

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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EDITORIAL

Young people— our national treasure

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Chris Brnjas, a young pastor from Ontario and a delegate to the Global Youth Summit held prior to Mennonite World Conference assembly last month, came back with a reminder that we are changing from an old, well-worn paradigm that “young adults are the future of the church” to the new and more encompassing “young adults are the present AND the future of the church.”

Often times young adults are seen by their congregations as more “young” than “adult” and feel as if their contributions and gifts are not taken seriously, he said, touching on an assumption we elders make intellectually but often don’t practice. We are bound, too often, by the conventional thinking that we as elders, with our lifetime experience, have the most to teach younger members in the faith, if only they would take our advice.

We don’t say it out loud, but we think it.

Without being patronizing, let me suggest that many times the reverse may be true. The so-called “millennials” (age 18-34) have grown up in a quite different era than most of their elders. They have been exposed to a broader cultural experience than many of us who grew up in closed religious enclaves. Their acceptance of persons different from themselves comes easily and without some of the prejudices that our earlier culture ingrained in us.

They are better educated. For us, sons

and daughters of parents with an eighth-grade education, going to college and university was a first-time experience for many of our families. It wasn’t that we

were smarter than our parents, but we were given the tools for intellectual development, critical thinking and communication that was not afforded them.

With their intellectual and communication skills, millennials can interact on a level with their parents and elders in this new era. They are savvy market consumers and less likely to be loyal to institutions than their elders. They are far more sophisticated in their communication and keep abreast with the times through the social media platforms of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google, LinkedIn and YouTube.

That doesn’t mean they are less committed to our Anabaptist beliefs, however. More impressed with action than words, they are more inclined toward shoe-leather Christianity than finely-tuned theological statements or pietistic pontification about personal salvation and discipleship. There is a language of doing and being.

Hans Weaver, a millennial co-founder of Menno Tea, told our staff member, Michael Hostetler, in an interview at Mennonite World Conference, that in producing their product, they are primarily interested in sustainable agriculture, using only organic products and



supporting local producers. They give a portion of their profits to Everence, the U.S. Mennonite Mutual Aid organization, and want to expand their production around the world with the same values and principles, demonstrating a far more passionate devotion to peace and justice.

Millennials are postponing marriage and children, often waiting until their late 20s and early 30s before making those commitments. Meanwhile, many of them are traveling the globe and going into volunteer assignments that expand their horizons and give them a broad viewpoint of how our world is rapidly changing.

In the present sexuality debate, they are much more accepting of those with a different sexual orientation and are often puzzled by the divisiveness that so preoccupies their elders.

With all of these qualities, it is important for us elders to not only recognize these gifts, but to invite greater participation of our young people in our congregational life, to make them an integral part of our worship and Christian formation efforts. It is inter-generational learning in reverse. We might have a healthier church if we took some clues from our young people.

In her farewell sentiments, our Young Voices co-editor Rachel Bergen said she found her voice in writing for the *Canadian Mennonite* “and a greater passion for writing about the Mennonite Church.” She said she “felt the freedom to tackle such onerous issues as rape culture and inclusion of people of differing sexualities and gender identities in the church” and “no pressure to write cutesy cat stories like there is in mainstream media.”

Adequate proof that, when recognized, our young adults can be enthused about the church and make it all the more vibrant, when given the opportunity to use their gifts. A national treasure indeed.

ABOUT THE COVER:

Miriam Rudolph creates a new print, “Assiniboine River Trail II.” Her work will be featured in “Tandem: Going Places Together,” an art exhibit at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery in Winnipeg that will open on Sept. 11. See story on page 28.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF MIRIAM RUDOLPH

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CANADIAN MENNONITE,

490 DUTTON DRIVE, UNIT C5,

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

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Facebook.com/Canadian.Mennonite

@CanMenno

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Guiding values:

Hebrews 10:23-25 • Accuracy, fairness, balance • Editorial freedom •

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

• Covenantal relationships and mutual accountability

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Head Office Staff:

Dick Benner, Editor/Publisher, editor@canadianmennonite.org

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

Barb Draper, Editorial Assistant, edassist@canadianmennonite.org

Dan Johnson, Graphic Designer, designer@canadianmennonite.org

Natasha Krahn, Circulation/Finance, office@canadianmennonite.org

Aaron Epp, Young Voices Co-editor, youngvoices@canadianmennonite.org

Virginia Hostetler, Web Editor, webeditor@canadianmennonite.org

Advertising Manager: D. Michael Hostetler, advert@canadianmennonite.org,

toll-free voice mail: 1-800-378-2524 ext. 224

Correspondents:

Will Braun, Senior Writer, seniorwriter@canadianmennonite.org, 204-822-8288;

Amy Dueckman, B.C. Correspondent, bc@canadianmennonite.org,

604-854-3735; **Donita Wiebe-Neufeld,** Alberta Correspondent,

ab@canadianmennonite.org, 780-436-3431; **Donna Schulz,** Saskatchewan

Correspondent, sk@canadianmennonite.org, 306-232-4733; **J. Neufeld,** Manitoba

Correspondent, mb@canadianmennonite.org, 204-221-8022; **Dave Rogalsky,**

Eastern Canada Correspondent, ec@canadianmennonite.org, 519-577-9987.

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Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press



Can **sex** with a pastor be an **affair**?

BY CAMERON ALTARAS

(The following article discusses a difficult topic in story form. All characters are fictional, although the events referred to are based on an amalgamation of true experiences.)

When pastors overstep professional boundaries with someone under their care, they become sexual predators

She went to her pastor for advice, not sex. Another woman accepted her pastor's invitation to chair a committee he oversaw, not an invitation to be sexually preyed upon.

And still another woman was encouraged by her pastor to enter the ministry, not to enter a sexual relationship with her seminary professor, who was also the on-campus pastor.

Each of these women thought they knew what they had agreed to. None of these women ever expected a pastor to do something so egregious as to manipulate them into having sex with him. The worst part of it was that each woman blamed herself for having an "affair" with her pastor and each woman hid silently in her shame. By holding his secret, each woman protected the trusted authority figure who had betrayed her.

Experts estimate that 90 to 95 percent of all victims of clergy sexual abuse are adult. But because they're adults, what happened between them gets erroneously labelled an "affair." In fact, what occurred was an abuse of power. Sex between two parties where there is a power differential is not and can never be labelled an "affair." Sex between persons with unequal power is not even about sex. It's about power and control over someone with less power.

If any one of these three women were to have been approached by a stranger at a party, she would have easily detected his sexual advances. But each was caught completely off guard when her pastor became amorous. Each thought she was making more out of the situation than her pastor intended. Each woman ignored her screaming intuition warning her that something was terribly wrong. None of the three women was prepared



Cameron Altaras (second from left at the table) was among the speakers from around the world who addressed topics of sexual abuse at a two-day conference held in Washington, D.C. July 30 to Aug. 1. Representatives of the Anabaptist-Mennonite chapter of SNAP then met in Alexandria, Va. where the author, Barbara Graber and Ruth E. Krall were among those doing the de-briefing.

to rebuff her pastor, because each held him in the high esteem afforded by his position. On top of that, none of them wanted to “offend” their pastor by refusing his pastoral hug the first time, and it became increasingly awkward to refuse to hug him each time after that.

Each of these women was unaware that their pastor was subtly manipulating them to the point where their ability to say “no” was completely undermined. But just because they didn’t say “no,” does not mean they said “yes.” The problem was not that each woman was vulnerable because she had less power than her religious leader. The real problem was that each of the pastors—the ones with the power in each situation—preyed upon and exploited each woman’s vulnerability.

Each pastor set the stage perfectly, playing the roles of devoted husband, father and servant of the church and its seminary. These pastors had become masterful at managing the impressions others had of them and painted portraits of themselves as exemplary and charismatic leaders. No one knew that the pastoral portrait was more like that of Dorian Gray, a secret and deceitful monster, locked away in a dark, hidden closet. And all three women knew that until the real portrait was unveiled, no one would believe them.

The grooming process

When pastors overstep professional boundaries with someone under their care, they become sexual predators and interact with their victims in the same destructive ways as non-clergy offenders. They slyly spin their web around a potential victim in what is referred to as “the grooming process.” The first step is to gain her trust. Then it’s easy to slide innocuously into her life, seep under her skin and into her places of least resistance and greatest need. This grooming can take a few days or last a few years, depending upon both the skill and patience of the perpetrator.

The crucial factor is to isolate the woman. In the case of the first of these three women, isolation was easy; she came to her pastor’s office for individual counselling. The second woman found herself meeting alone with her pastor over lunch to discuss important committee work. And it was not unexpected by any means that the third woman, a seminary student, would meet alone with her professor for academic guidance, or for spiritual guidance with him in his campus pastoral role.

It was during these one-on-one times that the emotional coercion of the grooming process began and each woman was primed for her perpetrator’s next steps. The effusive flattery

should have been a huge red flag, but each woman accepted it as authentic coming from a man of God. In each case, the pastor made the woman feel special, thus warranting his attention. He shored this up by sharing “privileged” information with her and conversations became increasingly personal. The pastor subtly questioned and, in the case of the seminary student, directly criticized the woman’s friends and family. And each pastor shared intimate details of his own unhappiness or marital dissatisfaction.

But the grooming process was not limited to clandestine meetings. His position granted the first pastor the credibility to enmesh himself in the first woman’s life by befriending her family. In the case of the woman chairing the committee, her pastor invited her and her husband to join him and his wife as their guests at a church dinner. And no one suspected anything when the seminary student co-authored and presented several papers at academic conferences with her seminary professor.

These moves ensured that everyone—especially the woman—saw the relationship between her and the pastor as “normal” and out in the open. In these public settings, the pastor threw his victim knowing glances and brushed by her in non-accidental ways, cementing the secretive specialness between them. The women, seeing their pastors in all these different roles, grew more and more confused. How could these women reconcile the public man venerated by so many with the secret man doing something so wrong with each of them? The pastors were publicly loved and adored. And each woman came to love her pastor in weird and unexplainable ways, typical of the love of the abused for the abuser.

If anyone else brushed by any of these three women or spoke to her in the ways her pastor did, she would have known they were flirting. But the cloak of soothing pastoral tones threw each woman for a loop. As a victim, each woman was primed for the perpetrator’s subtle questions about her sexual relationships. And not one of the women could pinpoint exactly when the warm and comforting pastoral hugs grew in length and became sexualized. If they were mugged in a dark

alley at gunpoint, all of these women would know they were being violated. But when her pastor came on to her, none of the women recognized the sexual violence for what it was.

Protecting the perpetrator's secret

The bond between each victim and perpetrator was sealed, as one by one, each pastor received the assurance he needed—articulated or not—that the woman would remain silent regarding what transpired between them. Common also to each case was that, to a greater or lesser degree, each pastor convinced his victim that she wanted his sexual advances because she didn't resist them. The seminary student even persuaded herself that she, a much younger, unmarried woman, was probably in some way “tempting” this revered man of God and quite possibly posed a threat to his reputation.

Although they were adults, none of the women understood the dynamics of power at play. Instead, each woman misplaced her guilt and assumed responsibility for inappropriate sexual behaviour. Each woman learned from her perpetrator how to hide the abuse while it was happening; when it was over, she continued to live the lie. And each kept silent in her individual prison of shame for decades. One of the women carried the secret to her grave.

At the core of each victim's silence was the knowledge that the pastor was a widely respected public figure and the doubt that anyone would believe her. Each perpetrator, in turn, could rest assured that his secret was safe. Because none of the women spoke up, they added to their own victimization, became complicit in protecting their perpetrators and couldn't warn any future victims.

Each of these women intuitively knew it was risky to reveal their abuse to their church community and especially to the religious authorities with the power to hold their perpetrator accountable. Far too many victims have not been believed or supported. This re-victimization proves even more traumatizing than the initial abuse. After many years, though, one of these three women did muster

up the courage to report the abuse to the church authorities, and after several more years, her claim was finally substantiated.

Unfortunately, her pain did not come to an end though because in the process she lost her connection to her spiritual home, and her spiritual life was severely compromised. She also struggled emotionally for many years, becoming suicidal at one point. The cost of her therapy brought significant financial hardship, her marriage suffered, as did her ability to do her job and parent her children, so they too required therapy.

