



CANADIAN MENNONITE

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Take a leap of faith this summer

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EDITORIAL

In the cross-hairs of change

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

“The times, they are a-changin,” belted out singer-songwriter Bob Dylan in the mid 1960s.

While Dylan made the words a hum-them-all-day-long habit for many of his fans, those of us living more than a half-century later smile to ourselves and ask: “What’s new about that?” Change has been constantly a part of our lives if we are awake and taking nourishment every day. Get used to it, sister. Adjust your lenses regularly.

Today, though, change is taking on a whole new meaning. Its pace has quickened. What we long considered changeless and stable is now being uprooted, in many cases considered archaic and useless, even mocked as something to be discarded.

Take “fake news,” for example. Those of us keeping informed through what we considered reliable news sources are now being told by the new U.S. president that this information is false because it doesn’t align with his ideological views of how government works, or should work.

Or that immigrants, especially from a certain seven Middle East countries, are likely terrorists—whatever that easily-thrown-around term means—and should be kept out. Or that Russia, historically a brutal regime dealt with warily by western governments, is now an international friend and ally.

All these are profound changes that can rock us to the core and even shake our faith in a God whom we consider a

power in our lives that works in mysterious ways to counter and confound the nations as they rage and engage in warfare to keep their power and place intact. As Anabaptist Christians, we are always conscious, with the psalmist, that “*the kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed*” (Psalms 2:2 NIV), biblical lyrics set to powerful music in Handel’s *Messiah*.



Make no mistake, though, that these wider cultural/political forces are affecting life in our own communion known as Mennonite Church Canada. The Brexit vote event in the United Kingdom and the isolationist Make America Great Again slogan can have an insidious but subconscious way of seeping into our own worldview as we carve out our own future in faith matters.

Two articles in this issue point to some undercurrents in our national and congregational life that should be brought to the conscious level.

On page 4, Ryan Dueck, in dealing with the recent David Haskell survey that draws a strong connection between theological conservatism in Canadian mainline Protestant churches and church attendance, warns profoundly that “theological truth and biblical fidelity cannot be reduced to an attendance referendum.”

We couldn’t agree more. But giving legs to a possible rift in our own communion right now is the disagreement

over Being a Faithful Church 7 that pits one interpretation over another in this so-called “biblical fidelity” debate regarding same-sex marriage. Will we divide over this or come together in good-faith disagreement?

And in his Future Directions article on page 14, senior writer Will Braun, in interviewing César Garcia, general secretary of Mennonite World Conference, cautions that in emphasizing the local congregation in our restructuring efforts, the new paradigm may be taking us to the point of “losing a biblical view of God’s vision: ‘A multicultural global community made up of people from every nation.’ That is everywhere in the Scripture.”

Will the shifting of our Witness program from a national office to congregations within a new regional church structure diminish that vision and bend toward the isolation that is gripping the international political culture?

And add to all of this the influence of the Internet on our daily lives. Conversations among us on social media can be more dominant and influential, it seems, than what the well-established media, such as *Canadian Mennonite*, fosters on a regular basis. Can we continue to nurture and shape a communion-wide narrative with so many venues feeding into it?

We are trying our best to use all media platforms to keep our readers informed and inspired across the country. Our website changes regularly to carry updated information and news that is important to feed and strengthen this narrative.

These are just a few of the forces that undergird the surface changes being proposed by the Interim Council of the Future Directions Task Force. Will they be recognized and taken into account as we discern together the future of our faith community?

Only time and our collective godly wisdom will tell.

ABOUT THE COVER:

Jake Scott, Silver Lake Mennonite Camp’s ‘outtrip’ leader, takes a leap of faith from a rock while guiding a canoe trip through Killarney Provincial Park. For more inspiring stories and photos, our Focus on Camping section begins on page 26.

PHOTO: SILVER LAKE MENNONITE CAMP

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Guiding values:

Hebrews 10:23-25 • Accuracy, fairness, balance • Editorial freedom •
Seeking and speaking the truth in love • Open hearts and minds in discerning God's will
• Covenantal relationships and mutual accountability

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Award-winning
member of the
Canadian Church Press



GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH FEATURE

Who's winning at church?

BY RYAN DUECK

Over the past while, a number of people have inquired about my thoughts on a recent “Theology matters” study conducted by Canadian scholar David Haskell that draws a strong connection between theological conservatism in Canadian mainline Protestant churches and church attendance.

According to the study, mainline Protestant churches that interpret the Bible more “literally,” hold to more traditional theological doctrines and are open to more contemporary expressions of worship, tend to be the ones that are growing, while those that emphasize their opposites are shrinking. The study has been covered by *The Globe and Mail* and *The Guardian*, among other media outlets. And Haskell himself authored an apologetics piece for the piece, being loosely connected to the liberal Protestant tradition that the study seems to cast in a negative, or at the very least ineffective, light.

What to say?

Well, the first (unremarkable) observation I might make is that the study reflects what I observe to be true on the ground. The little church I am a part of—which contains a delightful if sometimes bewildering mixture of conservatives and liberals—is a stone’s throw from a church of more than a thousand people in one direction and slightly fewer than that in another. Both of them would largely fit the descriptors above. Across our city, I would say that, pretty much without exception, the largest and youngest churches tend to be theologically conservative. So the study did not yield any particularly revelatory insights that most pastors, whatever their theological leanings, would not have been familiar with, if only in cursory and anecdotal ways.

There are ready-made and predictable explanations for, or responses to, these findings, of course. Conservatives respond to the data with no small amount of glee, interpreting it as unambiguous evidence of their “rightness,” validating their commitment to stand as a courageous bulwark against the creeping tide of liberalism, secularism, relativism and all kinds of other pernicious “isms” that seek to infiltrate and

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Shrinking, aging churches are, while perhaps regrettable on a pragmatic level (since the bills must be paid), ironically seen as a sign of fidelity to the ethos of Jesus, of a willingness to think critically, to welcome doubt and complexity, and to hold to more traditional forms of worship.



People are looking for good old-fashioned biblical truth, not all that liberal mumbo-jumbo. Put most crudely, this study proves that conservatives are winning. What else could pews full of young people possibly mean?

contaminate the church. You see! People are looking for good old-fashioned biblical truth, not all that liberal mumbo-jumbo. Put most crudely, this study proves that conservatives are winning. What else could pews full of young people possibly mean?

Liberals, by contrast, have their own set of responses lined up. Well, sheep like to follow, don't they? People are hungry for certainty, and love to be told what to do and how to think. People like to be entertained and so they dutifully line up for all the bells and whistles of these big flashy churches. Easy answers and large-scale impressive productions with lots of attractive programming for all ages—of course, those churches are growing! We choose to follow the simplicity of Jesus, and pursue justice and community!

Shrinking, aging churches are, while perhaps regrettable on a pragmatic level (since the bills must be paid), ironically seen as a sign of fidelity to the ethos of Jesus, of a willingness to think critically, to welcome doubt and complexity, and to hold to more traditional forms of

worship.

These two options seem to me to represent the low-hanging explanatory fruit, as it were, and I am, for that reason, inclined to dismiss both of them as anything resembling a comprehensive explanation to the study's findings. The truth is usually more complicated than we would prefer, if only because human beings are complicated creatures who do the things they do and think the things they think for a wide variety of reasons.

