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Volume 20 Number 21

CAMP KAINONIA MONTHLY

'Our family is here'

A Hutterite woman chronicles the arrival of Syrian refugees, pg. 17

inside

Take, break, bless 4

Camp Koinonia 50th-anniversary Snapshots 16

Focus on Books & Resources 20-26

EDITORIAL

Back the boycott

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Of all the current global conflicts, none seems as intractable as the Israeli-Palestinian one, pitting an occupier government against its occupied residents. The dire situation was recognized at Assembly 2016 in Saskatoon this past summer, when a resolution was passed to support the “boycott, divestment, sanctions” (BDS) movement as a way of taking the “few remaining options to end the occupation and facilitate a just peace with the Palestinian people.”

The resolution came as a result of a plea by Palestinian Christians to the Mennonites of North America to “please help us” because, as Jonathan Kuttab, a Palestinian attorney specializing in international law, said in a recent luncheon meeting at Mennonite Central Committee Ontario offices in Kitchener, Ont.: “It is in your DNA. It should be a no-brainer.” He asked us to shift our non-violent efforts in the region from relief and development, to advocacy.

This is a delicate and complicated issue. Two competing narratives on what’s really going on in this conflicted land makes any resolution impossible. Things are at a complete impasse. The two-state proposal is dead, says Kuttab. The Israeli narrative, aggressively perpetrated by a powerful Jewish lobby backed by Christian Zionists, tells the world that the Palestinians and other Muslim-populated countries in the region are “terrorists” bent on their destruction. Backed with more than \$5 billion in foreign aid this

year from North America (U.S. and Canada), Israel has the military might to quash any resistance from the Palestinian occupants of their land.

Add to that the religious fervour of Christian Zionists, some of whom are in our own Mennonite constituency, and we have the toxic mix of politics and religion that is a powerful, persuasive force on public opinion.

On the opposing side is the Palestinian narrative that cries out to the world that Israel’s ongoing and increasingly entrenched military occupation and settlement of Palestinian lands is in contravention of international law. More specifically, they are calling world attention to the breaking of a United Kingdom-drafted and UN-approved treaty that gave 44 percent of the land to Palestinians and 56 percent to Israel.

Since the Israeli narrative is so powerful, such things as two million Palestinians living in an “open-air prison” in Gaza is hardly known to the world, says Kuttab, not to mention that the inhabitants are kept on the “edge of starvation” with a carefully calculated calorie count that gives just enough nutrition to keep them alive.

Criminal justice hardly exists for the Palestinians, with the slightest infraction bringing down the heavy hand of punishment by the Israelis. When we visited in 1985, a family in Bethlehem had just had their home bulldozed because the couple’s nine-year-old son had thrown stones at an Israeli security Jeep driving

through the neighbourhood.

The dynamics of this conflict quickly become personal, but the response must be Spirit-led and wise. In his book *My Promised Land*, Rabbi Art Shavin writes, “Intimidation and occupation are the two pillars of our condition. Most observers and analysts deny this duality. The ones on the left address occupation and overlook intimidation, while the ones on the right address intimidation and dismiss occupation. But the truth is that without incorporating both elements into one worldview, one cannot grasp the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.”

We are amazed how quickly, in a few generations, the oppressed have turned to the oppressor. In this case, we must apply the words of Micah to “do justice,” and take the words beyond theological rhetoric. And the onus is on the Jews to carry out the justice that their Torah instructs.

Kuttab, a Palestinian Christian and chair of the board of Bethlehem Bible College, makes no bones about it: “Zionism is heretical; Jesus taught us something else.” This is strong language, but it comes from someone who, for more than 20 years, has been working in nonviolent ways for the cause of justice in his homeland.

If Rabbi Shavin is right, making room for Palestinians to live side-by-side peacefully with Israelis is in the state’s best interests. The present trajectory is doomed to fail in the long run.

We ask our church members unapologetically to support the BDS movement, one that “avoids investing in or supporting companies that do business with Israeli settlements and the Israel Defense Forces, and companies profiting from the occupation of Palestinian territories.”

View video of Kuttab’s talk
at [canadianmennonite.org/
boycott-editorial](http://canadianmennonite.org/boycott-editorial).



ABOUT THE COVER:

Elaine Hofer, a member of the Green Acres Hutterite Colony in Manitoba, plays in a puddle with Syrian refugee children Raghad Riad Al Hamoud, 4, and Ali Riad al Hamoud, 3. Read her reflection of the day they arrived with their parents in ‘Our family is here’ on page 17.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ELAINE HOFER

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contents

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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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Take, bless, break 4

In her sermon on the feeding of the five thousand, **MICHELE RIZOLI**, associate pastor of Toronto United Mennonite Church, suggests that Jesus 'sensed an opportunity to turn a crowd into a community, a chance to live out God's idea of abundance and hospitality.'

MC Canada introduces new moderator 13

CALVIN QUAN, a member of Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church, will lead the national church with 'grit and pioneering spirit' through the uncertain waters of Future Directions.

'Our family is here' 17

ELAINE HOFER, a Hutterite from the Green Acres Colony in Manitoba, chronicles the arrival of a Syrian refugee family sponsored through Mennonite Central Committee Canada.

A friend to the larger church 19

During her time as a pastor's wife and world traveller, the late **JANET RANCK MARTIN** 'shared with us those given gifts so that the body of Christ be built up,' wrote Tanzanian bishop **CHRISTOPHER NDEGE** in tribute.

Focus on Books & Resources 20-26

Young Voices 27-29

'Self-discovery through improvisational theatre' profiles Winnipeg filmmaker **BRAD LEITCH**. 'Shaping life on campus' features the thoughts of three Canadian post-secondary student-council presidents.

Regular features:

For discussion **6** Readers write **7** Milestones **10** A moment from yesterday **11** Yellow Page **25** Calendar **30** Classifieds **30**

Back the boycott 2

DICK BENNER

Stories: yours, mine, ours 7

DEBORAH FROESE

Healthy truth 8

MELISSA MILLER

A lesson on sharing 9

DORI ZERBE CORNELSON



Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press



GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH FEATURE

Take, bless, break

*Based on a sermon from Luke 9:10-17 preached
at The First Mennonite Church in Vineland, Ont., on Feb. 10, 2008.*

BY MICHELE RIZOLI

PHOTO BY D. MICHAEL HOSTETLER



But my mom—whose name was Grace—didn't care about appearances. Her humble menu did not limit her hospitality, because it wasn't about food. It was about welcome.

The Evansons were out of our league. We were a plain old missionary family coming from rural New Hamburg, Ont., and they were über-educated university professors from glamorous Colorado, U.S.A. But as she so often did when newcomers arrived in Brazil, my mom took the Evansons under her wing. She picked them up at the airport and then helped them find a place to live, furniture, schools for the kids, and so on.

As a 15-year-old, I didn't worry much about what Mom was up to all day. It was what she did at supper that day that was mortifying. She invited the Evansons to our house to eat with us. It was obvious that she hadn't planned to have visitors. Her menu for that evening was one of the plainest meals in her repertoire, straight from her humble life on the farm: bean soup and apple pie. Just picture it: white beans and chunks of white bread floating in a milk base. Then just before we ate it, we'd sprinkle cinnamon on top—one last weird culinary touch. It was a good soup, but to the uninitiated it lacked visual appeal. It's a soup you'd think twice about setting in front of your family, to say nothing of serving it to important visitors.

But my mom—whose name was Grace—didn't care about appearances. Her humble menu did not limit her hospitality, because it wasn't about food. It was about welcome. She improvised: put a little more milk in, broke up some more bread, cut the pie into smaller portions, and voilà!—enough for a crowd! Her table boasted no place settings, no centrepieces, not even a soup tureen. Martha Stewart would not have approved. We said a prayer—how embarrassing—and then the university professors with their three kids crowded around the table with our lowly missionary family and ate that soup like it was a feast.

About 30 years later, when Mom died, the Evansons sent a lovely condolence card. Do you know what they remembered best? That anemic-looking soup. When they were strangers, Mom's way of treating them like family made a lasting impression on them. You just never know what will happen when you open up to strangers,

WOODCUT FOR 'DIE BIBEL IN BILDERN' (1860) BY JULIUS SCHNORR VON CAROLSFELD



But it was not in Jesus' nature to send people away. Maybe he sensed an opportunity to turn a crowd into a community, a chance to live out God's idea of abundance and hospitality.

when you eat with them and include them in community.

An example of hospitality from Scripture

I wonder what people remembered about that day when Jesus fed an army of people outside Bethsaida. It was definitely memorable: all four gospels include the story, including Luke 9:10-17. The event was also influential in early Christianity. The way it is written—telling how Jesus took the bread, blessed it and broke it—ties the story to the liturgy of the Lord's Supper. To this day when we get together to be church, we gather around a simple shared meal in which bread is broken and blessed in Jesus' name.

There is a lot happening in this story, but what I particularly see is Jesus demonstrating the true nature of hospitality. Hospitality is welcoming strangers. It is often unplanned and unpredictable, it comes from an attitude of open invitation, it often includes food, and it is an abundant blessing to all involved.

As Luke tells it, Jesus had only recently sent out his disciples on a mission trip to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. The disciples weren't supposed to take along any provisions, but instead were to count on whatever hospitality they found along the way, staying in people's homes and moving from place to place. They did just that, and they came back on sort of a high, wanting to debrief. So they picked up and went away from the crowds to tell Jesus all about their ministry, without interruptions.

But their retreat didn't go as planned. The crowds followed Jesus and interrupted the meeting. The debriefing had to give way to teaching and healing. Before they knew it, it was time for supper. They were out in the middle of nowhere, the sun was going down, and a lot of people were still milling around. Jesus' training seems to have had an effect, and the disciples showed some sensitivity to people's needs. They were probably also remembering all the times strangers had offered them food in the recent past, so

they saw it as their responsibility to make sure these people were fed.

They really wanted to practise hospitality. The problem was, they put their heads together to try to figure out what to do, and they came up with nothing. Well, almost nothing. Somebody scrounged up a couple of fish and some bread, but that wouldn't do much good. They just were not in a position to feed anyone, let alone a crowd. So they explained the problem to Jesus and asked him if he would kindly dismiss everyone.

But it was not in Jesus' nature to send people away. Maybe he sensed an opportunity to turn a crowd into a community, a chance to live out God's idea of abundance and hospitality. You can feed them, he said. But the disciples still couldn't see a solution that didn't involve a monetary transaction. They didn't have any money, so obviously the people would need to go to town and use their own. The disciples were stuck in their reliance on material resources, not having yet learned all they needed to know about God's economy.

Then Jesus proceeded to show how to welcome and feed people you don't know, people who have interrupted your plans with their needs, people who aren't going away. You start with what you have. You take it, bless it, break it—and then watch God work.

The people were grouped as equals sharing a meal. Strangers became neighbours in this kingdom way of doing things. I imagine scattered groups of people. Some are sitting by the olive grove watching the sun go down. Some are gathered around that woman who keeps following Jesus ever since he

God used a party that had struck me as less than perfect to embrace Florence and make her feel that she belonged in our community.

healed her. Others are down by the stream washing up. Still others are perched on rocks, dangling their feet and watching volunteers moving back and forth between the groups, giving out food. Everyone is visiting, discussing what Jesus meant about the kingdom of God, reliving the details of the healings they witnessed or experienced.

People came away from that experience changed. They kept retelling the story. They kept replicating it. It became a ritual, a tradition, a way of reminding themselves: "So this is the power of eating together, of sharing resources, of trusting God, of living a life of welcome."

Hospitality is part of our identity

My mother almost instinctively welcomed people into her home and her circle of friendship. On her retirement from the mission field, her guest book listed more than 3,000 entries—and she would continue to host guests for another 15 years. Hospitality was her special gift, but being hospitable was also in her nature as a Christian.