While the woman's life was in tatters, the wheels of the church bureaucracy moved at a snail's pace. Before any substantive steps were taken to stop the offending clergy, he was able to continue in his ministry and abuse again.

Conclusion

The damage caused by each case of clergy sexual abuse reached beyond the three women, violating the spiritual life of the entire congregation, the seminary and the wider church body. In each case there was a massive sense of betrayal; the pastor betrayed his immediate family, his church family, the seminary and the church leadership which had ordained him. He undermined the very ethical and moral authority that a pastor is counted on to provide. Shock waves of disbelief

echoed upon discovery of the misconduct and people asked one another: “If you can't trust a pastor, who can you trust?!”

Those in church leadership roles with the power to hold perpetrators accountable must make it safe for victims to come forward. The church must name the evil, and church leaders must be completely transparent about sexual misconduct. Revealing the truth promotes healing and a sense of justice for victims, provides important learning for members of the church, and serves as a strong deterrent for potential future perpetrators.

Shattered faith and shattered lives are the outcome when a pastor uses a person under his leadership to satisfy his errant sexual needs. Calling it an illicit affair, and not recognizing that this is a pastor blatantly abusing his power, excuses the heinous acts of one who betrayed so many and attempts to blame the one who was betrayed the most.

Sex with a pastor can never be called an “affair.”

Sex with a pastor is abuse. ❧

Cameron Altaras, PhD, was born and raised Mennonite in Canada. Changing her birth name was a significant step on her healing journey. She is married and lives in the U.S.



❧ For discussion

1. Who has their hands on the reins of power in your congregation? Do you think they are aware of the power they hold? Do people deliberately set out to achieve power in a congregation? In what situations might these people abuse their power?
2. What are the attitudes or situations that make sexual abuse in the congregation possible? Our culture seems to have relaxed the rules around propriety and protocol. Do you think this makes sexual abuse more prevalent?
3. How much does your congregation take seriously the possibility of abuse by a person in power? Are we more ready to believe stories of sexual misconduct and abuse than earlier generations?
4. What steps do pastors need to take to help them steer clear of even the appearance of impropriety? What do congregations need to do to protect vulnerable people? What role or responsibility does the area church have when a pastor steps out of line?

—BY BARB DRAPER

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

We welcome your comments and publish most letters from subscribers. Letters, to be kept to 300 words or less, are the opinion of the writer only and are not to be taken as endorsed by this magazine or the church. Please address issues rather than individuals; personal attacks will not appear in print or online. In light of the many recent letters on the topic of sexuality, we will edit any letter on this topic to a paragraph and post the rest online at www.canadian-mennonite.org. All letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines. Send them to letters@canadianmennonite.org and include the author's contact information and mailing address. Preference is given to letters from MC Canada congregants.

✉ Mennonites should denounce Canadian arms sales

PETER MCKENNA, CHAIR of political science at the University of Prince Edward Island, questions the Canadian arms deal with Saudi Arabia in an article in *The Chronicle Herald* published June 9. He quotes from Michael Harris's polemical book, *Party of One* that Preston Manning said, "Words don't mean much to Stephen [Harper]."

I do not know if McKenna is aware of the historic peace position of the Mennonite Church, but he has certainly described one of the major reasons why Anabaptists refused to participate in the conflicts of their day. Where are voices of present-day Anabaptists? Where are the draft dodgers when we need them? Are the costs higher now?

On the day he rode into Jerusalem, Jesus told the

FROM OUR LEADERS

Engaging change, pursuing the Spirit

DAVE BERGEN

Life is never static. As I transition from eleven years of leadership with Mennonite Church Canada into a season of semi-retirement and new opportunities, I'm struck by the parallels between the endemic and essential aspects of change in personal life and in church life.

In fond farewell, I offer a few reflections on change for the church.

Much of this change is incremental as the church and its leaders adapt their worship and ministry to the tides of change upon which we sail. But in our time, prominent voices also issue an insistent call for the church to engage change of monumental proportions. Books like *Everything Must Change: Jesus, Global Crises, and a Revolution of Hope* (Brian McLaren) and *Why Christianity Must Change or Die* (John Shelby Spong) capture the spirit of the age with their urgent, attention-grabbing call for the church to embrace major changes. Mennonite Church Canada's own Future Directions Task Force is, in

part, a response to the cultural and societal dynamics that have prompted these, and many other change-focused books.

The temptation of those who identify the need to change and who often assist in leading a change process is to "damn the torpedoes" and forge ahead, viewing those who resist change simply as obstacles to overcome, or even to cast aside. In an article for the Congregational Consulting Group entitled "Valuing our Agents of Stability," David Brubaker reminds us that congregational reality includes both "agents of change" and "agents of stability." And successful agents of change must "learn to work *with* agents of stability rather than against them."

Agents of stability tend to be those who know the story of the congregation, who are intimately familiar with, and deeply grounded in, the "angel" of the congregation. They know what is precious and core to the life of the faith community, and will rightly resist efforts at change that fail to

recognize or worse, actively dismantle, what they know to be foundational.

Wise leaders and healthy congregations, writes David Brubaker, "display a delightful balance and mutual respect between the 'agents of change' and the 'agents of stability.'" In a time when many congregations, as well as the wider church, are preoccupied with the awareness that change is both needed and unavoidable, we do well to bear this wisdom in mind. It is as important for congregations and the wider church to reclaim and articulate what continues to ground and form us, as it is to dream together of the shape of the new things that the Holy Spirit is inviting us to be a part of. Neither should be neglected. Both must be tended, articulated and pursued.

As our Mennonite Church Canada family, with its congregations and area churches, collectively navigates its own seas of change, I hope and pray that those who guide and those who engage in this process will do so wisely and circumspectly. May we all be attentive to the voice of the Spirit whose wind blows the church—and our own lives—in ways we can barely begin to imagine.

Dave Bergen is the retiring executive minister of formation and chief administrative officer of Mennonite Church Canada.



religious leaders that if the people did not acknowledge him, the stones of the street would cry out.

Why are the leaders of the Mennonite Church silent about the sale of arms? Is it because the Harper government told you he would take away your tax exemption number if you continued to write anything that disagrees with its policies? Is this not a form of

cowardice that puts to shame those who gave up their jobs and even their lives for the cause of peace?

I am ashamed that our leaders have chosen to write only one-sided, popular presentations on the issue of homosexuality. With imbalance and silence on issues, you do not disturb people. Perhaps they simply go to sleep, feeling all is right with the world.

FAMILY TIES

Tribes

MELISSA MILLER

On a recent visit to extended family, I greeted my nephew's wife Emily and their year-old son Kenneth. She immediately thrust her child out to me, introducing him to his "auntie from away." Like a thirsty desert traveller, I drank in the sweetness of the youngest family member, who settled without protest into my eager arms, stranger though I was to him. "Family," I thought, "this is what it means to be in the tribe." Where else do parents trustingly give over their babes with such openness?

Kenneth's mother married my nephew Matthew, a fine young man I've known all his life. Because we're in the same tribe, Emily generously shares her little boy with me, all the while teaching him what it means to be in this family. "This woman that you do not know is connected to you," she conveys. "This is a stranger you can trust, someone known by and important to your parents, someone who journeys with you in life. She is in your tribe."



What a blessing to have a tribe! My family tribes—original and in-laws—are among my greatest gifts, full of loving, agreeable people with enough wackiness and scrappiness to keep it interesting.

I was also blessed by attending Mennonite World Conference in Pennsylvania this past summer with

thousands of my Anabaptist cousins. Even with the variations in denominations, nationalities, ethnicities and language, common themes were sounded: Jesus is our centre; peace, justice and reconciliation form our mission; community is our life-blood. And let's proclaim all those values with full-bodied song.

Tribes are essential. They provide us with a place to belong, a home base, and a sanctuary in which to retreat. They are integral in forming our identities. From our tribes, we learn language, religion, gender roles, sexual values and patterns of responding to conflict. We acquire tastes for certain foods. We develop capacities or inhibitions in giving and receiving emotional support. Consciously and unconsciously, we absorb how to bury the dead, how to navigate life's storms, and what to do when we're defeated.

Sometimes the tribe helps us define

Tribes are essential. They provide us with a place to belong, a home base, and a sanctuary in which to retreat.

who we are not, as individuals separate themselves from the communal identity. Does any of the following sound familiar? Everyone gathers for the monthly extended family birthday dinner, except for the lone wolf who seems unable to tolerate all that cheery togetherness. Or, endless conversations about church and Christian faith hold the attention

of everyone, except for the atheist who quietly removes herself. Or, everyone suits up for the annual back yard hockey game, except for the bookish cousin sitting in the corner, with a book. We need the tribe, and yet the tribe is not all of who we are.

Tribal language permeates the Bible, written in a time and place where society was largely organized in such tribes. Recall the many references to the twelve tribes of Israel. Recall the careful inscribing of Jesus' lineage in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. Recall Paul's boasting of his tribal connections. Tribes—to whom one belonged and where one fit—were very significant to the people of the scriptures, and it was natural, necessary even, to tell God's story through these tribes.

Yet the Bible also pushes beyond exclusive tribal boundaries. Threaded throughout these stories of God and God's people are many examples of the tribal borders being expanded and re-defined. Jesus' lineage included a member of the despised Moabites. Paul called his credentials "garbage," as he saw God throwing open the doors of the family to welcome all peoples from all tribes.

We need a tribe, and we need to be stretched as well. Thank God for tribes and thank God for pulling us beyond them.

Melissa Miller (familyties@mymts.net) has a passion for helping people develop healthy, vibrant relationships with God, self and others.

Where are the articles giving guidance in this time of elections?

Where are the Mennonite leaders/teachers who get paid and who should be speaking up on the issues? Have they gone into hiding, fearful for their jobs?

Oh, that more would rise together and declare, "that the emperor is not wearing any clothes."

DAVID SHANTZ, MONTREAL, QUE.

✉ Praise for the guitar-maker

RE: "THE LUTHIER of La Riviere," Aug. 17 issue, page 30.

I think "the cream has risen to the top" here with Jeremy! Seldom do you find someone with such dedication, work ethic, values and passion as he shows in his work and toward his fellow musicians.

RON CAMERON, ONLINE COMMENT

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Ripples of generosity

PETER DRYDEN

Hollywood loves a good surprise ending. My wife and I experienced that first-hand when we recently watched the Nicholas Sparks film, *The Longest Ride*. It is a romance with parallel storylines involving a modern-day young couple whose lives are interrupted by the discovery of each other, and an old man, who recounts his undying love for his late wife, Ruth, an avid art collector with an eye for the avant-garde.

I won't spoil the story for you, but the film has one of those typical Hollywood scenes: a crowd of people gather together (in this case, at an exhibit of Ruth's art collection) for the reading of the will, a situation that provides a shocking twist that no one anticipated. While it certainly makes for a compelling story, it is not very true to life when it comes to the managing of an estate.

At Mennonite Foundation of Canada, we encourage families to avoid surprises by having conversations about their will and estate planning. These conversations allow you to share your values and your intentions. Communicating your wishes beforehand makes it easier to manage your estate and provides peace of mind for you and your family, especially during a time of loss.



Some of our clients take a proactive approach to legacy planning by creating an annual family ritual of generosity. For example, one family set up a 20-year legacy of generosity plan, which includes an annual family gathering, impacting not only the children but also the grandchildren.

The patriarch of the family was passionate about supporting charities that he loved. To ensure their support after he was gone, his will earmarked a significant portion of his estate for these charities—distributed over a period of 20 years. He also set up undesignated charitable funds stipulating that his children would decide each year where this portion of his

Share your values and the story behind your commitment to generosity.

charitable gifts would go. This creative estate plan not only ensures support for his favourite charities for 20 years, it also brings his family together around the joy of giving generously to the causes they love, with a gift from their father's estate.

MFC is administering these charitable distributions, so we have the privilege to meet with this family every year as they decide together which charities they're going to bless. While there is the usual playful family banter and the sharing of their ideas, a spirit of joy envelops the

room during that sacred time, as they honour their father's life and carry on his legacy of giving. He certainly would have enjoyed these gatherings and would be proud of the rippling spirit of generosity that continues to grow in his family.

Another family has taken a different approach. They are building a family foundation to provide future support to the charities they love. In this case, the family foundation is managed by MFC, which gives them most of the benefits of having their own private foundation without all the red tape. Each year, family members contribute to this fund, ensuring the fund will grow as well as support the charities they wish to support.

