

CANADIAN MENNONITE

January 5, 2015
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are closed.
There is
shooting’

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EDITORIAL

I resolve to . . .

AARON EPP
YOUNG VOICES CO-EDITOR

The dawn of a new year is always alluring to me because there is so much promise. You say goodbye to the year that was. If the previous year was a good one overall, you hope that the new year will be similar. If the previous year was not so great, the new year promises an opportunity to start afresh.

We're a few days into 2015, and if you're the sort of person who likes to make new year's resolutions, you're either well on your way or you've broken them already.

I like making resolutions because it helps me to evaluate where I am in life and think about where I would like to be. Making resolutions is part of my ongoing quest to be the best person I can be, and to be who I believe God wants me to be.

Of course, my resolutions are meaningless if I don't create a plan that outlines how I'm going to follow through on them. The idea of starting afresh on Jan. 1 also seems silly at times, because why wait until the first day of a new year to make a change? I often think of an article by Mike Warkentin, a gym owner and writer in Winnipeg, in which he discussed people who make it their new year's resolution to be healthier.

"I've always believed that if you need a new year to make a commitment to being healthier, you aren't that interested in being healthier," he wrote. "You're just doing it because you feel like you should. It's like trying to quit smoking. Anyone who's done it will tell you that it won't happen

until you actually want it to happen. When you really want to quit smoking, you will, and it won't matter what the calendar says, what the doctors say or what the commercials say. You'll just do it."

One of my new year's resolutions for 2015 is to do more volunteer work. I write a column for the *Winnipeg Free Press* in which I profile different people each week who volunteer their time to make a difference in their community. The column is simply titled "Volunteers," and I often joke that it should be retitled, "People who make Aaron feel lazy." I've spoken with incredible people, many of whom make the time to contribute to society in some

I like making resolutions because it helps me evaluate where I am in life and think about where I would like to be.

meaningful way, even if they have numerous other commitments demanding their attention.

I've spoken with a 36-year-old self-employed mortgage broker and life coach who once spent 49 days running and cycling from Victoria, B.C., to St. John's, N.L., in support of the David Suzuki Foundation. I've spoken with a 93-year-old man who volunteers each week at not one but two Mennonite Central Committee thrift stores, where he is the resident "Mr. Fix-it." He plans to keep volunteering as long as he can drive.

I've spoken with a retired septuagenarian who teaches adult newcomers English as an additional language. She has helped some of these newcomers escape abusive relationships. And I've spoken with a 29-year-old freelance photographer who spent a month living on a dollar's worth of food per day to raise awareness of what most people in Malawi, a country in southeast Africa, experience as a daily struggle.

These people are inspiring. It seems to me that they are doing what they can to live out the second part of the greatest commandment: "Love your neighbour as yourself."

As I think of this commandment, I'm reminded of what Frederick Buechner, a Presbyterian minister, theologian and writer, included in one of his memoirs, *Telling Secrets*. "Love your neighbour as yourself is part of the great commandment," Buechner wrote. "The other way to say it is, 'Love yourself as your neighbour.' Love yourself not in some egocentric, self-serving sense, but love yourself

the way you would love your friend in the sense of taking care of yourself, nourishing yourself, trying to understand, comfort, strengthen yourself."

This passage is always an important reminder to me not to be too hard on myself. My efforts to love others cannot come at the expense of my own physical, mental and spiritual health. Ultimately, if I take care of myself, I can be at my best to love and serve others.

Loving and serving others is not a new idea, but it's one worth committing to on Jan. 1 or on any other day of the year.



ABOUT THE COVER:

A woman bursts into tears following an overnight artillery raid outside Slavyansk in eastern Ukraine. For the story on Mennonite Central Committee's work in the war-torn country, see page 24.

PHOTO: SERGEY PONOMAREV, MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

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Seeking and speaking the truth in love • Open hearts and minds in discerning God's will •

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- Prayer Network launched for PA 2015
- MWC seeks vocalists for international ensemble
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An 'experiment' in sexuality gone wrong

Legacies of John Howard Yoder's sexual abuse

BY RACHEL WALTNER GOOSSEN

The following is excerpted from a longer article, "Defanging the beast: Mennonite responses to John Howard Yoder's sexual abuse," in Mennonite Quarterly Review No. 89 (January 2015), based on newly available documents and interviews with 29 individuals. Readers interested in Goossen's work in its entirety, including documentation for women's accounts of their experiences as well as Mennonite institutional responses, may order a hard copy of the issue from MQR. The MQR issue is also available as an e-book through MennoMedia.org.

/// With aching hearts

Some readers have called for a moratorium on reports about John Howard Yoder's past misdeeds. We acknowledge that continued attention to this issue has caused pain to Yoder's family, friends and colleagues, as well as to the women who suffered because of his actions.

Yet, new information is emerging that cannot be ignored. Looking at the events of the past with 21st-century eyes, it appears that church and institutional leaders, while likely acting with the best of intentions, took actions that contributed to the ongoing pain. The church now has an opportunity to lament what is past and to seek closure of a difficult chapter in our life together.

As Mennonites try to understand what happened in private more than 30 years ago, we also recognize that sexual abuse is still present today. (See "Intimacy is not an invitation to abuse," page 34.) We, as individuals and as institutions, still find it challenging to know how to respond redemptively to victims and perpetrators.

This is a call for the church to find ways of caring for those who have suffered abuse while at the same time taking steps to make each congregation and church institution a safe place for all. As we grieve, we can accept the invitation to open a new chapter in our life together—an era in which respect and honesty flourish.

—Canadian Mennonite

During the mid-1970s, the renowned Christian ethicist and theologian John Howard Yoder embarked on an experiment in sexuality, devising his own guidelines and selecting his own subjects, whom he called "sisters."

Following a three-year term as president of Goshen (Ind.) Biblical Seminary, he began to develop "the notion of a distinction between two dimensions of sexuality, the familiar and the genital." Yoder speculated that persons plagued either by inhibitions about sexual intercourse or by promiscuity would have difficulty attaining what he termed "the freedom of the gospel," which he linked to Jesus' encounters with women. In a series of essays that he circulated on the seminary campus and beyond, Yoder speculated about Jesus' sexuality as a model for his disciples, for the men who followed in his path.

Nearly two decades later, in 1992, a denominational task force established by leaders in Yoder's congregation, Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, Ind., confronted him with 13 charges of sexual abuse. "These charges indicate a long pattern of inappropriate sexual behaviour between you and a number of women," the task force told Yoder, who had been ordained while serving as the seminary's president. "The settings for this conduct were in many places: conferences, classrooms, retreats, homes, apartments, offices, parking lots. We believe the stories we have heard, and recognize that they represent deep pain for the women. . . . The stories represent . . . a violation of the trust placed in you as a church leader."

In response to the task force's recommendations, the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference suspended Yoder's ministerial credentials and urged him to enter counselling and make restitution to women he had harmed. Yoder, who never disputed the 13 charges of sexual misconduct, agreed to take part in the disciplinary process, but maintained that he had never intended harm. Yoder phrased his misreading of women's willingness to

give consent as “falling off the bike”—that is, something that was regrettable but unintentional.

In the mid-’70s, when Yoder’s patterns of abuse emerged, he lived in Elkhart and was a professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame and taught part-time at Goshen Biblical Seminary, which shared facilities with Mennonite Biblical Seminary, now known as Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS). A prodigious scholar, Yoder lectured widely across Europe, North America, Africa, Asia and Latin America. His 1972 book, *The Politics of Jesus*, was considered a classic on religious pacifism, and his influence across international academic circles was immense.

During the last 25 years of Yoder’s life, his sexual behaviours toward many women caused significant harm. A highly mobile professor and church leader, he approached mostly Mennonite women both near and far from home. Yoder’s advances included making suggestive comments, sending sexually explicit correspondence and surprising women with physical coercion. In a 1974 solicitation in which he appealed to women to engage with him, Yoder wrote: “Only thanks to your friendship, sisterhood, can I do the theology.” Remarkably, he was conveying that they were tools for him to use in his quest to perfect Christian theology.

Precise numbers will never be known, but two mental health professionals who worked closely with him from 1992-95 as part of the Indiana-Michigan conference’s disciplinary process believe that more than 100 women experienced unwanted sexual violations by Yoder, ranging across a spectrum from sexual harassment in public places to, more rarely, sexual intercourse. With no legal charges ever filed, adjudication took place in seminary offices, conference quarters and living rooms—often involving Mennonites connected to Yoder through congregational associations or even family relationships. Despite Mennonites’ emphasis on local authority, rather than entrenched hierarchies, these leaders’ interventions, while well-intentioned, were largely ineffectual.

MENNONITE REPORTER ARCHIVES PHOTO BY ALLAN SIEBERT



John Howard Yoder explains the presuppositions that underpin the concept of a Just War at the 1984 peace seminar at Strawberry Creek Lodge in Alberta.

By 1979, Yoder’s supervisor at the seminary, president Marlin Miller, was documenting a surge of disturbing incidents involving Yoder from as far away as South Africa and from Strasbourg, France, headquarters of Mennonite World Conference. At the time, U.S. courts had not yet consistently defined sexual harassment, and employers rarely called in law enforcement to respond to sexual misconduct.

Rather than firing Yoder, who was his intellectual mentor as well as predecessor in the seminary presidency, Miller kept meticulous records about what he learned. He summarized calls and letters received—mostly from English-speakers, but also some in German and French—about women’s encounters with Yoder. Miller’s diary-like entries included details about his informants’ marital status and whether they had reported “total disrobing,” as well as their rationales for engaging with Yoder in his project. Miller also kept notes about women who reported that they had rebuffed Yoder’s sexual aggressions.

Although Yoder and Miller, hoping to avoid potential for scandal or blackmail, destroyed an unknown number of letters in 1980, surviving documents reveal not only the egregious behaviour of Yoder

toward some women, but also the power that Miller used to enforce their silence. For eight years, 1976-84, engaging with Yoder via theological disputation became the hidden agenda of Miller’s presidency. Hoping to save Yoder’s marriage and career, he used the data he had gathered to repudiate his star faculty member’s notions about sexuality.

In 1980, Miller established a disciplinary process with a small group at Goshen Biblical Seminary in an unsuccessful attempt to bring Yoder to accountability. This collection of faculty and board members, who drew up a secret “covenant” with Yoder, was the first of seven Mennonite groups to challenge Yoder from within institutional bases:

- **COVENANT GROUP**, Goshen Biblical Seminary, 1980-84
- **CONFIDENTIAL TASK FORCE**, Goshen Biblical Seminary, 1982
- **BOARD OF Elders**, Prairie Street Mennonite Church, 1986
- **PRAIRIE STREET Mennonite Church/JHY Task Force**, 1991-92
- **CHURCH LIFE Commission**, Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, 1992-96
- **ACCOUNTABILITY AND Support Group**, Indiana-Michigan Mennonite

Conference, 1992-96

• **EXECUTIVE BOARD**, Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, 1992-97

These groups had varying goals: to engage Yoder intellectually in his unconventional notions about sexuality; to investigate rumours of sexual misdeeds; to arrange for meetings between women accusers and Yoder as a step towards forgiveness; and to discipline him. No group succeeded completely. For the last two decades of his life, Yoder discussed, sparred and negotiated with these various parties.

In 1984, Miller and members of the Covenant Group, having failed to stop Yoder's behaviours, recommended his departure to the seminaries' boards. Yoder was allowed to resign, and he informed the theology department at the University of Notre Dame that he was leaving his adjunct position at Goshen Biblical Seminary, adding that the decision had "delicate dimensions." For the coming decade, seminary insiders maintained confidentiality, and Yoder, whose profile as theologian and ethicist would grow with his base at Notre Dame, was no longer welcome at AMBS events.

Yoder's professional reputation suffered only marginally. He was never formally disciplined by his broader academic and religious peers with whom he was affiliated, including the Society of Christian Ethics, which he served as president from 1987-88. Yet through the remainder of the '80s and into the '90s, the secrecy that had veiled Yoder's actions began to collapse. Some women who had experienced Yoder's sexual aggressiveness leveraged their collective will to force Mennonite leaders to stop his abuse. Their efforts at whistle-blowing culminated with several dramatic events in 1992, a turning point in the denomination's dealings with Yoder.

Over the next several years, Yoder sharply contested Mennonite conference officials' right to retain records documenting his abuse. In 1996, concerned about the implications of the sexual abuse charges on his legacy, he informed Indiana-Michigan Mennonite officials that he was consulting a lawyer about the

conference's plan to retain hundreds of documents—correspondence, meeting minutes and mental health records—that they had used in deciding not to reinstate his credentials. Yoder's dispute with Indiana-Michigan Mennonite officials signalled that their four-year disciplinary proceedings would miss the mark of reconciliation. A year before his death in 1997, at age 70, Yoder declared that "the initially stated goal of restoration has been abandoned."

Since Yoder's death, more than a decade-and-a-half ago, some admirers of his theology have offered various explanations for his behaviour. But in keeping the focus on Yoder, rather than on the consequences of his actions, these speculations deflect attention away from institutional complicity. Yoder had lectured extensively about the mandate of Matthew 18:15 for individual responsibility in confronting wrongdoing, and Miller, along with an entire generation of ordained leaders, had imbibed lessons on church discipline—in the biblical phrase,

"binding and loosing"—from Yoder through his widely disseminated books and teaching.

Tragically, in seeking to apply the Matthew 18 mandate for resolving conflict, Miller and others in positions of authority responded with painstaking slowness to Yoder's abuse of power. Years of wasted time, energy and denominational resources enabled the victimization of women living and studying on the seminary campus and beyond.

The peace theologian's perpetration of sexual violence upon women had far-reaching consequences among families, within congregations and throughout church agencies, from AMBS and Mennonite Central Committee to mission programs and Mennonite-affiliated institutions across the globe.

And the reverberations continue today for anyone seeking to read Yoder as a credible theologian. ❧

Rachel Waltner Goossen is professor of history at Washburn University, Topeka, Kan.

Yoder phrased his misreading of women's willingness to give consent as 'falling off the bike'—that is, something that was regrettable but unintentional.

❧ For discussion

1. What has changed since the 1970s and '80s that conversations about sexual misconduct and sexual abuse are so much more prevalent these days? Does sexual violence happen more now, or are we just more ready to talk about it? Does a sexualized culture make sexual violence more prevalent? Are we less apt to silence or blame victims than formerly?
2. How does your church work at being a safe space, free of sexual misconduct? If something like this should happen at your church, how would the congregation respond? Would you feel the church was a safe place to share your story if you experienced sexual violence? How are open conversations about sexual misconduct helpful? Can they also be harmful?
3. We need to trust church leaders and pastors. How do we also hold them accountable? What can we learn from the John Howard Yoder story? How much has Yoder's ethical teaching been discredited by his actions?
4. We are surrounded by a sexually permissive society. How can the church best identify and teach proper boundaries and guidelines for youth and adults in order to promote safe and healthy relationships?

—BY BARB DRAPER

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

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

✉ How long will natives be patient with Mennonites?

I JUST READ the “Can we talk” feature article, Oct. 13, 2014, page 4, that made me angry! I had a higher ideal for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) than I read about.

We taught in the Yukon and had two native girls live with us at Faro. They came from the native community to the east—Ross River—to complete their high school. The only other choice they had was to go to the residential school in Whitehorse. They worked hard and did well. They have every right to be treated with dignity and respect.

Letting Darryl Klassen go at age 64 is a shame, whether he works with natives or any other group. He was greatly appreciated by all accounts mentioned.

What is meant by “results”? Are you expecting native people to respond like the white society? They do not live or act like that. Can we not learn to accept their way

(Continued on page 8)

FROM OUR LEADERS

Starting strong

DAVE BERGEN

Early in the new year many congregations hold their annual general meetings. This is often the time when various leadership positions and volunteer roles are confirmed. But how many congregations provide an orientation to their new committee members? How do they learn about their church’s ministries and the wide reach of these good works? And where would they begin to find the material to help them?