Maybe we could start to be a more welcoming church by just being more welcoming to people in general. The opportunities are everywhere: slip over so someone can sit beside me on the bench, make room at the cafeteria table for someone who always sits alone, just say hi to someone I don't know yet.

Maybe we also need to lower our high standards and let God do a little bit of the work, too. A few years ago, Florence joined our congregation in Toronto. She had come from Uganda, and we planned a party for her, to welcome her. I distinctly remember being embarrassed about how few people showed up, like we were doing so little. But it turned out that Florence had never had a party that was just for her. She was overjoyed. She told us that she felt totally loved and welcomed, and she was. God used a party that had struck me as less than perfect to embrace Florence and make her feel that she belonged in our community.

At its heart, as modelled by Jesus, hospitality is about welcoming the stranger, taking even a little bit of our friendship—our food, our listening ears, our helping hands—and entrusting them to God to multiply exponentially. Take, bless, break. Hospitality is taking what we have, no matter how little, and blessing it by presenting it to God, and breaking it to



Michele Rizoli's mother, Grace Schwartzenruber, is pictured in her kitchen.

share. It is part of our identity, our nature, as followers of Jesus. ☘

Originally published in a longer version in the Spring 2009 issue of Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology. Used by permission of the author and the publisher (MennoVision.org). All rights reserved.

Michele Rizoli is associate pastor of Toronto United Mennonite Church. Her parents served as missionaries in Brazil for 32 years.



The bean soup recipe is online at canadianmennonite.org/take-bless-break.



/// For discussion

1. What hospitality have you experienced that was especially memorable? Have you ever served, or been served, the equivalent of simple bean soup, where the fellowship was a particular blessing? Do we worry too much about the appearance of food?
2. Michele Rizoli writes, "Hospitality is welcoming strangers. It is often unplanned and unpredictable, it comes from an attitude of open invitation, it often includes food, and it is an abundant blessing to all involved." Do you agree? What can we learn about hospitality from Jesus' feeding of the five thousand?
3. What is it about food that makes it so important in hospitality? Can food ever be a barrier to feeling welcome? Are other cultures better than ours at offering hospitality? Has our modern culture changed our expectations of hospitality?
4. Rizoli suggests, "Maybe we could be a more welcoming church just by being more welcoming to people in general." What are some ways that we can be more welcoming in our day-to-day lives? Can you think of creative ways for the church to extend hospitality?

—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.canadianmennonite.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.

✉ 'Minister's handbook to reproductive loss' available online

RE: "COPING, GRIEVING, remembering," Sept. 12, page 4.

I'm writing to express my appreciation for Beth Downey Sawatzky's thoughtfully written piece on pregnancy loss. I was particularly drawn to "Holly's" natural inclination towards ritual when she asked her doula to bless one of her babies during his burial.

A related resource on recognizing pregnancy loss is Alicia Buhler's 2016 "Minister's handbook to reproductive loss." This guide was written to equip those who provide spiritual care to grieving individuals and families as they stand on the holy ground of grief. Buhler's resource is available at bit.ly/buhler-reproductive-loss or through CommonWord (commonword.ca).



JENNIFER EPP, WINNIPEG

FROM OUR LEADERS

Stories: yours, mine, ours

DEBORAH FROESE

In her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the late Harper Lee captures the complex reality of relationship: "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view . . . until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it." Sounds messy and uncomfortable, doesn't it?

Although we can't literally climb inside someone else's skin, we have the opportunity to capture other points of view if we share our stories.

In principle, the concept is simple. It could start a chain reaction. You tell me your story, and I'll tell you mine. We'll get to know each other a little better, and then, as we spend more time together and begin to care about each other, we'll create new stories that belong to us both. We'll share those stories with others, and they'll share theirs, and before you know it, a community has grown.



About 10 years ago, Dann Pantoja, a peacebuilder in the Philippines, needed two men to work together, one a Muslim, the other Christian. Unfortunately, the two men hated each other. Dann sent them off in a boat together for the weekend with one rule: Don't kill each other. With nothing else to occupy their time, they shared stories and got to know each other. They returned as the best of friends and proceeded to work together building peace communities.

Sharing stories can be as messy and uncomfortable as trying to slide inside someone else's skin. The kind of story sharing that builds relationships and community requires vulnerability from both storyteller and listener.

In his book *Vulnerable Faith* (commonword.ca/go/149), Pastor Jamie Arpin-Ricci says that brokenness and fear of rejection—something he likens to death—often prevent us from fully exposing our innermost selves to others. Yet this filtered truth-sharing stands in

the way of true relationship: "Like Adam and Eve, we cover our nakedness in so many ways, motivated by the [understandable] fear of death."

Story-listening also comes with risk. What if we hear uncomfortable, unfamiliar perspectives, or ideas that challenge our beliefs? How do we reconcile this tension?

Author and theologian Peter Enns suggests that we consider whether we place our faith in what we determine to be a "correct" belief system, or if, instead, we place our faith in God. In *The Sin of Certainty: Why God Desires Our Trust More Than Our Correct Beliefs* (commonword.ca/go/787), he writes that "[w]hen correct thinking is central to faith, we transmit onto God our own distorted mental image of God, with all its baggage, hang-ups and deep fears. That is a tense faith, which we cover up with cleverness and arrogance, and which slides easily to anger and hatred toward those who think differently."

Let's share stories. Your experiences will add texture and richness to my perception of the world. I may not agree with all of your ideas—and you may not agree with mine—but we can still walk together and honour God in the spirit of community.

Deborah Froese is MC Canada's news services director.

✉ Time to give up the poverty act

SEVERAL ISSUES AGO, it was mentioned that Mennonite Church Canada had a financial shortfall. In the Sept. 12 issue's Calendar section, several provinces were seeking sponsors for "Ride for Refuge," to get funds to support 20 national church missionary groups.

What has happened to us? Christians are to tithe and give offerings (Malachi 3:10), but some of us give outside our church budgets.

It's time to give up the poverty act. The greatest sin is in our greed.

OLGA EPP, COALDALE, ALTA.

FAMILY TIES

Healthy truth

MELISSA MILLER

"You will know the truth and the truth will make you free."

Jesus' oft-repeated axiom from John 8 lifts up the value of truth-telling. The living out of it, though, is not simple. As one poster riffed: "The truth will make you free, if it doesn't kill you first." In the accompanying picture, a two-dimensional figure with a worried face is being squeezed through the wringer of an old-fashioned washing machine. Yep, the truth can be freeing. It can be transforming. Or it can be as devastating as death.

How do we decide when to speak the truth, and when to leave a secret unspoken?

When something potent and negative has happened, is it better to shroud the event in silence or to weave it openly into the family narrative? When is it wise to leave the skeletons in the closet, and when is it most freeing to pull them out for a closer look? What makes for a healthy family?

Often it's an emotionally loaded subject that creates the dilemma. I imagine you can think of examples from your own family or community. Was Mary really John's daughter, or was someone else her father? Did Auntie die of natural causes or was it by her own hand? Did grandparents practise harsh "discipline" or would we now recognize it as abuse or violence?



Was Uncle a child molester? Are there negative, demonic spiritual forces at work? Can they be exposed and brought into the light of truth?

Interestingly, in John 8, Jesus and his contemporaries named some of these hot topics, including adultery, illegitimacy, suicide, violence and murder. Death, demon-possession and lying itself are spoken of in this prolonged conflict between Jesus and those who wanted to trap him. Certainly we need to note differences in the context between Jesus' situation and ours. Yet his invoking of the freeing power of the truth is relevant for us.

Generally speaking, I lean towards the truth. I begin by respecting the truth of my own witness, and what has been told to me. If Mary wonders about the identity of her father because of some information or insight she has, I hold

I lean towards the truth, because, as Jesus said, 'The truth will make you free.'

that wondering with her. If people hint of suspicious circumstances around Auntie's death, I listen carefully, and may ask gentle, clarifying questions as they search for truth. If anyone speaks to me of child abuse, I am compelled to take steps to protect vulnerable children, and to empower those most directly involved as they seek healing.

I lean towards the truth, because, as Jesus said, "*The truth will make you free.*" Secrets have an oppressive, constraining effect. Secrets inhibit family health and intimacy. They are similar to the closets in my house that are full of boxes with mysterious contents. In the closet, these boxes—secrets—remain packed up, trapping energy and hoarding their possible treasures. If a family can unpack a secret, they will likely open up new, deeper connections among the members. For example, if Auntie really did commit suicide, family members could tell the truth, and honestly grieve the deep pain of her struggle and death; offer each other true support and genuine comfort; and educate themselves about suicide in the event of others being similarly troubled.

There is much more to be said. For starters, though, let us lean towards the

truth, and let us exercise care of the very young and the vulnerable. And please, if you have questions or comments, add them to the conversation.

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

✉ Former MCC personnel 'suffer silently'

RE: "WHEN YOUR services are no longer required,"
Aug. 29, page 4.

I, too, was dismissed by Mennonite Central
Committee (MCC) Canada, after almost 10 years of
service. It came out of nowhere. The decision was

casually let slip by my manager over the phone.

I was told the firing was due to restructuring, although the position might be there if our family would relocate to Winnipeg, which was out of the question for us. I appealed to board members, and then to the board chair, all known to me. No expression of care whatsoever was given.

(Continued on page 10)

GOD, MONEY AND ME

A lesson on sharing

DORI ZERBE CORNELSEN

A father often took his five-year-old son to the local minor hockey league games. Each time they went, they saw the same homeless man in the parking lot asking for donations. The first time, the son asked his dad why the man was asking for money, providing an opportunity for the dad to explain homelessness. The second time, the son asked why everyone didn't give the homeless man money, which gave the dad a chance to share a lesson on charities and generosity.

On their third trip to the rink, the young boy approached the homeless man. The father and son now knew the man by name and often engaged him in brief, casual conversation. Suddenly, the boy reached into his coat pocket, pulled out a small sandwich bag of coins, and with a big smile, offered the bag to the homeless man, who smiled back, offering an appreciative "thank you." At this simple yet profound act of generosity, the dad could only smile as he fought back tears.

This young boy understood abundance. Even with a small bag of nickels and quarters, he felt he had enough to share and wanted to give something to their new friend. Abundance isn't about wealth, excess or affluence. Abundance starts with gratitude, and nurtures relationship. When you're grateful for what

you have, whether a little or a lot, you want to share it with others.

There is actually much evidence out there to support the fact that living generously is good for us! *The Paradox of Generosity: Giving We Receive, Grasping We Lose* is the result of a five-year social-scientific study of financial giving done in the U.S. The authors conclude that "generous financial givers are happier people." The research also suggests that, "while money cannot buy happiness, giving it away actually associates with greater happiness." In the story above, the young boy, the father and the homeless man were all impacted favourably by this simple act of generosity.

The authors of *Paradox of Generosity*

Better health and happiness are simply the side effects of generosity.

go on to write: "This win/win outcome of generosity also holds true for other kinds of well-being, such as health, avoidance of depression, purpose in life and personal growth." In contrast, when we don't live generously, and strive to protect ourselves against future uncertainties and misfortunes, "we are affected in ways that make us more anxious about uncertainties and vulnerable to future misfortunes." If this is true, why wouldn't we all want to give?

Better health and happiness are

simply the side effects of generosity. At Abundance Canada, we work with some of the most generous people in Canada. For them, living generously is not about the size of their wallet; it's about the depth of their heart. They don't give because they can; they give because they want to. They are passionate about the charities they choose to support and they eagerly seek out ways to express their generosity.

Our organization was built on the understanding that God is generous and that God invites us to share. When we are generous, we reflect God's character.