What are your wishes for your family? Now is the time to avoid the Hollywood surprise ending by having the conversation with your children and grandchildren. Share your values and the story behind your commitment to generosity.

Let them know which charitable causes you hold dear and why. Every family is unique, and so is our approach to each MFC client. Let us help you create your own ripple effect of generosity.

Peter Dryden is a stewardship consultant at Mennonite Foundation of Canada serving generous people in Alberta. For more information on generosity, stewardship education and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit MennoFoundation.ca.

LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Fast food church isn't good for our health

TROY WATSON

There seems to be a growing interest in the “slow church” movement as an alternative to “fast food church.” What is fast food church?



Sociologist George Ritzer in his book *The McDonaldization of Society* (1993) claims the fast-food industry has become the defining paradigm for more and more sectors of western society and increasingly the rest of the world. He highlights four primary components of McDonaldization:

1. Efficiency – utilizing the best method for accomplishing a task quickly. Every aspect of the organization is geared toward the minimization of time.
2. Calculability – quantity equals quality, meaning a large amount of product delivered to customers in a short amount of time is the same as a high quality product. Workers are judged by how fast they are instead of the quality of work they do.
3. Predictability – no matter where or when a customer shops, they will receive the same service and the same product every time.
4. Control – everything and everyone in the organization is strictly standardized and uniform.

In his book *The McDonaldization of the Church* (2001) John Drane demonstrates how the fast food principles Ritzer highlights have come to dominate the modern church, including our worship, preaching, membership, discipleship, evangelism, leadership, programs and theology.

The pervasive influence of consumerism began infiltrating western Christianity with the church growth movement that began in the 1960s. Donald McGavran founded the Institute of Church Growth in 1957, just a few years after Ray Kroc started his bold

expansion of the McDonald's restaurant chain in the 1950s (often cited as the catalyst of modern franchising). Since then, growth measured by numbers has become the norm, with modern churches unwittingly, and sometimes unabashedly, competing with one another for “market share.”

The McDonaldization of church has resulted in efficient, calculable, predictable and control-based ministry. For example, discipleship has been reduced to an assimilation process of putting new people (especially those outside the parameters of our norms) through “retraining” programs so in the end they become like us. It's not that our understanding of what it means to follow the way of Jesus should be ambiguous. The prob-

The McDonaldization of church has resulted in efficient, calculable, predictable and control-based ministry.

lem is we want to control the outcomes and struggle to allow space for faith and spirituality that looks different.

It's easy to throw McDonaldization accusations towards highly polished worship “performances” in mega-churches, but the fast food principles have come to govern worship in most congregations, regardless of their size or worship style. From rigid liturgy to highly experiential “Spirit led” worship, most services follow clear “sanctioned” patterns (predictability). It's easier and quicker to plan worship services with clear templates to follow (efficiency) but is this empowering the whole gathered community to worship? Or are we enforcing a particular mode of worship (control) on diverse individuals who connect with God in

different ways?

Drane argues the most devastating impact of the McDonaldization of church is in our theology. The theology of the modern church resembles a pre-packaged product more than genuine theological reflection. Theology ought to describe, not prescribe, what God is doing in our midst. Too often our theological content is reduced to a neatly processed happy meal for quick and easy consumption.

Meanwhile, more and more Canadians are developing a strong distaste for our one-size-fits-all, fast food theology. People are asking deep and informed questions and are interested in spirituality, not a shrink-wrapped belief system. This disconnect is largely the result of the church's preoccupation with “either/or” thinking when contemporary western culture is increasingly embracing “both/and” thinking.

Drane prudently resists providing a new blueprint as the solution, but he does have some suggestions. Replace formulaic worship with creative and flexible space where worship can happen. Replace stereotypical sermonizing with prophetic communication and telling our stories. Instead of top-down discipleship models with “experts” who train others,

start empowering everyone to explore their own paths as equals and share with one another what they're learning along their own spiritual journeys through life.

The core issue in McDonaldization is about power and control whereas the original Christ movement was founded on weakness and vulnerability. The irony is that more and more Canadians are looking for communities characterized by the vulnerability of love, precisely what Christ calls the church to be. Drane summarizes the problem saying, “We seem to have ended up with a secular church in a spiritual society.” ❧

Troy Watson is pastor at Avon Mennonite Church in Stratford, Ont. (troydw@gmail.com)

VIEWPOINT

The future of MCC

Can it remain a vital link to the global village?

BY WILL BRAUN, SENIOR WRITER

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has long been part of the DNA of the North American Anabaptist church, linking us to the world and providing a sense of relation to “the least of these.” It has served as an informal seminary, immersing thousands of us in realities that have enriched us and, in turn, enriched our friends, family and the church. But that is changing.

MCC is placing fewer North Americans abroad.

In 1976, MCC had about 300 North American Mennonites serving overseas. Today, that number is closer to 150. Meanwhile, the overall number of North American Mennonites has doubled, further diluting the leavening influence of people with MCC experience abroad. (Throughout the decades roughly a third of MCC personnel have been from non-Anabaptist churches; the above numbers do not include those people.)

MCC has good reasons for placing fewer North Americans abroad. It has moved toward hiring more local staff (e.g. Bolivians working in Bolivia). In 1976, MCC had 21 non-North American staff. That figure has increased dramatically. Last year MCC personnel included 302 Americans, 346 Canadians and 359 citizens of other countries working either in North America or abroad. (As interesting as non-North Americans topping the list is the fact that the U.S. comes last, even though there are almost four times as many Mennonites in the U.S. as Canada.)

In many cases it is both cheaper and more effective for MCC to hire local people abroad as they have knowledge and connections that give them an advantage. It is also a part of a move away from the colonial model of North Americans descending as saviours.

However legitimate the reasons, this shift changes the extent to which MCC

promotes a collective sensitivity to the global village. Of course, MCC can foster awareness of global realities through learning tours and by bringing foreign partners to our churches, but the results will not be as profound as when people deeply rooted in our churches spend extended periods in other cultures.

It could also be noted that MCC does more work in North America than it used to, better connecting us to the margins in our own countries. (Though volunteer service placements in Canada have virtually disappeared.)

It should also be said that relationships between development workers and locals, while of great value, can also be tainted by a giver-receiver hierarchy, economic disparity and cross-cultural slippage.

Still the reduction in North Americans going abroad deserves consideration. While it may be tempting to welcome the shift as a natural internationalization of MCC, that notion is offset by the growth in salaried positions in North America, from 112 in 1976 to 432 last year. All of the overall growth in MCC personnel over that period—from 731 to 1,007—can be seen as an increase in paid staff in North America. (According to tax filings, 19 MCC staff across Canada made over \$80,000 last year.)

Through the shift in MCC, the organization has remained the envy of its peers in terms of its ability to raise money. That said, some angst looms. Will thrift stores, which bring in a considerable chunk of the MCC budget, continue to thrive despite a dramatic increase in the average age of volunteers? Will budgets remain strong even as fewer and fewer big donors replace larger numbers of small donors? According to MCC Manitoba director Ron Janzen, roughly 90 percent of donations now come from about 10 percent of donors. Translation: fewer

MENNONITE ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO PHOTO



In 1967 Gary Dewarle of Saskatoon (in the checked shirt) helped to build a road at a refugee camp near Saigon, South Vietnam.

people have MCC in their DNA. While it is difficult to demonstrate direct links between this narrowing of the donor base and the reduced numbers of North American Mennonites serving with MCC, it would be foolish not to recognize an overall weakening of the web of intercontinental relationships that has long formed the foundation of MCC.

I am reminded of a study done by another North American development organization in which low-income Latin Americans were asked whether the organization should send volunteers to help build houses or just cash for houses. They chose the volunteers, even though it would mean fewer overall houses built because more of the budget would go toward travel. They wanted the connection.

Without reading too much into that finding, and without glossing over the complexity of cross-cultural relations, I think it points to what is at the core of MCC: relationship.

MCC has become more sophisticated in how it addresses poverty; perhaps that evolution needs to be accompanied by new ways of building the web of deep international relationships. Or perhaps Mennonite World Conference can step into that gap, creating relationships founded on something more sustainable than an us-helping-them narrative. ❧

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Brenneman—Sawyer Michael (b. July 12, 2015), to Bev and Jeremy Brenneman, Poole Mennonite, Ont.

Enns—Amos Onezime (b. July 3, 2015), to Amber and Clint Enns, Carman Mennonite, Man.

Marip—Daniel Naw Htoi (b. July 18, 2015), to Sam Bung and Bawk Mai Labya, Hamilton Mennonite, Ont.

Martin—Charlotte Dawn (b. Aug. 10, 2015), to Devin and Megan (Geerlinks) Martin, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

Monette—Krey Jasper (b. Aug. 10, 2015), to Amber and Russel Monette, North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Pankratz—Evelyn Marie (b. July 5, 2015), to Erin and Nick Pankratz, Hamilton Mennonite, Ont.

Baptisms

Shannon Wiebe—Carman Mennonite, Man., Aug. 2, 2015.

Marriages

Hendricks/Reimer—Travis Hendricks and Deana Reimer, Carman Mennonite, Man. July 18, 2015.

Janzen/Saikaley—Rachael Janzen (Hamilton Mennonite, Ont.) and Matthew Saikaley in Burlington, Ont., Aug. 15, 2015.

Klaassen/Rekrut—Lydia Klaassen and Michael Rekrut at Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., Aug. 8, 2015.

Lichti/Martin—Katie Lichti and Phil Martin, Elmira Mennonite, Ont., July 18, 2015.

Taylor/Teichgraf—Paul Taylor and Stephanie Teichgraf at Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., Aug. 1, 2015.

Deaths

Dyck—Pearl Grace (stillborn May 31, 2015), to Jenna and Kelly Dyck, Carman Mennonite, Man.

Horst—Barbara, 99 (b. May 24, 1916; d. Aug. 9, 2015), St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

Klaassen—Sarah (nee Buhler), 93 (b. May 15, 1922; d. Aug. 6, 2015), First Mennonite, Kelowna, B.C.

Klassen—Dorothy (nee Gerbrandt), 74 (b. April 18, 1941; d. July 27, 2015), Bergthaler Mennonite, Altona, Man.

Klassen—George, 74 (b. Apr. 9, 1941; d. July 25, 2015), Carman Mennonite, Man.

Loewen—Susan (nee Froese), 91 (b. Feb. 15, 1924; d. July 26, 2015), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Moir—Stephan Edward, 58 (b. Sept. 2, 1956; d. June 20, 2015), Nairn Mennonite, Ailsa Craig, Ont.

Neustaedter—Anna (nee Sawatzky), 93 (b. June 18, 1922; d. Aug. 2, 2015), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Martin—Douglas Keith, 67 (b. Oct. 4, 1947; d. Aug. 10, 2015), Preston Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.

A moment from yesterday



Photo: Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies

Text: Kate Regier, Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies

A group of children from Orchard Park Bible Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., carry signs celebrating the 200th birthday of Sunday school as Kathy and Alfred Guenther present keepsakes to the children. In 1780, Robert Raikes started Sunday school in Gloucester, England, as a way to teach lower-class children morals and religion. Although Sunday school is standard practice today, its development was slow in some Mennonite circles due to their understanding of adult baptism and church membership. The first Canadian Mennonite Sunday school was established in 1840 in Waterloo County, Ont. A plaque is maintained at Wanner Mennonite Church, Ont., in commemoration of this event. (See the photo from MAO, 1992-14-2840, at <http://archives.mhsc.ca/>).

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Getting youth to World Conference four years in the making

BY DICK BENNER
Editor/publisher

Thanks to a great deal of planning, the 310 Canadian young people and their sponsors had the “global experience of a lifetime,” according to Kirsten Hamm-Epp, area church minister in youth and administrative planning for Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, who was the prime mover behind the efforts to get the youth to Mennonite World Conference (MWC) assembly held in Harrisburg, Pa., last month.

Hamm-Epp, who along with her colleague Dave Bergen, executive minister in Christian formation and chief administrative officer for Mennonite Church Canada, were appointed coordinators of the late-evening programming held at nearby Messiah College, where most of the assembly’s youth were staying. The lead-up to the 2015 event was in the works already back in 2011 when, at the Waterloo MC Canada assembly, it was decided that Canadian youth should take advantage of the 2015 MWC assembly.