Introducing Mennonite Church Canada’s monthly “Equipping” package to new committee members is one great way to connect them to the ministry and many rich resources offered by the national church of which they are a part. These are designed to help strengthen, inform and equip leaders in local congregations. “Equipping” points leaders to resources that support and enrich church councils, Sunday school teachers, lay leaders, worship leaders, music teams and pastors in

their roles; provides up-to-date information on international ministry; and makes leaders aware of the best and latest worship and study materials, curricula, DVDs and seasonal resources.

The other obvious way to equip leaders is to acquaint them with CommonWord Bookstore and Resource Centre (www.commonword.ca). CommonWord is a new collaboration of MC Canada and Canadian Mennonite University, and brings together the ministry of each into a single, unified service to equip the church more effectively. Through CommonWord, MC Canada offers more than 11,000 books, DVDs and more for loan, sale, download or link. CommonWord holds materials in more than 25 languages, its website is easy to navigate, and it offers an informative tutorial for first-time visitors. CommonWord holds the most extensive catalogue of curated Anabaptist resources in Canada.

As 2015 begins, several recent

resources bear special mention:

- “**BEGIN ANEW**” by Palmer Becker is a brand new, accessible discipleship training tool for new Christians available in English and Spanish.
- “**CREATION CARE Primer for Churches**” by Joanne Moyer, is a resource guide for congregations that are eager to learn how to live faithfully on God’s good earth.
- “**THE CHURCH Staff Handbook**” from Faith Alive Christian Resources can help church staff and leadership teams, as well as those who hire and supervise them, build a better and more focussed ministry.
- **TO HELP** build healthy church processes, there’s “The Art of Agreement: Good Committee Process for God’s People,” by Mark Vincent.
- **REMEMBER THAT** your area church may have resources and services that can help. MC Eastern Canada offers “Church Office in a Box,” and MC Saskatchewan provides the “Congregational Leaders’ Handbook.”

As 2015 begins, start strong by equipping and orienting your leaders for the ministry to which they have been called.

Dave Bergen is MC Canada’s formation executive minister and chief administrative officer.

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of responding? You will never get “results” if you can’t learn to pay attention to the way they do things.

It makes me angry to see that our leaders haven’t learned one single thing in these 140 years we, as Mennonites, have been in Canada. How long are the natives to be patient with us? This is ridiculous!

MARY ANN GOERZEN, SALMON ARM, B.C.

✉ MCC banquet cancelled due to Pentecostal church’s racism

This letter was originally sent to the Winnipeg Free Press about the cancellation of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Manitoba 50th-anniversary fundraising banquet on Nov. 15, 2014, and copied to Canadian Mennonite.

FAMILY TIES

My year of reading the Bible

MELISSA MILLER

Among other things, 2014 was the year I read the Bible in its entirety. Inspired by *Canadian Mennonite* Young Voices co-editor Aaron Epp, and with some additional space in my life, I accepted his challenge.

In retrospect, it really wasn’t an arduous challenge, but rather an intriguing journey through the 66 books and 1,189 chapters of the Bible. Given my love of the Bible and the hours I’ve given over to study, I’m a little surprised that I hadn’t previously achieved this goal. I had tried a few times but, like other well-intentioned readers, was defeated by the mind-numbing repetitions in early books of the Bible.

To address that problem, and to inject diversity, I created my own program. Beginning at the beginning, I read five chapters a day from one book, then turned to another different kind of writing for a second five chapters. So five chapters from Genesis would be followed by five chapters from Joshua. I tackled 10 chapters at a time, because I knew I wouldn’t read every day. And taking in sections of two books each time did prove to be more interesting and engaging. I bogged down seriously in the genealogies of I Chronicles—all those men with funny names—but

determinedly made my way through.

“You didn’t read them all, did you?” asked one friend, who was also in a Year of Reading Biblically. “Yes,” I replied, puzzled. “Don’t I have to? Isn’t that what it means to read the whole Bible?” And there were some treasures embedded, even in tedious name lists.

There were many gifts in the experience. Often I marvelled at the privilege of sitting with my open Bible, free from restriction or persecution. Given the Bible’s repeated calls for justice, right-

Often I marvelled at the privilege of sitting with my open Bible, free from restriction or persecution.

eousness and the upending of oppressive powers, one can understand why those same powers, intent on maintaining control, outlaw it. The Bible can shock and disturb the status quo.

Part of my reading of the Old Testament took place in Lesotho, a tiny, hilly country where the king owns all the land, even if the definition of ownership is different from North American understandings. As cattle and goats wandered across the roads and their herdsmen shepherded them, it was easy to apply biblical metaphors of wandering sheep,

cattle that need to be taught, and faithful and unfaithful shepherds.

Finally, after months of slogging through the violence, spilt blood and patriarchy of the Old Testament, I entered into the gospels like a weary wanderer coming home. Here is where I belong! As a Christian, I am well steeped in the life and teachings of Jesus. As an Anabaptist, I lean into the Sermon on the Mount, often called a Mennonite “canon within a canon.” As a counsellor and pastor, I treasure Jesus’ healing stories. With the rich background of the Hebrew Scriptures, the gospels’ witness to Jesus and his revelation of God took on even deeper significance.

As October drew to a close, I completed the last chapters of Revelation. Immediately I knew I wasn’t done. I wanted more. Now I am reading through a commentary on the Gospel of John, slowly sinking into more understanding of this book, which will be followed by

another commentary and then another. It’s a great joy.

I believe every Christian should do their best to read the whole Bible. Non-readers might turn to audio to help them complete the task. Over centuries, God’s Spirit has worked through human powers and fallibilities to provide this legacy of God’s Word. Might we honour that spirit with our attention and diligence?

Melissa Miller (familyties@mymts.net) is a pastor and counsellor, seeking wholeness in relationships.



It is a travesty that a wonderful organization such as MCC had its 50th-anniversary gala event cancelled due to racism.

All preparations were made and tickets had been handed out for this historic event. But at the last moment, Immanuel Pentecostal Church in Winnipeg cancelled the event because a smudge was to be part of the ceremony. MCC has had a long and very

positive relationship with first nations across Canada, frequently working together on issues of residential schools, racism and other social issues.

It is a sad state of affairs for a congregation that ostensibly preaches peace, harmony and good will to all for this to happen.

Approximately 20 years ago, a similar thing

(Continued on page 10)

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Year-round generosity

DARREN PRIES-KLASSEN

The Christmas holiday season brought a bombardment of consumerism. Retailers hoped you'd blow your shopping budget on Black Friday and Cyber Monday. But the day after this festive frenzy is now known as Giving Tuesday, a day that demonstrates how charities, businesses and individuals can transform the way we think about, and participate in, this season of giving.

What began in 2012 as a grassroots effort with 2,500 non-profit agencies, grew to include 20,000 charities in 2014, and donors responded. Online donations on Giving Tuesday were up 90 percent in 2013 and a further 60 percent in 2014. While Giving Tuesday has raised awareness of giving by designating a day for charitable activity, real success will happen by an overall increase in year-round generosity.

Henry Timms, the high-profile philanthropist and founder of Giving Tuesday, stated the goal of the event this way on Forbes.com: "The most passionate givers come to celebrate the cause [their charity of choice] on a year-round basis. . . . There's nothing more valuable to a non-profit than recurring giving."

Canadians are already making recurring gifts, as evidenced by the relatively consistent \$9 billion given annually since 2008. This might indicate stability, but there is more to consider. The number of

donors is decreasing, while the number of charities in Canada is growing. The pie hasn't grown; there's just more competition for who gets a piece and how big to slice it.

According to current research on giving attitudes and motivations, more and more people are interested in being part of something that makes a difference. This is great news for the sector. According to research by BMO, \$1 trillion is expected to pass from one generation to the next in Canada over the next couple of decades. Most will go to family, but some will also go to charity. If charities want more of those dollars, they'll need to do four things:

[M]ore and more people are interested in being part of something that makes a difference.

- **PROVE THEMSELVES** worthy recipients. Charities need to clearly articulate their purpose using a variety of media, including print resources, mailings, social media and the website.

- **FOCUS ON** impact and engagement. Charities need to tell stories of the difference they're making in people's lives, and show donors how their contributions make this happen. People give to causes, not to "overhead" and "administrative costs."

- **INCORPORATE GIFT** planning—legacy giving, future gifts and deferred

gifts—into their promotional and fundraising efforts. Charities should encourage donors to consider bequests along with gifts of life insurance, securities and RRSPs. The majority of planned gifts in Canada come in the form of bequests from generous people who consider charitable causes in their wills.

- **CHANGE THE** mindset from scarcity thinking to abundance thinking. In the late 1980s, almost 30 percent of Canadians claimed a charitable donation on their taxes. That number has been steadily declining, falling to 23 percent last year. On average, Canadians now give less than 1 percent of their annual income to charity. If charities can get people to focus on their blessings, people will be more likely to give.

The \$9 billion pie is capable of significant growth in Canada, but it requires more than just a generous heart on Giving Tuesday. We need year-round generosity. For those who join Mennonite

Foundation of Canada in believing that we serve a God of abundance, and that generosity is a form of worship, the message is clear: Our God is generous all the time. We should be too!

Darren Pries-Klassen is executive director of Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC). For more information on impulsive generosity, stewardship education, and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit MennoFoundation.ca.



(Continued from page 9)

happened to me. I taught a large adult Sunday school class at McIvor Ave. Mennonite Brethren Church, Winnipeg, and had contacted several indigenous Christians, including a pastor, to speak to us on faith within their communities. They began their presentation with a smudge calling upon God in Christ to be within our circle that morning. A number of people made a show of walking out. Later, others spoke indignantly to me because I had not warned everyone that a smudge would happen. Others noted that I should never have permitted a smudge within the church itself. They were emphatic that a smudge was heathen and called upon evil spirits.

There are Christians of many different persuasions, and racism lurks among them, particularly evangelicals. It is sad that the Christians of Immanuel Pentecostal claim to follow the Prince of Peace when their actions loudly speak the exact opposite.

KEN REDDIG, PINAWA, MAN.

✉ **Canadians called on to pray for peace in the Middle East**

A **SPECIAL THANKS** for the Aug. 18, 2014, edition of *Canadian Mennonite* with Palmer Becker's feature, "From milk and honey to a land of rubble," on page 4.

I was sad to read that Christian Peacemaker Teams are not allowed to walk in Gaza anymore. I encourage all my brothers and sisters in Christ that are travelling in the Middle East to remind each other, wherever they put their feet, to pray for God's peace in that area. Let's see where the Holy Spirit leads. I could see that we, as Canadians, really could be a help for the region through our prayers. I believe the Middle East would be more peaceful if they had one government.

I often watch *Discovering the Jewish Jesus* TV program with Kirk and Cynthia Schneider, a Messianic Jewish rabbi and evangelist, respectively. Listening to their program makes me think of Isaiah 44 and Romans 11, where God says that he will put the branch back into the tree.

I believe that we, as Anabaptist Mennonites, can unite, stand up, love Jesus and boldly go where God leads us to serve Christ.

MARLENE HIEBERT, STEINBACH, MAN.

✉ **Church needs to find unity in community, not hierarchical control**

ASKED BY EARLE Cornelius about how Mennonite World Conference (MWC) looks at issues related to same-sex marriage, Danisa Ndlovu, MWC president,

responded: "There are some that want to accommodate those that find themselves in those situations; there are some that would say, 'No, the Bible does not necessarily accept that.' But that has not been an issue that divides us. Rather, we are saying, 'Let's talk about it. Let us find ways of dealing with those issues without necessarily being confrontational'"

Then on Nov. 9, 2014, came the news that 96-year-old Chester Wenger—missionary, pastor and churchman par excellence—had married his son to another gay man in the backyard of his East Lampeter, Pa., home. In his "An open letter to my beloved church," he stated: When our gay, young adult son about 35 years ago was excommunicated from the Mennonite church by a church leader, without any conversation with him or his parents, my wife and I grieved deeply. . . . When the laws of Pennsylvania changed in July, our gay son and his committed partner of 27 years went immediately to apply for a marriage licence. Subsequently they asked me if I would marry them. I happily agreed."

In many ways, Ndlovu and Wenger got it right. They understand the subtleties of the way forward to being a faithful church. We can still be one people with many different voices. In that way we are no different than the often-divided early church that nevertheless clung together at key moments in the common belief in Jesus Christ. Like them, we should know that, although we may never reach total consensus on some issues, we can reach a deeper understanding born out of exercising mutual respect. This is a unity discovered in community, not a unity imposed through hierarchical control.

Wenger's prayer "is that [Mennonite Church U.S.A.] leaders in their next assembly will . . . not only approve but warmly invite into congregational fellowship those believers in Christ who have suffered exclusion from membership in our Mennonite church. Let us pray the Spirit of Christ will teach us all how to love and welcome the outcasts as Jesus did."

BERT C. LOBE, ST. JACOBS, ONT.

✉ **Students need to see how sexuality and spirituality are interconnected**

RE: "SEXUALITY IS about more than just sex," Oct. 27, 2014, page 19.

On behalf of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, I would like to thank *Canadian Mennonite* for attending the evening session of our "Healthy sexuality" series and covering the story.

During this year's annual Spiritual Emphasis Week, our chapel committee and administration chose to address the topic of "Healthy sexuality." We wanted our student community and parents, together, to build

a positive Christian sexual counterculture. We wanted our students to recognize that sexuality and spirituality are integrally interconnected.

And as Keith Graber Miller is quoted in the article, we wanted our students to internalize that “sexuality is . . . far more than what we do with our genitalia.” We chose to address this topic because we want our students to be reflective, responsible and compassionate in their efforts to form healthy relationships, particularly in a world of highly conflicting messages.

We were delighted to have parents and area Mennonite Church Eastern Canada pastors join us for the evening session. Rockway faculty are committed to walking with our students on their journeys of faith. We view conversation around this topic as one crucial way to engage with students in their faith development.

Healthy sexuality is a timely topic, and one that needs continued discussion in our church schools and our congregations.

ANN L. SCHULTZ, KITCHENER, ONT.

Ann L. Schultz is principal of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener.

✉ No one chooses to be left-handed . . . or gay

I DIDN'T CHOOSE to be left-handed and neither my own efforts nor the pressure of parents or teachers could make me learn to write with my right hand. One result was that I never learned to write legibly with either hand.

Studies have shown that about 5 percent of humans are left-handed. Coincidentally, about the same proportion is gay. Being left-handed or gay are not lifestyle choices. You either are, or you aren't.

I'm told that the effects of endocrine-disrupting chemicals on reproductive biology in humans during gestation and lactation can influence gender. Lee Harding, in a letter to the *Vancouver Sun*, maintained that a person can be chromosomally male and have female genitalia, or vice versa. According to him, there are chromosomal aberrations: women's sex chromosomes are normally XX and men's XY, but a person can have a missing, damaged, or extra X or Y. Science cannot define all the ways chemical, hormonal and chromosomal aberrations can cause a mismatch between a person's apparent biological gender and his or her gender identity, wrote Harding.

Given the social stigma and implications for sports and career advancement, no one in his/her right mind would choose to be either left-handed or gay.

IRENE KROEKER, LANGLEY, B.C.

✉ Doubting is not a virtue

RE: “FAITH VS. doubt (Pt. 1)” Oct. 27, 2014, page 13.

Satan said to Eve, “*Did God really say . . . ?*” and she began to doubt what God had said.

Evangelist Charles Templeton looked at the world and at the opinions of men—particularly about evolution—and began to doubt God.

We should understand that many of us doubt. Perhaps all have some doubts about some things from time to time: Will God really heal us? Will he always do what is best for us? Will God really forgive us? Is God too mysterious for us to understand? Is Scripture really as perfect as we say it is?

