

CANADIAN MENNONITE

December 12, 2016

Volume 20 Number 24

Spirit-heat to thaw your freezing blood

A reflection on 'Good King Wenceslas,'
pg. 4

inside

Understanding opponents of LGBTQ inclusion 13

Christians killing other Christians 18

'Mennonites, land and the environment' 24

EDITORIAL

We need 'Emmanuel' like never before

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

If ever we needed to hear "Emmanuel" (God with us), it is during this Advent season as we wind up the year 2016. With violence prevailing in war-torn countries, and political upheaval changing the face of our neighbour to the south, not to mention changes in our own denominational structure, we seem to be groping for a divine peace like never before.

The angel's song of "*peace on earth among those with whom he is pleased*" to the Bethlehem hillside shepherds seems like a faint whisper amid the din of our present world. How desperately we need the assurance of God's reign this season as we put aside our fears and despair to enter into the joy of our Lord, of God entering the human scene in the form of a newborn baby.

We are beset with anxiety by the speed of cultural changes coming upon us this past year. Watching the U.S. election, we have been introduced to "post-truth," as demonstrated by "fake news" stories, false information believed to be fact. To those born in the mid-1950s, this seems alarmingly Orwellian. It's hard to wrap our heads around it.

Social media discourse through Twitter and Facebook has so taken over conversation in the public square that traditional forms of communication are no longer

trusted sources of information, but are seen to be biased and market-driven, interested only in commercial success or in preserving establishment values. We live in silos and tend to communicate only with those who share our views and core beliefs.



Don't think for a moment that this isn't affecting our life as a faith community with Anabaptist roots. We struggle to model Jesus and follow his teaching as recorded in Luke 4:18: "*For the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those that are bruised*" (King James 2000 Bible).

Instead, we are spending our spiritual energies parsing the scriptures over gay marriage, having contentious discussions over who is the most faithful, who is in and who is out, and whether or not we will leave or stay with the main body of believers. We are less enthused about relating to our indigenous neighbours whose families have been broken over centuries of abuse and neglect. We seem reluctant to learn from native spirituality, which could enrich our own.

We are not sure if we should side with the Christian Palestinians in their plight

as "captives" in an occupied land of the Middle East, or to regard Christian Zionism as God giving the land to the Jews, going back to a promise made to Abraham.

While we give lip service to caring for creation, many of us are still far too dependent on fossil-fuel sources of energy to heat and cool our homes and fuel our cars, and to travel the globe in fuel-guzzling airplanes. It is hard to change our lifestyles in ways that pay closer attention to waste management and to cheap consumer goods produced by child labour and by \$2-a-day labourers in developing countries.

In our own denominational restructuring, are we drawing on the wisdom and leadership skills of women, persons of non-white ethnicity from our new Canadian congregations, and young leaders, all of whom could bring valuable perspectives to the new formation? So far, the task is falling to area church moderators and an Interim Council that includes only one woman. Most of the members are over 50; this is not to downplay the wisdom of age and experience, but does it have to be dominated by older white men?

Yes, we celebrate again the coming of Emmanuel, the stabilizing divine force that gives our lives meaning and purpose in a changing world, a place just as broken and violent as the Roman-occupied Palestine of more than two thousand years ago. Not much has changed, has it?

But the message of deliverance to the captives is still relevant in the 21st century. Can we, during this Advent, re-examine our spiritual priorities and bring peace among those with whom he is pleased?

ABOUT THE COVER:

The artwork 'Good King Wenceslas' was originally commissioned by Stages on the Sound in Brooklyn, N.Y., for a children's play of the same name. Layton Friesen reflects on the message of the carol in our Christmas feature, 'Spirit-heat to thaw your freezing blood,' on page 4.

ARTWORK: PATRICIA BRINTLE (USED BY PERMISSION)

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contents

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Spirit-heat to thaw your freezing blood 4

In his reflection on the 'Good King Wenceslas' carol, **LAYTON FRIESEN** states, 'As the Page fits his own feet into the Master's footprints that are pointed toward the freezing peasant, he finds a Spirit-heat radiating from these tracks.'

Future Directions: Take Two/

Future Directions process accelerated 16-17

These two stories by senior writer **WILL BRAUN** and Eastern Canada correspondent **DAVE ROGALSKY** take a look at the new Interim Council and the need for speed in the process.

'In the midst of suffering, faith does not disappear' 23

RACHEL BERGEN reports that Mennonite Central Committee's Syrian partners continue to deliver assistance despite intensified fighting in this protracted civil war.

Missionaries' influence spans the generations 28

MARY DERKSEN of Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, B.C., recounts how, nearly 60 years later, the missionary efforts of her and her late husband are still reverberating across two continents.

Finding God at work in the city 29

Herald Press releases *The Gospel Next Door*, the latest book by Marty Troyer, pastor of Houston (Tex.) Mennonite Church.

Young Voices 35-37

In "Voices singing 'Let's be jolly ...,'" musician **NOLAN KEHLER** talks about music that gets him into the Christmas spirit. In "Painting as problem-solving," artist **MEGAN KRAUSE's** anxiety over the future of the planet leads to a new exhibit of abstract paintings.

Regular features:

For discussion **6** Readers write **7** Milestones **12**

A moment from yesterday **15** Online NOW! **31**

Schools Directory **38** Calendar **39** Classifieds **39**

We need 'Emmanuel' like never before 2

DICK BENNER

The new normal now 7

KEN WARKENTIN

Are we living in the last millennium? 8

PHIL WAGLER

Church wants to spread the 'Living Word' 9

AS TOLD TO DAVE ROGALSKY



Award-winning
member of the
Canadian Church Press



CHRISTMAS FEATURE

Spirit-heat to thaw your freezing blood

A reflection on 'Good King Wenceslas'

BY LAYTON FRIESEN



Rather than bucking the snow-drifts on his own in trying to feed the poor, the Page can fall in behind the King who pioneers a path.

“**G**ood King Wenceslas” is not the most sing-able of carols and the lyrics are on the King James end of archaic. You may have assumed this 10th-century legend is about the spirit of the Yule and putting a penny in the old man’s hat. Let’s look again. See what you think of the conversion of his servant, the Page.

On the Feast of Stephen the King peers out his window into the frozen world and sees a peasant struggling against the cruel, cold night. The King asks his Page, “Yonder peasant, who is he? Where and what his dwelling?” He is asking the Page to help him know his kingdom’s needs. The conversion of the Page begins not when he stares down into his own navel and realizes his own sinfulness, but when his eyes are lifted to see the world as the King sees it, in need of love.

So “Page and Monarch forth they went, forth they went together.” This is the incarnation at Christmas. Think of God as King Jesus going out into a hostile world to bring good news to the poor and proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour (Luke 4:18-19). The King makes this decision himself. The Page has no interest in yonder freezing peasant until the King points him out and draws the Page into his love and out into the world with him. The Page says, in effect, *“Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word”* (Luke 1:38).

But then the drama of conversion begins. It’s a drama not because yonder peasant is so resistant to flesh and wine. Out on the expedition the Page flounders about in weakness, unable to keep up with the King on his icy mission. The Page discovers the depth of his sin as he seeks to track with his King on this errand of mercy.

The Page does not have a “hit-rock-bottom” experience by the fire inside the castle that might call out the King’s blessing on him. Out in the blizzard, on the way to the poor, the Page realizes that if salvation comes by accompanying the King out seeking the lost, he himself is a goner. “Fails my heart, I know not how, I can go no longer.”

Then cries the King over the wail of the storm: “Mark my footsteps, my good Page. Tread thou in them boldly. Thou shalt

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS PHOTOS (BIT.LY/CREATIVE-COMMONS-ATTRIBUTION)



'Good King Wenceslas' biscuit tin covers (above and at left) in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England, made by Hudson, Scott & Sons for Huntley and Palmers, 1913.

find the winter's rage freeze thy blood less coldly." In other words, quit thrashing around by yourself in this quest; walk, instead, in my footsteps.

This is grace. Grace can be the merciful acceptance of the sinner who has not

earned love. It can also be the command of orientation, and the assurance of the King's presence for a lost "under-saviour." Rather than bucking the snowdrifts on his own in trying to feed the poor, the Page is beckoned to fall in behind the King, who

pioneers a path.

But note again, there is no relieving the Page of the mission. The King does not stop and say: "First attend to thine own soul, my dear Page, and then come back hither into the gale." Salvation is simply

falling in behind the King tramping out with meat to a peasant. To be a Christian is to become a person who keeps up with the King. But can we be saved by merely following the King?

Here comes the Christmas miracle. The Page sets his foot down into the shoe prints of the King and knows immediately that these are no ordinary tracks: "Heat was in the very sod which the saint had printed." As the Page fits his own feet into the Master's footprints that are pointed toward the freezing peasant, he finds a Spirit-heat radiating from these tracks. This is our first indication that this King is more than just an ordinary good man.

The King holds a power to energize or grace a path into the world. The very soil this King touches as he strides toward the poor becomes the vent through which the warmth of Spirit-fire and the assurance of salvation enter the frail Page.

"Therefore, Christian men, be sure, wealth or rank possessing, Ye who now will bless the poor, shall yourselves find blessing." If we cut that last phrase loose from the rest of the song, we might suspect a legalism at work here, a works-righteousness in which we are saved if we give enough alms to the poor. It is true that, according to this song, the Page finds "blessing"—which I am interpreting as salvation—only in joining the King's trek into the world to help the poor. But this is not legalism, and here we come to an insight that, I believe, Scripture points to in talking about salvation.

Let me stereotype to make a point:

- **THE PROTESTANT** way would have the Page go through a saving experience back at the castle. There he would receive the assurance of salvation and the anointing of the Spirit. Then, out of gratitude for this wonderful grace, he would rush out to help the peasant. But even if he failed to reach the peasant, his salvation would be secure. He was saved back at the castle already, before the freezing foray.
- **IN A** legalist plan of salvation, on the other hand, the Page, back at the castle would be burdened by his need to impress the King. Seizing upon a plan, he would rush out to flounder in the snow, hoping the King would notice his

extreme effort and grant him holy rest when he is finally dragged, frozen, stiff and dead, back into the castle, having given his all.

- **BUT THEN** I think this 10th-century legend is similar to the old Anabaptist view of salvation. The King invites us to go out with him into the world to be his apprentice, his partner, in bringing hope to the poor. On the way, as the strength to overcome the world's never-ending winter, we receive unmerited grace, which is the Spirit-heat and assurance of partnership needed to share in the King's mission.

Here, grace is the Spirit's power to be joined mystically and practically with Christ in his love for people. We are saved by grace from all our sin, but this sin is not some navel-gazing infirmity we nurse by the fire back at the castle. Sin is our hopeless inability to truly love our fellow church-member, neighbour or the poor around us, as Christ does. As we seek to love the poor we are thrown against our own poverty. To be saved is to fall in behind the King. In that surrender, we find grace, forgiveness and assurance as the power to love.

Hans Denk, an Anabaptist mystic, said: "Whoever has recognized the truth in Christ Jesus and obeys it from the heart

is free from sin, although he is never free from temptation. It is impossible for him to walk firmly in the way of God unless he be strengthened by God."

We live in a culture that, at some level, wants to help the poor. What we find as the church is heat in the sod. In Christ there is power and hope for those who find the world's problems insurmountable and ever-increasing. We have found we cannot track with Christ without this Spirit-heat.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light (Matthew 11:29-30. ☸

Layton Friesen is an EMC minister, a doctor of theology student at the Toronto School of Theology, and a member of the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre. Originally published in the December 2015 issue of the Evangelical Mennonite Conference Messenger.



☸ For discussion

1. Do you know the words to "Good King Wenceslas"? Where did you learn them? How often do you hear it sung? Is it a favourite of anyone you know? Do you agree with Layton Friesen that it is "not the most sing-able of carols"?
2. Do you sometimes feel like the Page, finding it difficult to make your way through the snow while carrying a bundle? What situations make our lives particularly challenging? In what ways is King Wenceslas a Christ figure? What does it mean to walk in the footsteps of the King?
3. Friesen suggests that this song is an image of salvation as apprenticeship, which is different from salvation as private conversion or legalism. He says, "I think this 10th-century legend is similar to the old Anabaptist view of salvation." Do you agree? How does this view of salvation bring together grace and action?
4. Friesen writes about "Spirit-heat" that radiates from the Master's footprints. Can you think of examples of how Christians have experienced this "Spirit-heat"? What does this carol have to say about our relationship to Christ and our view of the world?

—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.

✉ Is the Doctrine of Discovery yesterday's news?

RE: "DISCOVERING HUMILITY" column, Sept. 26, page 7.

