9). Offering to Menno Simons Centre.

**Alberta**

**Oct. 27:** Sweet Interlude, an evening of desserts and entertainment featuring Steve Bell at Menno Simons Christian School, Calgary, at 6:30 p.m. For tickets call 403-531-0745.

**Nov. 10:** "Under Construction: What is a Spiritual Man?" with Gareth Brandt at Trinity Mennonite, Calgary, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. To register contact Marvin Baergen at 403-256-2894.

**Nov. 13-15:** Pastors and spouses retreat at Camp Valaqua. Contact Dan Graber, [dan@mennonitechurch.ab.ca](mailto:dan@mennonitechurch.ab.ca) or Tim at [pastor@edmonton1st.mennonitechurch.ab.ca](mailto:pastor@edmonton1st.mennonitechurch.ab.ca) or 780-436-3431.

**Saskatchewan**

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

**Nov. 2-3:** MCCS Encounter and AGM at First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

**Nov. 4:** Mennonite Historical Society book launch of Helena: A Peek into the Past, at Bethany Manor Fellowship Centre, 2:30 p.m.

**Nov. 6:** Pastors gathering.

**Nov. 17:** MC Sask Leadership Assembly.

**Nov. 18,19:** RJC fall theatre.

**Manitoba**

**Oct. 27:** Canadian Foodgrains Bank fundraising concert with Eastman Male Choir of Steinbach and U of M Concert Choir at Springfield Heights Mennonite Church, 7:30 p.m.

**Oct. 27:** MC Manitoba and MC Canada hosting Partnership Circle Meetings at Sterling Mennonite Church, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

**Oct. 27:** Camps with Meaning fundraising banquet at Whitewater Mennonite Church, Boissevain, 6 p.m.

**Nov. 2:** MCI soup and pie fundraiser and fall concert, at Buhler Hall, Gretna.  
**Nov. 10:** Camps with Meaning fundraising banquet at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Winkler, 5:30 p.m.  
**Nov. 11:** Camps with Meaning fundraising banquet at Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, 5 p.m.  
**Nov. 13:** Evening of the Arts at Westgate Collegiate, 7 p.m.  
**Nov. 22-24:** Cottonwood Community drama production *Sherlock Holmes* at Buhler Hall, Gretna, 7:30 p.m.  
**Nov. 23:** CMU Campus visit day.  
**Nov. 24:** Christmas@CMU, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

### Ontario

**Oct. 20:** Mennonite Disaster Service dessert night at Breslau Mennonite Church, 7 p.m.  
**Oct. 24:** Greening Sacred Spaces Network workshop, co-sponsored with MCC Ontario, "Water—a sacred resource," at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, 7-9 p.m., registration at 6:30 p.m. Visit [www.greeningsacredspaces.net/waterloo](http://www.greeningsacredspaces.net/waterloo) for information.  
**Oct. 26:** House of Friendship fundraising dinner to support women's addiction services. For tickets, call 519-742-8327  
**Oct. 27:** "Requiem for Peace" composed by Larry Nickel by the Orpheus Choir of Toronto at Metropolitan United Church, 56 Queen St., 7:30 p.m. Visit [www.orpheuschoirtoronto.com](http://www.orpheuschoirtoronto.com).  
**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 [businessasacalling.org](http://businessasacalling.org) or 1-800-665-7026 for information.  
**Nov. 2,3,4,8,9,10:** *Job's Blues: A Blues Opera*, based on the Book of Job with words and story by R. William Muir (managing ed., *Canadian Mennonite*), 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. 3:** Mennonite and Brethren Marriage Encounter annual meeting at 3950 Lawson Line, RR 3, Wallenstein. 4 p.m. with supper at 5 p.m. Phone 519-698-2091.