Are there some people whose reasoning would run along the lines above? Sure. Would it be the majority? I'm not so sure. I say this for the unexceptional reason that I know and love people across the theological spectrum. I know and love people who raise their hands during songs with rock bands at conservative mega-churches and those who kneel at the rail alongside the faithful few to receive communion at tiny liberal churches. And I know that their reasons for worshipping where and how they do are not as simple as either of the caricatures above.

For starters, much as it pains me to

say it, some people care far less about theology than studies like this seem to assume they do. Sometimes people just go where their friends go. Or where the music makes them feel good. Or where people offered to help them move last weekend. Or where they can get free coffee. Or where someone asked them how they were doing one Sunday. I've learned to never, ever underestimate the importance of a warm welcome and a kind word. These often mean a great deal more to people than anything that comes out of a preacher's mouth.

Having said that, theology is not irrelevant. Of course, it isn't. And there is some truth, I think, to the claim that, in general, people prefer certainty to ambiguity. Perhaps especially in our postmodern world, where everything seems up for grabs and nothing seems solid, where the Internet has exposed us to a tidal wave of information and we have few tools for sifting out fact and fiction, and where so much that once seemed predictable and reliable now seems not to be so. In this context, people might be looking for one area of life

where things are just black and white.

Or at least where they are presented as black and white.

It is equally true that just because the customer is happy, it doesn't necessarily mean the customer is right. Not always, at least. The fact that all the young, cool people are flocking to theologically conservative churches doesn't, in and of itself, say anything conclusive about whether or not their approach to the Bible or theology is the best, or even the only faithful one. They might have some things right. Indeed, they almost certainly do. They might also have a few things wrong or, at the very least, less right than they think they do. Certainty is among the most attractive idols on offer, it seems to me, and it never lacks for devotees.

The same is true for liberal churches, of course. Smallness is not a badge of honour in and of itself, as if they alone are the faithful remnant who have heroically stuck with Jesus, while the masses brazenly chase after the harlot of numbers and entertainment and certainty.

Open-mindedness and innovation, and a willingness to tolerate diversity, doubt and uncertainty, are appropriate responses to a point. But only to a point. If these become reasons for being in and of themselves; if churches define themselves as not being like those nasty, big, conservative churches; if churches forget that God actually has spoken in Jesus Christ and that there actually is important and non-negotiable content that underlies our convictions and commitments—then it's not hard to understand why such churches would be shrinking.

The preceding analysis probably doesn't surprise many readers. I suspect that I am neither conservative enough for my conservative readers, nor liberal enough for my liberal readers. At any rate, I think that a study like this shows less than we are inclined to imagine they do. Theological truth and biblical fidelity cannot be reduced to an attendance referendum. Much as we might prefer such simple metrics, this is not how things work. It's not how they ought to work, at any rate.

One last thing. As I said above, I know and love people from across the

The fact that all the young, cool people are flocking to theologically conservative churches doesn't, in and of itself, say anything conclusive about whether or not their approach to the Bible or theology is the best, or even the only faithful, one.

theological and ecclesial spectrum. And what I know from experience and from their strong example to me, is that in nearly every church—no matter if it's big or small, conservative or liberal, traditional or progressive, no matter how we label and thereby limit one another with these descriptors—there are people who really love Jesus and who are trying to follow him faithfully, even as they make mistakes and stumble along the way.

This is encouraging and, in my view, entirely what we ought to expect. After all, we have cast our lot with One who frustratingly refused to be limited to existing structures and categories, and who

stubbornly offered life and light across the many and varied boundaries that human beings laboured to maintain and police. Thank God. ❧

Ryan Dueck is pastor of Lethbridge (Alta.) Mennonite Church. His Rumbblings blog, where this first appeared, can be found at ryandueck.com.



To read the full "Theology matters" paper, visit <http://bit.ly/theology-matters-report>.



/// For discussion

1. Ryan Dueck suggests that a warm welcome and a kind word generally mean more to people than the theology of a sermon. Do you agree? How much do you think theology matters to people in the pew? If you were new in town, what would attract you to one church over another?
2. As you think about your community, which congregations are growing and which are declining? Do the growing or larger ones tend to have more traditional theology with more contemporary expressions of worship? Are the liberal churches the ones that are shrinking? Do you have an explanation for this phenomenon?
3. How are the beliefs of a theologically conservative church different from one that is theologically liberal? Do you agree that churches with more traditional theological doctrines provide more black-and-white answers to life's questions? Are people more attracted to churches that provide certainty rather than ambiguity? Do theologically conservative churches discourage questions?
4. Dueck describes a study that found a "strong connection between theological conservatism and church attendance." What message does this study have for you and your church? Is church attendance a good measure of faithfulness?

—BY BARB DRAPER

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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.

✉ Visit to the West Bank might enlighten letter writer

RE: "MC CANADA should retract BDS resolution and apologize to Israel" letter, Jan. 2, page 10.

This letter is unfair and misleading. As a mover and author of the resolution, I am baffled by the false assertion that it grew out of complaints from West Bank farmers about their water supply. As the resolution itself states, it was a response to the Kairos "Moment of truth" document, a call from Palestinian church leaders to the global Christian community to oppose the injustices associated with Israel's 50-year-old occupation of Palestinian lands. The uneven sharing of water resources is only one of the issues. The resolution is also clear in its condemnation of the violence of both Israelis and Palestinians, a point that Andrew Sawatzky ignores.

(Continued on page 8)

FROM OUR LEADERS

‘The darkness of the womb’?

DEBORAH FROESE

"[Y]ou shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. . . . 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these'" (Mark 12:30-31).

Oxford Dictionaries named "post-truth" as their Word of the Year for 2016, an adjective that values emotion and personal belief over fact. Last November, Stanford University released a study that sampled 7,800 middle school through college students in the United States and assessed their ability to distinguish credible news from fake news online. Researchers said they were "shocked" by how many students were utterly unable to evaluate whether the information was credible.

Even more worrying is how fake news, like a wild fire, is spread through social media. Sharing misinformation is just one easy click away. People who share a fake story lend credibility to it among their "trusted" friends, and those friends



share it with their friends, and soon a multitude of individuals is sucked into a vortex of lies and deceit.

Another scripture passage comes to mind: "[L]ook at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits" (James 3: 4-5).

Perhaps Reinhold Niebuhr's "Serenity prayer" needs some adjustment for our times: "God, grant me wisdom to discern truth, courage to challenge deceit, and the serenity to do so faithfully."

In a world in which we are assaulted daily by tsunami waves of opinion, information and misinformation, it's tough to discern truth. The world seems a dark place. But what if, as social activist and

storyteller Valery Kaur says, "This is not the darkness of the tomb, but the darkness of the womb"?

What if the challenges before us represent the labour of God birthing us into a new reality? Consider the hundreds of thousands of women—and men—around the world who marched for justice and equality on Jan. 21. They marched peacefully. Has such an event ever occurred before? What a symbol of hope!

This, more than ever, is a time to let love shine. As we struggle through the misinformation mire, let's focus on the commandments that Jesus deemed most important: to love God with fullness of being and to love our neighbours as we love ourselves. Filtering thought, word and action through these commandments is the surest road to truth and light, regardless of any confusion we find along the way.

May the fullness of God's shalom be yours.

Deborah Froese is director of news services and editor of PrayerNet for Mennonite Church Canada.