It seems Pope Paul III may have spoken to the Doctrine of Discovery already, in his 1537 papal encyclical:

"We define and declare . . . that, notwithstanding whatever may have been or may be said to the contrary, the said Indians and all other people who may later be discovered by Christians, are by no means to be deprived of their liberty or the possession of their property, even though they be outside the faith of Jesus Christ; and that they may and should, freely and legitimately, enjoy their liberty and the possession of their property; nor should they be in any way enslaved;

(Continued on page 8)

FROM OUR LEADERS

The new normal now

KEN WARKENTIN

For the past two months I have been living with post-concussion syndrome after an incident that involved a bear, a rock and the rain.

The prognosis for me is very good.

Improvement has been steady and gradual—sometimes too gradual for my liking—but likely I will not sustain any long-term damage. While I am beginning to feel well again, I am not convinced that I remember accurately what my pre-concussion state was. For example, I am coming to peace with living with a fairly constant ringing in my ears and it is beginning to feel like a regular part of me. My energy levels are not what I would like them to be, but I am adjusting my lifestyle to adapt to this reality. It is the new normal now, and I am able to find joy each day in many things.

During the recovery process I have spent time sitting silently in the dark contemplating many things and emptying my

mind of restless and anxious thoughts: Will I ever feel like I used to? Will I be able to do all the things I want to do? What matters now is how I will move forward into the noise and the light.

Some of my silent reveries have been around the recent changes—some might even call them traumatic changes—that we as the Mennonite church have been experiencing. Perhaps we are also in a time of recovery and revival. This year has felt like we have sustained life-changing, transforming events. We've had budget shortfalls that have resulted in significant changes. We have listened, shared and discerned God's will in a very fast-paced, socially changing environment. We have had several significant resolutions passed at our summer assembly in Saskatoon that will likely change the nature of our national church.

This bruising year has resulted in some injury. The fabric of our fellowship has been stretched and, in some cases, ripped. We have experienced tension in

relationships. Disagreements have limited our ability to trust and to listen. We have ringing in our ears and we might do well to wonder what it means for us.

I am told that if I take care of myself my brain will repair itself. I am happy to trust the medical profession on this front. I know that we can trust the Creator of our universe and the head of our church to recreate in each of us relational equilibrium, missional creativity and ministry engagement. As this new church year begins I am looking forward to witnessing the continued anointing of the Spirit of God on the church. I am looking forward to a refreshed capacity to bring "good news to the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, freedom for the oppressed and a bold proclamation of the year of the Lord's favour" (Luke 4:18-19).

Ken Warkentin is executive director of Mennonite Church Manitoba. No bears were harmed in the making of this article.



(Continued from page 7)

should the contrary happen, it shall be null and have no effect" (bit.ly/sublimus-dei).

RUSSEL SNYDER-PENNER
(ONLINE COMMENT)



✉ What is happening in our church institutions?

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

Aside from Mennonite Church Canada's desire to solve its problems by devolving its mandate to individual congregations and area churches, does our

OUTSIDE THE BOX

Are we living in the last millennium?

PHIL WAGLER

NO one would doubt that Stephen Hawking, the Cambridge University theoretical physicist and cosmologist, is one of the more brilliant minds of recent times. The guy forgets more in a day than I'll learn in a lifetime. *The Theory of Everything*, the movie of his marriages, his journey with early-onset Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS—more commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease), and his rise to fame, is a great watch and stirs much thought about the nature of love, faith and science. Hawking intrigues and he has wide influence.

So, when he says something like he did recently at the Oxford Union debating society it draws no small attention. "We must also continue to go into space for the future of humanity," he said. "I don't think we will survive another thousand years without escaping beyond our fragile planet." Quite a statement, and one that led to this jarring headline: "Stephen Hawking: Humans only have about 1,000 years left."

That's right. One of the brightest bulbs around has declared we're in the last millennium and our salvation is escape. This is, likely, an over-simplification

of Hawking's Oxford comments, and perhaps he was just seeking headlines to keep his books selling, but let's be honest: How many preachers would get away with such talk these days?

There is a trend currently among those contemplating the big questions: This can't last. Do you agree? Do you sense their angst? Do you read those headlines? Do you hope as they hope? Do Hawking's words elicit the desire to invest in NASA or the "Mars-ish" dreams of Elon Musk?

There is a strange paradox we live in within our culture: A shrugging dismissal of faith on the one hand, and an incapacity to live without it on the other. This is not meant to criticize, but rather to call Christians to new compassion, hope



'I don't think we will survive another thousand years without escaping beyond our fragile planet.'
(Stephen Hawking)

and boldness. We may conclude we live in a time where faith is a thing of the past for many, but this is clearly not the case. People are open to invitations to huge leaps of faith. After all, does it not take enormous faith to believe that our salvation from the ticking time bomb of a planet we inhabit is space travel? It takes

a lot of faith, without awakening much hope. This is not a salvation for all, but for the wealthy and privileged. Unless, of course, Chevrolet is still around and producing economy spaceships.

I jest, but only because we don't live a thousand years from now. And since we don't know what tomorrow brings, we'd perhaps be wise to remember a different type of authoritative word: "*But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent*" (II Peter 3:8-9, New Living Translation).

In other words, the last millennium could be today—and probably is for someone somewhere—so what does that require of you and me who have been brought from darkness to light, and know

a Saviour, who is full of grace and truth, and is looking for a people who bring heaven here?

Phil Wagler is pretty sure he won't be around for the next millennium, so he's committed to loving like Jesus right where he lives now in Surrey, BC.

walk into the unknown future wilderness require that we treat our staff like insects to be stepped on? There is no justification at all to use that demonic corporate model on staff of any church organization. While Elsie Rempel reports that there has been some redress, her dismissal still happened.

I cannot justify any financial support to any of the Mennonite institutions that I have been supporting

for years, separate from my congregational giving. *Canadian Mennonite* and a local organization are notable exceptions. The magazine has worked diligently at keeping dialogue open on the difficult issues that are of national and international importance to the Mennonite church. Thanks to the magazine, the Future Directions Task Force process has a chance of

(Continued on page 10)

NEW CANADIAN VOICE

Church wants to spread the 'Living Word'

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

EASTERN CANADA CORRESPONDENT

Church of the Living Word in Ottawa became an emerging church in Mennonite Church Eastern Canada in 2009, although it was founded four years earlier.

Church of the Living Word has some members, including Pastor Getachew Woldeyes's wife, who belonged to Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia, a Mennonite World Conference (MWC) member church.

Most of the adult members were refugees from Ethiopia during the communist Derg period from the mid-1970s to the late '80s. Woldeyes and Elder Rediet Lemichael both spent many years in Greece before coming to Canada, paralleling the current experience of refugees fleeing the Middle East and Africa.

The congregation, which consists of about 25 adults and the same number of children, along with five non-member families, continues to worship in Amharic, a Semitic language, but their youth and children have switched to English already. Woldeyes is of Amhara background, while Lemichael is Tigrayan, showing the inter-ethnic background of the congregation.

With the current unrest in Ethiopia, the congregation is praying for peace and



Pastor Getachew Woldeyes, left, and Elder Rediet Lemichael of Church of the Living Word in Ottawa, an Ethiopian emerging congregation in Mennonite Church Eastern Canada.

justice in their homeland. MC Eastern Canada's focus on peace in and through Christ matches their hopes. They feel accepted by the area church as a child feels accepted by a parent, blessed by the connections with people like Brian Bauman, MC Eastern Canada's mission minister.

According to the leaders, there is a significant Ethiopian population in nearby Nepean, whom they would like to reach with the gospel, so Living Word

is looking for a space to purchase, even a house, to use a base for ministry and outreach.

The MWC connection initially led Living Word to contact Ottawa Mennonite Church, and for a time its congregants worshipped there, but they arranged to use Cedarview Alliance Church, which was more conveniently located. Unfortunately, the cost of that

space escalated dramatically over the past few years. To keep rental costs down, Living Word continues to worship there on Sunday afternoons, but Bible study groups and choir practices take place in members' homes.

Church member Salem Abele, went to Indonesia in 2011 under Mennonite Central Committee's Serving and Learning Together (SALT) program. The congregation fundraised \$5,000 to support her in this, and wants to support other youth and young adults to make such connections.

The congregation takes a camping retreat each summer to eat, fellowship and plan together, as well as to worship. This has built stronger relationships among members.

Woldeyes is beginning to sound out a fellowship of Ethiopian congregations in Ottawa, with the goal of bringing different small congregations together to pray and worship, and perhaps to take on joint projects. Eritrean groups would be welcome as well.

Living Word hopes to soon be able to afford a part-time paid pastor. Currently Woldeyes works full time outside of his church work.

(Continued from page 9)

showing some wisdom as it progresses.

Enclosed with this letter is a \$2,000 cheque that I cannot send to my previous Mennonite charities until they apologize for their treatment of staff in an un-Christian manner and put policies in place for staff terminations that are in keeping with Christian values, not legal or corporate values.

There was a slogan years ago that asked, “What would Jesus do?” This is actually a good measure of how we should act in our treatment of others in any context. Likewise, the Golden Rule: “Do unto others . . .”

TIM SAUER, KITCHENER, ONT.

✉ **MCC urged to open its doors to people in same-sex relationships**

I **RECENTLY LEARNED** that certain aspects of the human resources policies of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) are undergoing review. Of particular interest to me is the policy that stipulates MCC workers must agree that while serving they will only engage in sexual activity within committed heterosexual relationships. In my opinion, this exclusionary policy must change so that MCC can open its doors to people in same-sex relationships.

I have articulated this concern since the first time I accepted a service term with MCC more than 15 years ago. I believe that many others within MCC’s constituency share my concern. It is past time for MCC to facilitate an open dialogue with its constituency on this policy.

I have heard several people put forth the argument that opening such a dialogue would not only cause division, but could also impact MCC’s revenue if churches opposed to same-sex relationships withdraw support.

While I fully expect the dialogue will not be easy, I believe that silent adherence to the status quo holds just as much potential danger for MCC. More Mennonites are engaging in productive dialogue on the full inclusion of people in same-sex relationships in our churches and organizations. Increasing numbers of people across generations are openly questioning whether exclusionary policies and practices are truly reflective of our faith-calling as Anabaptists.

While putting its collective head in the sand on this issue may seem like a safe option for MCC, I would warn against this approach. As our Anabaptist community evolves, MCC must remain open, thoughtful and engaged. Otherwise, this important Mennonite institution risks becoming stagnant and brittle at best—or out of touch and irrelevant at worst.

**SCOTT MORTON NINOMIYA,
KITCHENER, ONT.**

✉ **Another former MCC staffer tells of dismissal woes**

RE: “FORMER MCC personnel ‘suffer silently’” letter, Oct. 24, page 9.

I, too, would like to shed some light on dismissal practices by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC); in my case, it was MCC Ontario. I believe I was lied to and lied about when I was dismissed without warning and “without cause” 10 years ago.

MCC Ontario had reasonable policies in place for involuntary termination. The problem is that another section of the policy states that, in its discretion, MCC may terminate the worker’s employment “without completing any part of the above procedures or any other problem-solving or mediation procedures.”

MCC is good at teaching restorative justice and equity training, but its own practices leave the worker powerless and without recourse, because, as I learned, even Human Resources is mandated to support management, leaving no one to support the worker.

In mediation two years later I was told that I was fired because of fear, but that I had done nothing to create that fear and had done nothing wrong. But because of supervisors’ fears, I was denied support and due process, and was left to bleed. Because of fear, those in power chose to hang onto that power and use it to impose control, rather than include me in making decisions about my life.

On top of all this, the executive director at the time of my dismissal had the audacity to claim that she would make sure that neither I nor my wife—who was not an employee—would ever have a chance to work for MCC again. She later had to retract her statement.

To me, this is abuse of power. And I’ve still had no apology or offer of restoration.

DON PROCTER, BELGRAVE, ONT.

✉ **MCC staffing approaches are ‘the antithesis of peace’**

RE: “WHEN YOUR services are no longer required” feature, Aug. 9, page 4, and “Former MCC personnel ‘suffer silently’” letter, Oct. 24, page 9.

Both of these items sadden me, not only because letter writer Wayne Northey is a friend, but because of what these stories say about Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and our church agencies. The approaches described in Henry Neufeld’s feature and Wayne’s letter are the antithesis of peace, and violate one of MCC’s most foundational values.

Jesus said that the essence of what rulers do is lord it over their subjects and that they are considered great men for this reason. He then said that this does not

describe the way things are done in the kingdom of God.

MCC claims to be an agency committed to peace, and in many ways this claim has some authenticity. For example, Wayne's many years of faithful service in the restorative justice field. And Menno Klassen's invaluable, long-term service with indigenous people in B.C. After Menno was terminated by MCC B.C., there was a retirement party for him organized by indigenous people to show their profound respect for him. While many of his MCC colleagues were there out of their admiration for his work, MCC was painfully noticeable by its absence.

I hope that these practices, like the election of Donald Trump in the U.S., don't tell us more about ourselves than we are willing to admit.

DAVE HUBERT, EDMONTON

✉ Outcome of same-sex resolution stacked in favour of progressives

RE: "NO MORE closed doors" editorial, Nov. 7, page 2.