But one of the recent problems we have is the opinions of men who promote doubting.

Jesus clearly said to Thomas, “*You have seen and touched and now believe. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.*”

Doubting is not an unforgiveable sin, but neither is it a mark of sincerity or a new virtue. Asking questions in faith is different than asking questions to test God or to challenge God.

Rather, pray in faith for a steadfast faith, a trusting faith, a strong faith. God is greater than our doubts, and is always victorious. Do not be satisfied with a doubting faith. You may get what you ask for.

JOHN ZYLSTRA (ONLINE COMMENT)

✉ Influence from alongside, rather than from within

RE: “WHEN FAITH and politics intersect” editorial, Nov. 10, 2014, page 2.

I want to thank Dick Benner for his excellent editorial to lead into the discussion of Anabaptists engaging political processes (“Seeking the welfare of the city,” page 4).

The Anabaptist/Mennonite tradition of influencing the welfare of the countries, cities and towns in which we live by establishing businesses that function according to the principles of our beliefs, by engaging relationships in the community led by these principles, and by speaking to those in political office based on the example of our lived-out faithfulness, I would argue is still the preferred way.

To seek the “*peace and prosperity of the city*” (NIV) or the “*welfare of the city*” (NRSV) can be done very intentionally alongside the powers of political office. In fact, this is the missional way: to align ourselves with what God is already doing in our neighbourhood and work together with our neighbours to make it a better place.

I am okay with the uncertainty of “no guarantees” of success. When the influence we offer does not have the power of force, but the power of relationships in

community, there are no guarantees of getting those in political power to give their attention to our neighbourhood, but we can still brighten the corner where we are. Getting some public dollars and support thrown at a community vision for improving our neighbourhood is a bonus, but not necessary to make a difference.

The compromise of aligning with the powers who have force as an option to get things done, and have the option of seeking to make peace by lethal violence, is too great.
GARRY JANZEN (ONLINE COMMENT)

✉ Holy Spirit can collectively guide the whole church

RE: "IF LESBIANS can't be ordained is there still a place for ordination?" letter, Nov. 10, 2014, page 8.

Perhaps letter writer Victor Fast asks the wrong question. Other questions that come to mind in his letter are: Is there a place for Mennonite Church U.S.A.? (As a Canadian reader, we may ask about MC Canada.) Or a broader question: How does the Holy Spirit guide Christians today, or how does the Holy Spirit guide our Mennonite people?

I am disturbed by the judgmental statement referring to the difference between "a fallible delegate

assembly and the leading of the Holy Spirit." Does the Holy Spirit not guide both Denver First Mennonite Church and also guide our Mennonite people as we gather as churches in a broader gathering?

As an individual, I may sense the Holy Spirit's leading on an issue. But when my church gathers to consider the same question and prays for wisdom to discern the Holy Spirit's leading, if the answer arrived at is different from my own, I think it's best to assume the church is probably right.

Spending time together and asking for guidance together is a good step towards unity in the Spirit. I believe that the same principle holds true for a small church like I attend and the body we call MC Canada.

My conclusion is that there is a place for MC Canada and MC U.S.A. And I believe the Holy Spirit can guide us as we collectively and earnestly seek wisdom from God.

HAROLD PENNER, ST. MALO, MAN.

✉ Following a nonviolent God is a challenge for Christians

AMONG OUR MOST pressing needs today is the challenge to follow a nonviolent God as revealed by the nonviolent incarnational Jesus of Nazareth. Unfortunately, many Christians have opted for the use of military violence to punish "evildoers," choosing war as the most effective means to protect freedom, justice and peace.

Many Christians endorse the "violent apocalyptic Christ" as described in Revelation 19:11-21 and other passages, justifying the use of violence and using our sacred Scriptures to support a major destructive political practice on earth.

How can we use *Canadian Mennonite* even more effectively to demonstrate our faith in a God who triumphs over evil, calling his people to serve humanity and all creation by pursuing peace with powerful acts of sacrificial compassion and love?

ERWIN KROEKER, WINNIPEG

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/// Correction

The opening sentence of "What is 'the Word of the Lord'?" column, Nov. 24, 2014, page 14, should read: "You may have noticed that worship leaders and others who read Scripture in our services sometimes concluded with the exclamation, 'The Word of the Lord,' and often add, 'Praise be to God.'" This properly reflects that way readings are done at Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the error.

LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Faith vs. belief (Pt. 3)

TROY WATSON



I recently came across this sermon illustration differentiating faith and belief.

In Daniel 3, King Nebuchadnezzar makes a golden idol 30 metres tall and commands everyone to bow down and worship it. He declares that anyone who refuses will be thrown into a fiery furnace. Three Jewish men named Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refuse. When King Nebuchadnezzar confronts them, they respond: *“If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it and he will rescue us from your hand, O King”* (3:17).

This is belief. They believed God would rescue them. They “knew” God could and would save them.

In the next verse they continue: *“But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up”* (3:18).

This is faith. They trusted God even if what they believed wasn’t true (that God would rescue them). And because they trusted God, they obeyed, regardless of whether their beliefs turned out to be right or not.

This is a helpful distinction, but I think it goes even deeper than this.

Some background information first. The English words “faith” and “belief” come from the same Greek root word *pistis*. The early church probably had little distinction between faith and belief. However, a lot changed in the fourth century. The church became entangled with the very empire that killed Jesus and slowly started to resemble the kingdom of Rome more than the kingdom of God.

The church was institutionalized,

adopting the “3 C’s of Authority”—canon, clergy and creed—and the official church language shifted from Greek to Latin. As a result, the relationship between faith and belief became more complicated, and eventually belief replaced faith as the hallmark of what it meant to be Christian.

The post-enlightenment modern era amplified the difference between faith and belief even more. Here are some

Beliefs cling to what I’m already convinced is true and insist that truth fit my preconceived assumptions. Faith is letting go of my preconceived assumptions, finding the courage to open up to truth as it is.

distinctions:

- **BELIEFS ARE** opinions or judgments I’ve concluded are right. Faith is a deep-seated confidence and trust.
- **BELIEFS ARE** about something, someone or God. Faith is in something, someone or God.
- **BELIEFS ARE** propositional by nature: ideas, concepts, immaterial and invisible things that exist in my mind. Faith is the evidence of things unseen and invisible, the substance of immaterial things like hope.
- **BELIEFS CLING** to what I’m already convinced is true and insist that truth fit my preconceived assumptions.
- **FAITH IS** letting go of my preconceived assumptions, finding the courage to open up to truth as it is.

My beliefs are attached to certainty and theoretical knowledge. Faith bravely sails

into the realm of uncertainty and mystery. Belief acts like it knows. Faith acts in spite of not knowing.

The Bible is full of men and women letting go of what they believed in order to experience deeper faith in relationship with the infinite God, who is beyond our understanding.

For example, when Peter stepped out of a fishing boat in the middle of the sea of Galilee, in the middle of the night, in the middle of a storm, to attempt to walk on water like his rabbi Jesus—this was an act of faith. As a fisherman who grew up in a family of fishermen in a fishing town, Peter was well acquainted with the dangers of the deep. Undoubtedly some of his friends and colleagues had drowned. Stepping onto the water that

stormy evening went against everything Peter knew about the perilous reality of a raging night sea. He didn’t step out of the boat because he believed he wouldn’t sink, he did it because his rabbi Jesus had challenged what he believed. That is faith.

Later, in Acts 10, when Peter receives a vision in which God tells him to eat unclean animals, he instinctively responds, “No! That is against my beliefs!” But inevitably Peter opens up to the scandalous message and, in faith, loosens the grip his beliefs have on him. It is only because of Peter’s faith that he is able to let go of his beliefs, beliefs that are based on the Bible, mind you, and allow the new experience to shape his beliefs, instead of the other way around.

For three years, Jesus constantly challenged Peter’s assumptions and beliefs about God and reality, so Peter would eventually realize that faith is trusting God more than his beliefs about God. ❧

VIEWPOINT

God's design revealed in the cosmos

JOHN KLASSEN

Adapted from a meditation given at Langley Mennonite Fellowship, B.C., on July 13, 2014.

God created the heavens and the earth. I accept this basic principle, but faith does not require that we remain ignorant and disinterested in how the cosmos came about and how it works. We live on an earth that is hospitable to humans and we gaze at stars from a safe distance. When I retired from teaching I began to read physics. Reading about a colossal cosmos, I found myself returning to childhood memories on a prairie farm and the clear light of the stars.

The study of matter begins when children pick up their first handful of soil or spill a glass of water. Some children grow up to investigate the physical and biological universe, and make it their life's work. Scientists tell us that about 14 billion years ago matter was squeezed into a fantastically small nugget, which burst into a hot dense ball of fire. Since then, the cosmos has expanded and cooled off, and galaxies of fiery stars like our sun, as well as planets, rocks, dust, water, ice, electrical currents, gases and life have appeared.

Our galaxy is one of 170 billion galaxies. Somewhere in this huge and awesome mixture, which is hard and soft, warm and cold, dry and wet, dead and alive, exists our earth. It is 150 million kilometres from our sun with an environment in which life can survive. Genesis and scientists agree that humans came from soil and water. Our bodies interact with the same forces of the solar system as any other particle of matter.

Current research into physical matter sheds light on the nature and origins of life. One suggestion is that DNA, RNA and protein—working together and

dependent on each other—produced living matter capable of replicating itself. The DNA possesses a code and determines the characteristics of the living object. DNA needs RNA to carry the code to the ribosomes, the sites where proteins are constructed. It took countless random attempts by DNA, RNA and protein particles until a fortunate combination of movements succeeded and living microbes appeared. This scenario hints at the nature of God's patience and respect, and for the independence of the material universe. God waited while materials he created attempted repeatedly to produce life.

The Bible says that God created the cosmos in an orderly way, beginning with light and ending with humans. In Proverbs 8, Wisdom adds that she and God were at play, as together they created the fields, the mountains, the heavens and the oceans. So Wisdom and God bonded with creation in a mood of pleasure and laughter. It is possible that God's creation is one in which all the components of matter need each other in the making of a cell, the entity into which all-living organisms are divided. Time seems to be infinite, so God's created particles tried over and over again until life appeared.

In beautiful Eden, Eve and Adam reached for God's knowledge of good and evil. This signalled trouble. In the hands of humans, knowledge of good and evil is dangerous, and Adam and Eve were banished from the garden. After Eden, people presumed that their ethics were good and those of others were evil. They concluded that evil people needed to be



punished and conquered. As a result, the world was marked by hostility, violence and death (Genesis 6).

God's work of restoration began with the calling of Abraham and Sarah to be a blessing to all nations. Salvation culminated in God coming to earth in Jesus. At one point, people asked Jesus what they had to do in order to do the works of God. Jesus answered: Believe in the one God has sent. In the end, people killed Jesus, but God raised him, signalling the end of death. Paul preached that all have the grace of justification and righteousness. Believing that God was in Christ assures people that they are righteous and have life.

No person or group can make a claim that their moral system gains them greater favour before God. The incarnation of God in Christ was a phenomenal event. It ended the human distinction between good and evil, it promised peace on earth, and goodness and life.

There is little to show that kindness to strangers and love for enemies has permeated the world in the last 2,000 years. Nevertheless, there is good reason to hope that the gentle power of God, which loves and ultimately brings eternal life, is embedded into the pattern of the physical universe. The coming of life itself required billions of years of random motion to take root. It may take just as long for God-like love to become engrained in human life, replacing punitive moral systems to which so many people are attached. Christian faith is that God has conquered death and that salvation will ultimately come to all nature. ❧

John Klassen is history professor emeritus at Trinity Western University, Langley.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Using pain as material for endurance

COLLEEN PETERS

Neurological anomalies surfaced in 2004 for Colleen Peters, and after three years she was eventually diagnosed with progressive relapsing multiple sclerosis, the condition which forced her to apply for disability and with which she continues to live.

Ibrace myself when I sense that someone is about to touch me because I know the physical contact will be painful.

It's one aspect of the relentless neuropathic pain I'm vexed to know has been escalating during the last decade, to the point it's become a painful and presumed constant in my life, a vast arena of unknown I live in, where fear can fester.

I fear the fact that longevity is in my genes.

If, in one decade, my disease has progressed to the point where I'm asked by someone on virtually every run I take whether I need help, will I be able to run 10 years from now?

Run. Who am I kidding?

I call it running because I began running 36 years ago and only recently has my running begun to alarm strangers who see me on the road, kind strangers who stop and sometimes even turn around and come back to ask me if I'm okay. They may be strangers to me, but I think not strangers to God. They are those who've noticed my gimp and have obeyed God's nudge to ask me if I need help.

The same route that took me 30 minutes to run six years ago, now takes me 40 minutes to complete as I shuffle along hoping with each stride that I'll lift my legs high enough to avoid another abrupt and painful meeting with the road.

But never mind will I be able to run in 10 years, I fear I may not be walking in five. Many of my ancestors died in their 90s, and the thought of 30 years in a wheelchair scares me.

But a fear that looms larger than the fear of an imminent wheelchair is the fear that my irritability—chronic pain's persistent partner—will drive from me those I love most. With each passing day I feel more poorly. I sense my irritability and unkindness following the same curve that my pain has, and I wonder how much irascibility I can expect those I live with

A decade or a day, the pain doesn't go away. With every passing day, it seems it's here to stay.

to tolerate before walls go up to shield themselves from the peevish woman I've become. Self-pity is ugly, I know.

Please, God, it's not too late to mend my ways, to wear on my sleeve John Baillie's prayer: "Let me use pains as material for endurance."

The floating dock I feel like I've been on since November 2014 is riding increasingly rough waters, making me totter more often, and compelling me to use banisters, walls and people for the stability needed to avert tumbles and collisions.

Not every 10-year milestone is marked with pleasure. The mild tingling sensation in the tip of my left pinkie in November 2004 has encroached upon much of my body, to the point where my left arm and hand have been rendered virtually useless from pain and weakness.

Much of my body has succumbed to sporadic tonic spasms and constantly intensifies with any touch, including that of shoes, clothing and bed linens. The pressure required to grip and pick up a

jug of milk, or to hold something like a book, creates a burning, aching sensation in my left palm, wrist and arm. The weight-bearing required to stand, walk or run induces the same sort of pain in my left foot, ankle and leg.

A decade or a day, the pain doesn't go away. With every passing day, it seems it's here to stay. I run—or walk—with pain because life isn't static.

I've resolved to limp and gimp with my pain until I'm no longer able to, because I don't see not walking and running as an option, and I'm banking on God to be with me each stumbling step of the way.

A decade after the initial fear-filled symptoms appeared, I've come to know that I live not only in an arena fraught with fear, but also in a larger arena filled with freedom, where the unknown is tethered to time, and, although time's a tyrant, it's also a teacher tenderly trans-

forming me, ever on target and leading me home.

The years of fears, not knowing what would come, became, with time, years of knowing something will. This is not all there is. There is more to come: a mysterious freedom from illness, pain, fears and unfulfilled dreams.

Until then, I will strive to let nothing of value be lost on me, and continue to pine for the beauty that is promised to come when all things will be new.

"And he who sits on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new'" (Revelation 2:5). I remain grateful for hope, for promises and for prayers. ❧



Colleen Peters is married to Len and they have four adult children. She taught at Winnipeg's Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute before beginning to raise a family.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Cox—Carston (b. Nov. 22, 2014), to Stephen and Christina Cox, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Kim—Rohan (b. Oct. 1, 2014), to Scott (Hong Soek) Kim and Cheryl Woelk, Wildwood Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Sobie—Twins Rebecca Elizabeth Ann and Johanna Lynn Marie (b. Nov. 19, 2014), to Alaina and Alan Sobie, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Baptisms

Nathan Wiebe—Church of the Way, Granisle, B.C., at Babine Lake, Sept. 7, 2014.