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The letter is also unfair in its parting rhetorical question of why Bethlehem Bible College remains in the West Bank “when most of the Christians have been driven out.” Sawatzky implies that the college should just leave, too. But that assumption completely misses the missional purpose of the school. The college, the only evangelical Arab-language institution of its kind

in the Middle East, is valiantly equipping leaders for Christian presence and witness in the Holy Land and beyond. It’s true that the Christian population has diminished—largely because of the suffering imposed by the occupation—but why should that be a reason for the college to pack up and leave?

I encourage Sawatzky to travel to the West Bank and spend a week with the “living stones” of the Palestinian

FAMILY TIES

In defence of masks

MELISSA MILLER

The subject of masks came up in the adult Sunday school class. Not literal ones, but the invisible ones we wear in an attempt to hide that which we don’t want to be seen. I ventured that such masks are unhelpful barriers, interfering with connectedness and intimacy.

Quickly a woman responded, “We wear masks because other people don’t want to hear our troubles; they don’t want us burdening them with our whining.”

Given the swiftness and direction of her tack, I later wondered if I had touched something sensitive within her. Perhaps her attempts to remove a mask had not been met with kindness and acceptance.

In the moment, I inwardly protested, “No! That’s not what I meant at all.” By negating neediness and hinting of shame, she stopped me in my tracks. In effect, whatever her intention, she defended the need for such masks exactly as I was tugging at their edges. If I had felt more secure, I might have quoted Scripture and challenged her: “What was Paul talking



about when he told the Galatians (6:2) to ‘bear one another’s burdens’? Doesn’t the wearing of masks get in the way of bearing each other’s burdens?” For whatever reason, I stifled my objection and simply allowed space after her comment. Soon the discussion shifted to other subjects.

Now I return to the subject, inviting

your consideration as to the value or harm in wearing masks. It’s related to a previous column (“Healthy truth,” Oct. 24, 2016) on secrets and the truth. A mask is a kind of secret. A secret masks a truth.

Masks do have value. Consider these examples from my personal life, family or work.

As a parent of a young child, I often masked my true feelings in an attempt to guide the child towards emotional maturity. Although the prospect might have appeal, there would be little value in parent and child having tantrums simultaneously. I do confess that I was not always successful. I recall a particular day when I shouted at top volume, “Would everybody please shut up?” Maybe I omitted the “please,” I’m not sure. The details are a little fuzzy but the irony remains.

In my work settings, I am aware that people often unmask vulnerable information about themselves to pastors or counsellors.

Another example. I am not the best at managing my spouse’s irritation. Rather than brushing it off or smoothing it over, I’m more likely to enflame it by oversensitivity and defensiveness. Such situations could benefit from a little mask softening my response; some days I actually get there.

In my work settings, I am aware that people often unmask vulnerable information about themselves to pastors or counsellors. Within that protected space, I agree to listen open-heartedly to the other. This means I set aside—or mask—my personal feelings, to allow the other the means to explore the matters that are troubling him or her.

While I draw on my experiences and judgments at such times, I am careful to include them based on what I think will be most helpful to the counsellee or congregant.

In conclusion, there are compelling reasons to wear metaphorical masks. These include assisting another to grow towards maturity, self-knowledge or health. Yet too much covering up of our truths—our thoughts and feelings, our experiences and histories—impedes con-

connectedness and intimacy. In the next column, I’ll argue for the thoughtful removal of such masks.

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

church, which has maintained a Christian witness in the land since the time of Christ and which is a leader in a nonviolent quest for a Holy Land in which Jews, Muslims and Christians—Israeli and Palestinian—live securely in peace.

BYRON REMPEL-BURKHOLDER, WINNIPEG

✉ Program organizers deserve to be credited

RE: "FROM BEHIND the Iron Curtain," Jan. 2, page 16.

Thanks to Amy Dueckman for her excellent report on the Mennonite Historical Society of BC's fall fundraiser.

(Continued on page 10)

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Journey of generosity

MARLOW GINGERICH

"Now listen, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.' Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. . . . [I]nstead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.'" (James 4:13-15)

You likely know people who must have a plan in order to complete, or even start, a project.

The Internet is filled with articles about why we should have a plan to do almost anything. A plan clarifies priorities, helps you achieve balance, gives you the strength to say no to lesser things, and helps you avoid mistakes and envision a better future. These are good things! Planning can be very beneficial, but it can also be intimidating.

In his book *Rework*, Jason Fried writes, "Writing a plan makes you feel in control of things you can't actually control. Why don't we just call plans what they really are: guesses?"



It's true. We can spend a lot of time listing goals and designing strategies, but even with the best planning and intentions, there are no guarantees that our efforts will work as we want them to. The problem with planning, Fried continues, is that "plans are inconsistent with improvisation. And you have to be able to improvise. You have to be able to pick up opportunities that come along."

We shouldn't disregard planning altogether, however. But we should be careful not to obsess about it. Conversely, the

need to develop a highly structured plan before taking any action at all can cause you to develop planning paralysis.

Planning paralysis can affect many areas of our lives, including our charitable giving. Having a charitable giving plan implies that a few things have been considered before making a gift, such as where do my charitable passions lie? What does my budget allow me to give? When is the best time for me to give? When is the best time for a charity to receive my gift?

While I am a strong advocate for planning your giving, I also know that too much planning can hinder the joy that comes from spontaneous giving.

While I am a strong advocate for planning your giving, I also know that too much planning can hinder the joy that comes from spontaneous giving. All of your planning does not need to be perfect before you make your first gift. Some of it, maybe much of it, can be worked out along the way. Once you begin, work on a strategy that considers your beliefs and charitable passions. You don't need to know exactly how much you will be contributing or exactly where you will

make your contributions over the long term. There is time for that later. The key is to start. Just begin the journey and experience the joy of generosity.

At Abundance Canada, we can help you develop a charitable giving plan. Our gift planning consultants can help you open a gifting account, which will allow you to have the flexibility of spontaneous giving or to hold the funds until you have developed a giving plan. Once you make a donation to a gifting account, Abundance Canada will make donations on your behalf to the charities you choose, when you choose. You decide when to give, how much to give, and you can even remain anonymous if you wish.

Abundance Canada looks after all of

the administrative details, so that you can experience the joy and simplicity of giving . . . and avoid planning paralysis.

Marlow Gingerich is a gift planning consultant at Abundance Canada serving generous people in Ontario and eastern provinces. For more information on impulsive generosity, stewardship education, and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest Abundance Canada office or visit abundance.ca.

(Continued from page 9)

What wasn't mentioned, however, was that Louise Bergen Price and Ruth Derksen Siemens put together the program. Louise was the heart and soul of the afternoon and wrote much of it, including the sections that I narrated. I was little more than a voice.

ROBERT MARTENS, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

✉ Former columnist Phil Wagler praised for Outside the Box

RE: "STRENGTHEN WHAT remains," Jan. 16, page 11.

Amen, brother. I believe you speak what is in the hearts and minds of many in Mennonite Church Canada and for me personally. We can see ourselves as alive, believing we reflect accurately the Anabaptist vision with proud declarations for peace and justice, and yet be blind to what's true. We certainly need a renewing of the vision for "calling peoples and nations to repentance and salvation through Jesus Christ and his foolish cross."

You are what kept me reading *Canadian Mennonite*. Thank you, and God bless you and your ministry.