I take issue with the editorial and want to present another side.

To quote the result of the vote at the Saskatoon assembly is a poor choice at best. It did not reflect the membership of Mennonite Church Canada. Our church, a large congregation of more than 400 members, had exactly two delegates there. Because of distance and expense, many churches only sent a few delegates, and then had them report when they got back.

Churches located near assembly venues often send their maximum number of delegates. It could very well be that close to 50 percent of delegates came from the Saskatoon area. If this was the situation—and we know from reports published in *Canadian Mennonite* that the area is fertile ground for LGBTQ activity—we can see the possibility that the assembly was stacked in favour of the Being a Faithful Church 7 resolution.

What is more, we know that most "progressive changes" are pushed by educated members living in the university towns like Waterloo, Ont., and Winnipeg. But since when has education become equivalent to wisdom and faithfulness to the Bible? Did Jesus reveal himself to the Pharisees and Sadducees, or to fishermen and social outcasts?

We need to remember that most rural churches are fairly conservative and will continue in the teachings of their elders. Very seldom will a farmer get up in front of a large assembly and defend his principles. But a flamboyant speaker with a good education can sway the vote in favour of his convictions. Isn't that what politics is all about?

And remember, the assembly was held at the height of farming season, a time when most educators have their extended vacations.

ISAAK EITZEN, ST. CATHARINES, ONT.

✉ B.C. pastors seeking to break away should be 'denounced'

THE NOV. 7 "No more closed doors" editorial inspired me to make an exception to my rule of not writing letters to the editor.

Congratulations to Dick Benner for promoting openness in all of our discussions. Having served on municipal council and in senior management positions in the public sector for many years, I am in agreement with his statement that municipal meetings must be open to the public except for a limited number of topics that are specified by law.

The recent Mennonite Church B.C. pastors-only meeting did not meet the standards for openness that are required of municipal governments. In the meeting some pastors attempted to persuade others to move in a direction that is contrary to the path chosen by a clear majority of the voting delegates at Assembly 2016.

Shortly after the pastors-only meeting there was another meeting purportedly for congregational representatives. At the start of this meeting, the same pastors were given time to express their views before the other participants entered into roundtable discussions.

Both meetings were contrary to the long-established tradition of democratic governance in our congregations and area churches, and also to the Anabaptist principle of the priesthood of all believers. For a select few to meet behind closed doors to discuss a matter of great importance to all of us is a regrettable practice that should never be repeated.

What we have within MC B.C. is a group of pastors acting as self-appointed—not elected—leaders who are trying to persuade the rest of us to separate from MC Canada. This group does not deserve our support. It is up to the elected representatives of congregations to denounce the group's message and the methods employed by them.

JAKE THIESSEN, KELOWNA, B.C.

✉ BDS, interfaith dialogue both needed now

RE: "A BETTER way than BDS?" letter, Nov. 21, 2016, page. 10.

Russel Synder-Penner writes of his concerns

regarding the boycott-divestment-sanctions (BDS) movement. Unfortunately, his remarks are misleading in a number of areas. While he acknowledges that Palestinians have been oppressed, he states that Israelis fear for their lives. What this fails to note is that approximately seven times as many Palestinians as Israelis have died in this struggle since 2000.

One of the temptations we should avoid in trying to understand the problem is that of false equivalence. This is not a disagreement between two equal parties. Israel has all the power and the Palestinians have none.

Certainly we should continue dialogue with the Canadian Jewish community, but such dialogue should not be conditional on us postponing action on BDS to an indeterminate future moment. This is especially true considering that the oppression of Palestinians to which Snyder-Penner refers continues unabated in times of such dialogue.

Finally, he assumes that in our summer resolution,

Mennonite Church Canada was standing up for Palestinians and against Israel. He refers to a cultural boycott, which I struggle to find reference to in the resolution, and he summarizes the effort as “Christians shunning Jews.”

What he fails to realize is that the call for a just peace is as much for the sake of Israel as it is for the Palestinians. Christians can be a friend to Israel and Palestine, support BDS and maintain dialogue with all associated groups at the same time without falling into the 2,000-year history of Christian anti-Semitism.

I call on our congregations and our MC Canada leadership to implement the divestment decision and to advocate sanctions while, at the same time, forming relationships with Canadian Jewish and Palestinian communities, neighbourhood synagogues and mosques.

RAMON REMPEL, WINNIPEG

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Anthony—Levi Adam Andrew (b. Oct. 28, 2016), to Andrea Rourke and Tyler Anthony, Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Doell—Lucy Elizabeth (b. Oct. 30, 2016) to Carl and Leanne Doell, Carman Mennonite, Man.

Maendel—Brady Benjamin (b. April 19, 2016) to Raymond and Melissa Maendel, Carman Mennonite, Man.

Baptisms

Brandon Hadfield—Breslau Mennonite, Ont., June 26, 2016.

Jackson Blatz, Jason Brown—Lowe Farm Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., Sept. 18, 2016.

Hannah Guerkink—Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal, June 19, 2016.

Marriages

Bang/Petkau—Jimmy Bang and Johanna Petkau, Carman Mennonite, Man., Aug. 19, 2016.

Coleman/Schellenberg—Jackie Coleman and Greg Schellenberg, Carman Mennonite, Man., Aug. 19, 2016.

Fehr/Zacharias—Donavan Fehr and Julie Zacharias, Carman Mennonite, Man., July 23, 2016.

Hopkins/Phillips—Marjorie Hopkins (Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.) and Serge Phillips, at Emmanuel Bible College, Kitchener, Oct. 29, 2016.

Jeffers/Kotowich—Leah Jeffers and Kyle Kotowich, Carman Mennonite, Man., June 25, 2016.

Deaths

Braden—Lina (nee Loewen), 83 (b. April 23, 1933; d. Oct. 24, 2016), Toronto United Mennonite.

Cressman—Violet (nee Francis), 98 (b. June 2, 1918; d. Oct. 21, 2016), First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Dyck—Katrina (Tina), 91 (b. May 3, 1925; d. Nov. 9, 2016), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Falk—Tina, 94 (b. Dec. 21, 1922; d. June 24, 2016), Carman Mennonite, Man.

Friesen—Betty, 77 (d. Aug. 26, 2016) Carman Mennonite, Man.

Giesbrecht—Frieda (nee Thiessen), 88 (b. Dec. 6, 1927; d. Oct. 26, 2016), Wanner Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.

Groening—Randy, 53 (b. Jan. 31, 1963; d. Oct. 30, 2016), Carman Mennonite, Man.

Hildebrandt—Katharina (Katie) (nee Harder), 87 (b. Oct. 6, 1929; d. Oct. 26, 2016), Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.

Kreiter—Erna, 92 (b. Feb. 23, 1924; d. Oct. 29, 2016), Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask.

Mireau—Mary Jane (nee Siebert), 94 (b. Oct. 10, 1922; d. Nov. 7, 2016), Zoar Mennonite, Langham, Sask.

Petkau—Brian, 64 (b. March 18, 1952; d. Aug. 29, 2016), Carman Mennonite, Man.

Rempel—Jake, 74 (b. Dec. 30, 1941; d. Oct. 8, 2016), Carman Mennonite, Man.

Snider—James H., 80 (b. Nov. 5, 1936; d. Nov. 7, 2016), Wanner Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.

Snider—Minetta (Mae) (nee Jutzi), 94 (b. May 15, 1922; d. Nov. 8, 2016), First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Wiebe—Edward, 77 (b. March 12, 1939; d. Oct. 31, 2016), Carman Mennonite, Man.

VIEWPOINT

Understanding opponents of LGBTQ inclusion

WILL BRAUN

SENIOR WRITER

Officially, the resolution creating greater openness to LGBTQ people received 85 percent support at the Mennonite Church Canada assembly. That number is incomplete—more on that below—but it establishes a new narrative in which a majority within MC Canada expresses a degree of openness toward LGBTQ inclusion. So what about the people excluded from that narrative?

One measure of a democracy is how minorities are treated. For our church family, those minorities include LGBTQ people as well as those who oppose the resolution, which allows space for congregations to explore non-traditional views of sexuality.

Some would quibble with my language about the resolution creating greater openness, saying that the one-man/one-woman *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* is still the official bottom line. But let's be honest: The LGBTQ resolution officially opens a door that was not officially open before, and that door leads to territory not included in the *Confession*.

Back to the numbers. If every MC Canada congregation had sent a full slate of delegates, there would have been 761. Only 322 registered. Area church offices are allowed another 40 delegates, of which 36 registered. It is entirely possible—although not certain—that a significant number of those who did not come would have voted against the resolution. Perhaps some churches saw the writing on the wall and didn't bother to send delegates, as one person suggested to me.

Also, non-Euro-Canadian churches, which tend to be more traditional, had minimal representation at Assembly 2016. Some are now considering leaving.

What next? Many congregations will simply carry on as before, in many cases undoubtedly happy to set this matter aside. A relatively small number will push for greater change down the road. And a number of churches, particularly in B.C., clearly feel pushed further to the brink of leaving, or, if you will, of having been left behind.

I sought out comment from pastors of such churches because I want to hear their assessment of the process, and what factors or moments stand out for them. I want to understand them better. I found reluctance to comment.

One MC B.C. pastor said he and his area church colleagues recently had a very positive retreat, and he feels that at this point they need to deal with matters among themselves and their congregations, but not in the press. That is understandable. His message to the broader Mennonite community was simple: "Pray for us."

Dan Graber, who recently stepped down as area church minister for MC Alberta, was rare in his willingness to talk. When asked about the Being a Faithful Church (BFC) process, Graber says "conservatives" felt there was a lack of biblical emphasis in the process and a lack of emphasis on prayer. Some also missed reassurances that openness to LGBTQ matters did not also imply a loosening of emphasis on fidelity and keeping sex within the confines of marriage.

Anabaptist history is marked largely by division, in addition to migration and service. According to Mennonite World Conference, there are 74 separate organized groupings of Anabaptist churches in North America alone. Historically, the stresses that divide us relate to the "world" encroaching upon us: English,

government schools, chrome, modern mobility and gender equality. As society changes, some go along, others split off; occasionally it's the other way around. The adapters say the others just don't get it; the traditionalists say the adapters have traded their Bibles for a slippery slope. In the process, younger generations seemingly learn the wrong lesson and later repeat the cycle—or leave.

I think of a long-time Catholic friend who is gay and who has worked for the church most of his life, sticking with an institution that officially rejects him. Perhaps we can learn from Catholics about abiding the messiness of human existence.

That messiness has certainly marked the BFC process. Some people feel the process was slanted towards inclusion from the outset. I attended an MC Manitoba-sponsored conference on LGBTQ matters last year. While presenters outlined differing views, some participants said the event felt biased toward inclusion. I agreed, even though I happen to share that bias.

Somewhat typically, most presenters didn't state their own personal views, leaving us to guess. There has been a lot of guessing in the BFC process. Many denominational leaders have chosen caution over candour. This has contributed to suspicion. Graber says that smoothly stated non-positions can be used in manipulative ways, as they are hard to argue with or respond to.

At the same time, these are tender and precarious times. No one wants to say something that will be misinterpreted or have unintended consequences. Pastors are understandably jumpy when approached for interviews. And, in a spirit of candour, it is no secret that some more-traditional people within MC Canada view this publication with suspicion or hostility.

The resolution has brought a measure of healing for some and added pain for others. The church, like the world it dances with, is messy. Amidst that mess, graciousness is never ill-advised. ❧

For responses to this column from two church leaders, visit canadianmennonite.org/wb-bfc-responses.



VIEWPOINT

Open your home and create that much-needed village

CHRISTINA BARTEL BARKMAN
MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA

PHOTOS COURTESY OF
CHRISTINA BARTEL BARKMAN

I sadly keep hearing that my fellow “mom” friends back in Canada feel worn out and alone. As one blogger recently wrote, “It takes a village, but there are no villages,” referring to the popular African proverb, “It takes a village to raise a child.”

Our friends are crying out for community, but they all seem to be in the same boat. They’re struggling with everyday roles as mothers and homemakers, sometimes with outside jobs, too, and they aren’t sure how to help each other out in practical ways.

As I hear of these struggles, I can’t help but look at my own life and realize I do have a village—and they’re in my home every day! I think that there’s no better way to create a village of shared parenting and housework than to plant a church in your home!

In addition to hosting Peace Church Philippines gatherings at our house, our community is in and out of our place all



Christina Bartel Barkman says her son Makai considers Peace Church Philippines member Regina (Reg) Mondez-Sumatra to be his best friend. When Reg married Mel in August, all three Barkman children were part of the wedding party.

week, especially those who don’t have children of their own.