Bob Carby—Church of the Way, Granisle, B.C., at the Pines Extended Care Home, Burns Lake, B.C., Nov. 22, 2014.

Marriages

Falk/Nechu—Chad Falk (Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.) and Sandra Nechu, in Winnipeg, Sept. 14, 2014.

Friesen/Turner—Riley Friesen (Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.) and Cynthia Turner, in Gretna, Man., July 26, 2014.

Gerbrandt/Richert—Virginia Gerbrandt and Andrew Richert, at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., July 19, 2014.

McShane/Neal—Anysa McShane (Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.) and Josh Neal, in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Deaths

Baker—Renate, 79 (b. March 3, 1935; d. Nov. 27, 2014), First Mennonite, Calgary.

Becker—Annie (nee Doersken), 94 (b. Feb. 26, 1920; d. Nov. 4, 2014), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

Dettweiler—Ward, 89 (b. March 24, 1925; d. Sept. 17, 2014), Breslau Mennonite, Ont.

Dyck—Mary (nee Neudorf), 86 (b. July 15, 1927; d. June 4, 2014), Grace Mennonite, St. Catharines, Ont.

Epp—Mike, 93 (b. April 26, 1921; d. Oct. 16, 2014), Grace Mennonite, St. Catharines, Ont.

Giesbrecht—Anna, 89 (b. Aug. 4, 1925; d. Dec. 5, 2015), First Mennonite, Calgary.

Kropf—Floyd, 89 (b. July 23, 1925; d. Nov. 8, 2014), Tavistock, Mennonite, Ont.

Lucuik—Carolyn (nee Williams), 63 (b. Sept. 14, 1950; d. April 19, 2014), Grace Mennonite, St. Catharines, Ont.

McNally—Elvin, 84 (b. Nov. 26, 1929; d. Sept. 21, 2014), Breslau Mennonite, Ont.

Nafziger—Edith, 85 (b. Feb. 2, 1929; d. Nov. 3, 2014), Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont.

Nafziger—Maurice, 75 (b. Aug. 7, 1939; d. Nov. 9, 2014), Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Peters—Wilhelm (Willy), 73 (b. June 29, 1941; d. Dec. 8, 2014), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Poole—Lorne, 96 (b. March 12, 1918; d. Nov. 6, 2014), Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont.

Warkentin—Margaret, 89 (b. Sept. 3, 1925; d. Nov. 24, 2014), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Williams—Rudy, 90 (b. Jan. 31, 1924; d. Oct. 19, 2014), Grace Mennonite, St. Catharines, Ont.

Yssennagger—Helen, 79 (b. Dec. 16, 1934; d. Nov. 28, 2014), First Mennonite, Calgary.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones

announcements within four months of the event.

Please send Milestones announcements by e-mail to milestones@canadianmennonite.org including the congregation name and location. When sending death notices, please also include birth date and last name at birth if available.

Pontius' Puddle



HOW DO YOU THINK PEOPLE CAME TO BE?



GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Buffalo shout, Mennonites discuss

MC Saskatchewan members study indigenous relations through book discussion

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
ROSTHERN, SASK.

They met in the library at Rosthern Mennonite Church, a good place for a book discussion group to meet. It wasn't a typical book discussion group, but then they weren't discussing a typical book.

The book they discussed was *Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry*, a collection of essays, poems and readings by both indigenous and settler writers. Published by Herald Press, the book is edited by Steve Heinrichs, Mennonite Church Canada's indigenous relations director.

Eric Olfert, who serves on MC Saskatchewan's Ministries Commission and is part of the ad hoc Walking the Path Committee, led the discussion. Olfert had been part of a similar group in Mount Royal Mennonite Church last winter. He said that experience "forced me to read at a deeper level," and motivated his willingness "to help the broader MC Saskatchewan constituency work with the book."

On average, 12 participants attended each of the five meetings held between Oct. 9 and Dec. 4, 2014. Most were members of the MC Saskatchewan congregations nearest the Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation, namely Rosthern, Eigenheim and Tiefengrund Mennonite churches.

"The Walking the Path Committee started with a focus on encouraging our constituency to grow in relationship with the Beardy's and Okemasis First Nation, so it seemed good to do this discussion in a place easily accessible to constituents for whom Beardy's [is] their closest first nation," said Olfert.

Even with that goal in mind, the discussion was not intended to be a time of dialogue between the people of Beardy's

and their Mennonite neighbours. Rather, it was to be a time of learning and preparation, which might set the stage for future dialogue.

Each meeting saw the group discuss two chapters in the book, one from a settler perspective and another from an indigenous point of view. The final session included a look at Derek Suderman's essay, "Reflections of a Christian settler in the Haldimand Tract," and Daniel R. Wildcat's piece, "Just creation: Enhancing life in a world of relatives."

Participants agreed that indigenous/settler relationships are complex.

Cheryl Woelk suggested, "We need to 'complexify' things before we can begin to understand," adding, "Part of the journey of reconciliation is being able to sit with the discomfort."

Olfert countered, "Complexities don't

absolve us of our responsibilities."

Ryan Wood agreed, saying that one of the things he teaches his native studies students at Rosthern Junior College is that "we're all treaty people" and "we need to hold up our end of the bargain."

The idea that settlers can solve the problems that exist between the races comes out of "our colonizer arrogance," said Larry Epp. Solutions to these complexities need to come from the colonized people themselves, he said. "Until they tell us what the solution is, we're really just blowing smoke."

One thing settlers can do, said Craig Neufeld, pastor of Rosthern Mennonite, is to recognize evidence of empire in their culture and ask themselves, "What are ways we can challenge the empire?"

Garth Ewert Fisher, pastor of Mount Royal Mennonite Church, suggested, "We can paralyze ourselves with phony guilt or we can take a stand against the system we're part of."

Olfert was pleased with the level of interaction within the group.

"It felt like we were able to encourage each other to grow in our understanding [of], and engagement with, the issues," he said. He said he also found there was "a gratifying openness to study other books that had been referenced during this study."

Ideally, Olfert would like to see the conversation continue at the congregational level, with participants sparking or leading similar discussions in their own communities. ❧



MC Saskatchewan participants in the five-session discussion of Steve Heinrichs's book Buffalo Shout, Salmon Cry grapple with the complexities of indigenous/settler relations. Pictured from left to right: Craig Neufeld, Cheryl Woelk, Bernie Thiessen and Larry Epp.

'Seeking shalom as the end of lament'

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

To pray for enemies the way Jesus challenged his disciples to do in Matthew 5:43-45 can be intimately connected to the psalms of lament in the Old Testament. This was Derek Suderman's premise in his Eby Lecture at Conrad Grebel University College on Oct. 24, 2014.

The same term used for "lament" in the ancient Greek Old Testament is related to that used by Jesus for prayer in the Greek New Testament, according to Suderman, associate professor of religious and theological studies at Grebel, who recently contributed a chapter on Psalms to the Fortress Commentary on the Old Testament and Apocrypha

Suderman's idea moves Jesus' followers away from intercessory prayer as the only kind of prayer Christians pray for enemies, to something far more complex. Looking carefully at Psalms 6, 55, 88, 109 and 137, Suderman said that in these laments God and the people who hear the prayer are the intended audiences.

That may mean that when people read or speak a psalm, they are not only the speaker, but also the intended hearers of the lament. People, and not only God, are to hear how injustice has been done and bear witness to that injustice. As well, both hearer and speaker are to work to bring an end to the injustice and to mitigate its effects.

Suderman said that different voices can be heard in the laments, including "someone suffering from domestic abuse [55], or depression [88], first nations wrestling with the legacy of residential schools [35], those who are socially ostracized [109], and war refugees [137]."

These psalms are full of many emotions, including anger at the perceived wrong and wrongdoers, he said. According to him, Mennonites flinch and draw back from the suggestions by those praying that God inflict revenge on the sources of the injustice,

but Suderman suggested that lament is a continuing option for Christians today.

If this reading of the Psalms is true, he wondered if Jesus could be suggesting that when Christians "pray" for enemies, they might actually be calling on God and the people to bear witness, and to do something about the injustices being experienced.

Instead of only passively interceding for them, these would be prayers and calls to action on the part of God and of God's people. Jesus, a Jew, would have prayed the psalms of lament many times and would have known the meaning of prayer, he said.

Suderman pointed out that in the New Testament not even the Davidic king, who was allowed vengeance in the Old Testament, takes vengeance. That

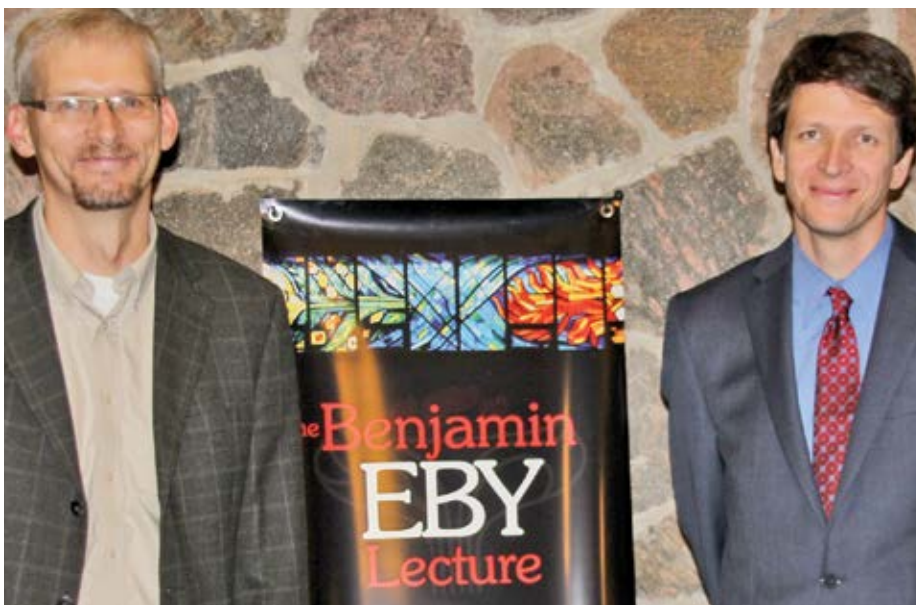
is left entirely up to God, as Paul wrote in Romans 12:19: "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'"

From the cross, Jesus calls out his lament, feeling rejected by even God, quoting from Psalm 22, a psalm of lament. Jesus was calling on those nearby to hear the injustice he seems to be experiencing at the hands of the Romans on behalf of the Jewish leaders. Lament, like that in Revelation 6, releases the strong emotions of injustice to God, calling on God to bring justice while denying human beings the right to do violence.

After the lecture, Reina Neufeldt, assistant professor of peace and conflict studies at Grebel, noted that in Nigeria, where she recently attended a funeral for the victims of a massacre, lament often leads to cycles of violence being perpetuated.

Suderman responded by saying that in North America the question is often, "Can God be violent?" But in West Africa, his experience has been, "Is God stronger than the evil forces?" ❧

Suderman's idea moves Jesus' followers away from intercessory prayer as the only kind of prayer Christians pray for enemies, to something far more complex.



Derek Suderman, left, poses with Trevor Bechtel, dean of Conrad Grebel University College, at Suderman's Eby Lecture on Oct. 24, 2014.

Doubt and Defiance shape 2014 Bechtel Lectures

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

WATERLOO, ONT.

“I think when a poet gives a lecture,” said Marlene Epp to Jeff Gundy, “it’s a very long piece of poetry, because all of your words were crafted like a poem.” Epp, professor of history and peace and conflict studies at Conrad Grebel University College, chaired a feedback session after the first of Gundy’s two Bechtel Lectures on Nov. 13, 2014.

Gundy, professor of English at Bluffton College, Ohio, spoke on “Poetry, the sleeping king and creative doubt” in his first lecture. The second, on Nov. 14, was a series of readings from his 2014 book of poetry, *Circling Defiance*.

Beginning with the myth that under the Untersberg near Salzburg, Austria, lives a king from the past, Gundy said that it is the mystery around the myth that makes for creative space. Is the king Charlemagne,

sitting in peace, watching citizens play on the green grass, or is it Friedrich Barbarossa, another Holy Roman Emperor who will not awake until it is time for him to bring the apocalypse?

Both versions of the myth exist and Gundy said it is the “doubt” around which one might be true that energizes creativity. According to him, doubt can be “a useful and creative force.”

But he attempted to set different kinds of doubt apart. “[A]ll doubt is not created equal. Enervating cynicism, mere disbelief, easy scorn, mindless relativism: all these are of no use,” he said. “The doubt I have in mind involves a flexible, open-minded scepticism, a brisk refusal of horned dilemmas and totalitarian claims, a humility both modest and bold. To question often, if not always, is the first step toward making

something new.”

Peppering his presentation with both his own words and the words of many other poets, Gundy invited his listeners to “join me in the company of those who are drawn irresistibly to the mysteries, the questions that have no answers, the inscrutable silences and roaring depths of the world and the soul . . . that in our human language we name God.”

Gundy said that doubt by itself is not

*‘The doubt I have in mind involves a flexible, open-minded scepticism, a brisk refusal of horned dilemmas and totalitarian claims, a humility both modest and bold.’
(Jeff Gundy)*

worth much. “Someone paralyzed by doubt may cause less harm than one energized by foolish convictions, but neither state is healthy for poets or artists or preachers or anybody else,” he said.

Gundy ended his lectures by remembering how little he knows about the world and how much mystery there is, even in the linden tree he planted in his backyard.

During question period, Gundy was pressed to differentiate between doubt and disbelief when it comes to teaching. Gundy replied that he feels, as a teacher, his role is to “support and challenge, like Socrates and Jesus, . . . to create doubt where uncertain knowledge was, to be present while learning is going on.”

Defiance is a short drive from Bluffton, but Gundy said it is also an attitude to the standard ways of thinking about life. He said, “Good writing is to refuse, resist, to push back” against what is accepted as true. Writers, who are often somewhat depressed, according to Gundy, have the privilege—or burden—to reveal what they see to others. The poetry he read on Nov. 14 was candid, open and self-revealing by being self-deprecating and transparent. ☘



Jeff Gundy, left, the 2014 Bechtel Lecturer at Conrad Grebel University College, talks with Susan Schultz Huxman, Grebel’s president, after his lecture on Nov. 13.

Water: an act of faith and hope

BY FERNE BURKHARDT

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
MANNHEIM, ONT.

“Water is a gift from God.” Those words opened the worship service at Mannheim Mennonite Church on Oct. 19, 2014, and the blessing of water flowed through the entire morning. It was a special service planned around the decommissioning of the church’s old well that no longer produced potable water, and gratitude for a new water source.

Water is significant in the Bible, from creation (watering the Garden of Eden in Genesis 2) to redemption (the river that flows from the very throne of God depicted in Revelation 22:1), worship leader Maurice Martin reminded the congregation. God’s people were saved from flood waters in Noah’s time, safely crossed the Red Sea to Egypt, and in the New Testament baptismal waters symbolized God’s salvation, he said.

The church’s old well, located in the basement, had served the school building

and then also the meetinghouse when that building was jacked up, moved and attached to the school building in 1980.

Research by Jim Bearinger, who was instrumental in getting the new well dug, sets the origin of the first well at about 1900 because it was lined with yellow, rather than red, bricks. Bearinger and octogenarian Lyall Woolner, both long-time Mannheim members and former students at the country school, often quenched their thirst with water from that well. Woolner was also school custodian for many years, using well water for cleaning chores.

Farmers dug the old well by hand, while a \$750,000 machine drilled the new one.

“With all that investment, [the third-generation driller] still had no better idea where to start digging than his grandfather did,” said Bearinger, who had spent months sorting through legal requirements, consulting with church leaders, reporting to

the congregation and facilitating the actual work on the new well. “It still is an act of faith and hope.”