HERMAN J. WIEBE (ONLINE COMMENT)

Christianity is a multi-lithic religion, and Anabaptism a multi-lithic movement within it, which we, as Mennonites, have tended to deny with a passive but stubborn, uninformed and unhelpful determination.

In Phil Wagler's "Outside the Box" columns I have heard a passion for a certain understanding of Jesus' message, the phrases and cadence of which I recognize, having grown up Mennonite Brethren. That is a church I left many years ago for a Mennonite church, having come to a partially different understanding of the call to follow Jesus.

I perceive God calling the church through "secular culture" many times since the Enlightenment to a faithfulness to Jesus in a way that Wagler would be unlikely to endorse. Over the coming decades, many thousands more Mennonites are going to move in and out of Mennonite and other churches, as changing North American spirituality bends the status quo of

"Christian" institutions beyond recognition. Let us affirm, rather than bemoan, these comings and goings, blessing what we can.

Thank you for your columns. You kept this committed liberal Mennonite reading your column almost every issue.

MICHAEL DYCK (ONLINE COMMENT)

✉ Help from Jesus available for those with same-sex attraction

I WATCHED AND listened to the online recording of the discussion preceding the vote on the "committed same-sex relationship" resolution presented at the Mennonite Church Canada assembly in Saskatoon last July.

Something that surprised and concerned me was that not a single individual got up to offer a solution to those who are LGBTQ-oriented and want to get out but are unable to do so. I know it is possible to exit because I have a friend who was a committed gay but is now married to a woman, thereby also acquiring children and grandchildren. This friend had previously really desired to be a woman as well. That need is now gone. I heard him say so at a meeting.

A delegate to the assembly from my community told of a person there who is a committed partner in a heterosexual marriage but now has to deal with same-sex attractions. This must be very difficult, but there is help available. Jesus can help people be set free, but they must desire that.

In Luke 4:18, Jesus quotes from Isaiah 61:1-2: "*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 proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.*"

ANDREW SAWATZKY, CALGARY

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Ayala—Timothy Gabino (b. Dec. 18, 2016), to Joy and David Ayala, Listowel Mennonite, Ont.

Dufton—Naomi Rebekah (b. Jan. 21, 2017), to Kevin and Sarah Dufton, Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont.

Hochstetler Epp—Ruthie Jean (b. Nov. 29, 2016), to Peter

Epp and Shanda Hochstetler, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Martin—Emmett Noah (b. Jan. 4, 2017), to Richard and Amanda Martin, Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont.

Peters—Sadie Renee (b. Jan. 5, 2017), to Terry and Erica

Peters, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Redekop—Emmett Martin (b. Dec. 17, 2016), to Lucas and Alison Redekop, Home Street Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Schultz—Kyla Faith (b. Jan. 29, 2017), to Nick and Caitlin Schultz, Poole Mennonite, Ont.

Tiessen—Manoah Benjamin (b. Jan. 23, 2017), to Ben and Jolene Tiessen, Ottawa Mennonite.

Wiehler—Heidi Ruth (b. Sept. 25, 2016), to Mark and Vanessa (Claassen) Wiehler, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Baptisms

Tyrell Roes, Joanna Kipfer—Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., Jan. 15, 2017.

Marriages

Gerber/Kuepfer—LeeAnne Gerber and Ross Kuepfer, Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont., Jan. 28, 2017.

Gibney/Virostek—Melissa Gibney (North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.) and Craig Virostek, in Golden, B.C., Jan. 7, 2017.

Deaths

Baerg—Vic, 75 (b. Feb. 2, 1941; d. Jan. 24, 2017), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

Buhler—Margaret (nee Ginter), 100 (b. Nov. 9, 1916; d. Jan. 16, 2017), Level Ground Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Epp—Leona Ruth (nee Jantzen), 88 (b. Oct. 16, 1928; d. Jan. 2, 2017), Eigenheim Mennonite, Rosthern, Sask.

Gade—Hans, 87 (b. Sept. 15, 1929; d. Jan. 26, 2017), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

Janz—Henry (Rocky), 79 (b. April 22, 1937; d. Jan. 14, 2017), First Mennonite, Calgary.

Janzen—Tina Wilma (nee Reinke), 92 (b. April 15, 1924; d. Dec. 6, 2016), Level Ground Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Neufeld—Werner, 84 (b. April 4, 1932; d. Jan. 20, 2017), Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Paff—John Alvin, 77 (b. May 27, 1939; d. Dec. 28, 2016), Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

Penner—Alfred, 87 (b. April 11, 1929; d. Jan. 19, 2017), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Siemens—Susana, 87 (b. Jan. 28, 1929; d. Dec. 31, 2016), Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

Spendlow—Violet, 72 (b. Sept. 6, 1944; d. Jan. 3, 2017), Lethbridge Mennonite, Alta.

Steinmann—Christina (nee Gingerich), 95 (b. June 18, 1921; d. Jan. 14, 2017), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Warkentin—Justine (nee Harms), 95 (b. Jan. 1, 1921; d. Dec. 24, 2016), Level Ground Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Wenger—Donald P (Don), 85 (b. Feb. 10, 1931; d. Jan. 15, 2017), Preston Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.

Wiebe—Frank, 74 (b. Jan. 4, 1942; d. Dec. 2, 2016), Trinity Mennonite, Mather, Man.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones

announcements within four months of the event.

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

A moment from yesterday



Elmer Martens, kneeling bottom left, was born in 1930 in Main Centre, Sask. He went on to become a leading authority on the Old Testament. His career was based at Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, but he also taught at numerous seminaries in North America and beyond. In addition to books, articles, preaching and pastoring, he was involved with the translation work for the New American Standard and the New King James versions of the Bible. Martens had a cooperative approach, as seen in this 1975 photo of the Mid-East Seminar, a two-week archeological dig near Tel Aviv, Israel. On the other end of the banner is Millard Lind, an Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary professor.

*Text: Conrad Stoesz / Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies
Photo: Mennonite Brethren Bible College Photo Collection /
Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies*



archives.mhsc.ca

LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Wisdom, where art thou? (Pt. 5)

TROY WATSON

The king was looking for someone possessing great wisdom to join his council of advisors. So he contacted the elders of the 12 regions of his kingdom and asked them to send their wisest man or woman to his palace to participate in a challenge. The winner would then be invited to join his council.

The elders selected and sent 12 people of great wisdom to the palace. When they arrived, the king summoned them to his royal court, where there were 12 desks in a row, each with a pen and stack of paper on it.

All the doors and windows were open and they marvelled at the beautiful gardens and majestic buildings surrounding them. Then they noticed a man, half-naked, tied to a wooden pole in the middle of the courtyard directly in front of them.

The king pointed to the man and said he had been charged with defying the king and was now going to be punished. The king explained to them that the man was innocent, but the royal court had decided to make an example of him.

"This man will be sentenced to 40 lashes and one year in prison," the king said, "unless one of you can set him free with your wisdom. It won't be easy, for I am a harsh man, but if any of you can do this, you will be invited to stay as a member of the royal council. Now there are 12 desks, paper and pens. You have one hour. Begin!"

The wise ones quickly sat down and began writing their best arguments for releasing the man, except for one very old woman wearing a purple shawl. She slowly walked out into the courtyard,



took a sword from one of the bewildered guards and cut the ropes that bound the man to the pole. She then took off her shawl, placed it on his shivering shoulders and told him he was free to go home.

The royal guards stood motionless and speechless,

in shock over the old woman's boldness. Finally one of them turned to the captain of the guards and asked what they should do.