Today, our friend Fread was over for a meeting with Darnell, which also meant he played with the boys for a few hours and entertained all three kids while I made dinner. Yesterday, Kathleen stayed the night and played with the kids while I did some laundry, and then she did the dinner dishes for us while we put the

It’s about making extra food at dinner in case a friend pops by, but not apologizing for a messy kitchen!

kids to bed. Reg was here all weekend and read countless books to the kids and washed dishes all weekend.

Friends at home are often surprised by how often I host, but I can honestly say that it doesn’t feel like “work.” For us, it actually means the parenting and household load is shared. It’s not a fancy type of hosting or entertaining, it’s just about continuously opening our home to all kinds of friends, despite the messy house and the whims—and sometimes tantrums—of children. It’s about making extra food at dinner in case a friend pops by, but not apologizing for a messy kitchen!

It really does take a village to raise our kids, and I am so thankful that we have that village here in our home. And more than the practical help they offer, I’m thankful for the relationships we have with these dear friends and for the way our children are shaped by all the amazing big brothers and sisters who have become our family. ☸



Makai and Cody ride piggyback on Fread de Mesa, who taught the Barkman family the Tagalog language and regularly serves as a kuya (big brother) to the Barkman kids.

Christina Bartel Barkman and her husband Darnell Barkman are giving pastoral leadership to Peace Church Philippines, a new Anabaptist church in Metro Manila. This article has been adapted from a blog post by Christina Barkman at bit.ly/much-needed-village.



PERSONAL REFLECTION

Saskatchewan women
celebrate transitions

LOIS SIEMENS

“Every transition is an invitation to journey with God,” is how Cindy Wallace ended each session with the women attending the annual Mennonite Church Saskatchewan women’s retreat last month.

We gathered in the lovely setting of Shekinah Retreat Centre on the North Saskatchewan River. Even the grey, overcast skies, the threat of freezing rain and the muddy grid road didn’t deter the 48 participants. What caught my attention was the moment I walked into the room was the lack of grey heads. I spotted several young moms with babies. I must say, the younger crowd created the same level of conversation as the older groups.

The theme of transitions was threaded throughout the weekend with skill, art and creativity. Wallace’s sessions on transitions used “Faith travels: Trusting God in life’s transitions,” the recently published Women’s Bible Study Guide by Marlene Kropf. We looked at the mountains, valleys and wilderness areas

of Moses’ life by mapping his spiritual journey. We then created our own spiritual maps to begin our own journey to study the transitions of our lives.

It was helpful to look at someone’s life with this long lens as a way to look at our own lives. We talked about ways we often respond to transitions with unhelpful results: we turn away and distract ourselves, try to control it or push against it. Curiosity was suggested as a way to respond positively to transitions as we lean on the fact that God’s presence is walking with us.

We heard individual stories of transition, which brought the theme into the details of the life of one woman, who stated strongly: “I know without a doubt that the God of the mountain is the God of the valley.”

The retreat was also a time to celebrate the gifts of women and pamper ourselves. Mary Ens, Val Wiebe and I brought our artwork to display and sell. Ten Thousand Villages helped us do our early Christmas



PHOTO BY LOIS SIEMENS

Mel Harms has been MC Saskatchewan’s women’s representative since Saskatchewan Women in Mission was disbanded in 2015. Harms is pictured holding Pilgram, the infant son of Cindy Wallace, a professor of English at St. Thomas More College at the University of Saskatchewan, at the area church’s women’s retreat.

shopping, and Nola Schofield massaged our tired bodies. ❧

Any woman who would enjoy working with a team to organize next year’s retreat is asked to email Mel Harms at cmharms3@gmail.com.



A moment from yesterday



This classic baptism photo from Coaldale Mennonite Brethren Church has been incorrectly dated as from the 1940s. Dedicated volunteers, who have a long-standing passion for the history of the church and a long institutional memory, believed there was an error in the description. With some effort, they found two newspaper reports that gave the details of the event. Now the record can be corrected: This photo is of a joint baptism service of the Lethbridge and Coaldale Mennonite Brethren churches. The service was held on Sept. 15, 1963, at Coaldale Mennonite Brethren Church with ministers Jacob J. Siemens and David Pankratz officiating.

Text: Conrad Stoesz

Photo: Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies



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GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Future Directions: Take Two

BY WILL BRAUN

Senior Writer

Faced with a funding crisis, sliding attendance and shifting cultural contexts, the response of Mennonite Church Canada and the five area churches has been a five-year process of restructuring denominational offices.

Peter Rempel—moderator of MC Manitoba and a veteran of other restructuring processes—says pastors tell him that 90 percent of people in the pews are disinterested in the process.

Keith Regehr, who was hired to lead the transition process, says restructuring is not a solution to the challenge of being church in the 21st century, although he is still excited about the organizational realignment.

The original Future Directions Task Force, which began meeting in early 2013, had two tasks:

- **DOWNSIZE AND** streamline MC Canada and the five area churches in the face of serious funding shortfalls.
- **COME UP** with a renewed vision for the church today.

In terms of downsizing, there are some general pieces of a model but no model per se. In terms of vision, that boils down to the notion of the congregation being the “basic unit of church,” something the Task Force has been saying since 2013.

At one point, the Task Force was close to a proposed model, but by the time Assembly 2016 rolled around it had backed away from specifics, in part due to resistance to its earlier suggestion that MC Canada’s international work be largely dismantled. While the 2016 report did not present a specific model, it can be assumed that there will be significant cuts to MC Canada and a more prominent role for area churches, which may or may not be

amalgamated regionally. MC Canada will likely be governed by area church moderators and a few members-at-large, instead of having its own board.

With the 2016 report and accompanying resolution, the Task Force was to hand its work over to a Transition Team of one to three constituents, which would deliberate for another two years. Instead, those in charge of the process hired Regehr and his consulting firm to lead the process. Under Regehr, the timeline will be condensed. MC Canada delegates should have a model to vote on at a special assembly in October 2017, instead of in 2018, as the resolution suggested. Regehr and his firm will be paid \$100,000 for their work up until the assembly.

Numerous working groups and a listening group are expected to be set up. In terms of where savings will be found, Regehr says

that is yet to be determined, although “there will be staff reductions” at MC Canada. While his job is not just about downsizing, he did say, “There is a funding crisis.”

Regehr says that if current funding projections hold, no further lay-offs will be required before next October. Year-end giving will be critical in that regard. MC Canada has been forced to lay off numerous people while the Task Force was deliberating.

Regehr works with an Interim Council made up of MC Canada and area church moderators. That creates a team of seven men and one woman. All but one are white. Most have at least some grey hair.

Given that, Regehr emphasizes the need to consult with voices from beyond “the centre,” which he sees as part of the role of the Listening Group. People have not yet been appointed to that group.

Regehr says that, in the end, the main difference for people in the pew will be a closer connection to their area church. He is excited about the prospect of this resulting in rejuvenated congregations. ❧

To read Will Braun’s personal opinions of the process online, visit canadianmennonite.org/future-directions-personal-dream.



INTERIM COUNCIL PHOTO



Pictured from left to right, the Interim Council is composed of: Keith Regehr, transition coordinator; Aldred Neufeldt, vice-moderator of MC Canada; Paul Wideman, MC Eastern Canada moderator; Willard Metzger, MC Canada executive director; Dan Jack, MC Alberta moderator; Calvin Quan, MC Canada moderator; Ken Warkentin, MC Saskatchewan moderator; Peter Rempel, MC Manitoba moderator; and Lee Dyck, MC B.C. moderator.



Coreena Stewart, MC Canada's chief administrative officer, left; Alissa Bender, pastor of Hamilton (Ont.) Mennonite Church; and Calvin Quan, MC Canada moderator, visit before a pastors supper during the MC Canada fall leadership assembly held at Toronto United Mennonite Church on Nov. 10.

Future Directions process accelerated

*MC Canada leaders shorten timeline on
Future Directions implementation*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
TORONTO

The timeline [for the Future Directions plan] from Saskatoon did not reflect what was possible," Willard Metzger, executive director of Mennonite Church Canada, told the denomination's fall leadership assembly in Toronto on Nov. 10.

Instead of bringing a plan for restructuring to a previously scheduled July 2018 delegate meeting, church leaders now see the process being completed for an October 2017 special delegate session instead. The reasons for this were twofold: downward financial pressures are not going to allow for a protracted process, and staff do not deserve two years of uncertainty about their jobs or the institution.

With Keith Regehr hired as transition director for the process, Calvin Quan, MC Canada's moderator, spoke of having the equivalent of "architectural drawings" ready by the area church meetings that begin in British Columbia in February, and

a "working drawing" by next fall.

Adding to the building metaphor, Regehr said that an "artist's impression" would be necessary within weeks. This sketch would be formed by an Executive Staff Group, composed of Metzger, Coreena Stewart, MC Canada's chief administrative officer, and the area church executive ministers, and tested with listening groups before being sent to the Interim Council, composed of Quan, Aldred Neufeldt, MC Canada's assistant moderator, and the area church moderators. The purpose of listening groups is, as Regehr put it, to have more than mainly middle-aged white men doing all the thinking. The Interim Council is expected to have material approved by Dec. 10, so that it will be ready to distribute to the area churches in the new year.

At a supper during the fall leadership assembly at Toronto United Mennonite Church, MC Canada pastors were invited to offer their feedback to the leaders on this

pressing matter.

Marilyn Zehr, pastor of Toronto United Mennonite, asked for "something we can communicate to our congregations," and Regehr promised that a "graphic is coming" soon. Neufeldt noted that there will very quickly be eight to 10 working groups, encompassing 120 people, looking at areas of the national church's work to help create the detailed plan.

David Brubacher, pastor of Grace Mennonite Church in St. Catharines, Ont., and an Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) board member, asked about the four schools—AMBS, Elkhart, Ind.; Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.; Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg; and Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C.

Regehr replied that leaders from all four had been present at the Toronto meetings earlier in the week and were collaboratively planning how to move forward, "finding ways so that as many students as possible" could benefit from an Anabaptist Mennonite education.

Metzger noted that the key challenge is, "What will strengthen a national peoplehood?"

When asked where MC B.C. is going, executive minister Gary Janzen replied, "MC B.C. is 'going somewhere.'"

Moderator Lee Dyck noted that the area church has had two meetings: the first in-camera with only pastors, in an attempt to create a safe place for uninhibited sharing; and the second with congregations, which generated 20 or more ideas on how to move forward. The list of options has since been reduced to six.

Part of the issue in MC B.C. is that some congregations have been allowed to belong to the area church only. A new structure would mean that they would again belong to a national body.

Janzen noted that the divisions run through not only the area church, but each congregation as well.

Ken Driedger, co-transformational pastor at Wideman Mennonite Church in Markham, Ont., wondered about the nationalism and separation from U.S. Mennonites in this plan. Metzger said that U.S. and Canadian executive committees still meet twice yearly. ❧

Christians killing other Christians

Jeremy Bergen speaks of martyrdom and the disunity of churches at Grebel's Eby Lecture

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

This presentation is about Christian martyrdom. But it is not primarily about the past, or really about the martyrs themselves. Rather, it is about how stories of particular Christian martyrs function in the present, perhaps to promote reconciliation and unity among Christians, or perhaps to inhibit reconciliation and undermine unity.”

Thus began Jeremy Bergen's Eby Lecture at Conrad Grebel University College on Nov. 3. Using both the well-known story of Dirk Willems and that of a group of Anglican and Roman Catholic martyrs in 19th-century Uganda, Bergen, an associate professor of religious studies and theology at Grebel and editor of *The Conrad Grebel Review*, showed how the story of a martyr is used by succeeding generations to make their points of theology for purposes of unity or division.

Willems, a Dutch Anabaptist who was imprisoned for his beliefs, escaped, only to be re-arrested and executed after stopping to save his pursuer from drowning after he fell through thin ice. In 2007, Nancy Heisey, then president of Mennonite World Conference, gave an icon of Willems to Pope Benedict XVI. Willems, an Anabaptist martyr from *Martyrs Mirror*, killed by Roman Catholics for his divergence on the topics of baptism and the Lord's Table, then a sign of division, was now to be a sign of engagement and unity in the larger ecumenical body of Christ.

The Ugandan martyrs—Anglican and Roman Catholic page boys in the court of King Mwanga II, a non-Christian ruler of Baganda—were killed for refusing to compromise their faith.

Both popes John Paul II and Francis,

as well as the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, have viewed these believers as a sign of Christian ecumenical unity, mentioning both when talking about the deaths. But the Roman Catholics and Anglicans maintain separate shrines to the believers since “martyr” is a technical term in the Roman Catholic Church and Anglicans could not fit into that definition.

While the boys all died together and for the same reasons, they are a place of disunity in the Anglican communion, according to Bergen, and their memory has also been invoked in order to justify harsh anti-gay legislation in Uganda, proving that

it is not always possible to control how a martyr story will be used.