Abundance Canada offers a variety of services to help people live generously. We can help you discover ways to give generously that you haven't yet imagined, both now and later in life. For example, our gift planning consultants can help you consider how you can include a generosity plan in your will. Abundance

Canada consultants will listen to your story, identify your charitable goals, and develop a plan to help you experience faithful, joyful giving.

Dori Zerbe Cornelsen is a gift planning consultant at Abundance Canada serving generous people in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. For more information on impulsive generosity, stewardship education, and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest Abundance Canada office or visit abundance.ca.



(Continued from page 9)

When I shared a little later a written diary/reflection of the experience with the binational director, also known to me, and previously very supportive of my work, he in some detail picked the reflection apart and upbraided me for such “negativity.” Again, no empathy whatsoever. His crowning insult was to tell me that MCC policy was that all staff were to work a maximum of nine years, then be dismissed. Apparently technically true, but this policy was contradicted by numerous staff then and since, of whom he was one!

I was fortunate, however: A respected provincial director insisted that my manager meet with me and a trained mediator, to work through the conflict. In the end, however, that provincial director—attending as an advocate—was forced to act like a union negotiator and “demand” a favourable settlement. There was once again no expression of empathy, no regret indicated.

Such handling elicited personal awareness of other MCC staff similarly treated. One commented that few wish to go public about MCC personnel mistreatment because MCC is so widely respected. So we choose to suffer silently, perhaps thereby sadly emboldening further personnel mishandling.

WAYNE NORTHEY, AGASSIZ, B.C.

✉ No other God compares to Jesus

RE: “DISCOVERING HUMILITY” column, Sept. 26, page 9.

My strong heartfelt agreement is with Steve Heinrichs on much of what he articulated. So much damage has been done by the Christian church in its functioning, whether knowingly or unknowingly, within the Doctrine of Discovery.

My one challenge would be that some unpacking needs to be done about what is meant by “Christian superiority.” If that means the superiority of western Christian culture, then I would wholeheartedly agree.

However, if by “Christian superiority” we are saying that Jesus Christ is one way to salvation and right relationship with God, while other types of spirituality are another way, and that one way is not superior to the other, then I would strongly disagree. Jesus is superior.

Actually, that isn’t accurate. Superiority is a measure of comparison, which would necessitate that there are different ways. But Jesus clearly says, “*I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*” So Jesus isn’t superior because there isn’t another way to compare him to.

So the challenge is this: Can we love our indigenous brothers and sisters on whose land we now live, as well as bless and respect their culture, while at the same time sharing the good news of Jesus with them?

I have to believe that we can. Why? Because Jesus calls us to love our neighbours as ourselves, and to make disciples of all nations.

CRAIG FRERE (ONLINE COMMENT)

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Ballantyne—Bennett Wiens (b. June 15, 2016), to Becky and Jon Ballantyne, First Mennonite, Edmonton.

Drapeau—Ashton Matteo (b. Aug. 2, 2016), to Rachel (First Mennonite, Edmonton) and Patrick Drapeau, in Fort McMurray, Alta.

Falk—Nixon Jay (b. Aug. 9, 2016), to Karissa and Justin Falk, Blumenort Mennonite, Rosetown, Man.

Fehr—Deacon Oliver (b. Sept. 9, 2016), to Leah and Dustin Fehr, Blumenort Mennonite, Rosetown, Man.

Foster—Leo James (b. July 12, 2016), to Carolyn (First Mennonite, Edmonton) and Tyler Foster, in Calgary.

Friesen—Gabriel Pax (b. July 28, 2016), to Abby and Jaron Friesen, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Gerber—Ava Mary (b. Sept. 18, 2016), to Thomas and Amanda Gerber, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

McKeown—Hazel Evelyn (b. Sept. 12, 2016), to Andrew and Jennifer McKeown, North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Miller—Robinson Lorne (b. July 6, 2016), to Nick and Dara Miller, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Baptisms

Karlie Haining—Vineland United Mennonite, Ont., Sept. 25, 2016.

Marriages

Albrecht/Zehr—Michelle Albrecht and Derek Zehr, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., Oct. 1, 2016.

Andres/Schmidt—Caitlyn Andres and Mark Schmidt, at First Mennonite, Edmonton, Aug. 27, 2016).

Damphousse/Klassen—Berne Damphousse and Janessa Klassen (Blumenort Mennonite, Rosetown, Man.), in Winkler, Man., Aug. 13, 2016.

Fehr/Friesen—Jason Fehr (Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.) and Alyssa Friesen (Blumenort Mennonite, Rosetown, Man.), at Blumenort Mennonite, Aug. 27, 2016.

Froese/Giesbrecht—Kyle Froese (Carman, Man.) and Carlie Giesbrecht (Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.), Sept. 11, 2016.

Hildebrand/Hildebrandt—Janina Hildrebrand (Winkler, Man.) and Andrew Hildebrandt (Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.), July 9, 2016.

Klassen/Rowan—Jeff Klassen and Stephanie Rowan, at

Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg, Aug. 13, 2016.

Deaths

Bauman—Barry, 47 (b. April 16, 1969; d. Sept. 14, 2016), Elmira Mennonite, Ont.

Campbell—Gordon, 79 (b. Aug. 7, 1937; d. Sept. 18, 2016), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Epp—Ingrid (Neufeld-Schaefer), 78 (b. May 4, 1938; d. June 25, 2016), Blumenort Mennonite, Rosetown, Man.

Hamm—Eva (nee Schmidt), 92 (b. Nov. 9, 1923; d. Sept. 22, 2016), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Hildebrand—Kathleen (nee Hoepfner), 88 (b. Nov. 23, 1927; d. Sept. 22, 2016), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Hunsberger—Deborah A., 61 (b. July 4, 1955; d. Sept. 22, 2016), Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Klassen—Abram H., 95 (b. Nov. 1, 1920; d. Sept. 11, 2016) Blumenort Mennonite, Rosetown, Man.

Lymburner—Margy (nee Hanna), 98 (b. March 8, 1918; d. Sept. 25, 2016), Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Penner—Katie, 93 (b. July 12, 1923; d. Sept. 23, 2016), Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man.

Toews—Jessie (nee Dick), 94 (b. Oct. 22, 1921; d. Sept. 23, 2016), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Weinberger—Albin, 94 (b. Feb. 5, 1922; d. Sept. 22, 2016), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

Wiebe—Anne (nee Janzen), 90 (b. Jan. 18, 1926; d. Sept. 11, 2016), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Willms—Irene (nee Mathies), 86 (b. Oct. 28, 1929; d. July 28, 2016), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Briefly noted

Mennonite Archival Image Database goes international

The Mennonite Archival Image Database (MAID), a project of the



Mennonite Historical Society of Canada, is growing and extending its reach for people looking for rare images. MAID welcomes the Mennonite Library and Archives (ML&A) at Fresno (Calif.) Pacific University as its newest archival partner. ML&A is the eighth MAID partner and the first outside of Canada, which enhances MAID's vision of being a source for "the discovery of photographs of Mennonite life from around the world." MAID's eight partners have now collectively uploaded more than 82,000 photographic descriptions into its Internet-accessible database (archives.mhsc.ca); nearly 19,000 of these have scanned images attached. ML&A has begun entering photographs into MAID from its rich collections, which consist of tens of thousands of photographs. Highlights include the Henry J. Wiens photographs of Mennonite Brethren church buildings, photographs of Mennonite Brethren congregational life on the west coast of the United States, the Fresno Pacific University photograph collection, and a massive collection of Mennonite Brethren mission photographs from around the world.

—Mennonite Archival Image Database

A moment from yesterday



This is no ordinary 1960s family reunion photo. Thousands of Mennonites fleeing the Soviet Union after the Second World War were forcibly repatriated. With the doors closed on mass migration, Mennonite Central Committee focussed on making efforts to reunite families, one at a time. Some of these men, women and children had arrived in Canada soon after the war; others had arrived only recently. These families were adjusting to new lives together after decades of separation. My grandparents are in this photo! Are yours?

Text: Laureen Harder-Gissing / Mennonite Archives of Ontario

Photo: Mennonite Archives of Ontario



archives.mhsc.ca

LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Wisdom, where art thou? (Pt. 1)

TROY WATSON

One of the devil's tactics in the temptation of Jesus, recorded in Matthew 4 and Luke 4, intrigues me. In this story, Satan takes Jesus to the holy city of God, into the house of God, and uses the Word of God, to distort the truth of God and oppose the will of God.



know that even if they get what they're chasing after, most of the time it doesn't bring the fulfillment they hoped it would. A wealthy man once confided in me that he had everything anyone could want, but none of it mattered. When I asked him why, he simply said, "Because I'm still not happy."

The devil essentially takes Jesus to "church" and recites Bible verses to tempt him. This should be a warning for us today. Just because we're looking to the church and to the Bible for answers, doesn't mean we aren't being misled.

Human beings tend to find the answers they're looking for, rather than the truth they'd prefer to ignore. This is because the ultimate goal of a person's pursuit of truth is rarely the truth. There are almost always deeper motives and desires at play.

I'm convinced that the majority of human beings are confused about what they really want and need in life. We consistently pursue unnecessary things that tragically cost us the very things we truly desire, value and need. In our seeking after success, achievements and prosperity, we often sacrifice the priceless treasures we already have, such as our relationships, time, energy, integrity and peace of mind, to name a few.

Tony Campolo, an American pastor and sociologist, once said in a sermon, "Adults spend all their health chasing after wealth and then spend all their wealth trying to get back their health." That sums up the absurdity of our life pursuits quite succinctly.

I've walked alongside enough accomplished, successful and wealthy people to

One of the greatest tragedies in life is never discovering what your deepest desires and longings are. We all have to chase after the wind for a few years—or decades—to discover that most of our pursuits are meaningless. This is part of

I finally realized that after two decades of pursuing this objective truth, it was something else I was really after. What I truly desired was wisdom and connection with 'divine spirit.'

the process, it's par for the course. Yet to never come to a moment of clarity, realizing what your soul truly desires, is the epitome of being lost. A tragedy of tragedies and vanity of vanities. As Jesus says: "What do you benefit if you gain the whole world, but lose your own soul?" (Mark 8:36).

For many years I chased after the truth in vain. I thought I wanted to know the truth, assuming truth was objective knowledge. I finally realized that after two decades of pursuing this objective truth, it was something else I was really after. What I truly desired was wisdom and connection with "divine spirit." Finally, I knew what I was looking for. Now, where to find it?

Another thing I've observed about the human condition is that even when we are clear on what we desire and need, we usually don't have a clue how or where to find it. Many of us are "looking for love in all the wrong places," to quote an old country song.

I began seeking God's Spirit and divine wisdom with the assumption they would come to me from above, that they were out there somewhere. So I looked for a leader, group or theological system to serve as the mediator of divine wisdom to me. I studied the Scriptures, and the writings of saints, mystics and spiritual thinkers, trying to find a reliable channel of divine wisdom. To no avail. It was in a moment of silent prayer, being still and listening to God, that the location of divine wisdom was revealed to me.

The moment reminded me of a 1979 horror film, *When a Stranger Calls*. The movie is about a sinister man repeatedly calling a babysitter who is alone at night

with three sleeping children under her care. She calls the police and a terrifying revelation comes when the police tell her, "We've traced the call. It's coming from inside the house!"

As crude and unsettling as this analogy is, the revelation I received in response to my pursuit of divine wisdom was identical. "The call of wisdom is coming from inside the house! Your body is the house where divine wisdom lives! The Spirit of Christ abides in you! Listen to the voice of wisdom within."

To be continued . . . ❧

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

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

New moderator brings 'non-anxious presence'

Mennonite Church Canada
WINNIPEG

As a busy professional engineer and a young father, Calvin Quan's days are full, yet he is ready and willing to serve as Mennonite Church Canada's new moderator. Where does he find the time and energy for national church leadership during a season of uncertainty and change?