"Arrest her!" he said. "She has defied the king."

The guards seized her and threw her before the king's throne.

"You dare to defy me?" the king asked.

This story echoes Jesus' teachings on wisdom. In Matthew 11:19 he says 'wisdom is vindicated by her actions' or 'justified by her works.' This means that wisdom is validated by its results. Or to put it another way, wisdom isn't truly wisdom until it does something.

"Explain your actions!"

"Well, sire, you told us an innocent man would be beaten and imprisoned unless one of us set him free. So I set him free," she said.

"Did you not see I was willing to punish an innocent man? How much more do you think I will punish you for defying me in my own court? Only a fool would do such a thing!"

"I'm sorry, but I beg to differ, sire. Only a fool knows what to do—but doesn't do it. Don't you agree?"

"But you didn't do what you were supposed to do!" the king shouted. "You were supposed to set him free by using your wisdom. By writing your wisdom down

on paper to convince me to set him free."

"Forgive me, sire, but that is not what you said. You only told us to set him free with our wisdom. So I did. Now, if I did what you are now suggesting I should have done, it wouldn't matter what I wrote down on that paper, it would not have been wisdom."

"Why not?" the king demanded.

"Because knowing what ought to be done isn't wisdom until you've done it."

A wise old woman indeed.

This story echoes Jesus' teachings on wisdom. In Matthew 11:19 he says "*wisdom is vindicated by her actions*" or "*justified by her works*." This means that wisdom is validated by its results. Or to put it another way, wisdom isn't truly wisdom until it does something.

Wisdom is understanding in action. As Jesus says in Matthew 7:24: "*Everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them is like a wise person who built*

their house on the rock." Twice Jesus stresses that wisdom is action in this verse:

- **PEOPLE ARE** only wise by acting on what they understand.
- **PEOPLE ARE** not wise by knowing how to build on a solid foundation, but by actually building on it.

James puts it this way: "*Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says*" (1:22). ❧

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

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

New name, different ownership

Mennonite Heritage Centre archives and art gallery to continue under new structure

Mennonite Church Canada / Canadian Mennonite University /
Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies
WINNIPEG

The Mennonite Heritage Centre, including its archival and art gallery programs, is being reorganized under a new partnership and name.

Discussions over the last months between Mennonite Church Canada, Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), and the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies (CTMS) culminated in a proposal for CMU to assume full ownership of the Mennonite Heritage Centre building and programming of the faith-based art gallery. The archives will be managed and funded by a three-way partnership of MC Canada, CMU and CTMS, itself a partnership between the University of Winnipeg's Chair in Mennonite Studies and the D.F. Plett Historical Research Foundation Inc.

Under terms of the proposal, CMU will own and maintain the Mennonite Heritage Centre infrastructure, with staff of both the archives and gallery integrated into CMU's human resources complement. Operational details within the partnership will be further clarified over the coming months. The proposal was accepted by MC Canada's General Board at a Jan. 13 meeting.

The Mennonite Heritage Centre will be re-named the Mennonite Heritage Archives (MHA) on June 1, the anticipated transfer date to the new partnership.

To facilitate the transition to the new structure, MC Canada will be releasing the current archives programming staff. The full-time position of director, currently filled by Korey Dyck, is being eliminated, while the archivist position, currently filled by Conrad Stoesz, is being expanded to full-time as part of the new partnership. Further announcements for re-staffing the new MHA are pending. A committee representing the three partners will

provide leadership to the MHA.

The partnership will seek to continue and to deepen the existing mandate of the archives program, including present and future deposits to the collections of MC Canada and other Mennonite denominations. At the same time, it will expand the focus to include resources that document the transnational Anabaptist experience, including materials related to church communities in the Global South, the Mennonite sojourn in Russia and the Low German Mennonites of the Americas.

The archives program has a distinguished record of service to the church community by storing and indexing congregational, area church and national church records. These records, such as baptismal and church membership information, also constitute a primary source of data for church and family researchers and genealogists. The program also receives donations of records from education

/// Staff changes

Pastoral transition in Manitoba

• **JOSEF ESTABROOKS** was installed as the new pastor of Fort Garry Mennonite Church in Winnipeg on Oct. 2, 2016. He brings distinctive skills to this, his first official pastoral position, through his degree training in justice and law enforcement, which featured an emphasis on youth corrections. Throughout his tenure, Estabrooks says he will be supported by his "lovely wife and three children, who are well short of being youth yet!"

—BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY

faculty, church leaders and others.

The operations of the art gallery will be assumed entirely by CMU on June 1.

The gallery is a bridge between Mennonites and other faith communities, featuring visual arts that share the Mennonite faith story within its own community, as well as bringing the faith stories of other religious groups to the Mennonite community. While the gallery is based in Winnipeg, travelling exhibits have been featured in congregations, campuses, and events such as the MC Canada and Mennonite World Conference assemblies. ///

CMU PHOTO



The Mennonite Heritage Centre, including its archival and art gallery programs, is being reorganized. The Mennonite Heritage Archives will operate under a new partnership, while Canadian Mennonite University will take over the art gallery.

Is Future Directions a First-World problem?

BY WILL BRAUN

Senior Writer

The Future Directions process is moving slowly and surely forward with a specific restructuring proposal and a timeline for downsizing proposals. Meanwhile, the notion of refocussing on the local congregation, which is central to the transition narrative, is generating vital questions about the importance of global perspectives in an increasingly nationalistic world.

First, the proposal. In line with earlier documents, the Jan. 26 proposal put forward by transition leaders calls for a major shift of resources from Mennonite Church Canada to new regional churches. Congregations would only give to, and be members of, these new regional bodies, not the national church. The national office would have a significantly reduced role. Sources say unofficially that MC Canada staff numbers are expected to go from the current 24 to less than 10.

PEACEBUILDERS COMMUNITY INC. FILE PHOTO



Dann Pantoja, left, Joji Pantoja and Tim Froese pose for a photo when the Pantojas visited the Mennonite Church Canada offices in Winnipeg. Froese, the executive minister of MC Canada Witness, wears the 'tubao,' a head gear of the Maguindanao tribe in the southern Philippines.

The current proposal will be brought to area church annual meetings between Feb. 25 and April 29 for their input. Meanwhile, the nine Working Groups established by the transition leadership will do their work, and MC Canada and the current area churches will present financial information for last year and income projections for this year. All of this, as well as the input of the Emerging Voices Initiative (EVI) and the Listening Group will be fed into the process.

Transition coordinator Keith Regehr says a more detailed proposal, incorporating all this input, will be put forward in late May or early June in advance of the special delegate assembly planned for Oct. 13 to 15 in Winnipeg. That proposal will need to spell out which work will be cut or scaled back in order to achieve the necessary budget reductions.

Staff at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, which houses an art gallery and archives, have already been released or given notice. The facility will be taken over by Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) as part of an arrangement that involves MC Canada, CMU and the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg. (See story on page 13.)

Local-global tension

Like earlier Future Directions documents, the current proposal frames the transition as a refocussing on the congregation as "the primary place of worship and mission." Proposed changes are supposed to allow the new regional churches to better resource congregations. At the same time, Witness work will need to be scaled back even more than it already has been. According to MC Canada, between 2007 and 2016, donation revenue used to support national and international work dropped from \$1.74 million to \$1.17 million.