Heisey was challenged about whether Willems would have wanted to be made into an icon, an image for contemplation by a Roman Catholic pope. But, Bergen mused, this moratorium is unlikely to happen since the stories are so powerful. Instead, the churches and members need to think about all those in the story. In Willems's case, those who were persecuting him were concerned for his eternal soul, not wanting him to believe what could have him damned before God, or to teach that to others. “Dirk's jailor,” Bergen said, “was one of us.”

Vigorous conversation followed Bergen's presentation. “How would the Ugandan martyrs be seen if they had been women?” was the content of one circle of conversation. Many female martyrs in the past were killed for refusing sexual advances of non-Christian men. In response to a question by Carol Penner, associate professor of practical theology at Grebel, Bergen said that women martyrs were often spiritualized and masculinized. ☞



Edmund Pries, left, an assistant professor at Wilfrid Laurier University and a member of Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church, discusses Jeremy Bergen's Eby Lecture with him on Nov. 3.

Breathing together

MCC Saskatchewan celebrates peacebuilding locally and globally

STORY AND PHOTO
BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
ROSTHERN, SASK.

“It is all of us together that make Mennonite Central Committee [MCC] breathe,” said Eileen Klassen Hamm, and each element of MCC Saskatchewan’s “encounter” and annual general meeting bore witness to her statement.

The organization chose “Peacebuilding on the prairies and around the world” as the theme for its Nov. 5 event, which was held at Rosthern Junior College (RJC). In her report, Klassen Hamm, who is MCC Saskatchewan’s executive director, noted both positive and negative outcomes of peacebuilding.

Earlier this year, author Yann Martel, who resides in Saskatoon, offered the organization a house he owns to use as a home for refugees. Martel said readers of his well-known novel, *Life of Pi*, paid for the house, and he wished to do something special with it. Klassen Hamm cited Martel, who said of MCC, “I’ve never encountered a group that so walks in the spirit of Christ.” Currently, a Syrian family sponsored by Mount Royal Mennonite Church lives in “the *Life of Pi* house.”

Klassen Hamm also spoke of MCC Saskatchewan’s participation in the 140th anniversary of the Treaty 6 signing, which the Young Chippewyan band hosted at Stoney Knoll, west of Laird. “We feasted together,” she said, “for that is one of the ways that strangers become kin.”

In September, the agency received a letter from the Bergthaler Mennonite Church indicating its withdrawal of support from MCC and from the board of the Warman, Sask., thrift shop. The church cited theological differences as a reason for its decision.



A choir made up of children of Karen families who came to Rosthern, Sask., as refugees perform for delegates at the MCC Saskatchewan ‘encounter’ and annual general meeting.

Klassen Hamm acknowledged the loss, expressing gratitude for past support and hope that connections with the church might be repaired at some point in the future. “Sometimes peacebuilding doesn’t go quite the way we want it to,” she said.

Guest speakers Carolyne and Gordon Epp-Fransen, who served as MCC country representatives for Jordan, Iraq and Iran, spoke about peacebuilding in the Middle East. “The Syria-Iraq crisis is the largest crisis MCC has ever responded to,” said Gordon. While 4.8 million Syrians have fled to other countries, 6.6 million are internally displaced and an additional 13.5 million living inside Syria are in need. Statistics for Iraq are similarly staggering, with 4.4 million internally displaced persons and an additional 10.1 million living in need inside Iraq. “What Canada has done in welcoming 30,000 Syrian refugees is wonderful,” said Gordon, “but the need is much greater.”

Jordan has welcomed thousands of refugees over many years, dating back to the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts of 1948 and 1967, said Carolyne. Many of these Palestinians, although they have lived in Jordan for more than 40 years, still have refugee status. The arrival of hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees in recent years has added to the burden on this tiny country.

In the Middle East, MCC partners with

various agencies, both Christian and non-Christian, to get aid to the people who need it most. “MCC is unabashedly Christian, but works with people of all faiths, showing God’s love to both Christians and Muslims,” said Gordon.

MCC also works with local groups who show God’s love by sponsoring refugees. Dana Krushel, MCC Saskatchewan’s refugee assistance coordinator, recognized the work of five churches and community groups in Rosthern that have helped both Karen and Syrian refugee families establish homes in the community.

Myriam Ullah, MCC Saskatchewan’s community engagement coordinator, led a panel discussion featuring the partnership between the organization and RJC. Panel members described the school’s partnership with MCC Guatemala, dating back to the early 2000s. Each year, as part of RJC’s Alternative Learning and Service Opportunities (ALSO) program, a group of students and teachers travel to Guatemala to learn about, and participate in, MCC’s work in that country. ☸




Do you know of someone in your congregation not getting Canadian Mennonite?

Ask your church administrator to add them to the list. It is already paid for.

PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN



A 'Symphony of hymns' fundraiser on Oct. 30 at Level Ground Mennonite Church in Abbotsford raised \$14,000 for Mennonite Church B.C. The event featured four area musicians singing and playing in combination, interspersed with the singing of old favourite hymns by the audience. Pictured from left to right: violinist Calvin Dyck, pianist Mel Bowker, flautist Alyssa Hordyk and vocalist Ian Funk. Proceeds from this fundraiser will go to support new initiatives in the area church budget, such as the Community Table Church and a 'Pride, prejudice and privilege' workshop.

God at work in the Church Snapshots

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



Andrew Suderman, left, preached about 'Ubuntu: Remembering our interconnectedness' at Breslau Mennonite Church, near Kitchener, Ont., on Oct. 30. As if to foreshadow his sermon about the ministry of bringing people together, his son James built this interconnected sculpture in the church foyer, although he called it a house for himself to live in, a home, a place of refuge and a base from which to reach out into neighbourhoods and countries. His sister Samantha did the same a few feet over. Andrew and Karen Suderman, formerly Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers in South Africa, are moving in December with their family to Harrisonburg Va., where Andrew will teach at Eastern Mennonite University.

On Nov. 7, Canadian Foodgrains Bank received a renewal of its matching agreement with the Canadian government, providing the non-governmental organization with \$125 million in federal funding over the next five years. Pictured from left to right at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg: Robert Granke, chair of the Foodgrains Bank board; Jim Carr, Minister of Natural Resources; and Will Bergmann, a farmer and growing project member from rural Manitoba.

Said Jim Cornelius, the Foodgrains Bank's executive director (not pictured): 'Obviously we're very happy that the amount has remained consistent. . . . It enables us to respond to developing food crises around the world; the nature of these crises is that they change and evolve unpredictably, so having money like this in the bank enables us to respond quickly and effectively as they emerge, which is critical!'



PHOTO COURTESY OF CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



Congregants of Breslau (Ont.) Mennonite Church gather around Karen Good, centre in shawl, as she leaves the position of parish nurse after more than 16 years. Blessing Good is Eleanor Epp-Stobbe, Breslau's pastor, in the red top. The position, which was Good's dream, was supported by a health council through a number of pastoral changes. The congregation blessed Good with the words to Patricia Shelly's song: 'The Lord lift you up. The Lord take your hand. The Lord lead you forth and cause you to stand, secure in God's word, seeking God's face, abounding in love, abiding in grace.'



Tom Yoder Neufeld, left, a retired Conrad Grebel University College professor, and Renate Klaassen from St. Catharines United Mennonite Church, centre, interact with Carol Penner after her presentation at Grebel's annual pastors breakfast.

'When all you have is a hammer . . .'

Carol Penner inspires at Conrad Grebel University College pastors breakfast

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

Carol Penner went into ministry to be a "humble tool in God's tool box—to preach, go to meetings and love people," like the hammer she brought to the lectern with her. "But," she said during her address to the annual Conrad Grebel University College pastors breakfast on Nov. 1, "the church is in a different space now."

According to her, the church is currently an anxious place, and there are higher expectations on pastors. Pastors, she said, "have felt the pressure to be something spectacular, to be the 'uberpastor,' to be the perfect pastor for the perfect church of the future . . . that we should have specialized skills. . . . [A]nxiety is often cast at the feet, or on the head, of the pastor."

As a pastor, she said she has felt unequal to the task and calling that the church presents to her.

But with humour and deep honesty,

Penner, now an assistant professor of theological studies and coordinator of applied studies at Grebel, encouraged pastors to trust that the church belongs to God, and that no matter what is happening now there will be a church in the future. What pastors need to remember, she said, is that "a pastor cannot transform the church," but "God can work a miracle in you so that you are the pastor the congregation needs."

The pastor's task is "to love the church," she said. "And because we love the church, we embrace the task of equipping ourselves for ministry through prayer, through attentiveness to the people we serve, through careful study of the Bible and our times. . . . We equip ourselves not because we fear that time is running out and we have to frantically do something or the church will die, but we equip ourselves because we know that God is doing

/// Briefly noted

B.C. Court of Appeal upholds religious liberty in TWU case

A five-judge panel of the B.C. Court of Appeal unanimously ruled on Nov. 1 in favour of Trinity Western University (TWU) in its legal challenge against the Law Society of British Columbia. The Law Society had sought to deny accreditation to future alumni of the Christian university's proposed law school because it argues that TWU's "community covenant" that students are required to sign discriminates against members of the LGBTQ community. The court emphasized that the effect of refusing to accredit future TWU law school graduates would be a "severe" impact on the freedom of religion of TWU students and professors, and that "members of that community are entitled to establish a space in which to exercise their religious freedom." The court noted: "A society that does not admit of and accommodate differences cannot be a free and democratic society—one in which its citizens are free to think, to disagree, to debate and to challenge the accepted view without fear of reprisal. This case demonstrates that a well-intentioned majority acting in the name of tolerance and liberalism, can, if unchecked, impose its views on the minority in a manner that is in itself intolerant and illiberal." Bruce Clemenger, president of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada stated, "This judgment is a strong affirmation of Canada's religious diversity and the right of everyone to contribute to Canadian society without compromising their religious beliefs."

—The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

something great, and we are the tools God will use to do it."

Hammering gently on the lectern, she concluded, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock, knock, knock. Who's there? It's the hand of God knocking, hammering, beating in our hearts, every minute of every day." //

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

'In the midst of suffering, faith does not disappear'

MCC's Syrian partners deliver assistance despite intensified fighting

BY RACHEL BERGEN

Mennonite Central Committee Canada

In October, students arriving at a Christian school in Aleppo, Syria, discovered that a rocket had blown out a portion of a classroom. So many rockets were landing in the area that the school administrators hadn't yet realized the school was hit.

One of the area pastors sends his children to that school and distributes Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) cash allowances to the most vulnerable people in his community. This pastor, who is not named for security reasons, also reported that a family of five was killed just outside the doorstep of the building where his church meets.

Aleppo, which used to be an affluent city before being ravaged by war over the last five years, again experienced escalating violence this past summer, which reached a peak in October.

"It is a city that is surrounded by fear, with bombs dropping, and with no electricity nor water, and everything that's going on in here makes it seem like it's impossible to live," said a representative of the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches, an MCC partner. "People will never give up, even though they sometimes lose hope or are afraid, but people here remake their lives daily."

MCC supports students in four church-based schools in Aleppo with tuition and teachers with trauma-resilience training. Peacebuilding efforts also continue, working to bridge divides between religious and political groups. Church members distribute cash allowances, blankets and kits filled with hygiene items as a way to carry out their mission.

"In the midst of suffering, faith does not disappear," said Doug Enns, one of MCC's

representatives in Lebanon and Syria. "MCC's aid helps strengthen the churches to be able to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable in their communities during this time of war and loss."

Sosamma, a 91-year-old woman whose real name is not used for security reasons, left her home in a state of shock after a missile hit it this past summer. She now lives alone with great difficulty and suffers from memory loss. Without a regular income, she relies on help from others, and appreciates MCC's relief kit filled with hygiene supplies.

"At my old home, my brother used to visit me with his family from time to time, as well as my friends," she said. "But now, since the city is witnessing a very bad

situation, it's very difficult to live or even to try to go out to buy food or any other things. I depend on my neighbours and good people like you to get my essential and necessary needs. You are my only hope in these difficult days," Sosamma told workers for the Middle East Council of Churches, another MCC partner.

While many Syrians have left the country in search of safety, there are still 6.1 million displaced persons within the country.

"Some Syrians, who have exhausted all other options, have left their homeland for the West. . . . But the greatest need remains for those who are staying in the Middle East wanting no more than to just go home and live in peace," Enns said. "We need enough support here now for people to survive, maintain hope and prepare to rebuild lives when the crisis ends. So our work as MCC here in the Middle East is to respond to this primary need."

MCC has designated more than US\$40 million through 36 partners in response to the Syria and Iraq crisis since 2011, including more than 60 shipments of hygiene items, blankets and other humanitarian supplies. Significant contributions from MCC's account at the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and the Canadian government have bolstered this response. ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MIDDLE EAST COUNCIL OF CHURCHES



A worker for the Middle East Council of Churches delivers a Mennonite Central Committee relief kit to Sosamma, 91, who left her home after a missile hit it this past summer. (Real names are not used for security purposes.)