“This meant keeping the youth assembly two-year cycle out of sync with delegates until after 2015,” says Hamm-Epp. “As a result of that decision, since the Fat Calf MC Canada youth assembly at Camp Assiniboia in 2013, the MWC assembly was promoted as the next large gathering place for Canadian youth.”

As early as May 2014, MC Canada invited youth leaders to put the MWC assembly on their radars and plan to bring their youth to Harrisburg. Throughout fall and winter regular updates were sent to youth leaders across Canada with general MWC information, registration tips, updates regarding a special one-day tour arranged by MC Canada at the Hershey Amusement Park, and more.

“Closer to the Assembly that list was narrowed down to those who were registered,” Hamm-Epp says, “and Dave and I became the point-persons for trouble-shooting



and general questions regarding the assembly and lodging for Canadian groups. While we did not coordinate cross-Canada buses or transportation—that was left up to group sponsors or, in the case of Saskatchewan, the area church minister—we worked hard both prior to and during the Assembly to create a special experience for our Canadian groups which would help them bond together as a national group, as well as build on their global experience.”

Each area church responded differently across the country, says Bergen. Mennonite Church B.C., due to the great

distance, did not engage anything centrally. However, one youth group from Emmanuel Mennonite in Abbotsford made their way by air to Pennsylvania, led by Chris Lenshyn. Mennonite Church Alberta also sent only a handful of youth, and the sending congregations made their own arrangements.

MC Manitoba, through Kathy Giesbrecht, associate director of leadership ministries, while not coordinating a bus, did provide significant coordination of planning and conversation with youth leaders who brought their youth to MWC. Some of these drove, others flew. One congregation (Fort Garry) rented a small bus and drove their 19 youth and sponsors there.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada also helpfully facilitated the charter of a bus to bring youth to the assembly, said Bergen. In addition, numerous congregations filled their own vans and cars to get there.

Bergen credits Kirsten Hamm-Epp for the positive experience of the Canadian young people at the MWC assembly. “It was a distinct pleasure to work with her. Her creativity, maturity and energy were an incredible gift to the success of our Canadian youth experience there.”

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVE BERGEN



Among the activities the Canadian youth were engaged in during the MWC assembly was finding and chatting with someone they didn't know.

Mennonite World Conference Stories

VIEWPOINT

MWC assembly was an amazing experience

BY PRABIDHI PANDEY

All the youth name tags at Mennonite World Conference assembly in Harrisburg, Pa., had “#J178” on them. Nobody gave much thought to it until 600 youth from around the world were gathered in a 24-acre space under the arena in the morning while the adults listened to the sermon in one of two daily worship services.

The J178 meant Jeremiah 1:7-8. *“But the Lord said to me, ‘Do not say, ‘I am too young.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,’ declares the Lord.”* We also had a chance to say it in our own language, so I said it in Nepali.

The worship services included amazing music from a different continent each day as well as a sermon brought by a person

representing that continent. We also had different workshops that we could attend each day.

The first day, I attended a workshop focussing on the relationships between Muslims and Christians. The workshop was led by an author who talked about respect, trust and walking in faith. He also said people look at the differences rather than the similarities, and it is hard to have a good relationship. I have a lot of Muslim friends so I thought this was a nice workshop to learn about how the relationship can be better, or how our backgrounds are affecting our relationship.

I also went to a quilting workshop. I wanted to see and experience how beautiful quilts are made. But as a person who burns water, I wasn’t doing very well, sticking the needle into my flesh and saying “Ow” every two seconds.

The next day, I went to a workshop called “Peace Amongst Disappointing Dreams,” where Tina Newson, who suffers from cystic fibrosis, taught us about how the pain usually results from expecting and not getting what you are expecting. She taught us her two life principles: life is wonderful and difficult; and we are born for a relationship with God. She invited us to try using a “mystery box,” where you put things that confuse you or when you do not know how God is working in your life. Later, whether you have answers or not, it is interesting to look at. She mentioned that ignoring your pain only extends it.

Another workshop, “Is Jesus the Only Way?” was led by James Krabill. This was one of the most interesting workshops. He started out by saying, “There is no foundation other than which is laid, Jesus Christ.” We looked at images and words and what it means to be ambassadors of

Christ, about how the way you picture Jesus affects the way you think about him. We looked at what Jesus said about himself: “I am the bread of life,” “I am the light of the world,” “I am the way, the truth and the life,” and “I am the good shepherd.” Slowly we came to realize that only Jesus claims those things.

We looked at views of Jesus and who the world thinks he is. Depending on the culture and where you are from, there are different views about Christ. Believe me, I know, because in Nepal Jesus is almost like a Twitter account that has lots of posts that say, “Follow me and I will follow back,” because there are people in Nepal who follow Christ for personal benefits.

At last we talked about how we can be ambassadors of Jesus. Mr. Krabill said his father, who was a pastor, read his way to faith, just like my parents did, as they weren’t born Christians.

My next stop that day was the Mennonite Disaster Service project, where we built homes for people whose homes had been damaged because of a natural disaster. I saw that our nametags said “volunteer” and I was able to get 1.5 hours of community service.

By the last day I couldn’t believe how fast it had gone. I went to a workshop, “Identify in God” that taught me that one needs to know why one exists. So many young people are suffering from depression these days and conflicts in the church affect kids. We seem to have so much these days, but young people are craving an identity as they are known as the “no-identity generation.” God doesn’t ask a lot, he shows his gift of strength by asking nothing from us except generosity, humility and dignity. Those are high demands and they are hard to live up to, but those demands actually make you gain something, unlike the world.

The last workshop I took in was an advocacy workshop where we discussed now much words have weight. Advocacy means taking action and educating people on an issue such as food and hunger, migration and displacement, peace-building and militarism.

I want to thank my church for making this amazing event possible for me. ✎



Prabidhi Pandey worked on the Mennonite Disaster Service project while at MWC assembly. She is a 14-year-old from Danforth Mennonite Church, Toronto.

MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE STORIES

MWC Assembly Scattered brings diversity in worship

BY DICK BENNER

Editor/publisher

Marilyn Zehr attended Mennonite World Conference (MWC) assembly as pastor of Toronto United Mennonite Church. As part of Assembly Scattered on Sunday, July 26, she took in the morning service at Community Mennonite Fellowship, in Milton, Pa. She found the worship style and issues confronting this rural congregation a contrast to her usual experience.



Marilyn Zehr

The service was largely “praise and worship” with an emphasis on personal salvation, Zehr said. An opportunity for anointing seemed like a regular part of the service and was quite inspiring. A Canadian Mennonite, originally from Mexico, was asked by the pastor to extend greetings from MWC and pray for the congregation. The worship leader also prayed for the guests.

In a Sunday school discussion, one of the larger adult Sunday school classes, led by lead pastor David Martino, an attempt was made to present the homosexuality issue from a scriptural basis from both a traditional view and a more inclusive view.

“I found that his presentation was fair,” she said.

There seemed to be little knowledge of how Canadians were dealing with the sexuality issue, Zehr observed, so she took the opportunity to discuss with the pastor some of the general outlines of the Being a Faithful Church process.

In an informal discussion with a young physician and church elder, she was startled to learn that his concern was how many persons in the congregation might be carrying weapons as they came to church. Having had experience with Mennonite Central Committee, the young man was concerned that there wasn’t more of a “peace understanding” by all members, although he said the pastoral leadership was

doing its best to promote an Anabaptist view of peace-making.

Zehr concluded both the worship style and the issues stood in sharp contrast to her Canadian urban congregation largely because of the demographics of the 300-plus member congregation, 80 percent of whom were not from Mennonite families with a traditional Anabaptist belief heritage. The presence of weapons, she surmised, was largely because of fear due to the recent massacre in a black church in Charleston, South Carolina.

An informal discussion indicated there was general knowledge in the congregation that Lancaster Conference had just announced its intent to withdraw from Mennonite Church USA over the sexuality issue, but there was no public announcement on the matter.

Someone from the congregation who had attended one or two sessions of the MWC assembly reported during the potluck following worship and Sunday school. The Canadian contingent was warmly welcomed.

The town of Milton is about a 90-minute drive north of Harrisburg. Zehr was accompanied by other Canadians including her husband John Epp, her parents Glenn and Mary Ellen Zehr, Jeff Taylor and Doreen Martens, and Darrell and Florence Jantzi.

Similar dynamics of worship were observed by Palmer and Ardys Palmer, members of Waterloo North (Ont.) Mennonite Church, in taking in the service at Delaware Mennonite Church, a small rural congregation of about 50 located near Salem, Pa., about 35 miles northwest of Harrisburg.

“The people were welcoming and hospitable,” said Becker. “They put on a huge meal for us, including both shoofly pie and sheerly cake. The pastor, Glenn Hosler, was drawn to the church through daily vacation Bible school and says that in spite of the congregation’s simple dress, etc. he never felt like an outsider. He has



Willi Hugo Perez gave a powerful testimony at the Delaware Mennonite Church service.

had some training at Rosedale, an evangelical Anabaptist junior Bible college located in central Ohio and owned by the Conservative Mennonite Conference.”

The worship service was very simple in three parts. The first part included welcome and sharing. People were very open to share with each other what was happening in their lives. There were about 20 guests from Mennonite World Conference, including Robert and Irene Suderman, Kyung Kim and Willi Hugo Perez, director of Semilla in Guatemala.

Part two was a period of singing familiar gospel songs. They did not have Mennonite hymnals.

Part three was preaching. Their former pastor, George Zimmerman, had worked with Willi Hugo Perez in Guatemala. Willi shared his testimony, which was quite dramatic.

A first for Mennonite World Conference in its every-six-year gathering, Assembly Scattered allowed guests to visit MWC churches and ministries on the way to or from Assembly Gathered. Participants experienced church life in North America and the diversity of the faith community. Visits focused on church-to-church engagement, allowing visitors and hosts to develop friendships, worship, learn about community concerns, tour historic and cultural sights, and share meals together and experience mutual hospitality. An estimated 3,000 people participated in the program. ☸

MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE STORIES

Historians address Nazi influence on Mennonites

BY TIM HUBER

For Meetinghouse
HARRISBURG, PA.

A chapter of 20th-century German Mennonite history that has been predominantly glossed over, received attention in back-to-back workshops by historians on July 22 at the Mennonite World Conference assembly.

Ben Goossen of Cambridge, Mass., spent six years studying Mennonite identity and German nationalism. Using archival material in North America and Europe, the doctoral student at Harvard University says the rise in Mennonite ethnic identity was built on and supported the rise of Aryanism and the Nationalist Socialist (Nazi) movement.

Already by 1933 “racial biologists” seeking to define ideal specimens of humanity had examined Mennonites in Europe and the Americas. Goossen said Mennonites submitted willingly and produced extensive racial knowledge by delving into genealogy. He showed an image of a 1934 Mennonite ancestor list carrying the image of a swastika rising from the sea, illuminating a brighter dawn.

“The general consensus was surprisingly uniform,” Goossen said. “The Mennonites, according to these scientists, were more Aryan than the average German.”

Goossen said Mennonites found the “science” appealing because it was useful. On the Eastern Front, Mennonites who remained in their genetically pure colonies, in what is today Ukraine, were happy to see the cruel Bolsheviks pushed back. Based on their experiences, they were happy to leave the Soviet Union, following their *Wehrmacht* liberators on the Great Trek west.

When they arrived in places such as occupied Poland, they received special rights as ethnic resettlers, accessing homes and farms taken from Poles or murdered Jews. Goossen said SS documents cite “Mennonites were the outstanding example” of avoiding kinship with their surroundings.

“For 400 years they had essentially created a racially pure community with pure blood lines,” he said. Nazi propagandists were also impressed by Mennonites’ ability to prosper in pockets around the world while retaining a German language and identity.

When the war ended, the population of Germany was devastated. Mennonite Central Committee set up a refugee program to help people flee Europe. But after claiming all those benefits based on German ethnicity, someone had to prove Mennonite refugees were not Germans. United Nations guidelines excluded Germans from refugee programs because they were considered to be the war’s instigators.

“But MCC had an answer,” Goossen said. “According to MCC they were not Germans at all, but Mennonites.” Goossen said MCC postwar relief coordinator Peter Dyck stated Mennonites were neither German nor Russian.