These outreach reductions, along with a doubling down on congregational focus,

creates a scenario in which we will be shifting resources from Witness efforts abroad to congregations at home.

Back in January, I asked César Garcia, general secretary of Mennonite World Conference (MWC), about the potential of Canadian congregations "sistering" with congregations in the Global South, in part to counteract this sort of shift. He responded with a call for a paradigm shift. I quote at length:

"Our Anabaptist ecclesiology emphasizes the local congregation till the point of losing a biblical view of God's vision: 'A multicultural global community made up from people from every nation.' That is everywhere in the Scripture.

"In our theology, the idea of being an alternative community is great, but we miss it when we apply it just locally. An alternative community to the political powers of today requires a transnational, cross-cultural, global community that lives out the Christian values of interdependency, love and equality. That kind of community is the only way of showing the world that it is possible to overcome nationalisms and ethnocentrism."

Anika Reynar, one of the EVI organizers, said that while Witness initiatives worldwide and the global Anabaptist context were raised by some people at the consultations across the country, these matters "did not seem to be at the centre of the conversation." She questions now why that is.

While Reynar, a CMU student, sees potential in the congregational model, she wonders "whether, in framing the transition process primarily in relation to the national church, we are doing ourselves a disservice by limiting our understanding of the church to nation-state and provincial boundaries, rather than imagining our churches here as part of a wider and vibrant global Anabaptist network."

Tim Froese, MC Canada's executive minister for Witness, says the hope is that congregations will take more ownership of Witness work and that the regional churches will take on a greater role in promoting partnership opportunities between congregations and Witness work. "In some ways," Froese says, "this may turn out to be a test of congregational desire."

Froese notes how MC Canada Witness work is changing. In order to “ease the risks of bringing Canadian/North American baggage into international work,” he says MC Canada has hired Witness workers from non-European MC Canada congregations for ministry in their countries of origin, citing examples involving South Korea, Thailand, Colombia and Vietnam. But he notes that it has been challenging to find funding support for workers who do not come from traditional European backgrounds, as they do not have deep connections to the broader Mennonite church in Canada. “The question may become,” he says, “how can we change this?”

Froese says he can envision strengthening ties to the global church in part through MWC, noting that “those are conversations that still need to be had.”

Dann and Joji Pantoja are Witness workers in the Philippines. Their funding dropped by 25 percent in 2016, while requests from communities for their services increased. “We’re tightening our belt,” they say in an email. “We’re scared. We’re also motivated.”

The award-winning social enterprise Coffee for Peace is funding much of the couple’s work, which involves spiritually rooted peacebuilding. They also value the partnership relationships they have with six MC Canada congregations. “We feel embraced by them,” they say. “We feel we’re safe in God’s hands because of the love of God’s people.”

Although experiencing “pain” in their “personal and organizational finances,” they are “determined to thrive, and not just survive,” because, as they say, “God, the Great Provider, is with us.”

As the Pantojas, in collaboration with their partners here and in the Philippines, spread a profoundly spiritual vision for peace, Garcia shares a related dimension of peace witness. “While political leaders speak about walls,” he says, “our churches are called to build cross-cultural and cross-national bridges, which can be done with the power of the Spirit only if we belong and act as a global church. We really need each other globally.” ☞

‘Befriending death’ at the ‘death café’

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
BADEN, ONT.

Michelle O’Rourke never expected that within months of having a lead role in designing and building the 10-bed Chatham-Kent Hospice, which opened in April 2016, that she would be moving her own father into the hospice on Fathers’ Day.

O’Rourke, a registered nurse and the integrated program coordinator for both the hospice and the palliative care and oncology departments at the Chatham-Kent Health Alliance, was the keynote speaker at Mennonite Church Eastern Canada’s annual seminar for pastors, chaplains and congregational leaders, held Jan. 21 at Steinmann Mennonite Church in Baden.

Surrounded by simple and poignant worship of read words, songs and images from the cradle to the grave prepared by Ingrid Loepp-Thiessen, O’Rourke noted that Catholic theologian Henri Nouwen believed that people belong to God in eternity before birth and again after death. “Life is just an interruption of eternity, just a little opportunity for a few years to say, ‘I love you, too,’” he said.

O’Rourke’s teaching centred on facing death as a normal phase of life that everyone will pass through. “Palliative care is not about dying,” she said. “It is about living” to the end. If one has the time, then “dying well” includes “coming to terms with the diagnosis” and all that entails.

With legislation allowing for medical assistance in dying (MAID), she addressed the need for more palliative and hospice care, pain control and helping the patient live until the end. She told stories of beer fridges in hospice rooms, weddings within hours of death, of hobbies continued and of lives that stretched out longer than expected, allowing for good work to be done in the work of dying.

Workshops in the afternoon included “Medical assistance in dying” facilitated by Steven Janzen, a psycho-social



Ray Martin, left, pastor of East Zorra Mennonite Church, chats with Michelle O’Rourke about her presentation ‘Befriending death’ at the annual Mennonite Church Eastern Canada seminar for pastors, chaplains and congregational leaders, held at Steinmann Mennonite Church in Baden, Ont., on Jan. 21.

spiritual care coordinator of the Central West Local Health Integration Network, and a taste of a “death café” facilitated by Matthew Bailey-Dick, coordinator of the Anabaptist Learning Workshop. This movement (deathcafe.com) began in 2004 in Switzerland and involves complete strangers coming together for the sole purpose of talking about death and dying while eating cake.

Some consternation was expressed by participants in the MAID seminar. Although Janzen noted that he would be coming to the subject from his multi-faith position as a spiritual care coordinator—and not from his Christian faith position—some thought that his nuanced discussion of doctor-assisted death meant a tacit approval of it. But his balanced approach spoke of the reasons people choose assisted death, the damage it has done to some doctors who thought they were okay with it, and the fact that many who apply for it never carry it out, even those who have obtained the necessary drugs. ☞

An historical treasure

Community newspaper donates back issues to Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan Archives

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
ROSTHERN, SASK.

Jake Buhler knows an historical treasure when he sees one. That's why he's so excited that the *Saskatchewan Valley News* is donating all of its back issues to the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan Archives in Saskatoon.

The *Valley News*, as it has been simply known, quit publishing after 114 years. The final edition rolled off the presses on Jan. 26. Owner Terry Jensen, who purchased the weekly community newspaper in 2014, cited a lack of advertising revenue as the major reason for the paper's demise.

The newspaper had a long association with Mennonites. Not only did it publish news about Mennonites living in Rosthern and many neighbouring communities, it also boasted numerous Mennonite owners and publishers over the years.

According to a Rosthern history book, *Old and New Furrows*, the paper was launched in 1902 as the *Enterprise*. The name changed 20 years later.

D. H. Epp, who was a teacher by training, immigrated to Canada from Chortitza,

South Russia, in 1923. Three months after his arrival, "his fellow immigrants approached him to start a German language newspaper which would serve as a link among the many immigrants who arrived in the 20s." Jeremiah Frawley, who owned the *Valley News* at the time, agreed to publish Epp's paper. The new paper was called *Der Mennonitische Immigranten Bote* (*The Mennonite Immigration Messenger*) and its first edition was published in January 1924.

In 1931, Epp purchased the printing plant and took over as editor of the *Valley News*. Fourteen years later, *Der Mennonitische Immigranten Bote* amalgamated with a German language paper from the United States and the name was shortened to *Der Bote* (*The Messenger*). Epp continued as editor and publisher of both papers until his death in 1955.