The huge machine drilled through 10 metres of clay, three of sand and several more of clay, until the driller said gleefully, “I think we got a good one.” Several months of rigorous testing of the water are still required before the new well will be in full use. ☞

Obituary

Christian spirituality trailblazer dies

ELKHART, IND. — Marcus G. Smucker—pastor, professor, mediator, trailblazer—died on Oct. 29, 2014, in Lititz, Pa. He was 82. Smucker was born into an Amish family in Bird-in-Hand, Pa. Because he was the



Marcus G. Smucker

fourth son in the family, and because he did not feel drawn to farming, Smucker pursued education and then voluntary service in Hannibal, Mo. Further service with Pax in Germany helped him gain leadership skills, and on his return to the U.S. he earned a bachelor of arts degree from Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Va. He taught high school briefly, continued studies at Biblical Seminary in New York. His first vocation was as pastor of Portland (Ore.) Mennonite Church, where he served for 16 years. In 1982, he joined the faculty of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, now Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), and with his leadership brought an emphasis on Christian spirituality and Christian formation into the seminary’s culture and curriculum. He served on the board of Goshen Biblical Seminary, one of the two seminaries that constituted AMBS, and for four years chaired the board. When he left AMBS in 1998, he moved to Lititz, where he served as an adjunct professor at Eastern Mennonite University and Seminary on its Lancaster, Pa., campus.

—AMBS

PHOTO BY MERRI KRAEMER SLAGELL



Jim Bearinger, left, and Lyall Woolner peer into the old basement well after the decommissioning service at Mannheim Mennonite Church on Oct. 19, 2014.

An evening of sharing

La Maison de l'Amitié celebrates 40th anniversary with gala

BY TAMARA SANDOR

La Maison de l'Amitié
MONTREAL

With 120 guests in attendance, some dating back to 1974, when la Maison de l'Amitié began, the community centre located in the Plateau-Mont-Royal neighbourhood of Montreal hosted a gala to celebrate its 40th anniversary on Nov. 1, 2014. The event had the feeling of the many pieces of a puzzle coming together for the first time to form one cohesive picture.

Former directors Vern Redekop (1976-80) and John Docherty (1989-2000) each shared their personal accounts of the eras during which they presided over the centre's work. Redekop traced the early years of the centre, when it began to find its place in the community as a daycare and source of support for newcomer families in need. Docherty described the changes that the centre underwent in the 1990s, when the daycare moved out of the building and the focus turned to serving the physical and spiritual needs of an influx of refugees to Montréal.

A short documentary, created especially for the gala, recounted the origin stories of some of the centre's current programs, including the student residence, farmers market, Duluth en'Arts (the neighbourhood music festival), and the Jardin de l'Amitié. The film emphasized how, throughout its existence, la Maison de l'Amitié has continued to adapt to the evolving needs of its neighbourhood, and has, most recently, turned its focus to community-building initiatives that bring people together to cultivate sharing and exchange in a multicultural context.

The spirit of the whole event was in keeping with these themes of sharing and exchange. Food was provided potluck-style, with each guest contributing one item to the long buffet table.

Music was provided by the Bagg Street Klezmer Band, which drew a good portion of the diners out of their seats and onto the dance-floor at the beginning of

the night! In a nice gesture of symmetry, the event also closed with dancing, as the Rwandan troupe Umurage performed a series of traditional songs and dances, and concluded by beckoning the audience to join in the festivities.

Even Docherty made a musical contribution, playing the bagpipes while entering the hall in formal Scottish regalia, before beginning his speech.

These performances embodied a principle that is at the heart of the community centre's mission: Culture has healing power, and by celebrating and sharing specific cultural traditions with each other, rather than denying or suppressing them, people come to live together in peace and respect. ❧



The Rwandan troupe Umurage perform a series of traditional songs and dances at la Maison de l'Amitié's 40th-anniversary gala, concluding by beckoning the audience to join in the festivities.

/// Briefly noted

Church honours all victims of violence

"Memorial for the missing" was the worship theme at St. Catharines (Ont.) United Mennonite Church on Peace Sunday, Nov. 9, 2014. At a time of year when the country acknowledged military participants who lost their lives, many families in the church community were reminded of loved ones who were also victims of violence. As part of this service, names of family members, friends or acquaintances lost through violence of whatever form were shared and acknowledged with the lighting of candles (*pictured*). Although this service did not bring formal closure to the burial of those who were missing, many felt it was a moving tribute to those who had lost their lives.

—BY MARIA H. KLASSEN

PHOTO BY RANDY KLASSEN



/// Briefly noted

Pie auction nets CPT \$6,200

SASKATOON—Laughter persistently erupted from the crowd at Nutana Park Mennonite Church on Nov. 8, 2014, as Ted & Company TheaterWorks raised money for Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) at the “Peace, Pies and Prophets” event that featured a live performance of *I’d Like to Buy an Enemy*, a humorous expression of current social justice and political issues. The event raised \$6,200 for CPT, which seeks to embody an inclusive, ecumenical and diverse community of God’s love through nonviolent action in conflict regions around the world. Pies from all across Saskatoon and beyond were on display and auctioned off throughout the evening. Every flavour was available, from rhubarb, chocolate and pecan to pumpkin cream cheese and mango plum. Each pie was introduced with a story, historical fact or family memory tied to its creation. Ted Swartz and Tim Ruebke, of Ted & Company, stepped momentarily out of character to enthusiastically auction off each pie. The pie-sale event, which has been held in numerous cities across the country, has raised more than \$140,000 in the past three years.

—STORY AND PHOTO BY JESSICA BUHLER



Tim Ruebke, left, and Ted Swartz of Ted & Company

Shekinah Retreat Centre welcomes new executive director

WALDHEIM, SASK.—Nick Parkes travelled a long way to become Shekinah Retreat Centre’s new executive director. Born and raised in Johannesburg, South Africa, he ventured to Ireland, where he met Chrissy Morin of Rosthern, Sask. When Morin returned to Canada, Parkes came with her. Eventually, they married and made their home in Rosthern, becoming members of Eigenheim Mennonite Church. Parkes spent the last several years managing a large hog barn, overseeing numerous employees and “many situations happening at once,” he says. When Shekinah advertised the position of executive director, he says he felt called to apply, believing God used his prior experience to ready him for his new role at Shekinah. Parkes takes the reins from Kristy Letkeman, who held the position for the past year- and-a-half and saw the camp through the worst flooding in its 35-year history. As he looks to the future, Parkes plans to spend time networking with long-time camp supporters to get a sense of what they’d like to see happening at the camp. Needed facility maintenance and completion of projects begun prior to the 2013 flood are also on the agenda.

—BY DONNA SCHULZ



Nick Parkes

What does GIC mean to you?

At MSCU, the **G** and **I**
mean **Great Investments**
with **Global Impact**.

Speak with our Investment
team to learn how your
investments can have
Global Impact!

GIC Special*
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for 18 months



/// Briefly noted

Churches learn to better communicate with pastors

STRATFORD, ONT.—Al Rempel, a Mennonite Church Eastern Canada regional minister, sees the workshop he gave on Nov. 12, 2014, at Avon Mennonite Church as one of the many resources available to the people charged with encouraging the health of the pastor/congregational relationship. During the evening meeting, Rempel worked with members of six Pastoral Congregational Relations Committees and pastors, giving them many practical tools for their work, including criteria for helpful feedback, a step-by-step look at the pastoral review process, a tool for accessing levels of conflict, and a look at villain/victim/rescuer triangles.

—BY DAVE ROGALSKY



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/// Staff changes

Pastors in transition in Ontario

• **Doug Amstutz** has been invited to be the pastor of Rainham Mennonite Church, Selkirk, Ont., for an interim period that began last October. Previously, he co-pastored with his wife Wanda in congregations in Scottsdale, Pa., and St. Catharines, Ont. He was also the interim pastor for one year at Crosshill Mennonite Church, Millbank, Ont. In addition, the couple were country co-representatives for Mennonite Central Committee in Ethiopia for four years. He holds a liberal arts degree from Hesston College, Kan.; a bachelor of arts degree in history and education from Goshen College, Ind.; and a master of divinity degree in pastoral ministry from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.



**Doug
Amstutz**

• **Gordon Allaby** was installed as minister of Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Ont., on Oct. 1, 2014. Originally from Toronto, he has served as pastor of Osler Mennonite Church, Sask., from 2004-14; as pastor of First Mennonite of Christian, Moundridge, Kan., from 1998-2004; and as pastor/church planter of Dover Christian Fellowship, Ohio, from 1994-98. He has taken a number of off-campus courses from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. He earned a master of divinity degree from Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky., in 1991, and a bachelor of arts degree in history from Ohio State University in 1985.



**Gordon
Allaby**

• **Rudy Baergen** began as a two-year intentional interim pastor of Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont., on Sept. 7, 2014. Most recently, he served as the interim lead minister of Waterloo North Mennonite Church. Previous positions include senior pastor of Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg; professor of Bible and academic dean of Seminario Bíblico Menonita de Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia, as a mission worker with Mennonite Church Canada Witness; and pastor of First Mennonite Church, Kitchener Ont. He earned a bachelor of theology degree from Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg; bachelor and



Rudy Baergen

master of arts degrees from the University of Manitoba; and a Ph.D. from Union Theological Seminary, New York City.

• **Charleen and Kendall Jongejan Harder**, co-pastors at Valleyview Mennonite Church, London Ont., were ordained on Nov. 16, 2014.



**Kendall and Charleen
Jongejan Harder**

Their ordination focussed on the theme of God's love in Ephesians 3 and Romans 8. Charleen acquired a master of divinity degree at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), Elkhart, Ind., in 2007. Before Valleyview, she served in Toronto at the Yonge Street Mission, and with the Graduate Christian Fellowship at the University of Toronto as an assistant chaplain while living in an intentional community. She also spent two years with Mennonite Voluntary Service in Saint Paul, Minn. Kendall spent two years studying at AMBS, where he completed a master of divinity degree; he also holds a master of medieval studies degree from the University of Toronto. He has experience teaching English-as-a-second-language at the Toronto Mennonite New Life Centre and in Cairo, Egypt, with MCC. In the summer of 2006, Kendall and Charleen spent time pastoring at Harrow Mennonite Church, Ont., as sabbatical replacements. Kendall and Charleen have two children, Tobias and Mattea.

• **Lili Hurtarte**, was called to be lay minister at Toronto Mennonite New Life Church in June 2014. She came to Canada from Guatemala in 1984. At New Life she preaches and leads the Sunday worship services. She also directs the congregation's Bible studies, orients and assists senior members of the church, and leads prayer groups.



Lili Hurtarte

Hurtarte is participating in Mennonite Church Eastern Canada training, and is involved in a home book study to grow in her knowledge and understanding of the Bible, although she is known in her congregation as someone who knows her Bible.

—BY DAVE ROGALSKY

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

COVER STORY

'Stores are closed. There is shooting'

MCC increases humanitarian aid in Ukraine

BY GLADYS TERICHOW

Mennonite Central Committee

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is appealing for donations to significantly scale up its humanitarian assistance in eastern Ukraine.

Continued violence and armed conflicts have forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes to seek safety in neighbouring countries and within Ukraine. Tens of thousands of people have been killed or wounded.

"Every person has to decide how to respond," says Vadym Proshak, a pastor of the Baptist Union in Zaporizhzhya. "As a church, we decided that we needed to be one of those forces who help and engage in the situation of internally displaced people."

MCC supports the church's services for vulnerable and displaced people through cash assistance and shipments of blankets, kits and canned meat. Additional support from MCC will enable the church to expand services.

When the first displaced families from up to a few hundred kilometres away arrived in Zaporizhzhya, the Baptist Union opened a City Aid Centre. It provides services that meet immediate needs, ease the trauma of displacement and help people establish stable living conditions.

"People showed up in the door of our churches asking for food and clothes," says Proshak. "We wanted to do something."

Seven months into the conflict, about 200 people a day are using the services at the centre. With additional funding, the church plans to open five more centres in the region, and expand medical and legal services.

"The main needs are food and medication," says Dima Matyukhin, who works in the centre.

The centre also has mobile teams who risk getting caught in the crossfire as they deliver food parcels and other humanitarian assistance to people in villages who do not have the financial resources to flee the violence and destruction. They are mainly families living in poverty, the elderly, people with disabilities and families with many children.

"Many villages are without electricity and water," says Matyukhin. "Stores are closed. There is shooting. When we go to these villages we suggest they leave, but people say they have no place to go. We visited one family who did not have anything to eat. They don't have money to buy food. They don't have money to leave the territory."

Among the 40,000 people who have fled their homes to seek safety in Zaporizhzhya

MCC PHOTO BY SERGEY PONOMAREV



A woman bursts into tears following an overnight artillery raid outside Slavyansk in eastern Ukraine.

are Larisa Semenova and her husband Igor. They fled from Donetsk, about 200 kilometres away, where they lived near the airport and were surrounded by intense fighting. The couple now volunteer at the City Aid Centre and for other church ministries.

"Helping others helps us to go on," says Larisa. "It distracts us from our problems. When people come to City Aid, we tell them our life story. It is easy for us to understand them because we have similar experiences."

'We're out of everything'

2014 crises stretch MCC resources to the limit

BY EMILY LOEWEN

Mennonite Central Committee

It's not just you. The news was particularly bad last year. Islamic State is gaining ground, while videos of beheadings and other violence circulate online.

In the Middle East, more than 10 million people already needed assistance because of the Syrian conflict, while more than 108,000 people in Gaza don't have permanent homes after more than two months of bombing last summer. And more than 1.4 million people were displaced in South

Sudan, with hundreds of thousands at risk of extreme hunger.

The situations are complicated. There isn't one person to blame. There are no simple solutions. The amount of need can feel overwhelming.

In all these places, and many others, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is responding. But the unusually high number of emergencies puts a strain on resources, says Bruce Guenther, MCC's director

of disaster response.

“We’ve allocated over double our emergency resources to date than we had in the previous year [2013],” he says. “We are maxed out on our account at the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, and we are out of relief and hygiene kits. We’re out of everything.”

That also includes an MCC staple: handmade blankets. And in some cases, a lack of funds has meant turning down relief projects.

“Sometimes [a lack of funds is] really a question of life and death. There’s no other way to put it,” says Amela Puljek-Shank, MCC’s area director for Europe and the Middle East, a region in particularly high turmoil in 2014. While air strikes fell on Gaza last summer, MCC, through its partners on the ground, was able to provide immediate relief, using money on hand to buy local supplies. “We were able to help with blankets. We were able to help with food, which people needed right at that moment.”

Donations to MCC’s emergency fund

MCC PHOTO BY RYAN RODRICK BEILER



Jasem Mohammed carries a food package distributed by MCC partner Zakho Small Villages Project at the Garmawa displaced persons camp in Iraqi Kurdistan. Like most people living in the camp, he fled the city of Mosul after its takeover by Islamic State.

helps it to both prevent crises from escalating and respond quickly when a disaster hits.

“We are really thankful for generous giving that we have had for Syria and also for responses in Gaza and Iraq,” says Guenther. “We would just encourage people to think about the many, many people that are

affected by conflict and other crises that they are not always aware of, and to give generously, because we are there and we are responding.”

To donate, call MCC toll-free at 1-888-622-6337 or visit donate.mcccanada.ca/relief. ☘

Let’s get acquainted ... over cake

Former prime minister lauds MCC for its work around the world

BY ROSE KLASSEN

Mennonite Central Committee Alberta
CALGARY

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is known for its ministry around the world, not the least of which includes hospitality and relationship.

These were two of the organization’s characteristics that struck former prime minister Joe Clark in 1989 when, as Canada’s foreign minister, he wanted to have informal discussions with Palestinian leaders, but they were cautious about a meeting. Unsure of how to arrange a meeting, a colleague suggested talking to MCC. Service workers Kent and Linda Stucky, who were trusted and respected by the Palestinian leaders, hosted a “let’s get acquainted” visit between the two groups and, on that neutral ground, a step was taken towards Canada’s decision to formally recognize the Palestinians’ right to self-determination.