“This was false,” Goossen said. “Virtually all Mennonite males fought in Nazi regiments, whether they volunteered or were forced.”

After the war the idea of “Mennonite

ethnicity” blossomed and grew, transitioning from what had been a religious identity. Things progressed to the point where one can be considered “Mennonite” despite not being a member of a Mennonite church.

Goossen said the distinction has managed to persist. Most German or Dutch names, complexions and ancestral backgrounds are still considered—just under the surface—“more Mennonite” than others.

“It’s important to understand that playing ‘The Mennonite Game’ [and celebrating traditionally Germanic ethnic relationships] means having something in common with Nazi race scientists,” he said.

Earlier in the afternoon, Astrid von Schlachta, president of the German Mennonite Historical Society, described her group’s project to collect memories and accounts of German Mennonites living under and participating in National Socialism. While a few books have been written on what is still a difficult topic to discuss in many circles, von Schlachta said there is much more that needs to be done to appropriately document what took place.

“There were a few articles in the [German Mennonite History Newsletter] in the last few years. Very controversial,” she said. “But that is good that it starts conversation.”

As a next step, a conference on Mennonites and National Socialism is planned this September in Münster, the beginning of what von Schlachta hopes will be more conferences to come. ❧

PHOTO BY DALE D. GEHMAN FOR MEETINGHOUSE



Ben Goossen shows the photo, “Heinrich Himmler in Molotschna, 1942,” during his workshop, “From Aryanism to Multiculturalism: Mennonite Ethnicity and German Nationalism, 1871 to Today.”

MWC announces new commission leadership

Mennonite World Conference
BOGOTÁ, COLOMBIA

Mennonite World Conference has announced changes in the leadership of three of its commissions. Joji Pantoja was appointed as chair of the Peace Commission. Joji and her husband Dann, originally from Canada, are peace-building missionaries in the Philippines. She succeeds Paulus Widjaja of Indonesia as chair.

Newly appointed as secretary of the Peace Commission is Andrew Suderman. Andrew and his wife Karen, originally from Canada, are providing leadership to an



Joji Pantoja

Anabaptist Network and Resource Centre in South Africa. He succeeds Robert J. Suderman as secretary of the commission.

Stanley Green of the U.S. was appointed as chair of the Mission Commission. Green is executive director of Mennonite Mission Network, the mission agency of Mennonite Church USA. He succeeds Richard Showalter of the U.S. as chair. Rafael Zaracho of Paraguay continues as secretary of the commission.

Siaka Traoré of Burkina Faso was appointed as chair of the Deacons Commission.



Stanley Green



Andrew Suderman



Siaka Traoré

Traoré is president of Église Évangélique Mennonite du Burkina Faso. He succeeds Cynthia Peacock of India as chair. Henk Stenvers of the Netherlands continues as secretary of the commission.

Alfred Neufeld of Paraguay continues as chair of the Faith and Life Commission, and John Roth of the U.S. as secretary. ☸



Alfred Neufeld

/// Briefly noted

MB Herald not shut down

WINNIPEG—Responding to strong pushback to shuttering their 54-year-old denominational publication, the *Mennonite Brethren Herald*, the Canadian Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches has decided to continue “until we can do more process work,” according to a July 10 letter sent by Harold Froese, moderator, Brian Cooper, chair of Faith and Life, and Willy Reimer, executive director. “It is clear we misread the sentiments associated with the *Herald*,” they said. “We underestimated the feelings people had toward the *Herald* as a vehicle for creating community.” They have commissioned a survey to measure the needs and interests of the community, the results of which they will present at their October annual gathering. Meanwhile, Laura Kalmar, editor, resigned her 10-year stint with the *Herald* to take a position as associate director of communications and donor relations for Mennonite Central Committee Canada.

—Staff reports

/// Briefly noted

New communication team for MWC

Bogotá, Colombia—Karla Braun began a half-time position as editor and writer for Mennonite World Conference (MWC) in mid-July, 2015. She has been associate editor of the *Mennonite Brethren Herald* based in Winnipeg for the past seven years. Beginning in Sept. 2015, Kristina Toews will assume the responsibilities of chief communications officer, a role that includes overseeing MWC’s communication strategy and coordinating all print and electronic communications. She succeeds Ron Rempel of Waterloo, Ont., who is retiring after serving in this position since Jan. 2012. Toews, originally from Abbotsford, B.C., has been living in Bogotá, Colombia, and has served as MWC’s web communications worker since 2013. She initiated MWC’s growing social media strategy through platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Replacing Toews in managing MWC’s web and social media presence is Aarón González of Costa Rica. He will work from the MWC office in Bogotá. César García, MWC general secretary expressed his gratitude for the work of the communications team in telling the stories of MWC. “Communications have been crucial during the last years in our global family,” he said.

—Mennonite World Conference



Braun



Toews

Pastoral transitions in Ontario

By DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

Doug Amstutz began June 1 as intentional interim minister at the Riverdale Mennonite Church, in Millbank. Previously, he was interim supply pastor at Rainham Mennonite Church, Selkirk, Ont., and has co-pastored with his wife Wanda in congregations in Scottdale, Pa., and St. Catharines, Ont. He was also the interim pastor for one year at Crosshill (Ont.) Mennonite Church. Doug and Wanda were co-country representatives for MCC in Ethiopia for four years. His education includes a BA from Goshen College, Ind., and an MDiv in pastoral ministry from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS). Doug and Wanda and their three daughters live in Kitchener.



Brent Charette has served as church engagement minister at Mennonite Church Eastern Canada for the past four years. When Ester Neufeldt retired from her role at MCEC in June, he added operations to his role. Charette previously worked at Hospice Wellington where he was the director. His education background includes a BA and a Master of Peace and Conflict Studies, both from the University of Waterloo. He and his wife Andrea attend Rockway Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont.



Sean East began as financial manager at Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) on June 16. He is responsible for all things accounting and financial, which includes support for pastors and treasurers with financial questions. He continues as pastor at Westhills Mennonite Fellowship in Baden, Ont.



Max Kennel took on the role of interim supply minister at Rainham Mennonite Church, Selkirk, Ont., in July 2015. Previously he was the associate

youth pastor at Crosshill Mennonite Church. He has a BA from the University of Waterloo and a Masters of Theological Studies from Conrad Grebel University College. In August he defended his thesis on secularism and the Dutch Collegiant group in the 17th century.



Sara Erb began as associate minister of children, youth and young adults at Breslau Mennonite Church, on Aug. 1, 2015. She recently finished an interim assignment at First Mennonite Church (Kitchener). She is a graduate of AMBS and Emmanuel Bible School in Kitchener. Sara has led worship in a variety of contexts spanning various ages, denominations, and socio-economic locations.



Tom Warner became the pastor at Erie View Mennonite Church in Port Rowan, Ont., in August. Warner has a MA in Biblical counselling from Briercrest Biblical Seminary and has pastored since 1977 in the Mennonite Church, the Mennonite Brethren Church and the Evangelical Mennonite Church. He also had a private counselling practice from 1997 to 2004.



Steve Brnjas begins Sept. 1 at Poole Mennonite Church, Milverton, Ont., as interim supply minister. He most recently

served in a similar position at Zion Mennonite Fellowship in Elmira, Ont. Previously he worked as an associate of Circles of Support and Accountability for MCC Ontario, as pastor with his wife Linda Brnjas at Bethel Mennonite Church, Elora, Ont., and as a constable in the Waterloo Regional Police Force. Steve received his Masters of Theological Studies from Conrad Grebel University College in 2011.



Paul Dyck began Sept. 1, 2015 as the minister of Hawkesville Mennonite Church. Dyck has been pastor at Poole Mennonite Church for the past 15 years. Before that he worked at Steinbach (Man.) Mennonite Church and Mount Royal Mennonite Church in Saskatoon, Sask. He has a Bachelor of Commerce from University of Manitoba and a MDiv from AMBS, Elkhart, Ind.



Eleanor Epp-Stobbe begins as minister at Breslau Mennonite Church on Sept. 1, 2015. She began serving as the interim pastor at Breslau on Sept. 1, 2014. Epp-Stobbe has a BA from Goshen College, an MDiv from AMBS and Doctor of Theology from the University of Toronto, Emmanuel College. She has served as pastor at Hamilton (Ont.) Mennonite Church, Erb Street Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont., Windsor Park United Church, Winnipeg, Man., executive director of Voices for Non-Violence, and has worked with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada and MCC Manitoba. ☞



Women hear about marginalized and vulnerable women

By LINDA WIENS

Women of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

As I sit in comfort in my air-conditioned home on this very hot day, I am reminded that I am truly blessed. At

our spring enrichment day, on April 18 at Listowel Mennonite Church, the Women of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada

(WMCEC) learned about women who live in Nepal with the same soaring temperatures and humidity, but not only do they have crying babies to nurse and other children to feed, many need to work outside the home. A big difference is that some work in the sex trade by choice, chance or even slavery.

It was very difficult for us (WMCEC) to hear stories of some of the more than 10,000 women and young girls who line up daily to sell their bodies. Imagine being 13 years old, kidnapped, then forced into prostitution. Suppose you were so poor that your own mother sold you so the rest of the family could eat.

Some of the lucky ones have escaped from that cycle of poverty and servitude through the efforts of a visionary couple who created a self-sustaining company called Freeset. They started it in 2001 in the sex district of Kolkata, India, to set women free (and their families by extension). Initially, 20 brave women seized the opportunity to get out of the sex trade and learned new skills such as creating marketable products such as handbags.

The women of MCEC also heard about a company called Elegantees that sells items sewn by former victims of human trafficking.

Those who attended the spring enrichment day enjoyed a fashion show featuring the Freeset bags, fashions by Elegantees and Hope's Gate Jewelry. All proceeds from purchases went to support the vulnerable women that these companies provide assistance to.

Sadly, Canada is not immune to marginalizing or exploiting vulnerable women, and abuse comes in many forms. Anyone looking for tools for personal healing, responding effectively to the needs of others, recognizing and celebrating God's grace while regaining lost confidence, should consider attending a Canadian version of Sister Care. Sister Care seminars will be held in Niagara and Kitchener this fall. See the MCEC website and link to WMCEC for details. ❧

Linda Wiens is a member of St. Catharines United Mennonite Church.

/// Briefly noted

MC USA responds to conferences considering departure

The executive committee of the executive board of Mennonite Church USA sent letters on Aug. 4 to North Central Conference and Lancaster Mennonite Conference, expressing a commitment to pray for and stay in relationship with each of them. North Central delegates passed a motion at their July 17-19 annual assembly to begin a year-long process of withdrawing from MC USA. The following week, leaders in Lancaster announced a proposal to "withdraw as an area conference of Mennonite Church USA," to be discussed in area meetings over the next weeks before a final decision is made this fall. The executive committee discussed the conferences' decisions while meeting in Harrisburg, Pa., following the Mennonite World Conference assembly. "As a leadership body within Mennonite Church USA, our Executive Committee longs for you to stay with us, for you to remain part of our church," wrote members Patty Shelly, David Boshart, Phil Rich, Joy Sutter and Isaac Villegas in letters addressed to each conference. "We are the family of God together. Mennonite Church USA is committed to remaining part of the same family as you, and we will welcome you again and again, even as you separate yourselves from us," they wrote.

—*Mennonite Church USA*

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PHOTO COURTESY OF REBECCA DYCK



Rebecca Dyck and Father Michael Lapsley celebrate the launch of the French edition of his memoir. Dyck is a member at Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal.

The journey of healing

Father Michael Lapsley shares wisdom on healing in Montreal

BY GUENEVERE NEUFELD
MONTREAL, QUE.

Father Michael Lapsley has dedicated his life to social activism, beginning with the apartheid regime in South Africa. He was a guest speaker at the Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal on Aug. 2. and shared some personal wisdom about healing.

After surviving an assassination attempt in 1990 that destroyed both hands, one eye and damaged his ear drums, he has used his personal healing journey to continue bringing justice to the world.

"No one travels this life without degrees of pain and hurt, and also degrees of damage," he says. "We all need tools to help deal with what has happened to us, particularly with aspects of war and injustice."

Father Michael was in Montreal for an Anglican conference and also celebrating the release of his book, *Redeeming the Past: My Journey from Freedom Fighter to Healer*, in its French edition, *Guérir du passé: Du combat pour la liberté au travail pour la paix*.