His foster son, John Heese, assumed responsibility for the *Valley News* at that point, while Walter Quiring became editor of *Der Bote*. When Heese died in 1960, his wife Lena and sons took over. Around 1964, publication of *Der Bote* relocated to Saskatoon. And in 1968, Lena Heese sold the business to three of her employees: Abe Penner, Ewald Epp and Frank Letkeman.

Ewald Epp continued as sole owner, with his wife Louise, from 1990 to 1997. He says that during his 40 years with the paper he worked as a typesetter, advertising salesman and, eventually, as editor and publisher. He is disappointed that the paper shut down. He's also disappointed that the archival material will not be staying in Rosthern, but he appreciates that it will be preserved and made available to the public.

The donation includes both bound and unbound back issues dating from 1930. Earlier records were destroyed by fire in 1929. Also included are thousands of 35mm negatives, each one dated and identified with a brief description. Jensen



The first volume of Der Mennonitische Immigranten Bote (The Mennonite Immigration Messenger), published in 1924 in Rosthern, Sask., is among the historical artifacts that Terry Jensen, the owner of the Saskatchewan Valley News, is donating to the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan Archives.

estimates the collection may include as many as 10,000 negatives.

Buhler guesses that the number may be even higher, and that up to half of them could have Mennonite content. He also hopes the archives will acquire the paper's digital files from the past 15 years. "Our first objective is to protect and store [the material]," says Buhler, noting that the archives, housed at Bethany Manor, will provide a temperature-controlled environment for preserving the historic newspaper.

Once the archives takes ownership, its next job will be to catalogue it all. "I expect that in six months we will have them on the shelves, though we won't have them identified," he says, adding, "Once we have lined up all bound copies, then people can come and have a look."

Buhler says acquiring the *Valley News* is extremely valuable to the study of Mennonite history in Saskatchewan, adding, "We have yet to know how important it is."

"At first we thought we were only benefiting the Mennonite community," says Buhler. "Now we realize that there are many photos of the first nations community. We want to benefit their community as well." ❧

For more photos of this historic transfer of materials, visit canadianmennonite.org/valley-news-donation.



Holding the 1930 volume of the Saskatchewan Valley News, Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan members, from left, Jake Buhler, John Reddekopp and Susan Braun, pose with Terry Jensen, the paper's owner. Jensen is donating all of the paper's archival material to the society's Archives.

“Melting the boundaries of our being”

Ken Nafziger explores singing together at 2017 Bechtel Lecture

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

It would seem that a 16th-century song of unrequited love would have little to do with a Christmas carol, communion and justice. However, by focussing on the Greensleeves melody, Ken Nafziger, who is finishing 39 years of teaching at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., this spring, showed how five different songs were connected musically, and influenced and moulded human understanding of each of them by their presence in people’s minds and emotions.

As this year’s Conrad Grebel University College Bechtel Lecturer, Nafziger led the gathered crowd in remembering and singing “Greensleeves,” “What Child is This,” “What Feast of Love,” and then an intermingling of the carol and “Helpless and Hungry,” a justice song, on Feb. 3 in Grebel’s Great Hall. His premise and thesis in this and other examples was that singing together “can mirror the soul or it can urge the soul to a different place. It can comfort or it can discomfort.”

Singing Watts’ majestic “I Sing the



Ken Nafziger, left, this year’s Bechtel lecturer at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., visits with Muriel Bechtel on Feb. 3.

Even a ‘wandering mind’ during the singing of a song can be a good thing, as the singer goes elsewhere and there is room to be ‘smote upside the head’ during the singing.

Mighty Power of God” reminds people of the glory of the creation around them, he said. But pair that song with “Many and Great, O God,” a hymn written by Joseph Renville, son of a French trader and a Dakota woman, in the late 18th century, and the creation takes on a new meaning. Singing it to the beat of the Plains Indian melody, people remember the Creator, the creation and who it belonged to before Europeans and others came here.

The music melts boundaries between peoples, and between people and new ideas. Nafziger believes that in the singing of one song as many as a hundred different boundaries can be affected. Even a “wandering mind” during the singing of a song can be a good thing, as the singer goes elsewhere and there is room to be “smote upside the head” during the singing.

“Music is about as physical as it gets,” he said, quoting American writer and activist Anne Lamott, whose return to faith was through the experience of congregational singing. “Your essential rhythm is your heart beat. Your essential sound, the breath. We are walking temples of noise, and when you add tender hearts to this mix, it somehow lets us meet in places we couldn’t get to any other way.”

Nafziger also led a conductor’s workshop

/// Staff change

MCC Canada executive director to retire this fall

• DONALD PETERS is retiring as executive director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada, effective Sept. 30, the board announces with a mixture of gratitude and



Don Peters

sadness. Peters is the longest-serving executive director of MCC Canada, having served in his role for 16 years. During his tenure, he shepherded the organization through several significant world events, including the 9/11 attacks and the crises in Syria and Iraq, leading to MCC’s largest humanitarian effort in its history, and to an ensuing wave of refugee resettlement in Canada. From 2008 to 2012, Peters guided MCC Canada through the New Wineskins process, a time of re-visioning and restructuring. The process moved the Canadian arm of the organization into an era of greater responsibility for international programming. Peters also invested considerable effort in strengthening ties between MCC Canada and its member churches, helping the organization remain committed to its Anabaptist faith roots through its work of relief, development and peace in the name of Christ. Prior to his term as executive director, Peters spent six years as principal of Mennonite Brethren Collegiate Institute in Winnipeg. He and his wife Elaine also served as MCC representatives in Brazil for five years, from 1988 to 1993.

—Mennonite Central Committee

on Feb. 4, and a community hymn sing, “Hymn singing in fair weather and in ill . . . and for pleasure,” on Feb. 5. ///

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Biblical response to colonial legacy

Mennonites deliver a thousand Bibles to first nation

BY WILL BRAUN
Senior Writer

Last November, Vic Bartel and John Ilg pulled into the northern Manitoba Cree community of Cross Lake with a thousand Bibles. The Bibles had been requested by the local Pentecostal church and supplied by Canadian LifeLight Ministries. Neither Bartel nor Ilg had made such a delivery before.

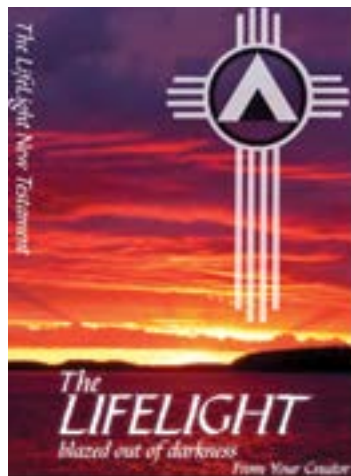
Upon arrival in Cross Lake, the two men—both retired Winnipeggers who attend Mennonite Church Canada congregations—ended up sitting in on part of a contentious community meeting, having supper with people from the Pentecostal church, delivering the Bibles and hearing the Cree-Irish hotel owner's assessment of the community's challenges. They pulled out of town the next morning before breakfast with less cargo but more questions.

An obvious question was whether the Bibles would be read. As the men learned when they got to Cross Lake, the Bibles were to be included in Christmas hampers.

The even-more obvious question—one that follows many visitors to indigenous communities upon their return to non-indigenous Canada, and one that indeed follows Canada itself as it plods through history—was: What can be done to improve the lot of indigenous people?