Calvin Quan

sea of change.

As chair, he continually improvised to meet the needs of his congregational family. "Each step of the way, God opened doors," he says. "Fundraising, building credibility and trust: All those things came together. God was at work

in our midst."

The determination required to improvise was likely modelled by Quan's parents, who came to Canada from China in the late 1960s.

"I grew up watching them live through the challenges of immigrant integration and the struggle to survive," he says. "That shaped me with a certain degree of grit and pioneering spirit."

"God provides in unexpected ways," says Quan. "I've seen God working most when I recognize I'm not in control, those times I've had to take risks and go places that I wouldn't otherwise go. It's a recurrent theme for me."

Quan was surprised to learn that MC Canada was considering him for the role of moderator, but he only thought about it seriously after hearing affirmations from church leaders. Crossing paths with former moderator Andrew Reesor-McDowell also helped, as he framed the role as a calling.

It's a calling that Quan seems prepared for.

"I think Calvin brings a deep faith and a non-anxious presence," says Willard Metzger, MC Canada's executive director. "His commitment to God and the church is very evident."

Quan is no stranger to uncertainty and change. A decade ago, his home congregation, Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church, faced several challenges. After leading the church for 25 years, the founding pastor was about to retire. The diverse congregation of seniors, students and immigrants, including Cantonese, Mandarin and English-speakers, was left without a ruler and in need of a new church building. In addition, the understandably less-than-coveted position of church board chair lay vacant. Quan was invited by the church nomination committee to fill that role and help the congregation navigate through a

He likens his experience to that of other Canadian newcomers, including Mennonites and other people groups in mainstream society. "I'm hopeful that through my unique and not-so-unique experiences, God is shaping me with the courage to overcome seemingly impossible odds and to not take anything for granted," he says.

Although some may say that scientific inquiry is essentially incompatible with religious belief, Quan sees no conflict between his science-based vocation as an engineer and his faith. In fact, he believes that science validates faith. "Science is about understanding truth," he says. "It's about weighing the evidence to arrive at that truth. As an engineer, I'm trained to research and ask questions. . . . When I look at the complexity and beauty of life, I find that putting my faith in the Creator is more compelling than believing in coincidence."

He points to Lee Strobel's book *The Case for Christ*, in which fact-based evidence for faith is explored. "[Strobel uses] legal cross-examination to look at evidence that overwhelmingly supports the claims about who Jesus is."

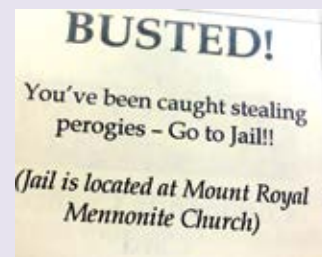
(Continued on page 14)

Briefly noted

Taking a chance on Menno-poly

SASKATOON—With special "Menno-poly" Chance cards, five different Monopoly boards scattered throughout Saskatoon and fun team challenges, the Mega Menno Monopoly Rally kick-off got groups excited for another year of youth events in Saskatchewan. The event took place on Sept. 9 at Mount Royal Mennonite Church, with about 40 youth and sponsors from eight different congregations participating. After a fairly epic game of musical chairs, teams were off to find the Pokémon-, Star Wars-, Saskatoon-, Red Green- and Simpsons-themed boards, each located at a different house. Upon arrival, teams had to compete in a fun challenge before playing the board. With a time-cap and prizes on the line, it was a race to the finish. One lucky team won movie passes and free tickets to the next youth event—a Tim Neufeld and the Glory Boys Hootenanny concert held on Oct. 9. To conclude the rally, Ryan Siemens, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan's area church minister, offered a prayer of blessing for each individual group, as well as the larger collective youth body.

—STORY AND PHOTO BY KIRSTEN HAMM-EPP



One of the games in the Monopoly rally included chance cards with a Mennonite theme.



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(Continued from page 13)

Concerning the direction ahead, Quan refers to the past work of the Future Directions Task Force. "Whatever structure we end up with, my hope is that we can facilitate missional living. I see amazing examples all around me, in our homes, in our church, where we work, and in our communities." ❧

Regehr named Future Directions transition director

Mennonite Church Canada

Keith Regehr, a managing partner working in the field of conflict resolution and restorative justice for the L3 Group in Kitchener, Ont., formerly known as Associates Resourcing Churches, has been named the new transition director for Mennonite Church Canada, according to a new website of the national church's Future Directions Task Force.



Keith Regehr

A teacher in the peace and conflict studies program at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., Regehr, a member of First Mennonite Church in Kitchener, will have access to multiple resources and experienced colleagues, including Betty Pries. He holds an advanced certificate in conflict management and faith communities from the same institution.

He is married to Arli Klassen and has two adult children.

With his skills and experience in leading processes to re-shape congregational identity, mission and direction, and participative management systems, he will be working with the transition team comprised of area/national church executive staff and moderators over the next two years.

The interim council is made up of Calvin Quan, the new moderator of MC Canada, and vice-moderator Aldred Neufeldt; Lee Dyck, moderator of MC B.C.; Dan Jack, moderator of MC Alberta; Ken Warkentin, moderator of MC Saskatchewan; Peter

Rempel, moderator of MC Manitoba; and Paul Wideman, moderator of MC Eastern Canada.

An executive staff group includes Willard Metzger, executive director of MC Canada; Coreena Stewart, chief administrative officer of MC Canada; and the executive directors of the area churches: Garry Janzen, MC B.C.; Tim Wiebe Neufeld, MC Alberta's temporary future directions coordinator; Ryan Siemens, MC Saskatchewan; Ken Warkentin, MC Manitoba; and David Martin, MC Eastern Canada.

"As we move into this period of transition," says the Future Directions website, "the ministries of MC Canada and each area church will continue. It is vital that congregations maintain, or, if possible, increase, current giving levels so that this transition into an even greater and deeper ownership of Christ's call to our church(es) can be a success." ❧

For more information, or to give feedback, email contact@futuredirectionsmc.ca or visit futuredirectionsmc.ca.



/// Staff change

Yee resigns pastoral role

• **KUEN YEE**, pastor of English ministries at Edmonton Vietnamese Mennonite Church, has resigned her three-quarter-time position effective Oct. 31. Yee is Chinese and has an Alliance Church background. In September 2012, she began serving as the pastor of English ministries with Vietnamese Mennonites. She formerly served as a lay pastor at Edmonton Chinese Alliance Church. She has also resigned as Mennonite Church Alberta's representative on the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service board.



Kuen Yee

—BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

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Camp Koinonia 50th anniversary

Snapshots

MENNONITE CHURCH MANITOBA PHOTOS



Molly Schaeffer, standing rear, one of this summer's resident managers, acts as emcee for Camp Koinonia's 50th-anniversary celebration on Oct. 2. Close to 150 people gathered for the event that included camp activities like wall climbing, ziplining, canoeing and pontoon boat rides that were supplemented by tours and cinnamon buns in the afternoon.



The event was capped off with worship, reminiscing and giving thanks for all the people who served, and opportunities for ministry, that 50 years at Camp Koinonia has enabled. Laura Dyck, a former resident manager, holds the anniversary cake.



Jake Neufeld, right, a long-time Camp Koinonia supporter and resident manager from 1977 to 1987, makes a huge batch of chilli in the cauldron for the 50th-anniversary supper meal, with help from Jack Heide, left.

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

PERSONAL REFLECTION

'Our family is here'

A Hutterite woman chronicles the arrival of Syrian refugees

ELAINE HOFER

Elaine Hofer and Paul Waldner are members of Green Acres Colony, near Wawanesa, Man. Their Hutterite colony, along with Enes and Fata Muheljic from Wawanesa, worked with Mennonite Central Committee Canada to sponsor a family from Syria. Hofer writes in her journal about the day they met Reyad Alhamoud, Najwa Hussein Al Mohamad and their two children at the Winnipeg airport on Feb. 18.

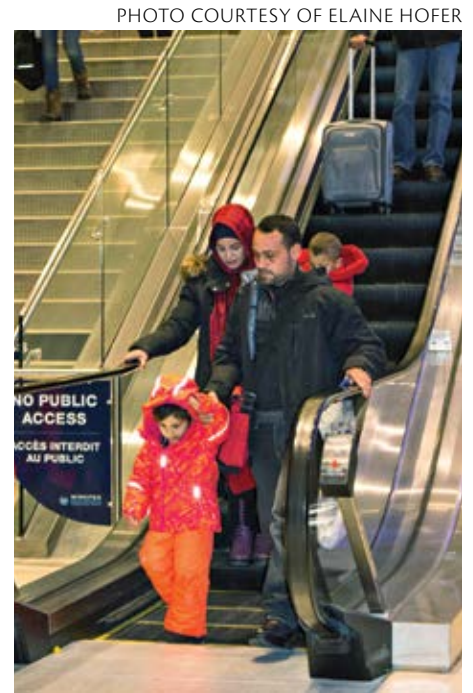
We try to imagine how it will be to travel home from Winnipeg, a two-and-a-half-hour trip, with a family of four who don't speak our language! We're a bit apprehensive, but hopeful that our hand gestures will help.

We stand waiting and my dad texts me that the flight we're waiting for is just over Steinbach. We look at each other like Kindergarten children, not willing to risk that long waterslide. How do we

suitably greet these exceptional people? We stand together, four people with one big heartbeat of emotion. Enes and his wife were refugees; Paul and my relatives from even longer ago were refugees, also.

While we stand there with our signs, teddy bears and Fata's thoughtful mini-rose bush, people come up to us and greet us: "Are you welcoming new Canadians? Well you just made my day!"

Another lady approaches us and asks if we'd be offended if she could donate



Reyad Alhamoud, Najwa Hussein Al Mohamad and their two children arrive at the Winnipeg airport on Feb. 18.

money to help our family. When we assure her that would be wonderful, she offers us an envelope with \$200. A lady from a Mennonite church in Winnipeg excitedly realizes who we're waiting for and says she is awaiting a family identical to ours. She offers to be an interpreter if we need her.

We stand and wait. Finally, a young family with two children in bright yellow coats! Oops, there's another family in red coats, also with two small children. Which one is ours? We shuffle and hold on to our signs and teddy bears to help us grasp the moment.

Paul urges me to capture moments with my camera. But I am worried that they might be offended. They don't know me and there they stand, looking so vulnerable and afraid.

Enes firmly and confidently reaches out his hand in greeting to Reyad. And Fata, in a completely natural gesture, kisses Najwa on her cheeks a few times. I follow suit, but I am not as graceful as Fata, as it is a ritual unfamiliar to me.

Reyad and Najwa look very, very scared. Reyad quickly expresses his fear

PHOTO COURTESY OF AVA WALDNER



Pictured from left to right: Wanda Waldner; Najwa Hussein Al Mohamad; Elaine Hofer, sitting; Reyad Alhamoud; and Paul Waldner holding Lee Waldner, 1.

about us not knowing their language. Our interpreter is able to reassure him that we had a computer app that would translate Arabic to English. It suddenly became a lifeline, and then he was able to smile.

We were safe and close in our old Nellie van, away from the airport. I somehow thought that soft seats and the warm heater blowing would soften some of the utterly frightened feelings they must have had. It was very cold outside. And I wished it weren't so dark; in the dark everything is magnified. Who did they leave behind? What had their lives been like up until now? How long did they wait for this?

We quickly pick up on Najwa's determination. And it fascinates and reassures me. She wants to know if we're married and how many children we have. She wants to know all about us, and she laughs when we are puzzled by her curiosity. Fata and I relish her laughter.

Paul drives and he and Enes make plans for the next couple days of accommodating and supporting the family. The

interpreter helps us along, and they nod thankfully over and over as we explain how long the ride home is, and where they will be staying. Fata tells the interpreter, 'Please, reassure them they are safe with us.'