**Nov. 7:** "Transitions in the Latter Years," sponsored by Fairview, Parkwood and Tri-County Mennonite Homes with Dr. David Grant and Bev Suderman-Gladwell at Greenwood Court Auditorium, Stratford, 7 p.m.  
**Nov. 9:** Youth worship concert, "Praising the Prince of Peace," featuring Instead of Silver. For information go to <http://mcco.ca/princeofpeace>.  
**Nov. 10:** MCC Ontario fall conference in Fort Erie. For information go to <http://mcco.ca/faith-action-O>.  
**Nov. 13:** MCC Ontario presents a night of Fashion and Thrift at Bingeman's, Kitchener. Tickets sell out fast. For information go to <http://mcco.ca/splash>.  
**Nov. 17:** Fairview Mennonite Home handicraft sale with Christmas crafts, decorations and more; 9 a.m.- 2 p.m. with lunch available.  
**Nov. 23:** *Gadfly: Sam Steiner Dodges the Draft* supporting Fraser Lake Camp, at Breslau Mennonite Church, 7:30 p.m. Tickets at [nov23fraser.eventbrite.ca](http://nov23fraser.eventbrite.ca) or 905-642-2964.  
**Nov. 23-24:** Spirit of Christmas music and craft show at Nairn Mennonite Church, Ailsa Craig, with Valleyview Men's chorus, Ten Thousand Villages, crafts and tea room 7-9 p.m. (23) 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (24). Call Barb at 519-232-4720 for information.  
**Nov. 24:** Nithview Christmas Tea and Bake Sale sponsored by Nithview Auxiliary, 200 Bouleee St., New Hamburg, 2-4 p.m.

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

### Classifieds

### Announcement

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### Employment Opportunities

**FIRST UNITED MENNONITE CHURCH (FUMC)** located in Vancouver, BC seeks **ONE EXPERIENCED PASTOR** (approximately ½ time) to serve in a culturally diverse urban setting. We hold to the Anabaptist theology, are members of Mennonite Church BC and MC Canada, and need a pastor to work with us as we strive to continue to develop our relationships with Christ, each other, and the community.

Candidates should have the following:

- Capacity to relate to various age groups and cultures.
- Five years church leadership experience, with a focus on preaching and worship, pastoral care, nurturing and supporting lay leadership gifts.
- Ability to work and mentor in a pastoral team environment. Actual responsibilities will take into account the gifts each pastor brings to address the needs of the congregation.
- Commitment to Anabaptist theology.
- Post secondary religious education (preferably an M. Div.)
- A completed Ministerial Leadership Information Form.

Interested candidates may contact the Search Committee at [laura.penner@gmail.com](mailto:laura.penner@gmail.com).

**MENNONITE CHURCH MANITOBA** is inviting applications for a **FULL TIME DIRECTOR OF CAMPING MINISTRIES**. We are looking for a dynamic person of faith willing to give leadership to our camping ministry (Camps with Meaning). This includes children's camping ministry, hospitality ministry, leadership development, budget development and management, fund raising, and staff recruitment.

All applicants considered will have a strong, committed faith in Jesus Christ, a commitment to the mission and vision of Mennonite Church Manitoba (including "Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective"), and an understanding of camping ministry. Ideally applicants will have experience in camping leadership, business, and public speaking.

Closing date for applications is October 26, 2012.  
Job descriptions available on request

Please send resumes to:

Ken Warkentin  
Executive Director Mennonite Church Manitoba  
200-600 Shaftesbury Blvd.  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3P 2J1  
Fax: 204-832-7804  
Email: [kwarkentin@mennochurch.mb.ca](mailto:kwarkentin@mennochurch.mb.ca)

**PASTORAL OPPORTUNITY  
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Inquiries, resumes and letters of interest may be directed to:

Henry Paetkau  
Area Church Minister  
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada  
4489 King St. E.  
Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2  
Telephone: 519-650-3806 / 800-206-9356, ext. 107  
Fax: 519-650-3947 / E-mail: hpaetkau@mcec.ca