“Linda even baked a cake!” Clark recalled as he spoke at MCC Alberta’s “Breaking Down Walls” event held on Nov. 21, 2014, in Calgary, affirming that national conversations are very important in breaking down walls that can be built up between groups. Some of the most important accomplishments in Canada’s national life have been the result of national conversations, bringing Canadians of different backgrounds together, he said.

He also spoke appreciatively of some of the significant ways he had noticed MCC

*‘[W]e have to recall how we have worked together in the past, how we have brought down walls, and we have to simultaneously recognize how much our own perspectives have to change because our world is changing so profoundly.’
(Former prime minister Joe Clark)*

supporters responding to people in crisis in the past, including its response to the Vietnamese Boat People in 1979-80, and the 1984 famine in Ethiopia, the latter in conjunction with its partner, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

Since many Mennonites came to Canada as refugees, Clark acknowledged that Mennonites have a more personal understanding of the circumstances under which so many people in the world currently suffer. “[Y]our commitment is also clearly a product of your faith, and is all the more remarkable because, while you are believers and examples of the best of the Christian faith, your care and help and

generosity of spirit have been extended so often to people of other faiths, indeed, sometimes to people whose experience has caused them to lose faith," he said.

Clark challenged the audience to continue to respond to the refugee crisis in Syria and Iraq, as well as to the Ebola crisis in West Africa; to recognize that acts of brutality in the name of Islam do not reflect the beliefs of that faith nor the behaviours of most Muslim people; and to support the education of children in an effort to broaden the knowledge and deepen the understanding of the citizens of the future.

He said that this is a time when it is tempting to build new walls and treat adversaries as enduring enemies, telling the group that "we are here tonight as citizens of a world where positive change can happen, does happen, a world where [we] can make a difference. But to do that, we have to recall how we have worked together in the past, how we have brought down walls, and we have to simultaneously recognize how much our own perspectives have to change because our world is changing so profoundly."

Clark suggested that the world needs leaders who lead not from behind nor from ahead, but who lead from beside, building

relationships along the way.

Music for the evening was provided by the Corpus Christi Male Chorale, and Kim Thiessen and Darryl Neustaedter

Barg. More than \$110,000 was raised to support MCC's Global Family education program. ❧

Teaching peace in the face of danger

BY ALEXANDRA BLY

Conrad Grebel University College
WATERLOO, ONT.

In front of a full audience at the University of Waterloo, Ziauddin Yousafzai, father of Nobel Peace Prize-winner Malala Yousafzai, human rights campaigner, and long-time educator, gave an impassioned lecture late last year on speaking out for peace and promoting education in the face of violence.

Throughout the lecture, the common theme was speaking out for what is right, and to find strength in opposing militancy and human rights abuses. Yousafzai emphasized that when people speak out they gain courage, further asserting that when people live under the fear of being killed or having their basic human rights violated, the best thing to do is to speak out.

Yousafzai stated that in the face of violence at the hands of the Taliban, his daughter Malala had two options: to stay silent or to speak out and risk getting killed. She, of course, chose the second option. He then reiterated how important it is to speak out for peace in the face of danger, and he reminded the audience that there are many notable examples of people who did exactly this throughout human history: Socrates, Gandhi and Nelson Mandela among them.

He recognized that it can be very frightening to speak out in such dangerous circumstances, but that it is even more dangerous to not speak out. The solution, he contended, is never to stay silent.

As a man passionate about women's rights and access to education, he spoke very highly of the women in his life, including Malala, and his wife Toorpekai. He expressed the pride that he feels for Malala, commenting on her wisdom. He spoke

about how his wife was also stronger and wiser than he was on many occasions, and that she is the real power behind the family, saying she provides the courage for him to speak out for truth, peace and justice.

Conrad Grebel University College and the new Mennonite Savings and Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement, hosted the event in conjunction with the fledgling Global Peace Council Canada, which is working with Yousafzai to develop peace curricula and resource guides to address the causes of conflict and the trauma of war, and to transform conflict in Pakistan. ❧

Alexandra Bly is a master of peace and conflict studies candidate at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.

N-SIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY PHOTO BY JESSE THIESSEN



Former prime minister Joe Clark, right, accepts a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) blanket for his part in the MCC Alberta fundraiser for its Global Family education program. Looking on is Kim Thiessen, one of the evening's performers.

CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE PHOTO



In front of a full audience at the University of Waterloo, Ziauddin Yousafzai, father of Nobel Peace Prize-winner Malala Yousafzai, human rights campaigner, and long-time educator, gave an impassioned lecture late last year on speaking out for peace and promoting education in the face of violence.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JON OWEN



From left to right: Norm Voth, director of evangelism and service for MC Manitoba; Orly Friesen, volunteer site manager; Jon Owens, caretaker and resident; Alvin Thiessen, supporter and volunteer; Pearl Plohman, resident; and Jamie Arpin-Ricci, pastor of Little Flowers Community, cut the ribbon to officially open Chiara House in Winnipeg.

Chiara House officially opens

Little Flowers Community, MC Manitoba and Eden Health Care Services partner to provide supportive affordable housing

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG

“When one of our members suffered from untreated mental illnesses and committed suicide quite publicly five years ago, we realized how critical it is to provide community supports and affordable housing in order for people to have a chance at healthy living,” said Jamie Arpin-Ricci, pastor of Little Flowers Community in Winnipeg’s downtown West End, at the official opening of Chiara House.

From this, a vision of a place that would provide affordable, safe, secure and dignified housing in the context of Christian community in this multi-ethnic neighbourhood began to develop through a partnership of Mennonite Church Manitoba, Little Flowers Community, Eden Health Care Services, Eden Foundation and a not-for-profit numbered company formed for this purpose.

Homelessness in Winnipeg is a major concern. A University of Winnipeg study

determined that, of the city’s 633,451 residents, 7,600 are “hidden’ homeless,” 1,915 are short-term or crisis-sheltered people, and 350 are living on the streets.

Searching for a building, Arpin-Ricci and Norm Voth, director of evangelism and service, for MC Manitoba, walked the streets of the neighbourhood.

“We found housing situations that were shocking and heart-breaking, and at times we were stunned and scared,” said Voth. “It re-instilled in us the need for this kind of space.”

Eventually they found a small three-storey apartment building that had been vacated because of a basement fire.

Now, four years later, Chiara House is fully occupied by 13 residents in eight apartments. On Nov. 14, 2014, a ribbon-cutting ceremony marked the official opening.

“A third of the residents are part of the core team from Little Flowers Community, who are there for the express purpose of

being good neighbours and supportive to the residents and neighbours,” said Jon Owen, who, together with his wife, Joelle Kidd, are resident core team members. He described his role as that of caretaker of the physical building, but his caretaking extends well beyond the physical structure.

Approximately one-third of the rooms are designated for people living with mental health issues and the remaining are for those needing affordable housing. Two single mothers with their children, a married couple and several single adults now make Chiara House their home.

A common room is available for residents and is used for community meetings and Monday night potlucks. Laundry facilities, a hospitality suite, two full bathrooms and an office are in the basement.

Owen and Kidd share the office with Little Flowers Community, offering a pastoral presence in the building. The hospitality suite is intended to be a short-term place for an individual or family “who is in critical need of shelter and recommended by the mental health system, the police or one of the other shelters, or it can be used by residents for their guests, because the suites are very small,” said Voth.

Fifteen-thousand hours of volunteer labour helped to make Chiara House a reality.

“We’ve been blown away by the support of [MC Manitoba] and the people that have come alongside us,” said Arpin-Ricci.

Although the project had significant challenges and setbacks, including five break-ins and four arson incidents, “what was tremendously encouraging was the support from MC Manitoba congregations. In total, we had 20 congregations, some from outside MC Manitoba, involved. First Mennonite Church donated 365 days of volunteer labour,” said Voth.

On one level, the vision has been fulfilled, but in the day-to-day living out of the vision, “we are just figuring out how to do this. No one is doing it in this context,” said Owen.

“Recognizing the dignity and value and unique abilities of everyone, and seeing mental health as a continuum, and doing this in a housing context is like no other model that we are aware of,” added Arpin-Ricci. ❧

VIEWPOINT

Do not store up treasures in pensions

BY WILL BRAUN

SENIOR WRITER

Like the Bible verse that says, “Do not store up treasures on earth,” but I also like the thought of a few treasures on the side for the sake of financial security. That tension gripped my soul as I opened the Mennonite Church Canada pension package I received when I joined the staff of this magazine. I paged through it, anxiously seeking an option to ease my troubled heart.

It turns out that 85 percent of the 932 people under the MC Canada pension umbrella choose the “core option” that is administered by OceanRock Investments. Sort of. Actually, MC Canada deals with Ardent Financial, which deals with Great West Life, which deals with OceanRock, which deals with numerous “sub-advisor” companies, which do the actual investing, sometimes in banks and other entities that have their own strata of investment.

The systemic and managerial complexities defy common sense.

OceanRock—a national leader in Socially Responsible Investing (SRI)—offers 22 funds and portfolios. The firm’s SRI screens weed out companies involved directly in tobacco, alcohol, the military, pornography, nuclear power and gambling, although investment itself is a gamble. In addition, it seeks companies that show leadership in environmental, social and governance issues.

The MC Canada “core option” is a mixture of four OceanRock funds along with a mortgage fund and a bond fund. If you drill down through the layers and lingo, you find that “core option” Mennonites



invest in government bonds, mortgages and such “ethical heroes” as PepsiCo, UPS, General Mills, Target and most of the big banks.

Wine is out, but mainstream consumption is certifiably responsible, despite the ecological, human and spiritual destruction in its wake. Pass the Pepsi shares.

May the kingdom come!

But OceanRock CEO Gary Hawton admits the challenges of SRI and says, “We ask for a little bit of grace along the way.” Fair enough. More than fair. No matter how we invest, and even if we don’t, we’re all complicit in the machinations of money and stuff, and we must be gracious with each other and ourselves.

It’s tough to consider the lilies of the field, which worry not about tomorrow but rely wholly on God. That’s scary. Pass the grace.

Of course, there are ways around the Matthew 6 comment on lilies, and there are good reasons to invest. One is the work-from-within argument. Hawton spends up to half his time on “shareholder engagement,” meeting with leaders of companies to discuss improvements related to social responsibility. “We are called to be salt and light,” he says, and his stories of this work paint a moving picture of someone doing exactly that in a setting where few else dare to tread.

This year, he had a behind-the-scenes tour of Suncor’s operations in the Alberta bitumen sands. This was part of nearly a decade of dialogue with the company on various topics. “We think we’re having meaningful long-term impact,” Hawton says.

The strategy is to invest in companies that are ethically “best-in-class” and encourage further improvement.

But the work-from-within approach is limited. OceanRock dumped its shares in Enbridge and Barrick Gold because shareholder engagement proved unfruitful and the companies were deemed no longer best-in-class. And, of course, no one is using the work-from-within argument in the case of alcohol, military and other sectors deemed fundamentally unacceptable.

The fossil-fuel sector is not considered fundamentally unacceptable, at least not by OceanRock. Yet the World Council of Churches and even the heirs to the Rockefeller fortune—which was built on oil—have pulled out of fossil-fuel investment altogether. And Desmond Tutu advocates divestment, noting how effective the strategy was in fighting apartheid.

While we all use fossil fuels, the divestment argument says we should use our money to encourage alternatives, not to bankroll companies whose very business model involves extracting as much hydrocarbons from the earth as possible. The widely accepted science shows that if all of the known fossil-fuel reserves of the major energy companies are indeed extracted, the planet will sizzle.

Only about 3.2 percent of the “core option” is invested directly in the energy sector. As the financial elders of the church will say, the world is complicated and dialogue is important. If such dialogue is to have integrity, it must consider lilies and divestment. Could we dare to print Matthew 6:19-34 in the MC Canada pension package?

Of course, the only way to face the grand invitation to store up treasures where no moth will destroy is to embrace the fact that, while the world is full of ethical greyness, it is equally full of grace. ❧



For “core option” details, visit www.canadianmennonite.org/pensions. My next article will trace my journey from youthful idealism to real-world pension decisions.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Remembering Mandela

ANDREW SUDERMAN

Nelson Mandela passed away a year ago last December, at the age of 95. Although we knew this time was coming, it does not alleviate the sorrow experienced by South Africa and indeed the world. Mandela—or Madiba, as he was lovingly called—lived as an incredible example of forgiveness and reconciliation. He inspired a nation and the world to reach out in a spirit of reconciliation and unity even to those who have hurt us.

Mandela not only fought an oppressive and unjust regime, but eventually and willingly sought unity and reconciliation even with those who were culpable for his years of suffering as a prisoner. By doing so, he helped to create one nation where all could belong.

After spending 27 years in prison, Mandela stated in *Long Walk to Freedom*: “It was during those long and lonely years that my hunger for the freedom of my own people became a hunger for the freedom of all people, white and black. I knew as well as I knew anything that the oppressor must be liberated just as surely as the oppressed. A man who takes away another man’s freedom is a prisoner of hatred, he is locked behind the bars of prejudice and narrow-mindedness. I am not truly free if I am taking away someone else’s freedom, just as surely as I am not free when my freedom is taken from me. The oppressed and the oppressor alike are robbed of their humanity.”

But this was not the way in which Madiba always viewed the struggle for freedom. In a Dec. 6, 2013, article in the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper, Desmond Tutu said that the vision Mandela came to embrace and demonstrate later in his life resulted from many years of suffering in prison: “Some have said Mandela’s 27 years in jail were a waste, suggesting that if had he been released earlier he would have had more time to weave his charm of forgiveness and reconciliation. I beg to

PHOTO © PEP HERNANDEZ /
BIT.LY/1WHEB9Z



differ.

“He went to jail an angry young man, incensed by the miscarriage of justice in the travesty of the Rivonia Trial. He was no peacemaker. After all, he had been MK [the armed wing of the African National Congress] commander and intended to overthrow apartheid by force.

“The 27 years were absolutely crucial in his spiritual development. The suffering was the crucible that removed considerable dross, giving him empathy for his opponents. It helped to ennoble him, imbuing him with magnanimity difficult to gain in other ways. It gave him an authority and credibility that otherwise would have been difficult to attain. No one could challenge his credentials. He had proved his commitment and selflessness through what he had undergone. He had the authority and attractiveness that accompany vicarious suffering on behalf of others—as with Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa and the Dalai Lama.”

And so, after many years of suffering, imprisonment and injustice, Madiba responded in a way that was—and is—so unexpected. He sought to forgive and

to reconcile, instead of seeking revenge through violence. What’s more, he inspired a whole nation to do the same.

Rather than using tools so common among empires and nation-states—tools of war, violence, and oppression—Mandela responded with tools that are familiar to the politics of God’s kingdom. These are Jesus’ tools: forgiveness, reconciliation, peace and love. And the world has recognized the different nature of these traits.

Madiba’s ability to embody a form of politics that is so often foreign to the politics of nation-states made him stand out in the world. He became an example to emulate.

Embodying kingdom-of-God values, and pledging allegiance to an alternative form of life focussed on reconciliation, are reasons for celebration. On the first anniversary of his death, we celebrate Mandela’s example not because he provided a compelling model of how to separate church from state, or faith from politics, or even how to influence or Christianize the state and the social order. We rejoice in his example because it is a compelling expression of how political the gifts of forgiveness and reconciliation really are.

Mandela stated during his 1995 National Reconciliation Day address: “We, the people of South Africa, have made a decisive and irreversible break with the past. We have, in real life, declared our shared allegiance to justice, non-racialism and democracy; our yearning for a peaceful and harmonious nation of equals. The rainbow has come to be the symbol of our nation. We are turning the variety of our languages and cultures, once used to divide us, into a source of strength and richness.”