We get home to Fata and Enes's home at 12 a.m. The children, Raghad, 4, and Ali, 3, lie sprawled like snow angels, bundled up in snowsuits fast asleep on the couches. We look at each other. We're here, this is really happening. Our family is here!

We say good night to our refugee family. Simple words feel good, and Najwa replies "good night" to us in English. I could have said it 10 times. It was a gesture we could give and receive. A way of sharing and receiving love and caring—our calling here in this world.

This has been incredible. It's been about vulnerability, trust and communication. It's about taking risks, and daring to love and serve. It's about risking trust and daring to receive love. *Es ist wunderbar!* ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF ELAINE HOFER



Elaine Hofer plays in a puddle with Raghad Riad Al Hamoud, 4, and Ali Riad Al Hamoud, 3.

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GOD AT WORK IN US

OBITUARY

A friend to the larger church

Janet Ranck Martin,
July 29, 1945 – Sept. 7, 2016

BY DOUG SNYDER

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

As a young girl in Pennsylvania, where she was born, Janet Ranck's interest in missions and supportive missions was nurtured by her family. Her father gave a house to the Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions to house missionaries on furlough in the United States. These missionaries shared many stories of their work in East Africa, which impacted her as a child and teenager.

She attended her first Mennonite World Conference assembly in Kitchener, Ont., as a teenager, which inspired her continuing dedication to the church as an adult. She attended six subsequent "Assembly gathered" events with her husband Wilmer Martin, beginning with Strasbourg, France, in 1984. This early connection to the broader church community inspired her strong love of the global church.

In 1968, she and her husband both studied at the Ontario Mennonite Bible School and Institute prior to his pastorates at Tavistock (Ont.) Mennonite Church for 10 years and at Erb Street Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont., for 13 years. She served as church secretary in both congregations and found meaningful experiences in a small group of women at Erb Street, which was noted specifically by Anita Cressman in her tribute at the memorial service.

Janet loved her role as a minister's wife at Tavistock and Erb Street, and encouraged Wilmer's ministry in TourMagination and Habitat for Humanity. Their joining the St. Agatha (Ont.) Mennonite Church congregation in 2002 found her highlighting international church needs, as she



Janet Ranck
Martin

and Wilmer reported happenings in the broader church to the congregation.

The couple travelled extensively, helping to co-lead tours for TourMagination and bus tours organized to encourage connections between Mennonite congregations in Canada and the U.S. Her travels

led her to visit more than 55 countries and spend time with congregations of multiple faiths.

Bishop Christopher Ndege wrote from Tanzania upon hearing of her passing: "We thank God for Janet Martin, who shared with us those given gifts so that the body of Christ be built up. . . . The work that Janet and Pastor Wilmer Martin participated in stands as a testimony to us today as their involvement in the 'great commission' to reach unreached people groups."

She is survived by her husband Wilmer, daughter Janelle, son Alan and daughter-in-law Christiane, and grandchildren Matthew and Miriam. ☸

☸ Staff change

Pastoral transition in Ontario

• **DAVID LEWIS** began as the intentional interim minister of Niagara United Mennonite Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake on Sept. 4. Lewis has a bachelor of theology degree from Canadian Bible College (now Ambrose University) and has also completed several courses at Canadian Theological Seminary and Tyndale Seminary. He is certified in leadership coaching and is trained as a transitional coach. Lewis has served in pastoral and denominational leadership roles in Canada, as well as an international posting in Warsaw, Poland. For the past 10 years, he has been serving in transitional ministry, assisting churches that are in between pastors. Outside of congregational ministry he has served on numerous educational and humanitarian boards, most recently completing a six-year stint on the Food for the Hungry Canada board, three of them in the role of chair.



—BY DAVE ROGALSKY



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FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

An insider's story of the Amish beard cutters

Power, isolation and manipulation were tools of cult-like leader Sam Mullet

MennoMedia

The strange case of the Amish beard cutters five years ago thrust a normally quiet American community into the national spotlight. The bizarre attacks seemed so out of character for a Christian community whose traditions emphasize nonviolence and forgiveness.

Now, five years after those attacks, a new Herald Press book—*Breakaway Amish: Growing Up with the Bergholz Beard Cutters* by Johnny Mast (written with Shawn Smucker)—tells the inside story. Mast is the grandson of Bishop Sam Mullet, who led the attacks and who pressured his grandson to participate by cutting his own father's beard.

The Bergholz Amish community, where Mast grew up in southern Ohio, became increasingly isolated from other Amish people as Mullet exerted cult-like control, ordering abusive attacks of beard and hair cutting, and other punishments, including forcing men to live in chicken coops. Some of the wives of those men moved in with Mullet, who sexually abused them.

"Somehow I'm getting a lot of power by committing these sins," Mullet told Mast after Mast learned of his grandfather's activities. "I know it's wrong, but I'm getting a lot of power."

Members became convinced that cutting their own hair was a sign of repentance and remorse—"a cleansing humiliation and a fresh start," Mast says. But when that conviction drove them to forcibly cut off the beards of Amish people outside their community, it was more than a strange religious ritual. It was a crime.

Recalling the disturbing events, Mast writes: "I saw images I'd rather forget: Holding my own father's hair in my hands

and cutting off pieces with a scissors.

"Watching six or seven men wander down toward Mullet's barn, chunks of their hair shaved off, their beards cut straight across with sharp scissors. I remember seeing those dishevelled men, skinny from not having eaten, their weird hair and their hats that no longer fit quite right, and thinking they looked like demons."

The Bergholz community was founded by Mullet and attracted families who preferred the strict Amish way of life practised there: no indoor plumbing, no tractors, no cars, no radio or television, no cell phones. Life was peaceful until Mullet began using violence and intimidation, along with strange punishments, to control the community.

A teenager at the time, Mast lived and worked on his grandfather's farm. In hindsight, he writes: "What I didn't realize was

how Sam operated: He used knowledge and emotions and sometimes lies to drive a wedge between people. Isolated people, it turns out, are very easy to control."

Mast asks: "Why would a bunch of grown men allow another man to treat them that way? I can't say for sure, but I think that for most of us, Bergholz was all we had. Every friend we had in the world lived there, every family member. Sam held the key to all of that."

"I think most people stayed in Bergholz

because they honestly believed that if they left, they would go to hell when they died," he says.

Mast's story is one of redemption and courage. At 22, he testified against his grandfather and 15 other defendants, many of them his aunts and uncles. They were all found guilty and are serving sentences of up to 15 years for their crimes. Mast left the community—the only world he knew.

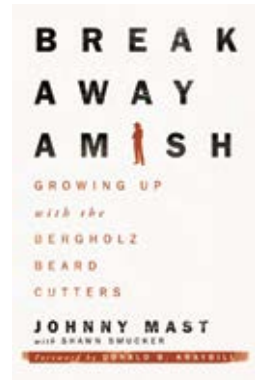
According to Mast, Bergholz is still controlled by Mullet from his prison cell. Mast's parents remain there, even though Mast's father was a beard-cutting victim. When Mast left the community, his mother begged him to stay and "try to do everything Sam tells you to do."

His parents have refused to meet his wife Clara and daughter Esther Jane. "It would be nice to see my dad again, to be able to have a regular conversation," Mast says.

*"I think most people stayed in Bergholz because they honestly believed that if they left, they would go to hell when they died."
(Johnny Mast)*

"But what happened in Bergholz ruined that."

It did not ruin Mast's belief in God, however, although he lost interest in belonging to a church. But since the birth of his daughter, Mast is interested in seeking out a new church home at some point. "Everything that happened led me here: to Clara and Esther Jane and a new life," he writes. "I don't live with regret. Actually, I have a lot of hope these days. I think it's going to be a good life." ❧



BOOK REVIEW

Learning from the 'teachers of trust'

Reconsidering Intellectual Disability: L'Arche, Medical Ethics and Christian Friendship.
Jason Reimer Greig. Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C., 2015, 291 pages.

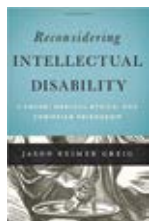
REVIEWED BY BARB DRAPER
BOOKS & RESOURCES EDITOR

If a person has a body that is physically and intellectually disabled, is it ethically right to use technology to keep that body small and childlike so that it is easier to care for?

As Jason Reimer Greig addresses this question, he explores the meaning of life. He argues that, while modern society has come to value independence and an absence of suffering, Christians should have a different worldview, one in which everyone is valued, regardless of his or her limitations. Although Greig does not mention right-to-die legislation, his comments could also be applied to that discussion.

A 2014 graduate of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., Greig spent many years supporting people with intellectual disabilities as part of an organization called L'Arche. He was shocked when he heard about a severely handicapped girl who received interventionist treatment to avoid puberty and to keep her body small. He believes that Christians should not think of disability—or even suffering—as a problem to be solved. He argues that life is a gift, not a possession, and a body is more than a container for the self—it is an essential part of personhood. The church, as a community, should extend hospitality and friendship to everyone, because that is what faithfulness to God is all about.

Citing the work of a variety of philosophers and theologians, Greig declares that since the Enlightenment modern humanity has come to believe the mind is more important than the body. Along with the idea that the body is little more than an



object or a machine, has come a deep fear of dependence on others and an abhorrence of suffering. Independence, autonomy and self-realization are the things society values. But this attitude poses a real problem for people with cognitive impairment, for it suggests they have no value and are virtually subhuman.

The Christian church should have a different view of life, says Greig. Our bodies are gifts, not possessions. The church is more than a group of autonomous individuals who choose to meet together on Sunday mornings, but, instead, is a community of the friends of God. In fact, we have much to learn about the theology of dependence on God from those who humbly accept their own vulnerability. The important things in life are not competition and achievement, but, rather, love, friendship and community.

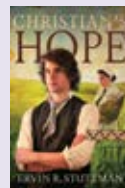
Greig also explains the vision and philosophy of Jean Vanier, the Canadian founder of L'Arche. "Vanier sees in the Christian story the antithesis of late modernity's belief in life as a process of moving from dependence to independence," he writes. "The truth resides in the fact that we receive our lives not alone, but through one another." Like Vanier, he believes that personhood is not a possession, but is a gift from God and from others. Receiving graciously is something those who are intellectually disabled can teach us, Greig says, calling them "teachers of trust."

Passionate about his subject matter, Greig presents good arguments about bioethics and why the worth of a person goes far beyond their ability to make

/// Briefly noted

Christian's Hope by Ervin Stutzman released by Herald Press

With *Christian's Hope*, author Ervin Stutzman, also executive director of Mennonite Church U.S.A., concludes his Return to Northkill trilogy. The first novel, *Jacob's Choice*, de-



scribes the historic French and Indian War massacre and aftermath, in which an Amish father and two sons are kidnapped and their family killed. *Joseph's Dilemma* looks at war and forgiveness through the eyes of a son adopted by his native American captors. In *Christian's Hope*, the second surviving son returns from captivity to find himself no longer at home in Amish culture and questioning his beliefs and identity. Christian Hochstetler faces interfaith questions about culture and the scope of God's love. He questions who he is after his unwilling return from his adopted native American home after eight years away. Is he Amish? Is he Indian? What clothes should he wear? Who is his true family? Which faith does he claim? Stutzman based his trilogy on documented evidence about the Hochstetler family, adding details and dialogue to the known historical facts.

Visit canadianmennonite.org/christians-hope to read an interview with Ervin Stutzman.
—MennoMedia



choices. It is not always an easy argument to follow, however, as Greig uses complex language and some of his ideas are philosophical and complicated.

Although it is not an easy read, this is an important book. As our society struggles with questions about medical intervention and end-of-life issues, Greig calls us to be faithful to God, and reminds us of the importance of community. ///

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

BOOK REVIEW

Questions answered without words

Unspoken: An Inheritance of Words. Connie T. Braun. Fern Hill, 2016.