'Mennonites, land and the environment'

Scholarly conference calls for renewed understanding of ecological interdependence and sacrament

BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY

Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG

Academics, students, independent researchers and lay people alike gathered at the University of Winnipeg in late October for a global history conference on "Mennonites, land and the environment."

The conference drew attention to historical intimacy between Mennonite identity and farming, highlighting certain theological values that have contributed to this relationship, including humility, service and nonviolence. Many academics, however, raised questions as to how Mennonite theology and religious world-views have, in addition to enriching their history of relationship to the land, perhaps also hampered progress in areas of sustainability and social justice where land use is concerned.

Horticulturist Martin Entz, for instance, pointed out how distinctive crop rotation and ploughing techniques among Mennonites in 16th-century Prussia stood out among contemporary techniques, enriching the soil conditions rather than draining them. However, he also noted—making comparison to the current predicament of Lake Winnipeg—that some of these ploughing techniques contributed to serious run-off excess and damaged local marine ecosystems, creating "dead zones" in the Prussian delta.

Hans Peter Fast, a web mapper from Utrecht, the Netherlands, suggested that the key to greater future success with ecological sustainability may not be better science, but better theology. "Some congregations view faith as interpersonal, not so much as inter-special [between species] or environmental," he said. "Mennonites hold humility as a key virtue, but that's a two-edged sword. It inspires an attitude of service, but also inhibits their readiness to

view their work as religiously important, or their faith as a way to do what they do 'better' than it has been done in the past or is being done elsewhere."

Similarly, Gordon Zerbe, academic vice-president of Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg, spoke on the dilemma of the Bible as an often troublesome, human-centric text full of "emigrant or itinerant dualism," a theological attitude that considers the earth inferior to heaven and implies that the world is to be overcome, its temptations resisted, and the other-world of heaven after death to be pursued above all. Zerbe's talk outlined the need for a viable way of reading the Bible's "environmental history" that can illuminate Christians' engagement with ecological issues. To do that, he proposed six guiding "eco-justice principles" evident in the Bible:

- 1. INTRINSIC WORTH:** Earth and all its components have intrinsic worth/value.
- 2. INTERCONNECTEDNESS:** Earth is a community of interconnected living things that are mutually dependent on each other for life and survival.
- 3. VOICE:** Earth is a subject capable of raising its voice in celebration and against injustice (Luke 19:40, Romans 8:22).
- 4. PURPOSE:** The universe, Earth and all its components are part of a dynamic cosmic design within which each piece has a place in the overall goal of that design.
- 5. MUTUAL CUSTODIANSHIP:** Earth is a balanced and diverse domain in which responsible custodians can function as partners, rather than rulers, to sustain a



Gordon Zerbe

balanced and diverse Earth community.

6. RESISTANCE: Earth and its components not only suffer from injustices at the hands of humans, but actively resist them in the struggle for justice.

In response to Zerbe's presentation, Karl Koop, a professor of history and theology at CMU, asked: "Might it be the case that [Mennonites and other Protestants] are challenged to respond to issues of land and environment because they do not have a sacramental view of reality like the Roman Catholics and Orthodox, who can more easily imagine the notion of grace and the presence of God being mediated through the material world? With some exceptions, the Anabaptist impulse over the centuries had tended to be in the 'spiritualist' direction. So perhaps Mennonites can learn from the sacramentality of the Orthodox and the Roman Catholics."

Later, Koop added that his comments didn't mean that Mennonites in their tradition do not have resources for addressing environmental issues, but that "these resources are more likely to come from their peace theology and their emphasis on preserving life—not from some belief in the intrinsic value of the material world."

Other key insights on sources of historical Mennonite "disability" in the championship of ecology and land-based social-justice included a presentation by Elaine Enns of Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries in California on generational trauma in Mennonite communities, especially those coming out of Russia, and how that trauma can damage a people's ability to tell their stories well. Enns described oral history as the "lifeblood" of a community, saying, "Mennonites are dedicated to the preservation of their historic stories, but do not always embrace all the subtext of those stories, or show similar dedication to honouring neighbours' stories."

She humbly named Canadian Mennonites' "endemic silence regarding indigenous displacement" by Anabaptist settlers, and reminded listeners that "[Mennonite churches] have the prophetic and pastoral capacities to embrace re-membering restorative solidarity," both with neighbouring peoples and with the land. ▮

MC CANADA FILE PHOTO



Just outside Bethlehem, Palestine, an 8.5-metre-high concrete separation barrier covering more than 700 kilometres obstructs the free movement of thousands of Palestinians. The wall is viewed by Israel as a security barrier; Palestinians view it as a wall of oppression.

Assembly 2016 resolution about more than BDS

Its goal is to promote a safe haven for both Palestinians and Israelis

BY DEBORAH FROESE
Mennonite Church Canada

“In this resolution we are not taking sides between Israel and Palestine,” said Palmer Becker at Mennonite Church Canada’s Assembly 2016. “We support the need for a safe place to live for both Israeli Jews and the Palestinian Arabs. We grieve whenever there is loss of life, whether that is Palestinian or Israeli.”

The resolution supporting justice for Palestinian and Israeli people was moved by Byron Rempel-Burkholder in response to a request from Palestinian Christians, and seconded by Becker.

MC Canada delegates voted 342 to 1 in favour of supporting the numerous actions included in the resolution. These actions were designed to address the plight of Palestinian people who are asking that “the global church come alongside the Palestinian people as they suffer under Israel’s 49-year military occupation of their lands,” according to the resolution.

For nearly seven decades, Mennonites have lived and served in Palestine and Israel, encouraging hope and healing for all people

groups through a variety of ministries.

Willard Metzger, MC Canada’s executive director, recently accompanied a tour group to the region with other leaders of Mennonite denominations in Canada. With numerous prior trips under his belt, he noted a marked change in the atmosphere. “I heard less optimism from Palestinians than I heard six years ago,” he said. “They used to speak with a sense of hope and resistance to the oppression they are experiencing, but now they seem to regard global economic action as the last resort.”

Both Palestinian and Israeli groups reporting on the delegate decision have distilled the entire resolution down to one action that would support boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel.

But church leaders point out that the action supported by delegates is more nuanced than full-out compliance with BDS: It recognizes harm done to both people groups; acknowledges that there are peace and justice seekers in both Palestinian and Israeli communities; and supports

continued learning, prayer and grace from MC Canada individuals and congregations about the complex situation.

In summary, the MC Canada resolution on Palestine and Israel seeks:

- **TO LET** the gospel of Jesus Christ guide and grace our responses.
- **TO COMMIT** to ongoing prayer, learning and discerning about this matter.
- **TO AFFIRM** efforts of Israelis and Palestinians who are committed to non-violent ways of overcoming the injustice in their region.
- **TO WORK** in partnership with Palestinian and Jewish communities.
- **TO REFRAIN** from investing or supporting companies that profit from Israeli settlements located on occupied Palestinian lands (the West Bank and East Jerusalem), or business that supports the Israeli Defense Forces.
- **TO ENCOURAGE** the Canadian government to support measures (including economic sanctions) that put pressure on Israel to end the occupation of Palestinian territories.

The delegate decision sparked strong and sometimes hostile criticism from pro-Israeli groups. Metzger and moderator Calvin Quan have met with representatives of the Canadian Rabbinic Caucus, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, and the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

“It is disappointing that these groups are unwilling to discuss the situation unless we pull back from any and all economic sanctions,” said Metzger. “That is disheartening, but we will continue to move forward, letting the gospel of Jesus Christ guide and grace our responses.”

Not all Jewish groups are opposed to BDS. Organized groups such as Independent Jewish Voices Canada, and Jewish Voice for Peace and Rabbis for Human Rights in the U.S., recognize injustices against Palestinians and believe that economic sanctions are helpful, often citing such sanctions as a key factor in the demise of apartheid in South Africa. Meanwhile, Metzger continues looking for Jewish and Palestinian groups in Canada with whom to promote understanding and create an alternative voice. ❧

God at work in the World Snapshots

Priya Pandey of Danforth Mennonite Church in Toronto makes use of the 'Little Free Library' located on a post in front of the church. Designed by Bill Bryson as a miniature of the actual church, with help from Walter Schutz in building it, the library is open 24/7, with instructions to 'take a book—return a book.' And it need not be the book taken. No one is keeping track of the level of activity, but one member brought six books in one Sunday and found them all taken out a week later. For those interested in a 'Little Free Library' of their own, visit LittleFreeLibrary.org.



MAX CANADA INSURANCE PHOTO



MAX Canada Insurance and its Mutual Aid Ministries program recently presented an \$80,000 gift to Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) to aid in the recovery and rebuilding of Fort McMurray, Alta., after a devastating wildfire earlier this year. Pictured from left to right: Elaine Shantz, MAX Canada board chair; Paul Burns, MAX Canada underwriting manager; and Ross Penner, MDS Region V director of operations.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BILL BRYSON



CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM DIALOGUE PHOTO



Common Word Alberta hosted the fourth annual Muslim-Christian Dialogue at Edmonton's Al Rashid Mosque on Oct. 15. Muslim and Christian representatives of indigenous, settler and refugee groups told their stories and spoke to the question, 'How does our specific faith shape how we live mercifully together?' Two recent Syrian refugees, one Christian and the other Muslim, spoke compellingly about the Christian legacy of their homeland. Pictured from left to right: Kerry Diotte, Member of Parliament for Edmonton-Griesbach, and event emcees Farah Jamil and Scott Sharman.

MENNONITE DISASTER SERVICE PHOTO



In a recent visit to White Sulphur Springs, W.V., where Mennonite Disaster Service Storm Aid volunteers are building new homes for survivors of the devastating June 23 floods, a rainbow appeared, bringing to mind the words of Genesis 9:13: 'I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth,' and affirming that with each nail hammered, roof attached and window hung, comes hope and the fulfillment of a covenant.

GOD AT WORK IN US

Missionaries' influence spans the generations

BY BARB DRAPER
Editorial Assistant

Missions is not a very popular word in some circles these days, but when Masaki Higashiguchi visited Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, B.C., on Oct. 30, it was a reminder that missionaries of the past have made an impact. Masaki is a high school teacher in Takachiho, Japan, who is taking a study leave in Canada. After spending a year in Prince Edward Island, he moved to North Vancouver in July, and he and his family plan to return to Japan in January.

Mary Derksen, who knew the Higashiguchi family from her years as a missionary in Japan, heard that he was in Vancouver and invited him to be at her church for a Missions Sunday worship service and potluck. The family could not come, but he found his way by bus from Vancouver and walked until he found the church. It was a happy meeting. Masaki was excited to meet people involved in environmental issues, especially Tim Larson, who is program director at Camp Squeah. He hopes to incorporate some of the methods used in Canadian high schools relating to the environment in his school in Japan.

Mary and the late Peter Derksen were missionaries in Japan for 45 years. In 1958, while they worked with an emerging young church in southern Japan, a young man named Seiko Higashiguchi began attending Peter's English-language Bible classes. These classes were a big attraction for young people who wanted to learn English. Seiko accepted Christ as his Saviour, and, as a symbol of his new faith, planted a small evergreen tree by their front door. Later, Seiko was transferred to another town and the Derksens lost contact.

Several years later, in the 1970s, the friendship was renewed when the Derksens had a new assignment in a

different Japanese city. They were happy to renew the friendship, but were sad that Seiko seemed to be denying his faith. He had married and had two children, and asked the Derksens to help him immigrate to Canada. He wanted his children to have more opportunities than they could have in Japan.

That was a difficult task; however, Peter's sister in Vancouver found a job for Seiko. He visited the Derksens several times before he left, planning that his family would join him after he found work and a place to live.

In Vancouver, the Higashiguchis began attending a small Japanese church, where an evangelist held a series of meetings for Japanese Canadians. Seiko renewed his decision to follow the Lord, and his wife also became a Christian.

When the Derksens' daughter Vangy went to Vancouver to study at the University of B.C., the Higashiguchi family almost adopted her. She spent many happy times with them, enjoying Japanese food and attending Japanese Bible studies. It was almost like being home in Japan.

After almost five years in Canada, Seiko's father became ill. Wanting to do what was right, they decided to return to Japan to care for their ailing parents.

After the Derksens retired from their work in Japan in 1999, Seiko and his wife came to Canada for a visit. He had been diagnosed with cancer, but was still able to travel. The two families spent wonderful hours together, catching up. The Higashiguchis received joy and encouragement from the Japanese church in Vancouver.

When the Derksens visited Japan in 2002, visiting Seiko was a highlight. He was weaker, but still able to play his mouth organ. He died shortly after that visit.

Masaki was only 2 when the family

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARY DERKSEN



Seiko Higashiguchi plants a tree in front of the mission house in Nichinan, Japan, in 1958.

returned to Japan, but he was raised in a Christian home and became a Christian. He and his wife were married in the Miyakonojo Mennonite Christian Church. While currently living in Vancouver, Masaki and his family attend the same Japanese church that his parents attended when they lived in that city.