May we be as courageous as our beloved Madiba in the ongoing pursuit of justice, peace and reconciliation! ✎

Andrew Suderman is a Mennonite Church Canada/Mennonite Mission Network worker in South Africa and Director of the Anabaptist Network in South Africa (ANiSA).

GOD AT WORK IN US

TRIBUTE

Carpe diem

Jack Dueck

Oct. 20, 1932 – Nov. 21, 2014

BY CAL REDEKOP

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

In his “Remembering Jack” soliloquy at Jack Dueck’s memorial service, the famous Mennonite novelist and writer, Rudy Wiebe, termed his friend, “a very large and complex human being,” and rendered this story as an example:

“One day he was teaching Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s novel [at Goshen College, Ind.] about the Soviet Union Gulag, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. While Jack was lecturing to half-drowsy students about life in a police state, the classroom door suddenly burst open, two huge policemen charged in, handcuffed Jack and dragged him off to jail. Of course, Jack had arranged it all, but no student ever forgot that re-enactment of Stalin arrest.”

I will not define the many inferences and deductions that can be reached from this episode in Jack’s teaching career in the late 1960s. But I cannot resist hoping that some students must have connected a Gulag police state with the police brutality in the civil rights movement in the South, as well as the strained relations between the local police department’s concern about Goshen College’s “radical” student demonstrations in the 1960s. There were also concerns in the administration about the possible unrest—or even violence—on campus resulting from Jack’s fake arrest. Making the horrors and grandeur of the past relevant to similar realities in the present was one of Jack’s most powerful stances and insights: “Carpe diem!”

Jack’s teaching ended in 1978 so he



Jack Dueck

could pursue his love of people and utilize his enormous entrepreneurial and people skills to help them live more effectively. He created People Management Associates, and in 1983 he became a consultant to Penn Alps on historic Route 40, a folk art centre begun by then-renowned Alta Schrock. Soon he was the manager, commissioned by the board to provide new vision and direction to Penn Alps. His leadership with new personnel techniques and restaurant expansion re-invigorated the flagging centre. As a result, travellers increasingly included stops at Penn Alps to eat outstanding food, stay at Elliott House or visit the thriving Spruce Forest Artisan Village.

In 1993, Jack visited Shenandoah Valley to present *Mysteries of Grace and Judgment* at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. The conceptualization and writing of this piece marshalled Jack’s gifts of language, song, emotions and piety to the utmost.

Planning for the visit itself took several months. Jack narrated six stories of Russian Mennonites verbatim, one being “John Hiebert: Mennonite capitalist, communist, Christian,” and led the choir in “In the Rifted Rock I’m Resting.”

This was a monumental event. The audience packing Lehman Auditorium shed many tears, as Jack described yet another tragedy. Many marvelled at the emotions he displayed in the moving, desperate story, and at Jack’s agility and ability to control his own.

One of his many editorializing/admonishing/writing efforts was his column “Stories of Faith in Life” in *Canadian Mennonite* from 2007-10.

Central to Jack’s intellectual/spiritual life was the reality of irony. Reflecting on the *Mysteries of Grace and Judgment* experience, Jack wrote in a letter dated Feb. 21, 2000: “More and more I have found how story impacts constructive memory, triggers redemptive reflection and, above all, opens doorways to painful but graceful healings. One . . . amazing discovery was how a story of one people’s sojourn connects and inspires people from another entirely different psychological and spiritual matrix. . . . [For example], the Roman Catholic people in the diocese and church in Kitchener were so affected that the pastor announced the program and the cathedral was packed. The irony is latent.”

Jack’s story became an important and insightful one. I love him for his extravagance in trusting others, his humour, his insights via often embellished stories, and his human foibles. When I get to heaven I will have no trouble finding him, for he will either be leading a heavenly choir with Rudy singing tenor, or telling a mostly true story to a rapt congregation of angels, or walking and talking with children. His love for his family and the larger human family on earth guarantees he will be there.

In July 2014, Jack received news of an aggressive brain tumour. He pursued initial treatment in Ontario, where he lived, and then he and his wife Eleanor moved to Linden, Alta., where they planned to fully retire and live close to family and childhood friends. He passed away peacefully on Nov. 21, 2014, embraced by love and the music of Mendelssohn.

He is survived by his wife Eleanor Toews; his children, Evelyn Dueck (Don Davis), Carolyn Clement (Chris Clement), and Lorne Dueck (Shannon Oldham); his grandchildren, Annette and Rebecca Davis, and Isabelle and Alexandra Clement; and his siblings, Peter Dueck, Tina Siemens, Dora Layng, Margaret Wiebe and David Dueck. ❧

ARTBEAT

MOVIE REVIEW

Join the fight

The Hunger Games: Mockingjay (Pt. 1).

Directed by Francis Lawrence. Screenwriters: Peter Craig and Danny Strong. Starring Jennifer Lawrence and Josh Hutcherson. A Color Force/Lionsgate release, 2014. Rated PG-13.

REVIEWED BY VIC THIESSEN

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

“**S**top the senseless violence. This isn’t the path to change or justice.” According to the rebels in *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay (Pt. 1)*, the third and weakest film in the Hunger Games series, those are words only a traitor would utter.

And indeed we soon learn that, although spoken by Peeta, one of the series’ heroes, the words actually come from the mouth of President Snow (Donald Sutherland), the representative of evil in the Hunger Games world.

As a follower of Jesus, I was immediately put on the defensive.

Mockingjay (Pt. 1) begins deep underground, where District 13—which was thought destroyed 75 years ago—has remained hidden while developing its computer technology and a huge arsenal of weapons to be used for a second attempt at revolution against the Capitol.

Plutarch Heavensbee (Philip Seymour

Hoffman) convinces President Coin (Julianne Moore), that Katniss (Jennifer Lawrence) is the perfect symbol for the revolution and should be featured in a series of propaganda films that will inspire the other districts to join the fight. Katniss is reluctant until she sees what Snow has done to District 12, where her home is located. Meanwhile, Peeta has been forced to star in Snow’s own propaganda films and say such traitorous things to the rebels as “Stop the killing!”

The acting in *Mockingjay (Pt. 1)* is excellent, and the score by James Newton Howard is his best in the series, but the final book in Suzanne Collins’s trilogy should never have been broken up into two films. Not only are the motives suspect, but the result is a film that is too long and not compelling. Worst of all, on its own it conveys the messages that violence is the only path to justice and Jesus should be branded a coward and a traitor

for not backing a violent revolt against Roman oppression.

History has shown that the myth of redemptive violence—the idea that the use of violence, however horrid it may be, is usually necessary to save the world from evil—only perpetuates the cycle of violence and has been singularly ineffective at ridding the world of evil. (After all, killing Sadam Hussein and Osama bin Laden has not made the world a peaceful place.)

Insofar as *Mockingjay (Pt. 1)* joins its countless Hollywood counterparts in promoting this myth, it suffers from a serious failure of the imagination. Yes, we need to stand against oppression, but, like Martin Luther King Jr., we need to find nonviolent ways of doing this that are both more effective and more faithful.

I recently visited the new Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg and was appalled by the irony that led me from Buffy Sainte-Marie’s poignant anti-war classic, “Universal Soldier,” which suggests that soldiers are never the way to peace, to a temporary exhibit on peace which focusses on how Canadian military intervention in places like Afghanistan is a key way of creating peace. The ease with which we are able to sympathize with calls for a violent response to Islamic State is a direct result of propaganda like this. Exposing our children to such propaganda is something we do at our own peril.

Director Francis Lawrence says, “My goal with *Mockingjay* is to make people think about war—the sides of war, the consequences of it, the propaganda and the images we’re being shown.”

If that’s true, and I hope it is, his goal will only be achieved in the final film of the series, because Pt. 1 reveals nothing of this apart from ongoing reservations on the part of Katniss about her role in the revolution.

Indeed, the film’s use of “The Hanging Tree” song to goad the masses into violent action seems designed to create sympathy among viewers for the violence that follows. Given that the violence is aimed at the corporate powers that exploit the poor in our world, this is either very ironic or something to be resolved in a surprising plot twist in the fourth film. ☞

COLOR FORCE/LIONSGATE PHOTO



Katniss (Jennifer Lawrence) in a scene from The Hunger Games: Mockingjay (Pt. 1) with her quiver of deadly arrows.

/// Briefly noted

Newest summer Bible school curriculum ready for order

“Message received: Hearing God’s call” is the new MennoMedia Vacation Bible School material for 2015. It features five Bible stories that highlight biblical characters who heard God call them: Samuel, Esther, Mary, Jesus’ disciples and Lydia, who responded to God’s call, changing their lives forever. The curriculum is designed on a rotation model, with all

children and teachers first meeting in a large group session for a time of worship and music, including a drama presentation of the Bible story. Following the time of worship and drama, children are divided into groups that rotate among different activities related to the Bible story. The curriculum materials were written during the past year by a group of educators in Ohio,

coordinated by managing editor Mary Ann Weber. “Message received: Hearing God’s call” may be ordered in an all-in-one boxed set that includes everything needed for planning and preparation. All items are also available separately. For more information, visit www.MennoMedia.org/vbs.

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Intimacy is not an invitation to abuse

Church needs to create safe places for survivors of sexual assault

BY RACHEL BERGEN

Young Voices Co-editor

ISTOCK.COM/ADL21 PHOTO



When she begrudgingly did comply, she felt awful, even worthless. 'I thought, this is what's expected of me by being in this relationship,' she says. 'I had to make compromises.'

Every 17 minutes, a woman in Canada experiences sexual assault. Many times these women are assaulted by someone they know, sometimes even by someone they're in a romantic relationship with.

The latter was true for Jessica (a pseudonym), who grew up attending a Mennonite Church Canada congregation and agreed to speak to *Canadian Mennonite* anonymously to protect her identity.

A few years ago, Jessica was in a long-term relationship with a man who also attended a Mennonite church. They were serious and even considered getting married. She was just about to start university when she says he began to get violent and emotionally manipulative.

She and her boyfriend were intimate, but Jessica says she sometimes wouldn't feel like being sexual. When she didn't want to, her boyfriend would sometimes physically coerce her by climbing on top of her and trying to engage in sexual acts with her.

"He was a strong person, and it was hard for me to push him off," she recalls. "I would keep telling him to stop, that I didn't want this, and to get off of me. After a while he would, but then he would give me the cold shoulder and make me feel really bad."

Jessica says she felt emotionally manipulated into complying with his sexual advances. When she begrudgingly did comply, she felt awful, even worthless. "I thought, this is what's expected of me by being in this relationship," she says. "I had to make compromises."

They eventually broke up, realizing their relationship was dysfunctional.

Jessica needed help from her faith

community, but didn't know how to ask, or even how to talk about what had happened to her.

Months later, Jessica was reading an article about sexual assault in relationships when she realized that was exactly what had happened to her. The writer's accounts of her trauma gave Jessica the strength to be able to name the experiences as assault and sexual abuse.

Societal context

Jessica isn't alone. Many women are assaulted in relationships, and, like her, don't speak out or file police reports for fear of being blamed, re-traumatized, or experiencing backlash from their assailant.

The most recent high-profile case of this kind involves long-time CBC Q personality Jian Ghomeshi. Before the story broke nationally and internationally, he took to Facebook to explain his preference for consensual rough sex, and how the allegations against him were made by a "disgruntled ex-girlfriend."

His long explanation triggered outrage across the country. Many people couldn't believe a couple of women who hadn't even filed police reports had gotten away with ousting one of Canada's most beloved TV and radio personalities for an apparent lifestyle preference. To this day, a lot of blame is placed on the women who came forward to tell their stories.

Ghomeshi allegedly assaulted at least nine women and is currently facing four charges of sexual assault and one count of overcoming resistance (choking).

Many of the women who spoke out

against Ghomeshi report some of the same feelings of confusion as Jessica: emotional manipulation and guilt.

A role for the church

Jessica says she doesn't feel safe to reveal her identity in her current church context or through this article, but she hopes others who have been abused or assaulted will find strength through her story.

In situations like these, Jessica says the Mennonite church has an opportunity to provide non-judgmental spaces for survivors and families of survivors to speak out without fear of gossip or facing blame. At this point, though, she doesn't feel the churches in her area are equipped for this.

"We don't talk a lot about those things [sexual abuse]," Jessica says, "so when people experience them, they feel like an anomaly and that it's their fault they got themselves into the situation. . . . They feel they need to take responsibility for their

own feelings of harm."

The church also has an obligation to teach. Jessica says part of the problem is that churches don't talk enough about healthy sexuality, rape culture or what constitutes abuse.

"No means no, whether you're in a relationship or not," she says.

Jessica worries that women are sometimes encouraged by Mennonite churches to absorb trauma, rather than seek help. They face blame for experiencing abuse for the sake of outward appearances and maintaining family units or relationships.

She cautions that people need to be equipped to talk about boundaries in relationships without feeling pressured to go outside of them. Churches play a key role in teaching people about these things. When Mennonites aren't given these tools, people are susceptible to serious harm.

And when there aren't spaces to seek support, the harm persists, she says. ✎

VIEWPOINT

Celebrating generosity

Canadian Mennonite University students give thanks to donors on Tuition Freedom Day

BY AMBER NEUFELD

SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES

For the past two years, I have had the pleasure of being activities vice-president on the Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) Student Council. Along with all the elections, blood donor clinics and fun social events I've planned, I have also organized a very special day that is close to my heart: Tuition Freedom Day.

Tuition Freedom Day marks the end of the fiscal year paid for by student tuitions and the beginning of the year made possible by grants and donations from the Manitoba government, churches and individual donors.

When I was in my first year, I had no idea what this day was or what it meant. I knew we got together, heard some

speeches, watched balloons fall from the rafters and ate pizza together. I could feel the atmosphere of celebration, but had no clue what the celebration was for. I did not realize that, despite the tuition I pay, it only covers about 40 percent of what it actually costs to run the university.

I did not realize that the other 60 percent or so is covered by a multitude of donors, each giving to CMU for their own unique reasons: because they were impacted by their own time studying at CMU, or because they believe in CMU's potential. My own grandmother gives what she can because, being a piano teacher for most of her life, she values how education can transform a person.

(Continued on page 36)

PHOTO BY AARON EPP



Amber Neufeld enjoys organizing Tuition Freedom Day, an annual celebration recognizing the generosity of donors, churches and the Manitoba government in supporting education at CMU.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CMU



Tuition Freedom Day is celebrated with speeches, balloons, pizza and fellowship.



The 2014-15 Canadian Mennonite University Student Council.



A group of students leads singing at the 2014 Tuition Freedom Day, on Nov. 24.

(Continued from page 35)

My peers and I are testaments to the transformation of education. I believe we become better people when we learn and are engaged with one another, thinking of ways to shape each other's lives and communities for the better.

With my time at CMU drawing to a close, these things become more and

As students, our eyes are open to the fact that we are always being supported in our studies. This is humbling.

more important to me as well. I love being able to plan an event for the sole purpose of celebrating generosity and education. Tuition Freedom Day is where two different groups—students and donors—come together to celebrate the shared goal we work towards. As students, our eyes are open to the fact that we are always being supported in our studies. This is humbling.

As Raven Nickel, our student speaker at the 2014 Tuition Freedom Day on Nov. 24, shared, “[Donors] give us opportunities that push us to look for the image of God . . . enabling us to look beyond ourselves so that we can do kingdom work.”

At CMU, we are encouraged to push out of our comfort zones by wracking our brains a little harder, by looking for the connections between disciplines and by constantly searching for ways we can make this world even just a little bit better.

It may sound trite, but CMU is educating a future generation of women and men to look outside of ourselves, to see the bigger goal of God's kingdom on earth.

Donors get to see their donations flourish in the forms of bursaries, scholarships, new building projects, and especially in students who can continue

to engage in their studies. I hope that donors are thrilled each time they hear of a CMU alum going off to do great things, or when the university announces exciting projects like Marpeck Commons, the new library, learning commons and bridge that recently opened on campus.