REVIEWED BY DAVE ROGALSKY
EASTERN CANADA CORRESPONDENT

Poetry has always spoken to me. Whether it is the blank verse of Shakespeare, the doubling images of Hebrew scripture, or the lyrics of song, popular or otherwise. But I had not found the time for regular reading and contemplation until a spiritual director on an eight-day silent retreat suggested that my spiritual path sounded to her to echo the 14th-century Sufi poet Hafez. It was easy to include reading his work to my contemplation time, and I have begun



reading poetry in a more regular fashion.

Connie T. Braun of Vancouver has written poems closer to my own story than those of Hafez. Her collection, *Unspoken: An Inheritance of Words*, is dedicated to her mother in memory of her grandmother. Braun's family story is one of movement from Prussia, along

the Vistula River, to the Ukraine's earth, black and blackened by the fire of war, back to Poland before finally coming to the mountains of British Columbia.

It is a story she knows from reading history and from little glimpses with few words told by her family, much in silence. Memories of loss, of seeming miraculous return, of the end of life rich with food, faith and family.

Some poems are very situated in the life of the Dutch/North German/Russian story, but many take us to places in life where we all go. Not all are memoirs or of times past. "A talk with my son about God" meets the place many churches and church-going people find themselves in, trying to explain why faith is real, why it is important, why perhaps even the faithful have questions that need new answers, "to be guilt-free of traditional dogma."

Much to contemplate.
She lived on, and as I grew older I understood that she was content not to story me with stitches of loss, although I wanted details

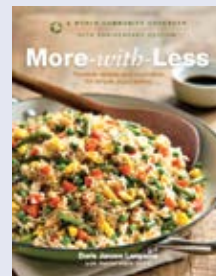
of her life to fasten her to me forever. So, near the end,
each time I visited her in the nursing home, I took away,

/// Briefly noted

More-with-Less turns 40 with new edition

Doris Janzen Longacre's *More-with-Less* cookbook, compiled from hundreds of recipes submitted by Mennonite cooks around the world, has almost a million copies in print. But it is four decades old. Leanne Brown, author of a cookbook entitled *Good and Cheap*, was asked to write a foreword for the 2016 edition of *More-with-Less*. She suddenly realized the request brought to mind a sacred space in her own mother's kitchen. "This was the book my mother kept on the kitchen shelf," Brown writes. "The kitchen shelf was sacred. Small and rickety as that shelf was, only that which was always in use deserved that hallowed spot." Food writer Rachel Marie Stone, author of *Eat with Joy: Redeeming God's Gift of Food*, was contracted to update and edit the 40th anniversary edition. The first edition launched before she was even born. Those of Brown's and Stone's generations think of *More-with-Less* as much more than a cookbook; they see it as a movement that now includes such terms as "slow food," "locally sourced," "hundred-mile diet," "meatless Mondays," and more. New features include a new size, lay-flat binding, some new recipes containing fresh and healthy ingredients, updated nutritional information and expanded cooking techniques. The recipes also include labels indicating vegetarian or gluten-free.

—MennoMedia



lovingly, without asking, so many questions.

—From "Polished Buttons" //

Connie T. Braun can be reached at connie@braun.bz



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A memoir retold by Helen Rose Pauls



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2016 Fall list of Books & Resources

Theology, Spirituality

All You Need is Love: Honoring the Diversity of Women's Voices in Theology. Jennifer Castro, ed. Women in Leadership Project, Mennonite Church U.S.A., 2016, 195 pages.

The 20 papers in this collection were presented at a Women Doing Theology conference held in Virginia in 2014. Among the papers included is one by Kimberly Penner, a Canadian.

Bread for the Journey: Meditations and Recipes to Nourish the Soul. Lovella Schellenberg et al. Herald Press, 2016, hardcover.



This collection of 13 weeks of meditations comes from the authors of *Mennonite Girls Can Cook*. Each week begins with a family journey story and a recipe, followed by Scripture-based meditations and prayers for each day of the week. The recipes are accompanied by full-page, colour photos.

Empire Erotics and Messianic Economies of Desire. P. Travis Kroeker. CMU Press, 2016, 92 pages.



As a presenter at the J. Thiessen Lecture series at Canadian Mennonite University in 2013, Kroeker explores what the Bible says about human desire. He wonders whether progressive Mennonites have chosen mammon, thereby losing their souls.

Ethics for Peacebuilders: A Practical Guide. Reina C. Neufeldt. Rowman and Littlefield Publishing, 2016, 171 pages.

Neufeldt, who teaches peace and conflict studies at Conrad Grebel University College, says that working for peace requires deep ethical thinking because doing good can easily have unintended consequences. Each of the seven chapters includes questions and scenarios for reflection and discussion.

Faith Travels: Trusting God in Life's Transitions. Marlene Kropf. MennoMedia, 2016, 93 pages.

Sponsored by Mennonite Women Canada and Mennonite Women U.S.A., this Bible study guide is designed to be used for personal study, women's groups and retreat settings. In each of the 13 sessions, Kropf includes biblical and personal reflections, as well as discussion questions.

From Suffering to Solidarity: The Historical Seeds of Mennonite Interreligious, Interethnic and International Peacebuilding. Andrew P. Klager, ed. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2016, 410 pages.

Klager, who teaches at the Centre for Mennonite Studies, University of the Fraser Valley, B.C., put together this collection of essays dealing with how Mennonites have been involved in building peace. Among the many contributors are John Derksen, Marlene Epp, Esther Epp-Tiessen, Lowell Ewert and Royden Loewen.

Generous Spaciousness: Responding to Gay Christians in the Church. Wendy Vanderwal-Gritter. Brazos Press, 2014, 281 pages.

The author of this book is executive director of New Direction Ministries of Canada. She encourages the church to respond to gay Christians with generous spaciousness, rather than with hard-line positions.

God After Christendom? Brian Hymes and Kyle Gingerich Hiebert. Paternoster Press, 2015, 170 pages.

This book is part of a series sponsored by the Anabaptist Network in the U.K. It gives an overview of the way Christians have talked about God over the centuries, always from the perspective of today's world. It is available as an eBook.

The Gospel Next Door: Following Jesus Right Where You Are. Marty Troyer. Herald Press, 2016, 207 pages.



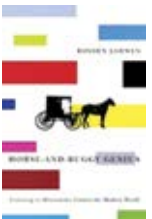
Troyer, pastor of Houston Mennonite Church in Texas, reflects on what it means to put faith into practice.

Using stories and down-to-earth personal experiences, he shows that following Jesus means getting involved with neighbours, and includes working for peace and justice.

Gospel of Luke and Ephesians: First Nations Version. Rain Ministries Inc., 2016, 140 pages.

This is the first publication of a project to translate the New Testament into language that is culturally sensitive to first nations people of North America. Translation was done by indigenous elders and pastors working with Wycliffe Associates. More information is available at firstnationsversion.com.

Horse-and-Buggy Genius: Listening to Mennonites Contest the Modern World. Royden Loewen. University of Manitoba Press, 2016, 244 pages.



Between 2009 and 2012, Royden Loewen led a team researching various horse-and-buggy Mennonite groups, including some in Ontario. The book presents the worldview of Old Colony Mennonites in Latin America, and compares how various horse-and-buggy Mennonite groups cope with the pressures of the modern world.

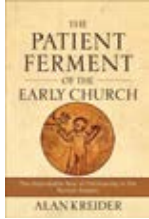
Lord Willing? Wrestling with God's Role in My Child's Death. Jessica Kelley. Herald Press, 2016, 295 pages.

The author describes her anguish as she

FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

accompanied her young son through illness and death caused by a brain tumour. She also wrestles with the question of why God allows pain and suffering, finding comfort in the idea that God does not preordain it.

The Patient Ferment of the Early Church: The Improbable Rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire. Alan Kreider. Baker Academic, 2016, 336 pages.



Kreider describes the practices of early Christians in the centuries after Christ and explores how the church managed to grow in spite of persecution. He argues that it happened because of patience and dependence on God, a tradition that changed by the time of Augustine.

History

The Amish: A Concise Introduction. Steven M. Nolt. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016, 142 pages.

Nolt gives an overview of Amish life and debunks some prevailing myths. He describes Amish ways of thinking about such things as family, community, schooling, technology, work and interaction with the broader world.

Breakaway Amish: Growing Up with the Bergholz Beard Cutters. Johnny Mast and Shawn Smucker. Herald Press, 2016, 173 pages.

Johnny Mast, grandson of the bishop, describes from an insider's perspective, how the Amish community in Bergholz, Ohio, went rogue. Not in fellowship with other Amish, Sam Mullet manipulated his community to the point that some members were convicted of assault.

Common Witness: A Story of Ministry Partnership between French and North American Mennonites, 1953-2003.



David Yoder Neufeld. Institute of Mennonite Studies and Mennonite Mission Network, 2016, 178 pages.

After the Second World War, French and North American Mennonites worked together to plant churches and to work with people in need in post-war France. The writer is a PhD candidate at the University of Arizona.

In Pursuit of Faithfulness: Conviction, Conflict and Compromise in Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference. Rich Preheim. Herald Press, 2016, 419 pages.

Preheim describes the origins of the Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference that brought together Mennonites and Amish in the 19th century. In the 20th century, the church moved away from being isolationist, with constant struggles between traditionalists and progressives.

More Than One Thing is True: Agony and Ecstasy Below Cloud Nine. Urbane Peachey. Masthof Press, Pa., 2016, 193 pages.

In this memoir, Peachey reflects on his work with Mennonite Central Committee in the Middle East through the 1970s, considers the commonalities between Christianity and Islam, and ponders his experiences as a Mennonite pastor in Pennsylvania. It is available from the author at upeace@aol.com.



Not Talking Union: An Oral History of North American Mennonites and Labour. Janis Thiessen. McGill-Queen's University Press, 234 pages.

Thiessen conducted many oral interviews across North America to discover stories about Mennonites and labour. She goes into some depth in describing the attitudes of California Mennonites toward the organization of field workers in the 1960s and the Mennonites in Manitoba who tried to claim conscientious objection to unions in the 1970s.



Out of Place: Social Exclusion and Mennonite Migrants in Canada. Luann Good Gingrich. University of Toronto Press, 2016, 300 pages.

Gingrich tells the story of how social service agencies in Canada have found it difficult to relate to Mennonites who have relocated from Mexico and other Latin American countries. The writer, a professor at York University,



interviewed many "Dietsche" families and social service workers.

Refugee. Helen Rose Pauls. Self-published, 2016, 96 pages.

This memoir of Agnes Sawatzky Pauls tells the amazing story of how she survived the horrors of the Stalinist regime in Russia in the 1930s and '40s. She told the stories to her daughter-in-law, but asked that they not be published before her death. To order, contact the author at ehpauls@shaw.ca.

Risk and Adventure: Community Development in Northern Alberta (1955-1970). Isaac Glick and Mildred Glick. Privately published, 2016.



Many volunteers served with Mennonite Voluntary Service in northern Alberta in the 1950s and '60s. Ike and Millie Glick write about these volunteer experiences as they worked to bring better education, healthcare and other developments to indigenous communities. Copies are available at imglick52@gmail.com.

Simple Life Fretz: A Kitchen Table Memoir of the First Mennonite Sociologist. Sara Fretz-Goering. Available from Friesen Press as hardcover, paperback or eBook, 2016, 192 pages.

Writing from her father's perspective, the daughter of J. Winfield Fretz has put together a comprehensive story of his life. She began collecting photos, letters and transcripts after his death in 2005. Fretz was the first president of Conrad Grebel College.

Other books

After Identity: Mennonite Writing in North America. Robert Zacharias, ed. University of Manitoba Press, 2015, 244 pages.