Born in New Zealand in 1949, Father Michael went to Australia at age 17 and took vows in the Society of the Sacred Mission in 1971. After being ordained as

a priest in 1973, he was transferred to the South African city of Durban.

It was there his activism took root. Confronted with the realities of racism under the apartheid regime, Father Michael actively opposed the killing of children and the torture and detention of students and young people. His efforts resulted in his expulsion from South Africa in 1976 and he took refuge in Lesotho, a small African country bordered by South Africa on all sides.

Rebecca Dyck, daughter of the late Peter J. Dyck, a prominent figure in the history of Mennonite Central Committee, was in Lesotho for four years in the late 1970s as an MCC nursing teacher where she became friends with Father Michael.

"I already admired his work back when he had two hands, two eyes and two ears that worked," she says. "Now his witness is even stronger."

After various violent police raids, Father Michael eventually moved to Zimbabwe to further distance himself from the unsafe conditions of Lesotho. It was there, in 1990, he received a letter bomb that permanently injured him.

Already well known as a world leader in fighting apartheid, Father Michael relied on his numerous communities to heal from the apartheid regime's assassination attempt.

"Anything which is life-threatening will be life-changing and cause us either to diminish or grow, but never stay the same," he says of his healing journey. "We're much more likely to make life-giving decisions if we're surrounded by people who are encouraging us and praying for us."

Father Michael knew the decision of how to respond to his attack was within him. "I've realized that if I was filled with hatred, I'd be a victim forever. They would have failed to kill the body but they would have killed the soul."

He transformed the horrors of his experience into the Institute for Healing of Memories (IHOM), an international organization founded in 1998, which facilitates workshops to offer individuals, communities and nations the tools needed to heal. Originally created to support the South African journey of healing from apartheid, it has since spread all over the world for groups as diverse as HIV/AIDS victims, prisoners, refugees and war veterans.

Believing that "every story needs a listener," the IHOM works to break the cycle of victim to victimizer by accompanying others on their journey to healing and wholeness. It works under the principle that all humans are spiritual beings of infinite worth who share responsibility for the past and for reshaping the future. They believe everyone has the capabilities of being both a victim and a victimizer.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, inspired by the same work done in South Africa, provides a Canadian context for the work of Father Michael. He urges every Canadian to read the findings of the TRC in order to aid the collective healing of our shared history with residential schools.

While the work of the IHOM can seem never-ending, Father Michael has created a path for others to follow on their journey to healing, not only with the workshops themselves, but also with his memoir. "Every book that is read is like another member of staff for the Institute for Healing of Memories," he says. ▮

/// Briefly noted

EMU/Goshen sexuality policy causes rift in CCCU

The recent move by two U.S.A. Mennonite colleges—Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va. and Goshen (Ind.) College—to drop their non-discrimination policies on sexual orientation has caused a rift in the 121-member Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) by triggering an exit by a more conservative college. Samuel W. “Dub” Oliver, president of the 4,000-student Union University, a Southern Baptist school in Jackson, Tenn., says the two Mennonite schools have “abandoned fidelity to God’s Word,” in announcing his school’s withdrawal from the Council. No other member schools have withdrawn so far, said Shapri D. LoMaglio, CCCU’s vice president for government and external relations, according to *Christianity Today* (CT). The CCCU board discussed the situation at Eastern Mennonite and Goshen at their regular meeting in July. After the meeting, the CCCU board “reaffirmed its commitment to a deliberative and consultative process,” which included calling the presidents of all CCCU member schools to discuss the issue. The “vast majority” of them affirm traditional Christian teaching on marriage, the umbrella organization said in a July release. But Oliver has warned in the past that as many as 40 CCCU members could leave if Eastern Mennonite and Goshen are allowed to remain as members, according to CT. The issue of whether Christian colleges could lose their tax-exempt status was raised during the Supreme Court’s deliberations over legalizing same-sex marriage. During Senate hearings last month, IRS Commissioner John Koskinen told a Senate subcommittee that the agency has no plans to address the tax-exempt status of religious schools.

—*Canadian Mennonite* staff reports

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Canadian School of Peacebuilding completes successful 2015 session

Eighty-four students from around the world gathered at Canadian Mennonite University for the Canadian School of Peacebuilding. A new book is launched with stories, theories and tools of peacebuilding.

canadianmennonite.org/school-peacebuilding-2015

Anabaptist educators gather for global conference

Anabaptist educators attended a global education conference, just before Mennonite World Conference assembly. The summit attracted educators and leaders from 13 countries around the world.

canadianmennonite.org/Anabaptist-educators-conference



AMBS program allows Canadian students to obtain distance degree

In the MDiv Connect program, Canadian students will do most of their study in their home contexts and come to the Elkhart, Ind., campus only for week-long classes two or three times a year.

canadianmennonite.org/AMBS-Canadian-distance-degree

New bursary to help MDS volunteers prepare for ministry

An anonymous donor is making it possible for students who volunteer with Mennonite Disaster Service to receive financial help for their higher education at CBC and CMU.

canadianmennonite.org/new-bursary-MDS



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GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Churches support Freedom Road

Steve Bell joins campaign to address Winnipeg's water injustice

J. NEUFELD

Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG, MAN.

A campaign of church signs supported by Juno-award-winning musician Steve Bell is calling on the federal government to address the longstanding injustice of Winnipeg's water system.

In August Bell joined the chorus of voices asking the federal government to do its part in building a road that would connect the isolated community of Shoal Lake 40 with the Trans-Canada Highway.

"It's the right thing to do," said Bell on August 7, the day after he visited the community of Shoal Lake 40. "It's kind of a no-brainer. I was looking for an Achilles heel and I couldn't find one. This was a fully self-sufficient community for thousands of years and suddenly it was artificially isolated and became dependent... All they're asking for is a road so they can get jobs in Kenora, so they can get access to essential services, so their kids don't have to be biled all winter long to go to school, so if someone has an asthma attack they can just drive to the hospital."

The city of Winnipeg pipes all its water from Shoal Lake, which straddles the Manitoba Ontario border about 150 kilometres east of Winnipeg. When city engineers built the aqueduct and water intake system in the early 1900s they turned Shoal Lake 40—a First Nations community of about 200 people—into a man-made island. The isolation has brought a century of heartache to Shoal Lake 40. A ferry connects the community to the mainland during the summer, but during freeze-up and thaw in the fall and spring, the thin ice is treacherous. Several people have died trying to make the crossing.

Shoal Lake 40 is under a boil-water

advisory and has to import all its own drinking water in bottles. A water treatment plant was designed but never built because of the cost of transporting building materials to the island.

The First Nation used to sustain itself, but the development of the water intake system affected fish migration patterns and the First Nation's access to wild rice harvest. In the 1970s and '80s the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources introduced quotas and shut down the local walleye fishery. The city of Winnipeg, worried about increased traffic on the lake, also

blocked the First Nation's bid to lease cottage lots on the lake.

"Everything they've done to try to do some economic development on their own has been thwarted," said Bell.

For years, the community of Shoal Lake 40 has been asking for one simple thing: a pair of bridges and an all-weather road—dubbed Freedom Road—that would connect the island to the Trans-Canada Highway only 27 kilometres away. The project would cost about \$30 million, split between three levels of government. The city of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba have each committed \$10 million. Only the federal government is still holding out. In June, Greg Rickford, the federal Minister for Natural Resources, visited Shoal Lake 40 but left the community in tears after declining to commit federal funds to the project.

It was a photo in the Winnipeg Free Press of children weeping after Rickford's visit that moved Bell to get involved. "I saw this picture of this elder and these children huddled, trying to ward off hopelessness and something inside me snapped," he said.

Bell met with a group of Mennonites including Dorothy Fontaine of Mennonite Church Manitoba and Steve Heinrichs of

PHOTO BY DAVID DRIEDGER



First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg doesn't have a church sign with moveable letters, so they got creative in voicing their support for Freedom Road.

PHOTO BY AMY KNIGHT



Erwin Redsky, chief of Shoal Lake 40, tells the story of his community to Steve Bell and Joy Smith.

Mennonite Church Canada to brainstorm ways for churches to lend their voices to the cause. They came up with a campaign called Churches for Freedom Road [<http://churchesforfreedomroad.ca/>] inviting churches to declare their support for Freedom Road on their signs. More than 40 churches from many denominations have done so, including Sargent Avenue Mennonite, First Mennonite, Emmanuel Mennonite, Charleswood Mennonite, Sterling Mennonite and Douglas Mennonite.

After Bell was interviewed by local media about the campaign, he got a call from his member of parliament, Conservative MP Joy Smith. She said she supported the campaign and wanted to visit Shoal Lake 40 herself.

On August 10 Smith held a press conference with Bell in which she called on her own government to commit to building Freedom Road.

At first it seemed the government was moved. Minister Greg Rickford responded, saying he supports Freedom Road “in principle.” But although the federal government has contributed \$1 million to the design study that’s currently underway, so far they haven’t committed to their third of the construction project. Both Justin Trudeau and Thomas Mulcair have said their governments, if elected, would provide the final \$10 million to build the road.

Shoal Lake 40 is completing the design for the road. They’ll be ready to start construction in January, should the funds materialize.

“We’ll be monitoring and we’ll get noisy

/// Briefly noted

Foodgrains Bank launches conservation agriculture program

WINNIPEG—Canadian Foodgrains Bank will scale up its work in conservation agriculture in three east African countries through a new five-year, \$18.67 million program. The program, launched Aug. 5 at Artell Farms in Niverville, Man., has been made possible by a \$14 million grant from the Government of Canada through Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada. Mennonite Central Committee Canada, World Renew and World Relief Canada will directly assist 50,000 farm families in Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania to increase the productivity of their farms through conservation agriculture. “This program will allow us to scale-up our work to enhance soil and water conservation through improved agricultural technologies in Ethiopia and Kenya, where we work with six local partners,” says Don Peters, executive director of MCC Canada. Conservation agriculture brings together the principles of minimizing soil disturbance, permanently covering the soil, and crop rotation. It has proven effective at restoring soil health and fertility, improving the capture and use of rainfall, and increasing crop yields and farm profitability. Funding from the Canadian government is available on a 3:1 matching basis.

—Canadian Foodgrains Bank

if necessary,” said Bell. He’s collecting signatures on a petition to Rickford at <https://community.sumofus.org/petitions/>

road-to-reconciliation-provide-access-to-clean-drinking-water-for-the-people-of-shoal-lake //

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GOD AT WORK IN US

The life of an MCC thrift shop manager

STORY AND PHOTO BY KATIE STECKLY

There's never a dull moment at the thrift shop. Whether it's a truckload full of donations five minutes before closing or a till that needs balancing, Mennonite Central Committee thrift shop managers are always on the go. But sometimes there are unexpected duties to attend to at the local thrift shop. Just last week, my mother who manages the Milverton, Ont., MCC New to You, experienced one of the best, most story-worthy ones yet.

It was a typical Saturday when my mother found a young gentleman, looking quite flustered, standing at the counter in the store. Immediately my mom noticed that he wore hearing aids in both ears. After some broken conversation, and some passing of papers with written messages, Mom discovered that he was looking for 25 Main Street South, Milverton.

"I'll show you where it is, it's just down the street," she offered, and walked him to what she assumed was his destination. By this point, Mom had accumulated some information about her guest—his name, which for our storytelling purposes will be Chuck, and that he was from Mississauga.

When they arrived at that spot on the street, he protested. That was *not* the place he was looking for. Eventually after a bit of confusion, my mom went with Chuck to his car which was in a parking lot across the street from the shop. He wanted to show her his GPS, and the address that he was *really* looking for. My mom confirmed, yes, the address in his GPS was 25 Main Street South, and yes, the house she showed him was 25 Main Street South as well. Still frustrated, Chuck offered my mom his cell phone, and the number of the friend he was supposed to meet at his destination. She dialed.

"Hello, I'm Karen Steckly, and I'm here with your friend Chuck. He's trying to look

for the place he's supposed to meet you, where are you?"

"We're in Milton, where are you?"

"Milton?! We're in Milverton..."

"Where is that?"

"About an hour and a half away from where you are!"