**SOCIOLOGY VACANCY**

**EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY** announces a full-time, tenure track faculty position in Sociology beginning Fall 2013. Ph.D. and experience in higher education required. Practice experience strongly preferred. Applicants should be trained in sociology and will ideally have experience in some area of international development, humanitarian assistance, and/or environmental and social sustainability. Courses will focus on sociology but may also include international and community development, social work, human rights, conflict resolution, or environmental and social issues, depending on the experience, qualifications, and interests of the applicant. Nine-month contract, salary determined by education and experience. Eastern Mennonite University uses a tenure-with-review contract system. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable), and three reference letters to Dr. Nancy R. Heisey, Vice President & Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802. <http://www.emu.edu> [ugdean@emu.edu](mailto:ugdean@emu.edu) Applicants will be acknowledged by letter or email. Review begins immediately. Applicants will be asked to respond to questions specific to EMU's mission after the initial inquiry. EMU reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic, and cultural diversity.



**THEATER VACANCY**

**EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY** announces a full-time, tenure track faculty position in Theater beginning Fall 2013. Ph.D. or MFA required. Teaching and professional experience required. Responsibilities include teaching theater history, playwriting, and other courses in areas of expertise (i.e. acting, performance art, film, design, applied theater) and directing in the departmental season. Applicants should demonstrate a strong commitment to the collaborative creative process within an undergraduate liberal arts environment; and embrace the opportunity to build a young theater department that seeks adventurous, socially engaged theater and expansion of traditional performance canon. Applicants should welcome teaching and creating at a Christian university that values diversity of expression. Nine-month contract, salary determined by education and experience. Eastern Mennonite University uses a tenure-with-review contract system. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable), and three reference letters to Dr. Nancy R. Heisey, Vice President & Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802. <http://www.emu.edu> [ugdean@emu.edu](mailto:ugdean@emu.edu) Applicants will be acknowledged by letter or email. Review begins immediately. Applicants will be asked to respond to questions specific to EMU's mission after the initial inquiry. EMU reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic, and cultural diversity.



**MUSIC (PIANO) VACANCY**

**EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY** announces a tenure-track, continuing faculty position in piano with additional responsibilities in music theory or music history beginning Fall 2013. Doctorate preferred, master's degree required. Performance experience and ongoing professional experience/scholarship expected. Responsibilities include teaching private piano at the university level and possibly in our Preparatory Program, teaching all levels of music theory or music history, and performing in collaborative and solo settings. Nine-month contract. Salary and rank determined by education and experience. EMU uses a tenure with review contract system. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, transcripts (unofficial acceptable), and three reference letters by November 15, 2012 to Dr. Nancy R. Heisey, Vice President & Undergraduate Academic Dean, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, VA 22802. <http://www.emu.edu> [ugdean@emu.edu](mailto:ugdean@emu.edu) Applicants will be acknowledged by letter or email. Review begins immediately. Applicants will be asked to respond to questions specific to EMU's mission after the initial inquiry. EMU reserves the right to fill the position at any time or keep the position open. AAEO employer. We seek applicants who bring gender, ethnic, and cultural diversity.

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



*Among the things to see at the International Plowing Match (IPM) held at Roseville, near Kitchener, Ont., was Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) volunteers raising a barn. As the structure begins to take shape, MDS Region V (Canada) director Nick Hamm (left), Ronald W. Martin, MDS Ontario Chair Glenn Buck and Ontario Vice-chair Martin Durksen pause for a photo. Martin, of Conestoga Carpenters in Waterloo, was approached by the IPM to coordinate an “old time community barn raising” on the site. Martin specializes in restoring old timber frame buildings. In lieu of payment, Martin requested that the IPM committee make a substantial contribution to MDS for the work done by the volunteers on the site. The IPM was held on the farm of Will Stoltz, a retired MC Eastern Canada pastor and chaplain, September 18-22.*

MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE ALBERTA PHOTO



*Randy Klassen takes a swing in the Mennonite Central Committee Alberta golf tournament at Nanton, Alta., on Sept. 16. MCC Alberta thanks everyone who supported their annual golf tournaments in La Crete, Nanton and Tofield this fall. More than 145 golfers participated and raised more than \$220,000 for MCC projects such as building sand dams in East Africa or the food crisis in the Sahel region of northern Africa.*