Sitting around the table during his visit to Emmanuel Mennonite, Masaki eagerly listened to stories about his father. He talked about his family and proudly said, "My children speak better English than me."

Mary Derksen was very happy to have her church meet Masaki. It reminded her of the many families that have been touched by the work of missionaries who were supported and prayed for by the broader church. ❧

With files from Mary Derksen.

ARTBEAT

Finding God at work in the city

BY ARDELL STAUFFER

MennoMedia

God is at work and the gospel is alive in our cities, towns and communities. This is the message Marty Troyer wants to share in his new book, *The Gospel Next Door*, released by Herald Press earlier this year.

As a pastor in Houston, Tex., Troyer has found the gospel to be thriving in the city. “People are sharing Jesus, pursuing shalom in the city,” he says, adding that the old division of evangelism and social justice breaks down as Christians combine these in life-giving ways.

In addition to pastoring Houston Mennonite Church, Troyer writes a blog hosted by the *Houston Chronicle*. Entitled “The peace pastor,” it emphasizes a gospel-centred Jesus ethic.

In *The Gospel Next Door*, Troyer writes about the gospel message through the lenses of following Jesus, making peace and overcoming injustice. “Jesus is the centre, and it ripples out from there,” he says.

Finding God’s work in the world starts with spiritual tools, according to Troyer. It is rooted in Scripture and good worship. “A good hymn book is one of the greatest tools for justice we have,” he says.

As a church reaches out in its community, it finds others working for God’s kingdom. “This is a mosaic of stories,” Troyer says. “We Mennonites don’t have a corner on the God of peace. So many people share those values and that passion.”

In his new book, Troyer recounts stories of Houstonians whose faith in Jesus drives their work: against violence in their neighbourhoods, for Habitat for Humanity and against human trafficking. “The church is the one staring into the darkness and working for change,” he says.

“My pen pal Terrence went into prison at age 12, and is now 38 and still behind bars,” says Troyer. “In Houston prison ministries

and restorative justice, the church is leading the way.” Christian ministries are addressing overcrowded prisons, mass incarceration and racism.

Partnering and praying with different denominations clarifies Christian language about the gospel, Troyer believes. “Personal faith has come alive as we opened our doors and eyes to the rest of the church,” he says.

Troyer hopes readers will discover broader church partnership. “The world is hungry for God,” he says. “They don’t see it in the church regularly, so they are excited about it.” He believes churches need to stop working alone and engage publicly, talking with and listening to more people.



Troyer makes the point that *The Gospel Next Door* is not about one pastor and one church. “We are one piece of the mosaic,” he says. His book starts to put together the mosaic of the gospel happening in Houston—one example of God’s kingdom in action. ❧

To read an interview with the author, visit canadianmennonite.org/troyer-interview.



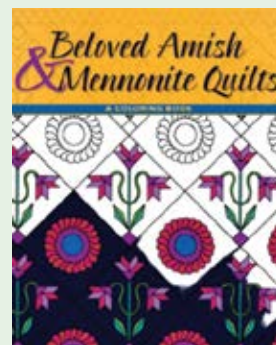
/// Briefly noted

Herald Press releases first art colouring book for adults

Herald Press is moving into the devotional colouring book market with its first entry into the field: *Beloved Amish and Mennonite Quilts*. The colouring book includes more than 40 designs based on popular Mennonite and Amish quilts throughout history and across the United States and Canada. These include baskets, pinwheel, centre diamond, rail fence, log cabin, garden maze, Jacob’s ladder and other popular designs. Short descriptions of the history or traditions surrounding each quilt design are included, along with loosely related Scripture verses for further inspiration. Journal space offers readers a chance to write prayers or reflections while they colour.

The pages are perforated so artists can easily tear-out pages from the colouring book to give to someone, to frame, or both. Adult colouring books intended for Christian audiences focus on the act of colouring, and help people slow down, meditate, relax, pray and breathe more slowly. Editorial director Amy Gingerich says, “We wanted to offer those looking for inspiring colouring books a rich collection of quilts in the Amish and Mennonite tradition.” A second colouring book, *Amish Prayers: A Coloring Book*, will be released in early 2017.

—MennoMedia



'Marriage geek' offers her take on love and fidelity

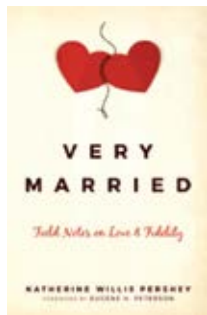
BY KELLEY HUGHES

MennoMedia

If self-confessed “marriage geek” Katherine Willis Pershey knows one thing after 14 years of marriage, it’s that couples bound together in a sacred covenant need more than cheery how-to advice on achieving marital bliss.

The author and pastor offers a bracing dose of reality about the “agony, ecstasy, and tedium of wedlock” in her new book, *Very Married: Field Notes on Love & Fidelity* from Herald Press.

Calling herself “an apologist for marriage,” Pershey says, “I believe that the practice of two people entering into a life-long monogamous relationship is worthwhile. I ardently hope marriages can be



saved, and that marriage as an institution can be redeemed.”

She considers various changing cultural attitudes toward marriage in the pages of *Very Married*, and offers her theological convictions with an interest that is more than pastoral—it’s personal. “Marriage is the fundamental fact of my life; as surely as I live and move and

have my being in God, so, too, do I live and move and have my being within the bonds of marriage,” she writes.

Pershey and her husband Benjamin got married young—on her 22nd birthday—and the early years were rocky. In *Very Married*, she draws from her own experience and the stories of other couples to

“consider how our love has flourished and where it has floundered . . . the ways the vows of our marriage covenant have made us free and the ways they have yanked us away from peril”

Among the topics she explores:

- **ON BEING** a difficult person married to a difficult person: Pershey says that she and her husband “were slowly poisoning our love with exasperation, acrimony, and on our worst nights, utter contempt.” They have learned they can reconcile, forgive and change, “but only as long as neither of us gives up.”

- **ON SEX** outside of marriage: “I might actually believe that sex is for married people,” she admits. Wounded by premarital sex, she believes “the contrast between unmarried and married sex is significant. The covenant of marriage—the vows to love now and forever—changes everything. It just does.”

- **ON TEMPTATION:** Finding herself attracted to a friend she now thinks of “as the person with whom I did not have an affair,” Pershey told her husband about it. Although it stung him, “it was a hurt he could sustain, because he understood that at the root of what I was telling him was that I was trustworthy.”

- **ON DIVORCE:** “The presence of divorce on the table means there is an enormous blinking asterisk” indicating the marriage is until death do us part, “unless . . . things happen.” That may be enough to “tear marriages asunder that could be redeemed,” Pershey says. Yet she also prays “for all the people who suspect their lives were saved by divorce; for all the people who imagine they could only ever receive judgment, not compassion, from a member of the clergy; for all the people who meant forever but didn’t make it.”

- **ON THE** Christian call to love: Marriage requires mutual practices of care, attention and servanthood. “If a Christian has a calling to live a life of love—modelled after the ways of Jesus and rooted in the great commandments to love God and neighbour—a married Christian is first and foremost charged to live this life within his or her own household.”



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Very Married grew out of an article

Pershey wrote for *Christian Century* magazine, which became the magazine's most-read article online in 2015. The book's title comes from actress Audrey Hepburn's response to being asked if she would ever marry: "If I get married, I want to be very married."

That's how Pershey sees her own marriage. As she reveals in the book, her marriage isn't perfect, "but we are nevertheless very married. I wouldn't want it any other way." ❧

/// Briefly noted

MennoMedia closing Canadian office and distribution centre

MennoMedia has announced that it will close its office and distribution centre in Kitchener, Ont., in early 2017, leaving one full-time employee out of work. MennoMedia has maintained an office in the Mennonite Central Committee Ontario centre at 50 Kent Avenue for the past three years; before that, the office was located for many years in nearby Waterloo. "This was a difficult decision," said Russ Eanes, executive director of MennoMedia and its book imprint, Herald Press, from the organization's head office in Harrisonburg, Va. "We have a loyal Canadian customer base, especially in Mennonite Church Canada congregations. However, as both the church world and the publishing world have changed, we have to change. We are actively working to develop one or more partnerships with third parties that can continue to provide top-level service to our Canadian customers." In looking at costs, the staff and board of MennoMedia found that "it will be more cost-effective, with our limited resources, to work through a third-party distributor in Canada for Herald Press," Eanes added, pointing out that a significant portion of Canadian congregations are already being serviced through a call and distribution centre in the U.S. "That will continue seamlessly in the coming months," he said.

—MennoMedia



ONLINE NOW!

at canadianmennonite.org

Customs vary among Ontario Amish

Members of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario heard an overview of the diverse Amish groups in their area and visited some of their communities.

canadianmennonite.org/ontario-amish



Roi des Rois interested in God's kingdom realized

"If you're such a good salesman, sell me on your God."

That was the beginning of Michel Monette's journey toward leading a Mennonite congregation in Quebec.

canadianmennonite.org/roi-rois



'Thanks to God, I have a new house'

MCC partnered with Mennonite churches in Ecuador to construct earthquake-resistant homes for some of their most vulnerable church members.

canadianmennonite.org/homes-ecuador



Winnipeg church hosts event of solidarity with Dakota Access protests

Home Street Mennonite Church offered local people an opportunity to add their voices to the peaceful protest against the oil pipeline.

canadianmennonite.org/solidarity-dakota-access



I wonder what life was like at the time of Paul?



Circus Maximus ruins in Rome.
Photo: Ruben Holthuijsen

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Shining a light on addiction and mental health

WATERLOO, ONT.—Natalie Harris knows what it's like to live in a dark world when suffering from PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) and addiction before she received care at Homewood Health, owned by the Schlegel family from Kitchener, Ont.

"I didn't want anyone around me. There was nothing in my life that was positive anymore," she says, looking back. "I had nightmares that turned into night terrors. I would wake up drenched in sweat—all leading to my suicidal ideation; I tried to block it out with my addiction."

Natalie represents the growing number of people suffering from PTSD in our modern society, a condition that is highly complex, says Stacey Ferland, trauma practice lead for Homewood Health's national group of

clinics, and is often accompanied by addiction or other mental health conditions.

PTSD can either be triggered by a single event in one's life or from ongoing exposure to trauma. In Natalie's case, it was initially triggered when, as a paramedic, she was called to the scene of a gruesome double murder in Barrie, Ont., where she had to treat the murderer. Then, two years later, Natalie was re-traumatized when she had to testify in court against the accused.

After both of these incidents, family and friends noticed that Natalie, a mother of two, wasn't herself anymore. She isolated herself, lost relationships and was "literally dying," she now says, looking back. "Her experience shows how this disorder affects families directly," says Ferland, "which is

why it's important to treat the family along with the patient."

Natalie's story is one of a miraculous turnaround. From the darkness of her suffering from PTSD and addiction, she is now an advocate for hope and recovery. Natalie has become a prominent government lobbyist, fighting for the passing of Ontario Bill 163,

a legislation that mandates a presumption that PTSD diagnosed in first responders is work-related. This legislation, Supporting Ontario's First Responders Act, applies to

more than 73,000 first responders across Ontario and was passed in April of this year.

I had nightmares that turned into night terrors... all leading to my suicidal ideation; I tried to lock it out with my addiction.

Natalie does a lot of advocacy work, speaking at no charge to peer, church and community groups, and engages in promoting post-traumatic growth. "This is an important part of recovery," she says, "using tools such as meditation to put you in touch with your emotions on a daily basis—something that, in the throes of your addiction, you are unable to do."

Sharing her story on a larger scale, Natalie wrote a book titled *Save-My-Life School*, breaking down her experience into three parts: her life while suffering from PTSD and addiction, her recovery experience, and what she calls "graduate school" about re-entering her life. The book is described by her publisher, Heather Down, as "raw and honest, but at times laugh-out-loud funny, poignant and simply a good entertaining read."

To aid others in their recovery efforts, Natalie speaks freely about her experience hoping to connect with others who might be suffering and looking for help. She has been presented with the opportunity to save lives in a different way than she once did, and she is embracing it with everything she has. "I am happier than ever before," she says, with a radiance that comes through even in a phone conversation.



911

After her recovery, Natalie Harris wrote a book on her experience described as "raw and serious, but at times a laugh-out-loud funny, poignant and simply a good entertaining read."

Promotional Supplement



Stacey Ferland,
Natural Practice Leader



Ram Kalap, MTS, Chaplain



James MacKillop PhD,
Senior Scientist



Brian G. Furlong, MD,
FRCPC, Chief of Staff

Addiction across all populations

“Addiction crosses all boundaries within the population,” says Dr. Brian Furlong, chief of staff at the Homewood Health Centre. “As an example, healthcare professionals that can be traumatized just from the nature of their work comprise some of the prime groupings. Nurses, police, firefighters, paramedics and pharmacists who already know about addiction can be clever about hiding symptoms of addiction for a long time,” he observes.