The 12 essays in this collection further explore the idea of Mennonite identity. It came out of a Mennonite/s Writing symposium in 2013. Among the contributors are Di Brandt, Royden Loewen, Magdalene Redekop, Hildi Froese Tiessen, Paul Tiessen and Robert Zacharias.

Both My Sons: A Story of Family and War in the Early Pennsylvania Forest. Ken Yoder Reed. Masthof Press, 2016.

This novel tells the story of Swiss-German

immigrants who arrive in the wilderness of Pennsylvania in 1710. The author's two previous novels are *Mennonite Soldier* and *He Flew Too High*.

Daughters in the House of Jacob: A Memoir of Migration. Dorothy M. Peters and Christine Kampen. Kindred Productions and the Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission, 2016, 275 pages.



Dorothy Peters and Christine Kampen, both from B.C., researched their family history

through letters, pictures and documents. They are cousins and granddaughters of Jacob Doerksen, a Mennonite preacher and teacher. The memoir tells the story of several generations, going back to South Russia before the revolution.

More-with-Less Cookbook: 40th Anniversary Edition. Doris Janzen Longacre and Rachel Marie Stone. Herald Press and MCC, 2016, 320 pages.



This new edition of an old favourite has many large and colourful photographs, a new

layout, reorganized introductory pages, updated nutritional information and cooking instructions, and some new recipes. It is available in paperback or lay-flat binding.

Very Married: Field Notes on Love and Fidelity. Katherine Willis Pershey. Herald Press, 2016.

Using a frank style and experiences from her own life, Pershey writes about the joys and challenges of staying happily married. A pastor herself, the writer wants to encourage committed marriages, especially in the church.

—Compiled by Barb Draper
Books & Resources Editor

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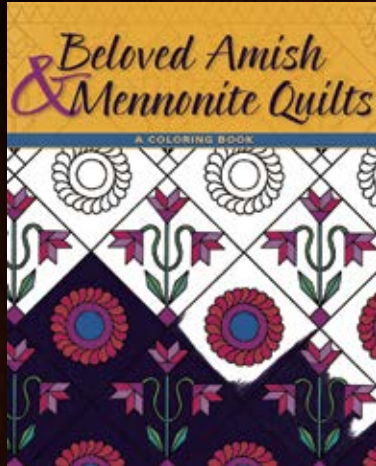
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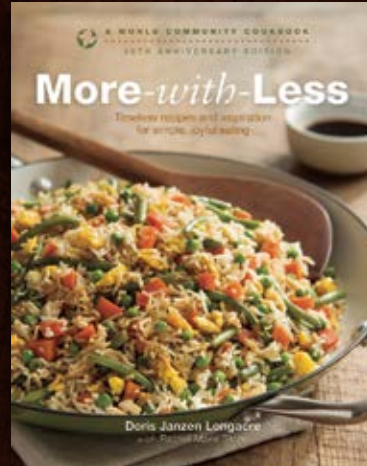


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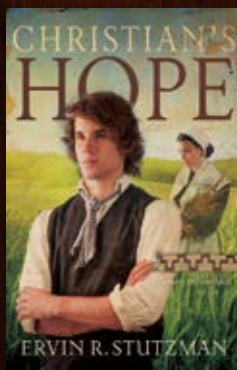
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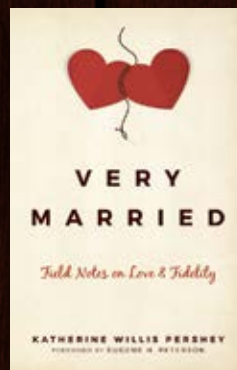
MORE-WITH-LESS IS NEW! Now with lay-flat binding, color photos, new healthy recipes, and updated information by award-winning food writer Rachel Marie Stone, the new 40th anniversary edition also preserves hundreds of timeless recipes and tips from Doris Janzen Longacre's bestselling cookbook. Join the generations of cooks using this classic cookbook that is gentle on the budget and mindful of those who are hungry.

\$22.99 USD. Lay-flat paperback.
9780836199642. 09/27/16.



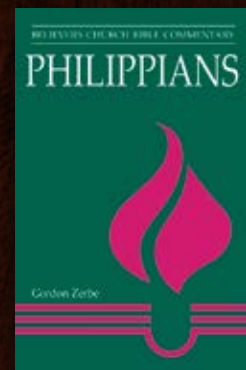
THE DRAMATIC SAGA of an Amish family captured by Native Americans continues in book 3 of the Return to Northkill series. Amish son Christian Hochstetler returns to his family after seven years in captivity during the French and Indian War, but finds that many things have shifted, leaving him faced with a life-altering decision.

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MARRIAGE. WHAT IS THIS SACRED COVENANT that binds one person to another, and what elements of faith and fidelity sustain it? United Church of Christ minister Katherine Willis Pershey invites us to embrace the joyful and difficult work of cherishing another person, for better or for worse. For life.

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WHAT IF, RATHER THAN READING PHILIPPIANS, we allowed Philippians to read us? Dr. Gordon Zerbe challenges us to enter the historical and cultural context of the ancient Roman world and to allow Paul's prison letter to interpret our own lives. Volume 31, Believer's Church Bible Commentary

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Self-discovery through improvisational theatre

Filmmaker to explore 'playback theatre' in upcoming documentary

BY AARON EPP
Young Voices Editor

Winnipeg filmmaker Brad Leitch's next project is a deeply personal one.

The 30-year-old, who attends Hope Mennonite Church in the city, is making a documentary about "playback theatre," a form of performance art that involves audience members sharing a story from their lives and an acting troupe immediately playing back that story using a variety of improvisational techniques.

Leitch first got involved in playback theatre three years ago while studying peace and conflict transformation at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU). In the field

good enough to make, at the very least, a short documentary. "I can stretch a budget, and I know we can do a lot of really good things with that," Leitch said. "We're totally, totally thrilled."

CM: How did you first get involved with theatre?

BL: I first started to dabble in some high-school and grade-school plays. That kind of changed for me [later] in high school, and I kind of stepped away from theatre for a while just because it was too difficult. I maintained that passion and that love for theatre, but it would be many years until I

'I'm just falling too much in love [with playback theatre] and really want to share [it] with other people.'
(Brad Leitch, filmmaker)

of peacebuilding, it is being used as a conflict-transformation tool for education.

Leitch has experienced first hand the power of playback. "As we share our stories [with] each other, it really does make an impact and lead to meaningful transformation," he said.

When *Canadian Mennonite* spoke with Leitch during the first week of October, he had just released *Reserve 107: Reconciliation on the Prairies*, a short documentary he filmed about indigenous-settler relations in Laird, Sask. He was also in the midst of a campaign to raise funds to make the playback theatre documentary.

At that point, he had raised \$17,000,

would actually come back to it. That would be specifically through playback theatre.

CM: Why did doing theatre become difficult?

BL: In high school I started to develop a lot of symptoms connected to anxiety and panic disorders. There was a certain period of time where I literally lost my ability to speak in public settings. I had already done a high-school play performance, but as a lot of these symptoms and experiences started to develop and become worse and inhibit my life in even just some basic, simple ways, I kind of went into hiding. It

(Continued on page 28)

PHOTOS THIS PAGE BY BRANDI FRIESEN THORPE



Brad Leitch, pictured leading a workshop on playback theatre, discovered the art form while studying at Canadian Mennonite University.



Brad Leitch, left, pictured with Robin Shugart and Bonface Beti, is excited to expose more people to playback theatre through his documentary.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BRAD LEITCH



Brad Leitch's directorial work has explored topics of peace and justice in Canada, Iraqi-Kurdistan, Israel/Palestine and the United Kingdom.

(Continued from page 27)

was an educator who really encouraged me to come back to theatre and join a drama class, and then eventually try out for some of the high-school plays in my senior year. That brought me back into theatre in that season of life.

CM: How did you discover playback theatre?

BL: It was basically a three-day workshop class that I took [at CMU]. A couple troupe members from a local group called Red Threads of Peace came out and introduced us to playback theatre. I really loved the workshop.

It was really that first time since high school where I found that I was performing again without even realizing it, because [playback is] such a gentle way of bringing people into a performance. It's not just for "quote-unquote" professional actors. I was embodying the character of somebody else. I loved that and I missed it, so when the invite came to anybody who wanted to join their regular play dates that they had, I said yes.

I would just go every week to hang out with the troupe and practise different forms of playback. It was a great outlet alongside my other work. Filmmaking for me a lot of times is a very solitary process, so to create with other people through playback theatre

was incredibly meaningful.

CM: How did the documentary come about?

BL: I'm just falling too much in love [with playback theatre] and really want to share [it] with other people. There are elements of it that are profoundly understated. There's no massive stage with lights, we don't have a lot of props, but what we have is our creative capacity to empathize and to embody another story. It becomes a profoundly personal thing as a playback troupe plays back somebody's story that's so meaningful to them, and they, for the first time, discover something about themselves or are reaffirmed in something of their own story for the first time.

As theatre actors, you have the opportunity to play that back. Even the moment that brings somebody to tell a story there, especially if it's one of vulnerability, there's a huge journey prior to that point. So, as a filmmaker, I know there's something really interesting I can do with telling the stories of the people of playback theatre, both as actors and as audience members, both inside and outside of that theatre space. ✎

The interview has been edited and condensed. To learn more, visit playbackfilm.ca.



Shaping life on campus

Student council presidents reflect on their hopes for the 2016-17 school year

BY AARON EPP
Young Voices Editor

PHOTO COURTESY OF JEREMY LIEUWEN



Jeremy Lieuwen wants Columbia Bible College to be a place where students can 'taste the kingdom of God.'

For many people, studying at college or university is about more than just going to classes. It's about connecting with peers at social events, service projects and forums that happen outside the classroom.

Often, these events are planned by the student council. To find out more about the young leaders who are helping to shape life on campus, *Canadian Mennonite* spoke with the student council presidents from the three post-secondary institutions affiliated with Mennonite Church Canada about

their hopes for the 2016-17 school year.

Jeremy Lieuwen, Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C.

Jeremy Lieuwen wants Columbia to be a place where students can "taste the kingdom of God."

"My goal for this year is to taste the kingdom of God, to experience what it means to live where Jesus reigns, to be part of a community that loves and values and encourages you no matter what, [where

people can] experience healing from the past . . . and experience better [their] identity in Christ,” says the 22-year-old, who grew up in Abbotsford and is in his fourth year of a degree in biblical studies.

“We try to have that DNA as part of each of our events,” Lieuwen says of his seven-member student council. “At the core of it, we always want it to be us helping students to really experience the kingdom of God.”

Being on student council can feel like a full-time job. He attends four or five meetings each week and spends at least two hours each weekday on student council-related work. But it’s worth it.

“Something I’ve been learning . . . is just how to walk in humility, and how much of what we do is actually God working through us,” Lieuwen says. “I believe that truth more and more every day. God is

various subcommittees of the 26-member student council organize.

Students who live on campus are more likely to participate in student-council activities than students who commute. Lord would like to bridge the gap because she has experienced first hand the benefits of participating in campus life.

“Being connected is pretty important,” she says. “You form a lot of important relationships when you’re in university [and] you learn a lot outside of class, through people and just experiences in general.”

Mika Driedger, Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.

Before she was elected president of Grebel’s student council, Mika Driedger had never been in a formal student leadership position. She ran for president after

PHOTO COURTESY OF ALYSSA LORD



This is Alyssa Lord’s second term as president of Canadian Mennonite University’s student council.

*‘The idea of getting to kind of help coordinate people, and link people with other people who could work together, appealed to me.’
(Mika Driedger, Grebel)*

working through me, and it’s not by my strength or by my hand that these things are succeeding.”

Alyssa Lord, Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), Winnipeg

For Alyssa Lord, one of the best parts about being student council president at CMU is working with a variety of people.