At Tuition Freedom Day, each group gets to look at the faces of the others and see a different perspective of CMU. It really is a special connection that gets overlooked in a lot of other university contexts, and I'm happy to be a part of a celebration that fosters this connection.

On behalf of the intelligent, hardworking and grateful students at CMU, I thank donors for their support. I hope you can swing by next year's Tuition Freedom Day to enjoy a slice of pizza with us.

Amber Neufeld, 21, is from Winnipeg. She is a fourth-year social science and English double major at CMU.

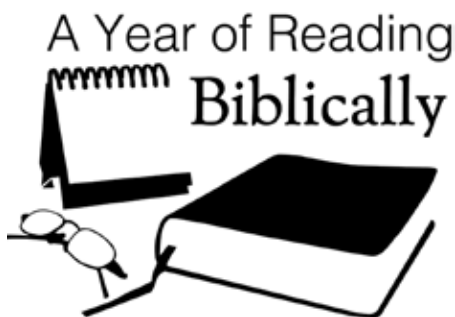
PERSONAL REFLECTION

Drawn to the story

Scripture resonates even with some non-Christians

AARON EPP

YOUNG VOICES CO-EDITOR



Do you know any atheists who celebrate Easter? I do.

As you read this, A Year of Reading Biblically—the challenge I

and a number of *Canadian Mennonite* readers have undertaken to read through the Bible from cover to cover in 2014—is over. But as I write this, it's

mid-December and I still have a few weeks left to finish.

As I reflect on the Bible, it occurs to me that its stories resonate with people regardless of whether they identify as Christian or not. At the end of 2013, I posed the question, “Why read the Bible?” on my Facebook page. One of my friends responded, “My English 100 prof at [the University of British Columbia] told our class that if we wanted to understand English literature, we had to read the Bible. That impressed me, since he didn’t seem to be a man of faith.”

Recently, a friend of mine named Lukas Thiessen posted a list on Facebook of 10 books that have influenced him over the years. Lukas used to self-identify as Christian. He grew up attending a Mennonite church, worked at a Mennonite camp and earned his first undergraduate degree at a Mennonite university. Today, he self-identifies as an atheist.

“There is no other book in my life over which I have done more studying, arguing, worrying, exalting [and] searching, than [the Bible],” Thiessen wrote on Facebook. “Even as an atheist, I continue to be a Bible-apologist because so many people don’t understand the first thing about Scripture. I know so much more about pop culture because I know this book so well.”

I wanted to understand the impact that the Bible has had, and continues to have, on his life, so I called him up. Thiessen, who holds a master of arts degree in curatorial practices from the University of Winnipeg (UofW), was in the midst of writing an article about his journey from Christianity to atheism for the *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, an academic journal published annually by the UofW’s chair in Mennonite studies.

During our conversation, I learned that he still celebrates Easter. Every year, he fasts on Holy Saturday. On Easter morning, he heads down to the Forks—the historic spot in Winnipeg where the Red and Assiniboine rivers meet—with a Bible, a loaf of bread, a bottle of wine and a musical instrument.

“I read one of the resurrection stories from one of the gospels and drink half a

bottle of wine and eat half a loaf of bread, and it’s awesome. And I 100 percent do not believe in God or care whether Jesus lived,” Thiessen says, adding that he uses the instrument he brings to play the Beatles song, “Here Comes the Sun.”

This may strike some as irreverent, but in my experience he is anything but. He is not militant in his atheism and it is not the product of youthful adolescence or him not knowing who he is. His journey to atheism was a slow one, drawn out over a number of years of serious reading, thinking and reflecting. He is naturally curious and says that his stance on God is open enough that he could be wrong. “I’m open to being wrong, because I’ve been wrong before,” he says. “But I don’t think I am.”

So why the annual Easter sunrise service? Why the connection with the story of Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection?

“The idea of being God, or the son of God, and allowing humanity—which you created—to kill you, is incredibly powerful,” Thiessen explains.

In his view, the story of Christ’s death and resurrection has influenced the way we have constructed our society, as well as the ways we conceive of our own worth and the worth of our fellow humans. For him, one of the keys to the story of Jesus Christ is the idea that we should not try to control one another.

“I think that’s an amazing message,” he says. Whether it actually happened or not, “the story matters because it does influence the way I live [and] treat other people.”

For Thiessen, the story is enough. For me, as a Christian, belief in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and having a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, are what make the story important. I want to believe that the stories in the Bible are somehow more important than any other story.

How about you? Which biblical stories intrigue you the most? Did you participate in A Year of Reading Biblically? How did it go? There is one article left in this series and I’m interested in hearing people’s experiences. You can e-mail me at youngvoices@canadianmennonite.org.

PHOTO BY AARON EPP



Once a Christian, Lukas Thiessen now identifies as an atheist. He lists the Bible as one of the books that has most influenced his life, and still reads stories from the gospels every Easter.

PHOTO BY GERHARD EPP



*‘For me as a Christian, ... I want to believe that the stories in the Bible are somehow more important than any other story.’
(Aaron Epp)*

UpComing

AMBS service to lament John Howard Yoder's actions

ELKHART, IND.—The Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) board of directors, president and administrative cabinet are planning AMBS-based gatherings, including a Service of Lament, Confession and Hope for the weekend of March 21-22. All AMBS alumni/alumnae, current and former faculty, board members, administrators, staff and their families are invited to participate. The evening of March 21 will be an opportunity for alumni to visit and reconnect informally. On the morning of March 22, there will be an intimate gathering of truth-telling, reflection and prayer for those who were victimized by John Howard Yoder and those who are bearing witness to the experience of others who were victimized. The afternoon Service of Lament, Confession and Hope for all AMBS-affiliated participants and families will focus on sadness for what occurred, confession of the institution's slowness to respond adequately to the complaints of the women, a pledge to work for prevention of predatory behaviour and a hope-filled resolve to pursue ongoing healing. The AMBS board and administration are committed to covering costs for travel and lodging for anyone victimized by Yoder who submits expenses either personally or through a friend. More information will be available later this month.

—Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

Healthcare leaders plan international summit

Leaders of Anabaptist/Mennonite hospitals, senior care, behavioural health, developmental disability, community health and health education organizations from Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and North America are being invited to attend an international leadership summit from July 20-21 in Camp Hill, Pa., under the sponsorship of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) and Mennonite Health Services. Meeting participants will address topics such as Anabaptist theology and health; women's health; health technology; end-of-life healthcare; Anabaptist visions for global health, sustainability and the culture of peace; and church and hospital partnerships in Zambia. They will also discuss a vision for creating an MWC-based global health network. MWC general secretary César García, says, "Come join us. Let's walk together on the road of healthcare. Let's stand in an interdependent and cross-cultural way with those who are sick and suffering. Let's enjoy the hope that brings together a compassionate global community to support those who need to be touched by God's healing." For details about the summit program and registration information, visit www.mwc-cmm.org/article/other-meetings or e-mail Ronald Yoder at ron@mhsonline.org.

—Mennonite World Conference

Calendar

British Columbia

Feb. 6-8: Young Adults Impact Retreat at Camp Squeah, Hope.

Feb. 20: MC B.C. Leaders, Elders and Deacons Conference, at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond. All are welcome.

Feb. 21: MC B.C. annual meeting at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond. Registration through local church offices.

Alberta

Jan. 16-17: Junior high snow camp at Camp Valaqua, Water Valley. Theme: "Faith in transit." Speaker: Don Douglas. For more information, e-mail yltalberta@gmail.com.

Feb. 7: MC Alberta general council meeting, at Berghal Mennonite Church, Didsbury, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Feb. 20-22: Senior high snow camp at Camp Valaqua, Water Valley. Theme: "Faith in transit." Speaker: Ryan Dueck. For more information, e-mail yltalberta@gmail.com.

Feb. 28: "Sweet Interlude" fundraising event, at Menno Simons School, Calgary, from 6 to 10 p.m. Dessert buffet, silent and live auctions, and entertainment, with proceeds going toward the school's mortgage.

Saskatchewan

Jan. 30-Feb. 2: Senior-high youth retreat for grades 9 to 12, at Shekinah Retreat Centre, Waldheim. Theme: "Where's God in my song?" Keynote speaker: Ben Pauls. Registration deadline: Jan. 23. For more information, call 306-249-4844 or visit www.smyo.ca.

Feb. 6: RJC Friday Night Live youth event.

Manitoba

Jan. 23: CMU Singers in concert with MCI and W.C. Miller choral ensembles, at Buhler Hall, Gretna.

Jan. 24,31: "Leading well: A workshop for song leaders and worship leaders, featuring Christine Longhurst, who teaches worship and church music at CMU; from 9:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. (24) at CMU in Winnipeg; (31) at Covenant Mennonite Church, Winkler. For

more information, visit www.cmu.ca/leadingwell.

Jan. 28: Verna Mae Janzen Music Competition, at CMU's Laudamus Auditorium.

Jan. 29-30: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate junior-high students perform three one-act plays at the Franco-Manitoban Centre, Winnipeg. For more information, call 204-775-7111.

Feb. 4: Open house at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, at 7 p.m. For more information, call 204-775-7111.

Feb. 6: New Music Festival featuring all CMU choirs, at Centennial Concert Hall, Winnipeg.

Feb. 10: Face2Face community discussion: "You lost me: The church and young adults," featuring Irma Fast Dueck and Peter Epp; at CMU's Great Hall, at 7 p.m.

Ontario

Until Jan. 18: "Along the road to freedom" art exhibit by Ray Dirks, at Conrad Grebel University College Gallery. For more information, visit uwaterloo.ca/grebel/grebel-gallery.

Jan. 21: Mennonite/s Writing, a free public reading series with celebrated Canadian authors, at Conrad Grebel Chapel, at 7:30 p.m.: Patrick Friesen will read from his forthcoming book of poems, *A Short History of Crazy Bone*. For more information, visit grebel.ca/mennolit.

Feb. 4: Mennonite/s Writing, a free public reading series with celebrated Canadian authors, at Conrad Grebel Chapel, at 7:30 p.m.: Di Brandt will read from a collection of poems-in-progress. For more information, visit grebel.ca/mennolit.

Feb. 6-7: Oct. 24-25: "Reading the Bible with Jesus" retreat at Willowgrove, Stouffville, with Bryan Moyer Suderman: sponsored by MC Eastern Canada, the Markham-Stouffville Mennonite Ministerial and Willowgrove. Pt. 3: "John: If you believed Moses, you would believe me." For more information, e-mail miriam@willowgrove.ca.

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

Classifieds

Travel

Visit Europe the Mennonite Way! Multiple Hotel Tours focussing on Mennonite-Anabaptist history in Holland, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Poland and Ukraine. Organized by Mennonite Heritage Tours, www.mennoniteheritagetours.eu

Travel

PHOENIX (Arizona) MENNO Guest House Bed and Breakfast welcomes guests coming to the Phoenix area. (Web site www.hscserves.org). Email phxmennoguest@gmail.com or call 623-847-0314.

Employment Opportunities

Hawkesville Mennonite Church is looking for a 3/4 to fulltime pastor with Anabaptist beliefs and values who can lead us in loving God, our neighbours and creation. Our small congregation meets in the village of Hawkesville, but our members live in rural and urban communities throughout the region. We have deep roots in the village and bring the issues and joys of the wider world we live in to our worship and church life. If interested, contact Henry Paetkau, MCEC Conference Minister at hpaetkau@mcec.ca by February 16, 2015.

Advertising Information

Contact
D. Michael Hostetler
1-800-378-2524 x.224
advert@canadianmennonite.org



Mennonite Church Manitoba

Director of Ministerial Leadership


Mennonite Church Manitoba invites applications for the position of Director of Ministerial Leadership. This position is accountable to the Executive Director of MCM and is responsible for Congregational Ministry with particular attention given to pastoral ministry. This person will be responsible for working with congregations in pastoral transitions, pastoral skill development, and credentialing.

This is a full-time position, located in Winnipeg, Man. We are looking for someone to provide leadership in our congregations and among our pastors. This person will have a sense of vision for the future of congregational ministry, strong leadership skills, and administrative capabilities. Travel within the province and occasionally across Canada is a requirement of the position. For a complete list of key duties and qualifications please see the job description posted at www.mennochurch.mb.ca/serve.

All staff are expected to exhibit a personal faith commitment to Christ as Saviour and Lord, uphold the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, and the vision of Mennonite Church Manitoba.

Inquiries, applications or nominations for this position can be directed to Ken Warkentin, Executive Director, Mennonite Church Manitoba, kwarkentin@mennochurch.mb.ca 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 2J1 (ph. 204-896-1616).

Deadline for applications is January 23, 2015.



Breslau Mennonite Church

Employment Opportunity

Breslau Mennonite Church is looking for an associate pastor to join the lead pastor on our ministry team. This is a .6-time position, with a particular focus on family, youth, and young adult ministry. The associate pastor will have a strong commitment to social justice and Christian formation, with strong abilities in teaching, mentoring youth/young adults, and helping to discern and develop spiritual gifts.

Breslau Mennonite Church is a mid-sized, semi-rural congregation with active Sunday School and youth programs. Our members are a mix of rural and urban families from the Kitchener-Waterloo, Cambridge, and Guelph areas.

Interested candidates should contact Henry Paetkau, MCEC Conference Minister (hpaetkau@mcec.ca), by January 31 to apply.



Breslau Mennonite Church

Employment Opportunity

Breslau Mennonite Church is a mid-size, semi-rural congregation serving families in the Kitchener-Waterloo, Cambridge and Guelph area (breslaumennonitechurch.ca).

We seek a full-time lead pastor who is committed to Anabaptist faith and its traditions of peace and social justice. Our ideal candidate will also have strong gifts in leadership, administration, and helping to create meaningful worship experiences. The lead pastor will be part of a team ministry with our associate pastor (also being sought).

Preferred start date: Fall 2015.

Please contact Henry Paetkau, MCEC Conference Minister, at hpaetkau@mcec.ca by January 31 with applications or expressions of interest.



LANGLEY Mennonite Fellowship

LANGLEY MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP is searching for a FULL-TIME PASTOR who will initially work half-time with our current pastor who is transitioning to retirement. The half-time position, starting summer 2015, will convert into the full-time position in summer 2017.

LMF is a small, welcoming community of diverse Anabaptists who support social justice and rely on the consensus model for making group decisions.

If this pastoral opportunity interests you, please contact Gerry Grunau at gerrygrunau@gmail.com to start a conversation. Resumes, including the completed Ministerial Leadership Information form and references, due Jan. 31st, 2015.

More information at www.langleymennonitefellowship.org

PHOTO RIGHT: Vietnamese Christian Church of Abbotsford, B.C., celebrated the baptism of five young people on Nov. 2, 2014, the first such service for the Vietnamese congregation. Pictured, Jessica Nguyen is baptized by Ken Ha, pastor of the Vietnamese congregation, and April Yamasaki, pastor of Emmanuel Mennonite Church. A number of guests from other Mennonite Church B.C. congregations came to the service at Emmanuel, where the Vietnamese congregation regularly meets, and were invited to celebrate afterwards with a supper of Asian and western food.



God at work in B.C. Snapshots

PHOTO BELOW: The new MCC Centre in Abbotsford, B.C., held its official grand opening on Dec. 6, 2014, beginning with speeches by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) B.C. personnel and local politicians celebrating the new building and dedicating it to the ministry of MCC around the world. The building includes headquarters for MCC B.C. staff, a thrift shop and Ten Thousand Villages outlet. MCC B.C. executive director Wayne Bremner said the new centre is building on the 'legacy of compassion' that is MCC's ministry. Following speeches and a dedicatory prayer, a dozen people representing various programs and generations of MCC cut the ribbon outside the front door of the building.