This is where, during my mother's telling of the story, my jaw dropped. If you don't know the area, I'll give you a brief run down. 1) Mississauga and Milton both are far enough away from us in Milverton that we consider them both to be basically Toronto. 2) To get to Milverton from Mississauga, you usually would pass through Milton on the 401. 3) There are lot of town names involved with this story that start with 'M'. But back to the story...

At this point in the conversation, Mom noticed that Chuck had become a bit agitated. He was trying to talk to her while she was on the phone and began motioning to his fuel gauge. Empty.

In an effort to bring some order to the situation, my mom asked the friend on the phone for the proper address to input into the GPS. She wrote it down, and Chuck

entered it. She wrote, "Gas?" on another piece of paper, and Chuck pointed to his pockets and shrugged. She wrote, "Visa?" and he shook his head.

Chuck was evidently very anxious now, so my mom said, "Just wait five minutes," and held up five fingers, "I'll be right back." My mom collected her purse and keys and returned to the parking lot. They went to the gas station together, where she pumped fuel for him until the tank was full and sent him on his way.

"Thank you, thank you!" he said. He hugged my mom and wrote on a small piece of paper, "I'll pay you—Friday."

She took that paper from him and wrote in response, "No need to repay me—just do a good deed for the next person who needs it."

I have always felt that MCC thrift shops serve many purposes in the mission of our faith. Despite the obvious generating funds for relief work at home and far afield, thrift shops also create an accessible and affordable resource of clothes and household items for lower income families. In addition they provide an inclusive space for people to contribute to society and the work of the church, and to find purposeful and fulfilling work. And more recently I've learned that the thrift shop is also a place of refuge, or a place to find someone who will show compassion or lend a helping hand.

The managers of MCC thrift shops serve many purposes beyond what we expect. They often become the hands and feet of the body of Christ in far more ways than listed in the job description. ☼



Karen Steckly manages the MCC New to You shop in Milverton, Ont.

ARTBEAT

7th Cousins auto-mythography

Erin Brubacher and Christine Brubaker walk 700 kms

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONTARIO

Erin Brubacher and Christine Brubaker are seventh cousins, more or less. Before their 700-kilometre walk from Brubaker Valley Road in Lancaster, Pa., to the historic John E. Brubacher House in Waterloo, Ont., they discovered a common ancestor, Hans Bruppacher, born in Switzerland in the 1600s. Erin comes from the Abraham Brubacher line and Christine from the Hans Brubacher line. As actors they joked that they were “learning their lines” as they spoke to the group gathered in Waterloo to welcome them “home” on Aug. 6.

The walk from Pennsylvania to Ontario was part of a larger collaboration that took them to the Live Art Series for the SummerWorks Performance Festival in Toronto August 7, 8, 10 and 11. “The Unpacking” explored where they went, what they saw and how they experienced following the “Trail of the Conestoga,” which their ancestors followed from Pennsylvania to Ontario in the 1700s. Brubacher and Brubaker noted in Waterloo that they had forded a river on foot. At that moment they were probably the furthest off the original route, but they felt the closest to their ancestors who had to ford many rivers on their trek.

Erin Brubacher said of the journey: “Our piece is inherently about taking time, and interrupting the everyday pace that has become our habit. Recently, a stranger asked if we were walking to learn how to work and be together: This is certainly part of it.”

They are calling the material they have gathered an “auto-mythography” looking at what people remember, how they remember it, what people make of what they think they remember, and how this is all part of a

larger story. They noticed on their walk that as they talked about the previous day they would remember it differently. Stories are created as people move through life.

Both Brubacher and Brubaker are accomplished participants in the performing arts—acting, writing, directing and arts education—working in Toronto and beyond. At the “homecoming” in Waterloo they told the story of the trip as a series of locations where they had stayed overnight, a piece of theatre including several refrains of “a day off.”

According to Brubaker they used unscripted performances at SummerWorks, “unpacking the material with an audience, so that they could discover meaning with others and where the audiences’ curiosity/questions live.” They went on an extended



Christine Brubaker (left) and Erin Brubacher walk the last kilometre of 700 as they approach the Brubacher house on the grounds of the University of Waterloo. An invitation had gone out and a number of people joined them for the last hour of the journey.

walk with an audience, fielded questions from those people, and told the story of the whole trip in 45 minutes.

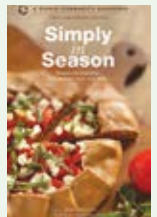
While the project started as a generational piece, it became less about Mennonite history and more about Erin and Christine in relationship because of their shared name. Erin’s dad did a lot of genealogical research and discovered their ancestors were first cousins who emigrated to Pennsylvania in 1750, but the walk became about making someone family/community and the importance of relationships in life. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Tenth-anniversary edition of *Simply in Season* released

Simply in Season: Tenth Anniversary Edition invites readers to celebrate the gifts of garden, farm and market. The new edition of the cookbook contains colourful photographs of seasonal dishes and an expanded fruit and vegetable guide that outlines how to care for produce once it is out of the garden, from storage to preparation. Accompanying these descriptions are some identifying characteristics, nutrition facts and selection guidelines for each fruit or vegetable. Written by Mary Beth Lind and Cathleen Hockman-Wert, the cookbook is part of a series published by Herald Press in cooperation with Mennonite Central Committee. Originally published in 2005, the book has over 141,000 copies in print. The connection between food, people and God is a central theme to *Simply in Season*. Galloping Gourmet Graham Kerr says, “What you read here comes from a voice that is pastoral, not judgmental. . . . Expect to be lovingly challenged in your decision to eat what is fresh and in season.”

—MennoMedia



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Colombian refugees sponsored by Winnipeg Mennonites

BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE

Special to Young Voices

Javier and his family arrived in Winnipeg in November of 2013, on the brink of Winnipeg's coldest winter since 1898, a bone-chilling change from their Colombian homeland, where the temperature rarely drops far below zero.

The cold was a small price to pay for safety, though. The family fled Colombia to save their lives.

Javier, his wife, Luz Merys, and their three daughters had been displaced from their home in northern Colombia to the capital city, Bogotá, where they knew no one. They are among 5.7 million Colombians, more than 10 percent of the population, forced to leave their homes because of conflict and violence, according to a report released by the Norwegian Refugee Council in 2014.

Javier says generations of Colombians have experienced conflict, poverty, independent military groups and criminal governments. "The corruption is everywhere," he says.

Javier's family was forced into hiding after a paramilitary group took Luz Merys's family farm. When her father complained, the group threatened to kill her family. They had to escape.

When the family started attending a Mennonite church in Bogotá, they were connected with sponsors from Winnipeg, including the Charleswood Refugee Ecumenical Sponsorship Team (CREST). These sponsors, including Charleswood Mennonite Church, made it possible for Javier's family to move to Winnipeg, by helping pay for flights, arranging initial housing and paying for rent, groceries, and supplies for the first year. They also connected on a personal level, showing Javier's

family around Winnipeg and helping them adjust to the many changes of culture.

Javier and his family now live in a building of 66 apartments for newcomers run by the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM). The organization also provides programming to help refugees and immigrants integrate into Canadian society.

But the transition to a new life is not easy. "I miss everything in Colombia," says Javier. "Nobody wants to be... kicked out of their country."

Challenges in a new country

One of the biggest difficulties is the language barrier. Javier takes English classes, however, he avoids having conversations with many people because of his limited ability.

"What will I answer them?" he asks. Even taking the bus, which is necessary for the family because they have no car, is intimidating when English is a challenge. Even in IRCOM House, communicating takes effort; Javier's family is currently the only family that speaks Spanish. But despite the differences, he says they are all "like a family, a big family in this big building."

Javier and his family have also found community in Charleswood Mennonite Church, where they attend regularly. The church gives them a chance to interact with English-speakers and develop friendships with non-immigrants, like Rudy and Ruth Friesen, who sponsored their emigration from Colombia and greeted them at the airport when they first arrived.

After less than two years in Winnipeg, Javier and his family still experience new challenges, even with support systems. Javier and his wife are expecting a baby girl

VOICE | of the marginalized

PHOTO BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE



Javier moved to Winnipeg in 2013 with his wife and three daughters.



Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe

in April. It is exciting, but also daunting, because they know English will surround them in the hospital.

Javier may not speak English fluently, but he's certainly not voiceless. He wants people to know how much newcomers like him value life in Canada and the opportunities that come with it.

"Immigrants are people who have dreams. They came here to work, to study, to have a better life for them and their families," Javier says.

"This is our country now too. And we love it. We love Canada." ❧

(The surname of Javier and his family has been withheld from publication because of their experience with the paramilitary group in Colombia and their concern for

safety. Large portions of this interview were translated by Luis Diaz, who immigrated to Canada from Cuba five years ago. He is a friend of Javier's family.)

Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe, 18, is a general studies student at Canadian Mennonite University. She attends Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

This article is part of a series called Voice of the Marginalized. These articles were written by students in CMU's Journalism: Principles and Practice course. Voice of the Marginalized connected writers with people on the margins of the community. Teacher Carl DeGurse serves on Canadian Mennonite's board of directors and is an assignment editor at the Winnipeg Free Press.

Come together

Artists chronicle the different ways they engage with the world around them in new exhibit

BY AARON EPP

Young Voices Co-editor

PHOTO COURTESY MIRIAM RUDOLPH



"Are You There?" by Miriam Rudolph.

From Winnipeg to Minneapolis to Edmonton, Terry Hildebrand and Miriam Rudolph's journey together as artists and life partners has taken them to a variety of different places.

Hildebrand, 31, and Rudolph, 32, return to Winnipeg in September for an art exhibition showcasing their recent work. "Tandem: Going Places Together" opens on Friday, Sept. 11 at the Mennonite Heritage Centre (MHC) Gallery. On display until Tuesday, Oct. 27, the exhibit includes Hildebrand's functional ceramics on wooden structures, while Rudolph, a printmaker, will display a selection of thematically diverse prints.

"It's a fabulous gallery exhibition space," Rudolph says by Skype from the apartment she and Hildebrand share in Edmonton, where Rudolph is working on her Master of Fine Arts degree at the University of Alberta.

For Rudolph, who grew up in Loma Plata, Paraguay, before moving to Canada

PHOTO COURTESY MIRIAM RUDOLPH



Miriam Rudolph and Terry Hildebrand met 11 years ago while studying fine arts at the University of Manitoba.

to do her undergraduate degree, displaying work at the MHC Gallery also allows her to maintain connections with her Mennonite roots. "For me, it's important to stay connected with the community that I call my own," she says.

Hildebrand grew up near Winkler, Man., and the couple met 11 years ago while studying fine arts at the University of Manitoba. Prior to moving to Edmonton, the couple lived in Minneapolis for two

PHOTO COURTESY MIRIAM RUDOLPH



Rudolph is an accomplished printmaker currently working on her Master of Fine Arts degree at the University of Alberta.

years, where Hildebrand earned his Master of Fine Arts in ceramics at the University of Minnesota.

Hildebrand makes ceramics out of porcelain, with a focus on teapots and cups. He presents his work in groupings, mostly on wooden trays he makes himself.

He began making ceramics during his second year as an undergraduate student and enjoys creating ceramics because of the technical skill and knowledge required throughout the whole process: wheel throwing, adding handles and assembling the pieces, adding decorations and patterns, pre-firing the pots, and glazing and re-firing the pots in a wood or soda kiln, which leaves them with somewhat random surface colouring and melted ash glazes.

"There's a constant learning and development that I'm attracted to," he says. "It's a skill. In ceramics, your whole piece will crack or it won't work in the end if you're not conscious about every step that you're doing."

All of Hildebrand's work is functional and invites the user to consider the conscious action of drinking and using a vessel.

"I do like holding a cup in my hand and

drinking coffee out of something I made," he says, adding that the pieces he will have on display in "Tandem" were created over the past two years.

Rudolph will have work on display that was created in a similar time period. One suite of prints consists of maps Rudolph has created of places she has lived in Canada, and another suite maps the Paraguayan Chaco she grew up in, which is changing rapidly due to deforestation.

A third suite included in the exhibit is more autobiographical, dealing with the grief Rudolph experienced after the sudden death of her father in Paraguay last year. He was cycling on a Sunday morning when he was struck by a drunk driver.

"That was really sudden and unexpected," says Rudolph, who was in the midst of moving from Minneapolis to Edmonton at the time. "I lost my biggest critic, fan and mentor, and I miss him terribly as a discussion partner during graduate school."