“There are so many really passionate people [at CMU],” says the 23-year-old, who grew up in La Broquerie, Man., and is working on a degree in history and psychology. “People aren’t scared to share their values, and that’s refreshing.”

This is Lord’s second year as student council president, and she has two main goals. The first is to build relationships between CMU students and the students from Peguis First Nation who are on campus for a 10-month program designed to help them transition from the indigenous community 150 kilometres north of Winnipeg to the provincial capital’s urban setting.

Lord also wants to see more CMU students get involved in social activities, service projects and worship evenings that the

two friends encouraged her.

“The idea of getting to kind of help coordinate people, and link people with other people who could work together, appealed to me,” says Driedger, 21, who grew up in Petitcodiac, N.B.

The fourth-year University of Waterloo biomedical-science student is enjoying the ways being president challenges her introverted nature. “A role like this really pushes me to make connections in the community with and between people,” Driedger says.

Like Lord, Driedger champions the benefits of being involved in campus life. “There is a huge variety in the stuff we do, which is fun, because it means moving slightly out of your comfort zone,” she says. “It gives you a different perspective of people, and helps you to get to know them in a better way.”

Driedger says there is a strong community at Grebel, and she hopes to maintain that during her time as president. “I see my role as to facilitate other people’s ideas, and make sure the student council—and therefore the student body—is moving in the direction students want it to move,” she says. ❧

Calendar

British Columbia

Nov. 18-20: MC B.C. "Impact" youth retreat, at Camp Squeah, Hope.
Nov. 26,27: Advent Vespers with Abendmusik Choir, at 7:30 p.m.: (26) at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford; (27) Knox United Church, Vancouver. Offerings to Menno Simons Centre.

Saskatchewan

Nov. 15: RJC kielke and sausage supper, at Bethany Manor, Saskatoon.
Nov. 18: Advent of Consumption, Mega Menno youth event at Osler Mennonite Church.
Nov. 26: MC Saskatchewan fall leadership assembly.
Dec. 11,17: A Buncha Guys Christmas concerts: (11) at Mayfair United Church; (17) at Shekinah Retreat Centre, Carlton. Both concerts at 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 16,18: RJC Christmas concerts: (16) at Knox United Church, Saskatoon; (18) at RJC in Rosthern, at 2:30 p.m.

Manitoba

Nov. 15: Westgate "Evening of the arts," at St. Mary's Anglican Church,

Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

Nov. 17: CMU School of Music open house. For more information, visit cmu.ca/campusvisit.

Nov. 19: Megan Krause and Dale Boldt exhibition at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg, at 7:30 p.m. Until Jan. 21, 2017.

Nov. 23: CMU Outtatown Discipleship School for a day. For more information, visit cmu.ca/campusvisit.

Nov. 25: CMU campus visit day. For more information, visit cmu.ca/campusvisit.

Nov. 26: Christmas at CMU. Celebrate the start of Advent enjoying music, festive décor, cookies and hot apple cider.

Nov. 28: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate annual general meeting, at 7 p.m.

Dec. 5: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Christmas concert, at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

Dec. 18: CMU Vespers service. A Christmas-themed worship service incorporating Scripture, prayer, hymns and choral music.

Feb. 2-3, 2017: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate presents three one-act plays by its junior-high students, at the Franco-Manitoban Cultural Centre, Winnipeg.

Feb. 8, 2017: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate open house, at 7 p.m.

April 27-29, 2017: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate presents its

senior-high musical.

May 8, 2017: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate bursary banquet, at the Canad Inns Polo Park, Winnipeg.

May 17, 2017: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate work day.

May 31, 2017: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate presents its Grade 7-9 spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

Ontario

Until Dec. 5: "Together: When we are engaged" photo exhibit that celebrates everyday acts that deepen our sense of community, at the Conrad Grebel University College gallery, Waterloo.

Until Dec. 26: Exhibit at the Mennonite Archives of Ontario at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo: "Conchies speak: Ontario Mennonites in Alternative Service."

Nov. 3: The Benjamin Eby Lecture, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, at 7:30 p.m. Speaker: Jeremy Bergen. Topic: "Christians killing Christians: Martyrdom and the disunity of the church."

Nov. 5,6: Pax Christi Chorale, with the Bicycle Opera Project, presents Mendelssohn's "Elijah," at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto; (5) 7:30 p.m.; (6) 3 p.m.

Nov. 11-13: Marriage Encounter weekend for couples at Monastery of Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre, Niagara Falls. For information, go to marriageencounter.com or call 519-669-8667.

Nov. 18-19: "Spirit of Christmas" sale, at Nairn Mennonite Church, Ailsa Craig: (18) from 6:30 to 9 p.m.; (19) from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. With crafts, Ten Thousand Villages items and home baking. Music in the tea room. In support of the local food bank.

Nov. 19: Fairview Mennonite Home's

annual handicraft sale, in Cambridge, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Includes tea room and bake sale, Christmas decorations and gifts, and Santa's "sweet shop."

Nov. 19: Annual Nithview bazaar with a bake sale, silent auction, community vendors and a tea room, in New Hamburg, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Nov. 19,20: Soli Deo Gloria Singers present their fall concert, "Christ alone, Scripture alone": (19) at UMEI, Leamington, at 7:30 p.m.; (20) at Leamington United Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m. For tickets, call UMEI at 519-326-7448.

Nov. 26: Rescue Junction concert and MennoHomes AGM at Woodside Church, Elmira, at 7 p.m. Everyone welcome. For information call 226-476-2535 or visit www.mennohomes.com.

Dec. 4: St. Jacobs Mennonite Church presents the music of Vivaldi's "Gloria" with choir, soloists and orchestra as part of its Sunday morning worship service, at 10 a.m.

Dec. 10: Mennonite Mass Choir with the KW Symphony and soloists perform Handel's "Messiah," at Centre in the Square, Kitchener.

Dec. 10,11: Pax Christi Chorale, with Shannon Mercer and the Aslan Boys Choir, presents, "Ode on the Nativity" by C.H.H. Parry, at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto; (10) 7:30 p.m.; (11) 3 p.m.

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



UpComing

Deadline approaching for '10 under 30' nominations

Canadian Mennonite wants to know about the young adults who are making a difference in your community. In a special feature we will publish in the new year, *Canadian Mennonite* will feature 10 young people from across Canada who care about and support the church—10 emerging Mennonite leaders who are working to make the world a better place. If you know young people who make the church or community better, whether it's through pastoral ministry, activism, community work, visual art, music, business, farming, politics, the world wide web, or in some other way, we want to hear about them. Send an email to youngvoices@canadianmennonite.org by the end of the day on Nov. 4. For nomination criteria, visit bit.ly/10-under-30.

—BY AARON EPP



Classifieds

Announcement

The Village Casketmaker
 Funeral caskets and urns sold directly to public. Sensible and eco-friendly. Made in Winnipeg. Shipping beyond Manitoba available. Learn more: thevillagecasketmaker.com

For Rent

Five bedroom furnished home in Winnipeg, Man., for rent January - April 2017 during sabbatical. \$1500/month including heat/water. Contact Rachel Huebner, for details at rkhuebner@gmail.com.

Employment Opportunities

**CANADIAN
MENNONITE**

Employment
opportunity

Executive Editor, Publisher

Canadian Mennonite, an independent, church-supported publication, is inviting candidate applications for two key positions:

Executive Editor (60%) will guide and direct the magazine, website, social media and other day-to-day publishing activities of *Canadian Mennonite*.

Publisher (40%) will have overall responsibility for *Canadian Mennonite's* print and digital publishing activities; for its financial health; and for providing a vision and strategy for growth.

These positions may be combined in the right candidate and are open to all qualified applicants.

See canadianmennonite.org/positions for full information and job descriptions. Applications close December 15, 2016.



HOSTS at BRUBACHER HOUSE MUSEUM Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo

Conrad Grebel University College and the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario are seeking one or two people to serve as host(s) for the Brubacher House Museum, beginning February 2017 for an initial two-year term. Located on the beautiful north campus of the University of Waterloo, this Mennonite-built historic home (ca. 1855) requires host(s) who are willing to live on site in a private two-bedroom apartment and provide tours during the summer months and by appointment in the winter months. Host(s) are also expected to promote the Brubacher House and develop programming in consultation with an advisory committee. Rent and utilities are free in exchange for performance of duties. Applicant(s) should be responsible and able to relate to a broad range of people. Preference will be given to person(s) who have a familiarity with the history of Waterloo Region.

Application deadline is November 15, 2016.

Contact E. Paul Penner, Director of Operations
at 519-885-0220, x24231 or eppenner@uwaterloo.ca.

Read more at grebel.ca/positions



**Conrad Grebel
University College**

The Board of Governors of Conrad Grebel University College invites applications and nominations for the position of

PRESIDENT

Conrad Grebel University College, founded by the Mennonite church, is affiliated with, and situated on the campus of, the University of Waterloo. The mission and programs of the College are rooted in and inspired by its Christian identity and its Anabaptist/Mennonite heritage. The College offers undergraduate courses in History, Mennonite Studies, Music, Peace and Conflict Studies, Religious Studies, and Sociology, and has graduate programs in Theological Studies and in Peace and Conflict Studies. The College residence houses 174 students, from across all University of Waterloo faculties, in a dynamic community.

The board is seeking a strategic, energetic, creative, and collaborative leader who will consolidate and extend program strengths, foster academic excellence, and advance relationships of the College with the world-renowned University of Waterloo and the broader community.

For further information about the College, position description and application procedures, see www.grebel.ca/positions. Review of applications will begin **December 1, 2016**, and will continue until the position is filled. The College is committed to employment equity and welcomes applications from all qualified persons; however, Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority.

All inquiries will be kept in confidence and should be addressed to the Presidential Search Committee, chaired by Fred Redekop, at grebelsearch@uwaterloo.ca.

www.grebel.ca/positions

'Half-moon' agriculture helps African farmers

STORY BY MARLA PIERSON LESTER /

PHOTOS BY JAMES SOUDER

Mennonite Central Committee

Step into the fields of Etienne Tiendrébeogo (pictured at right in the bright shirt) in Yé, Burkina Faso, and you'll notice something striking: large half-moon shapes dug into the soil, adding a fanciful touch to the dirt of his rural fields.

The result is anything but fanciful, however.

In Burkina Faso, rainfall is erratic, and without techniques like this, rain from a downpour would roll off the parched soil, leaving little nourishment for crops. But where half moons are dug, the water is held in place, giving it a chance to seep into the soil, where it will better nourish crops.

These half moons, combined with other new agricultural techniques Tiendrébeogo learned through the work of the Office of Development of Evangelical Churches (ODE), a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) partner, have changed his life by increasing his crop yields.

To build half moons into a field, Tiendrébeogo follows these steps:

1. **FIND THE** direction water will flow when it rains.
2. **DRAW A** four-metre line. Create a curved line connecting the two ends of the line. The curved side must be downhill from the straight side.
3. **DIG 15** to 30 centimetres deep in the soil inside the half moon.
4. **PILE THE** soil on the edge of the arc to a height of 5 to 10 cm. For extra support, put rocks on the curved edge.
5. **PUT A** pile of organic manure inside the half moon.
6. **MIX THE** manure into the soil.
7. **PLANT SEEDS** in the half moon after it rains.

When Tiendrébeogo first heard about half moons, he doubted they would work.

"But through our experience, we are delighted to use the new practices because everything went well and it did not cost any extra money," he says. "Farmers don't need chemical inputs because they can use organic fertilizers from their livestock. In the past, we used to sell food saved for our family to pay for school fees, which sometimes meant we did not have enough to eat."

"Now I teach other farmers these techniques, even those who did not participate in the ODE training," he says. ☸