Dr. Furlong says we have come a long way from when society’s first response was to protect the mentally ill from themselves and then from society by immediately institutionalizing them, forming a kind of “warehousing” solution.

Today, though, with the stigma being gradually removed, persons showing signs of PTSD and other mental health conditions or addiction can access help quickly with dedicated professionals such as those at Homewood Health.

“We are learning that addiction manifests itself differently in different age groups,” says Furlong, “so we are starting to approach the 18- to 25-year-olds differently than older persons. An age-based approach is becoming more common.”

Latest research

“The focus on the latest research on addictions is how genetics play into the neurobiological brain disorder,” says Dr. James MacKillop, senior scientist at the

Homewood Research Institute and professor of psychiatry and behavioural neurosciences at McMaster. “Hereditary factors can determine how one is prone to alcoholism, for instance, so we take this into account when assessing the disease.”

In other cases, the focus is on how quickly or slowly one can metabolise a drug. “Since there are thousands of different genes in our bodies,” he says, “we take the molecular approach to look for small variances. It’s not like one person has blue eyes and another, brown eyes. This all has to be balanced between the biological and environmental components. If a child has been exposed to poverty, for instance, that weighs more heavily toward environmental causes.”

Addiction is a crisis of the soul, their souls are injured, their self-worth and value are gone.

The spiritual component

“Addicted persons are in a broken spiritual state”, says Ram Kalap, chaplain at the Homewood Health Centre, who grew up Hindu, but converted to Christianity. “They have lost their self-respect and feel disconnected.” The first thing Kalap does, after centring himself with prayer and meditation before seeing patients, is to

journey with them without inducing guilt or shame. He listens intently to the story of their lives.

“Addiction is a crisis of the soul,” he says. “Their souls are injured, their self-worth and value are gone, even though many of them have religious upbringing. They are trying to find meaning. So I come alongside them and help them discover the sacred in their lives. They often blame God for their condition and so I give them permission.” He tells them, “If your God isn’t big enough to take some blame, you don’t have a God.”

“They can then begin to face the issues in their life, don’t blame the past, but begin to face it and acknowledge that they can’t do it alone,” Kalap says. He tells them to be gentle with themselves. “It is at that point for some that a light bulb comes on and they begin the road to recovery.”

Ferland, a trauma therapist for 18 years with training in Christian psychology, agrees that PTSD often results in an “injury to the soul.” And that is when faith may come into the picture as part of the recovery process. Pastors and church leaders could help by developing a language of acceptance and open dialogue regarding personal trauma and its emotional stress on a person.

Those suffering from addiction or other mental health conditions such as PTSD should see the church as a therapeutic place, a place where the belief in God can help in the path to recovery.

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January 23 • ambs.edu/leadershipclinics

Worshipping Our Way Into God's Future

James Krabill, senior executive for Global Ministries, Mennonite Mission Network; and sessional faculty, AMBS

Sustaining Long-Term Pastorates

Duane Beck, retired pastor • Janice Yordy Sutter and David Sutter, pastors, Kern Road Mennonite Church, South Bend, Indiana

Make Four Hours Count:

How to Streamline Bible Study for Ministry

Mary H. Schertz, professor of New Testament, AMBS

Congregational Leadership and Ministry in the Face of Sexual Abuse

David B. Miller, associate professor of Missional Leadership Development, AMBS, with members of the Mennonite Church USA Panel on Sexual Abuse Prevention



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Voices singing 'Let's be jolly' . . .

Musician Nolan Kehler talks about the music that gets him into the Christmas spirit

BY AARON EPP
Young Voices Editor

Nolan Kehler knows a thing or two about music. In addition to studying vocal performance at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, the 22-year-old works part-time as an AM radio DJ and also as a producer for CBC Manitoba.

Kehler has played drums for a number of Winnipeg musical acts, including Pocket Change, Kenzie Jane, and Rhia Rae and the Rubies. If that weren't enough musical involvement, he is also the founder and editor of a blog that is posting reviews of each album on *Rolling Stone* magazine's list of 500 greatest albums of all time.

With the holidays upon us, *Canadian Mennonite* asked Kehler, a member of Seeds of Life Community Church in Altona, Man., to talk about some of his favourite Christmas music.

"River" by Joni Mitchell

From the album Blue
(A&M Studios/Hollywood, 1971)

"I wish I had a river to skate away on," renowned Canadian singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell sings on this classic folk song. It's a melancholic song that Kehler views as ultimately positive. "Christmas is largely a season where we put aside a lot of our day-to-day woes or conflict, and reflect on hope," he says. "I think that Joni Mitchell both recognizes the sadness of our day-to-day lives but also . . . [offers] a route of escapism to a place that's more full of hope."

Christmas with the Rat Pack by Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jr.

(Capitol Records, 2002)

Kehler remembers being 10 or 11 when his mother bought this collection of Christmas standards sung by three members of the Rat Pack. Most of the songs are studio recordings, but there are a few live tracks as well. Hearing the famed singers interact with the crowd is a particular highlight for Kehler. "It feels like they're talking to you and they're spending the holidays with you," he says.

Christmas by Bruce Cockburn

(True North, 1993)

"I really love Bruce Cockburn's *Christmas* album a lot," Kehler says. "It's a bit rawer around the edges than a lot of Christmas albums I would listen to regularly, and I appreciate that. It sounds like he's performing in a log cabin out by a creek in the woods, and all he's got is a warped acoustic guitar—and a backing band, of course." Kehler points to Cockburn's rendition of "The Huron Carol," sung in its native Huron, as a highlight. "That's the one that draws you into the sense of a wilder Christmas record."

"Santariffic" by Harry Connick Jr., featuring Lucien Barbarin

From What a Night! A Christmas Album (Sony/Columbia, 2008)

(Continued on page 36)

PHOTO COURTESY OF NOLAN KEHLER



Nolan Kehler is a voice student, radio DJ, drummer and music blogger.

PHOTO BY DENNY RENSHAW



American singer-songwriter Sufjan Stevens is well known for his 10 Christmas EPs.



Joni Mitchell's Blue contains the melancholic but ultimately hopeful Christmas song, 'River.'

PHOTO BY KEVIN KELLY



Part of the appeal of Bruce Cockburn's 1993 Christmas album is its rawness.



'The Walls Fall Back and the Night is Fluid' (2016) by Megan Krause is one of several pieces included in her Fertile Ash exhibit. The painting was created using India ink, acrylic and oil on panel.

PHOTO BY AARON EPP



Megan Krause's work is heavily influenced by her time spent studying international development.

(Continued from page 35)

"You can't help but chuckle and bob your head at the same time" when listening to this original composition by crooner Harry Connick Jr., Kehler says. It's a big-band jazz number that features Connick Jr. and trombone player Lucien Barbarin trading lines about how eating cookies and drinking milk have left their bodies looking "Santariffic." There's also a little romance thrown in for good measure. "They're having fun with it, and the trombone solo's dynamite," Kehler says. "It's a fun Christmas song."

Songs for Christmas by Sufjan Stevens

(*Asthmatic Kitty*, 2006)

Acclaimed American musician Sufjan Stevens recorded 10 Christmas EPs between 2001 and 2011. The first five are included in this collection. "He's one of the greatest singer-songwriters out there today," Kehler says. Listeners of the collection, will feel as though they are at a holiday party in someone's basement, hearing a guy with a guitar singing in the corner, he adds. The five EPs mix originals by Stevens with his renditions of classic Christmas and religious songs. "His version of 'Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing' is gorgeous," Kehler says. ☘

Painting as problem-solving

Artist's anxiety over the future of the planet leads to new exhibit of abstract paintings

BY AARON EPP

Young Voices Editor

For Winnipeg artist Megan Krause, painting is a process of problem solving.

"I never plan a piece ahead of time. Not anymore, anyway," the 32-year-old says. "It's all intuitively done."

Krause starts her paintings by playing and experimenting with how to apply the paint, dripping here and splattering there to see what happens. Then she begins to shape the painting.

"I try to tap into a more childlike imagination when I'm starting a painting, and as it evolves I start to resolve it more technically," she says. "[Later] I'm thinking about composition, and where the eye travels, and the colour palette."

Krause's latest exhibit, Fertile Ash, opened at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery in Winnipeg last month and is on display until Jan. 21. The exhibit features about 20 works that combine India ink, watercolour, acrylic and oil.

The paintings reflect Krause's personal

narrative, but they also address a long-running theme in her work: the environment and what it means to be good stewards in light of a growing population and rising global temperatures.

Krause says that "anxiety over the future of our planet" draws her to exploring environmental themes. Before earning an honours degree in fine arts from the University of Manitoba (UM), Krause graduated from Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) with a degree in international development. Studying international development sparked her interest in the environment and human ecology.

Her early work is more explicit in its handling of these subjects. Krause describes them as "case studies about resource management. It was important to me that my knowledge [from CMU] wasn't lost," Krause says. "I didn't want to make superficial art. I wanted it to be somewhat political."

At the same time, her art professors at UM pushed her to be more abstract in her

work. They emphasized considering how to create a piece that will keep the viewer looking at it for more than five seconds. “I learned not to be so precious with my paintings, and to take real risks,” she says.

Krause grew up in Winnipeg and Saskatoon, where her family attended Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship and Wildwood Mennonite Church, respectively. She was exposed to art at a young age. Her mother is a landscape painter, and Krause saw her paint commissioned works for family and friends, as well as create banners and backdrops for church.

Krause teaches drawing, painting and mixed media at CMU’s Community School of Music and the Arts, and at the Winnipeg Art Gallery Studio. Over the years, she has received the inaugural Nellie McClung Arts Legacy Award, as well as the Canadian Society for Civil Engineers Emerging Artist Award. She was also a

finalist for the Salt Spring Island National Art Prize in October 2015.

Krause has taken part in the Deep Bay Artists’ Residency in Manitoba’s Riding Mountain National Park, as well as the Churchill Artists’ Residency in Churchill, Man., where she first began working on the paintings that would become *Fertile Ash*.

After spending a year-and-a-half alone in her studio working on *Fertile Ash*, Krause is happy that people can now see it. She emphasizes that there are infinite ways to interpret her work, and all of them are valid.

“I hope [people] can come to my work realizing there is no literal read. There are infinite reads, and I really enjoy hearing other people’s [interpretations] and what they see,” she says. “[People] shouldn’t be intimidated. You bring your own experience to a painting. If everyone can relate to it in a different way, I think that’s what makes it successful.” ❧



'Carbon Thaw' (2016) by Megan Krause. India ink, acrylic and oil on panel.



'Building Up and Moving Forward' (2016) by Megan Krause. Acrylic and oil on panel.

Promotional Supplement

Schools Directory featuring Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

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Seminary study from a distance: Margaret De Jong


Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.

Margaret De Jong of Fredericton, N.B., is currently discipling new followers of Jesus in Senegal with Mennonite Mission Network. She is one of 29 students pursuing a seminary degree at a distance through the Master of Divinity Connect program

at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS). Connect students take a combination of online and hybrid courses, connecting with their professors and fellow students online and through one-week visits to campus. De Jong, who has served in Senegal since 2006, was part of the first group of Connect students in the fall of 2013.

"One of the reasons I wanted to go to seminary was to have a better understanding of Scripture so I could help others understand the Bible better," she says. "I have loved how I can be in my ministry setting and learning at the same time, applying what I'm learning in



(Continued on page 39)



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Calendar

British Columbia

Jan. 21, 2017: A second congregational gathering to continue to listen to viewpoints on the Being a Faithful Church 7 decision, at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond, from 9 a.m. to noon.

Saskatchewan

Jan. 13-14, 2017: RJC alumni Tournament of Memories.

Manitoba

Jan. 28 & Feb. 4, 2017: A two-day, two-part Celtic Christian spirituality

retreat in Winnipeg, exploring gifts of the Celts with stories, reflection and inspiration. For more information, call 204-489-7016 or visit ButterflyJourneys.webs.com.

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, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.


For more Calendar listings online, visit canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar.



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(Continued from page 38)

my context.”

Connect students are eligible to receive the full amount of need-based tuition aid by taking 12 credit hours per year. For Canadian students, AMBS offers tuition at par—currently more than 30 percent above the Canadian dollar. And paying for one class at a time has helped De Jong avoid debt. Her goal is to finish by 2019.

De Jong comes to AMBS about twice a year and was on campus for a semester in 2014; otherwise, she takes one three-hour course per semester.

She says she enjoys her online conversations with classmates, adding, “This



Margaret De Jong

is an awesome learning community!”

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Advertising Information

Contact
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advert@
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Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date	Ads Due
Jan. 16	Dec. 30
Jan. 30	Jan. 16
<i>Focus on Education</i>	
Feb. 13	Jan. 30
Feb. 27	Feb. 13
<i>Focus on Camps</i>	
March 13	Feb. 27
March 27	March 13
<i>Focus on Seniors</i>	
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