Rudolph says that the common ground her work shares with Hildebrand's is "the conscious engagement with our environment," as well as using the work to express what's most important in life.

"I think that's what art is about," she says.

Ray Dirks, curator of the MHC Gallery, says the high quality of their work, as well as their desire to stay connected to the Mennonite community, make Rudolph and Hildebrand a good fit for the gallery.

Rudolph displayed some of her work at the gallery in a joint exhibition with artist Benny Peters in early 2013, and the experience was "nothing but positive," Dirks says. He is excited to showcase her work again, and to showcase Hildebrand's work in the gallery for the first time.

"We haven't had a whole lot of those kinds of ceramics exhibited," Dirks says. "[Terry] is very intentionally an artist, but also very intentionally creating things that are practical and usable. That is something that is appealing."

Rudolph and Hildebrand are looking forward to attending the exhibit's opening at 7:30 p.m. on Sept. 11.

"I'm excited," Rudolph says. "It's always fun showing our work together, having people come out that we haven't seen in a long time and seeing the response to the work that we do." ❧

PHOTO BY MIRIAM RUDOLPH



"Assiniboine River Trail II" by Miriam Rudolph.

PHOTO BY MIRIAM RUDOLPH



Originally from Winkler, Terry Hildebrand earned a Master of Fine Arts degree with a focus on ceramics from the University of Minnesota.

PHOTO BY TERRY HILDEBRAND



A whiskey set by Terry Hildebrand.

Calendar

British Columbia

Sept. 18-19: MCC Festival for World Relief, Tradex in Abbotsford.

Sept. 26: Prince George Mennonite Fall Fair.

Oct. 2-3: Bible conference at Columbia Bible College exploring themes of creation, humanity and God throughout the Bible. Speaker: Rikk Watts from Regent College. 7-9 p.m. (2), 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. (3).

Oct. 5-7: Mennonite Church B.C. pastor/spouse retreat at Camp Squeah with guest speaker Donald Clymer. "Stop! Look! Listen! Are you Drawn by God or Driven by Culture?"

Oct. 16-18: MC B.C. women's retreat at Camp Squeah, Hope, with guest speaker April Yamasaki, "Spark Your Spiritual Gifts".

Nov. 13-15: Senior Youth Impact Retreat, at Camp Squeah, Hope.

Nov. 14: LifeBridge Ministries fundraising breakfast.

Saskatchewan

Sept. 13: Rosthern Junior College opening program at 2:30 p.m.

Oct. 2-4: "Weekend Musical Workshop for the Congregational Voice" with Marilyn Houser Hamm at Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon. Call the church office at 306-374-2144 to register interest.

Oct. 2-3: RJC Alumni volleyball and soccer tournament weekend.

Oct. 3-4: SMYO Jr. High (grades 6-9) retreat at Youth Farm Bible Camp to get a glimpse of Mennonite World Conference assembly and to meet Willard Metzger, executive director of MC Canada. Visit www.smyo.ca for more information.

Oct. 16-17: MC Sask/Sask Women in Mission women's retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

Oct. 24: MC Sask Equipping Day at Eigenheim Mennonite, "Engaging Anabaptism Today," beginning at 9:30 a.m. Call 306-249-4844 for information.

Oct. 24: RJC Corporation meeting

at 5 p.m. and RJC Appreciation and Fundraising banquet.

Nov. 24: RJC Kielke and Sausage Supper at Bethany Manor, Saskatoon.

Dec. 6: RJC choir concert at Knox United Church, Saskatoon, at 7:30 p.m.

Manitoba

Sept. 26: 31st annual Brandon relief sale at Keystone Centre, Brandon (Manitoba room). More information at mccmanitoba.ca/events.

Oct. 2: Opening program for Westgate Mennonite Collegiate at Bethel Mennonite Church, 6:30 p.m.

Oct. 3: Sounds Good! II, workshop for those who work with worship technology such as sound, visuals and lighting, at Eastview Community Church, Winnipeg, 9:15 to 3:30 p.m. For more information visit re-worship.events.blogspot.ca.

Oct. 3: Westgate cyclathon and alumni homecoming.

Oct. 15: Mennonite Heritage Village volunteer appreciation event for 2015 volunteers. For more information, visit www.MHV.ca.

Oct. 23-24: "Mennonites, Medicine and the Body: Health and Illness in the Past and Present," an academic and community education conference hosted by the Chair in Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg. More info at: <http://mennonitestudies.uwinnipeg.ca/events/>.

Nov. 7: "Singin' in the Grain" fundraising concert for Canadian Foodgrains Bank at Springfield Heights Mennonite Church, 7:30 p.m., featuring the Winkler Men's Community choir and Eastman Male Choir from Steinbach. Call 204-829-3570 for information.

Nov. 12-14: Westgate presents "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at the Gas Station Theatre.

Nov. 17: Evening of the Arts at Westgate, 7 p.m.

Nov. 23: Annual general meeting at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, 7 p.m.

Ontario

Sept. 12: Wanner annual cornfest, rain or shine. Music by No Discernable Key, Gaga ball, campfire and chili cook off. Bring lawn chairs and a donation for the Foodbank. Visit

www.wannerchurch.org or contact Nancy Brown at 519-658-4902 for information.

Sept. 19: The Detweiler Meetinghouse near Roseville is participating in the Waterloo Region's "Door Open" event from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sept. 19: Toronto Mennonite Festival in support of MCC at Black Creek Pioneer Village.

Sept. 25-27: Men's meat retreat at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp with Chip Bender as resource person. For more information visit www.slm.ca/retreats or call 519-422-3200.

Sept. 27: Sixth annual contemporary hymnsing at Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, chaired by Mark Diller Harder at 2:30 p.m. Bring copies of *Sing the Journey* and *Sing the Story*. More information at www.detweilermeetinghouse.ca.

Oct. 4: 40th anniversary worship celebration at Wellesley Mennonite at 9:30 a.m. Everyone welcome.

Oct. 4: Community memorial service at Detweiler Meetinghouse at 2:30 p.m., led by Scott Brubaker-Zehr, Sam Steiner and Will Stoltz. Included in the service will be highlights and updates of the cemetery.

Oct. 5, 6: Fall seniors' retreat at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp. (Same program both days.) Guest speaker: Tom Yoder Neufeld. Join us for a day of worship, learning and fellowship. For information go to www.hiddenacres.ca or 519-625-8602.

Oct. 15-17: Ten Thousand Villages Festival sale at Hamilton Mennonite Church. Enjoy homemade soup and dessert in our Villages Café, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. (15, 16), 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (17).

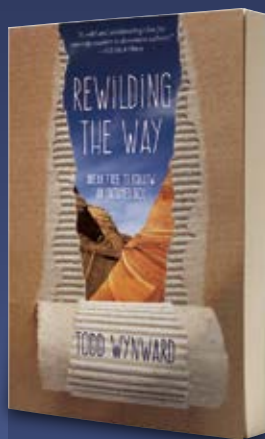
Oct. 18: Twelfth annual gospel music hymnsing based on *Life Songs II* at Detweiler Meetinghouse at 2:30 p.m., led by Bob Shantz.

Oct. 24: "The Growth and Spread of Old Order Mennonite Communities since the 1960s," hosted by the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario at Floradale Mennonite Church at 2 p.m. Speakers: Clare Frey and Amsey Martin.

Nov. 8: Fourth annual male chorus sing at Detweiler Meetinghouse at 2:30 p.m. Former male quartet, chorus or want-to-be members welcome to sing old gospel songs and anthems. Led by Bob Shantz.

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Nov. 14-15: St. Jacobs Mennonite Church 100th anniversary celebration; (14) see website, (15) Worship service and choir at 10 a.m. and "Simpler Times: Stories and Songs for the Soul" at 2:45 p.m. Details including choir invitation at www.sjmc.on.ca or 519-664-2268.

Nov. 29: Fourth annual "Welcoming Advent" at Detweiler Meetinghouse at 2:30 p.m. with Christmas music by

Lifted Voices and Laurence Martin leading historic Christmas songs. Everyone welcome.

Quebec

Sept. 27: Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal potluck supper for young adults, ages 18-25. For more information and/or to register interest, contact pastormfm@gmail.com.

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If you have ever been sexually violated at any age by, or had what you thought was an affair with, a member of the clergy or lay-leader within the Mennonite Church, confidential help is available at Mennonite@snapnetwork.org. See also snapnetwork.org.

Employment Opportunities



**Mennonite
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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
Director of Development and
Advancement

The Director of Development and Advancement is the chief marketing officer that provides leadership to donor relations, communications and the advancement of MCC BC toward its mission by collaboratively developing and implementing strategies that generate awareness, relationships, engagement, support and various types of donations from within our constituency and the broader public.

The Director of Development and Advancement ensures that activities are focused on approved strategic priorities and are in compliance with standard ethical requirements as well as MCC values, principles and policies.

This position is available on a salaried basis and reports to the Executive Director. Only those candidates who are legally eligible to work in Canada should apply. Please send resume and cover letter to the MCC BC HR Department by email to Marie Reimer at hrmanager@mccbc.ca or by fax 604-850-8734. Start date, Friday, October 30, 2015. For more information about this position please go to: <http://mcc.org/get-involved/serve/openings/director-development-advancement>.

All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to: a personal Christian faith and discipleship; active church membership; and nonviolent peacemaking. MCC is an equal opportunity employer, committed to employment equity. MCC values diversity and invites all qualified candidates to apply.



**Mennonite
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MCC BC JOB OPPORTUNITY
Legacy Trust Executive Director
Abbotsford, BC

Start Date: October 2015

The Legacy Trust Executive Director is the chief executive officer of the "Legacy Trust" group of companies owned by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) British Columbia. The Legacy Trust group of companies is comprised of donated assets that function similar to an endowment, with the purpose of generating ongoing revenue to support the world wide ministry of MCC. MCC is a Christian faith based agency that provides relief, development and peacebuilding initiatives in over 60 countries worldwide. MCC BC carries out programs that address basic needs here in BC and also supports the international work of MCC by generating funds, recruiting personnel and mobilizing material aid.

MCC BC is the shareholder of the Legacy Trust group of companies and appoints the directors of the Legacy Trust Board and related subsidiaries as needed. The Legacy Trust Board is the oversight body of the Legacy Trust group of companies and properties and as such it approves the goals, plans, policies and long-term direction of Legacy Trust within the general parameters set by MCC BC as the shareholder.

The Executive Director of Legacy Trust is a new position starting in the fall of 2015. The Executive Director will be accountable to the MCC BC Legacy Trust Board and will be responsible for the management and development of the Real Estate and Business Subsidiaries of MCC BC. Applicants should have solid business education and significant business management experience.

This position is available on a full-time salaried basis, part-time contractual arrangements would also be considered. Only those candidates who are legally eligible to work in Canada should apply. To ensure consideration please submit your application as soon as possible, no later than September 15, 2015. Applications will be received until a suitable candidate is identified.

The Legacy Trust Executive Director is accountable to the MCC Legacy Trust Board which is accountable to the Board of Directors of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) British Columbia.

For a full job description, please go the MCC website, mcc.org (get involved, work with us).

Please send resume and cover letter to the MCC BC HR Department by email to hrmanager@mccbc.ca or by fax 604-850-8734.



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PHOTO COURTESY OF CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE



Peace Campers learn the positive effects of communal agriculture with Patchwork Community Gardens.

Peace camp has rippling effect

DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent, with notes from CGUC
WATERLOO, ONT.

Just as the ripples from a stone thrown into a body of water move outward from the centre, so too the effects of one person acting in and for peace affect many around them, sometimes in surprising and unexpected ways. Conrad Grebel University College's fifth annual summer camp for youth between ages 11 and 14 ran August 10 to 15 at the college's Waterloo campus.

One camper commented that "there are ways we can help issues that may seem bigger than us. It's meaningful because...our opinions matter."

Many local organizations came and presented to the youth, including Homelessness Everywhere Lacking Publicity and Food Not Waste. The youth travelled to Patchwork Community Gardens in Kitchener and learned about food security in regard to peace, locally and globally.

Because of support from a five-year grant from the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation and ongoing sponsorship from Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, Josslin Insurance, and the Kitchener Waterloo Community Fund, Peace Camp 2015 provided 17 campers with subsidized registration. %