Walter Bergen says questions and ambiguity come with the territory. He is the national team leader for Canadian LifeLight Ministries and the person who asked Ilg and Bartel to make the delivery. In the past 18 months, the Winnipeg-based ministry has delivered about 20,000 Bibles, complete with testimonials from indigenous people, to indigenous groups from B.C. to Ontario to the far north.

Bergen, who attends Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, B.C.,



is passionate about working with indigenous church leaders. He freely confesses his own cultural biases as a “settler” and his desire to address those biases. During a visit to Hope Mennonite, Bartel's church in Winnipeg, Bergen was asked: “Isn't distributing Bibles to first nations ‘colonial’?”

In a phone interview, Bergen says something that turns the question around. He says part of his process of addressing cultural bias is to trust indigenous church leaders when they request copies of the Bible for their people, rather than to ask his culturally laden questions.

He is not talking about blind trust either, but rather trust within the context of relationships he has developed with these church leaders. The Cross Lake example was somewhat unique in that the request came via another Bible distribution organization that community members had originally contacted.

Bergen's views, alongside the view of the person who suggested the Bible delivery was “colonial,” illustrates the diversity within MC Canada.

It's complicated. Three MC Canada people provide free Bibles to a Pentecostal congregation that rents an under-utilized Mennonite church in a remote Cree community that was home to a Catholic residential school until 1969, as well as a United Church day school, and is now led by a chief, Cathy Merrick, who spent part of her earlier years as a foster child in the home of the Mennonite missionary there. As in most indigenous communities, despite the catastrophic impact of Christianity, a good number of people are Christians.

At the thought of unloading a thousand Bibles into that context, some of us cringe, while some of us praise God. Some question, some trust.

Some of us are much more comfortable with less overtly religious efforts to reach out to indigenous people. Some of us think it is high time for Mennonites to do a lot more overtly religious outreach. After all, we believe in the power of the Scriptures to change lives, do we not? Why would we refuse any request for a Bible?

Bergen speaks about holistic ministry, by which he means an approach that addresses spiritual healing. “Broken people actually need their lives transformed,” he says, adding that he has no illusion that Bibles alone will solve all the needs of a community like Cross Lake. He prays that LifeLight's “small piece” will be part of a “larger plan that God has.”

In reflecting on the trip to Cross Lake and how the Bible informs the situation, Bartel talks about the Doctrine of Discovery, a view that was, sadly, “born within the confines of the church” and granted “some people more rights and privileges than others.” He says it is the responsibility of those who want to follow Jesus to counteract this by loving their neighbours despite perceived differences, and working not to view anyone as “other.”

Bergen says he is “seeking to be less colonial each day” and to “honour relationships” he has developed with indigenous people. As for LifeLight, he says it tries to do Bible distribution “honourably” amidst the complexities and ambiguities. ❧

Talking with our cousins

CMU hosts interfaith panel discussion on the three Abrahamic faiths

BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY

Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG

A public panel discussion on the relationships between the three Abrahamic religions couldn't have come at a more opportune time, occurring as it did on the heels of the opening of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery's showing of "Synagogues in Germany: A virtual reconstruction" and the recent Quebec City mosque shooting.

The three panellists for Face2Face, a Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) series, made reference at one time or another to the particular importance of respectful and attentive interfaith discourse to world peace at the current political juncture, as did some audience members. If there was one quality that distinguished the discussion overall, it was the extraordinary warmth, humour and affection with which the panellists spoke to one another and about one another's faith traditions.

Moving in order "from the earliest revelation," Ruth Ashrafi, Judaic studies advisor at Winnipeg's Gray's Academy; Karl Koop, professor of history and theology at CMU; and Shahina Siddiqui, founder/executive director of the Islamic Social Services Association, gave brief reflections on the core tenets of each faith, and the moral values and demands each tradition brings to bear on its adherents.

Ashrafi began her remarks by observing how special this Face2Face exchange was in a global context: "I have lived in Holland, I have lived in Israel, and I can say that in those two countries it would not be possible to have three people from the Abrahamic religions . . . sitting on the same stage and talking to each other and listening to each other. But in Canada, things are really different and that is something to be extremely grateful for—something to protect and guard as best we can."



Karl Koop

After their opening summary remarks, speakers answered two broad-range questions which drew them into discussions on various themes. The first question was about the challenges currently facing members of each faith tradition; key themes that came up were the modern context, including new challenges presented by technology, pace of life and what is sometimes viewed as a "newly dominant" secularism.

Koop, speaking for the Christian tradition, observed the following:

"For Christians around the world . . . secularism and individualism [are] front

'Christians talk about peace and justice, but to actually stand up for peace and justice and truth in a time where truth-telling is . . . in question—I think the biggest challenge is for us to say nothing. . . .'
(Karl Koop)

and centre, and I think Christians around the world are struggling with this reality. I don't think that philosophical atheism is the problem, but I think a kind of a pragmatic atheism is the challenge.

"Christians talk about peace and justice, but to actually stand up for peace and justice and truth in an age of anti-Semitism, Islamophobia; in an age of racism, genocide, sexism; in an age of hyper-nationalism; in a time where truth-telling is . . . in question—I think the biggest challenge is for us to say nothing, to acquiesce, to keep our heads down, and hope and pretend that things will simply get better on their own.

"In our time, it seems as though Christianity is standing between two extremes, and maybe this is so for other

religions. . . . On the one hand [there is] a fundamentalism that sees the world in black and white, and provides simple answers to very complex questions. . . . On the other hand, there is the temptation [of] an easy liberalism that doesn't stand for anything, and doesn't know what it believes.

"Both of these are much different than the kind of faith where questions, real questions, are being asked." Koop also named a lack of unity and denominational division as key problems for Christians.

The second key discussion question was about what opportunities each panellist saw for further applied cooperation and mutual learning between the three faith traditions in the future.

Siddiqui had a unique advantage in speaking to this question, given that both Moses—the key prophet of Judaism—and Jesus—the key prophet of Christianity—are viewed as critically important prophets in Islam, with the addition of Mohammed. She described friendship, humility and mutual listening as being core to the building of peace and cooperation between faith groups:

"I believe in building relationships and

I've been doing that for the last 41 years in Canada. I think when you sit and break bread with someone, when you know that they've just had a new grandchild, or their son or daughter has just married, when you have that kind of intimate relationship with someone, then you can share the difficult conversations as well.

"For example [with my friends of other faiths], we may have differences on global issues, but we know where they belong. They don't belong in our friendship, they belong in a different setting of conversations. But we are willing to listen to each other.

"You can't have a relationship unless you are ready to listen, even when you disagree. What is extremism? Extremism is when you're not willing to listen [because] your way is the right way and that's it." ❧

Matt Epp helps 'grow hope'

Entertainer headlines fundraiser for Canadian Foodgrains Bank

BY ALLISON GOERZEN

Mennonite Central Committee Alberta

The soulful voice of Matt Epp serenaded a crowd at Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary on Feb. 3. Epp partnered with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Alberta and Canadian Foodgrains Bank for a fundraising concert to launch the Grow Hope campaign.

Richard and Esther Goerzen will plant, nurture and harvest 100 acres of their land, with expenses covered by donors so that all proceeds can be donated to the Foodgrains Bank for its food-security initiatives. A \$300 donation purchases the materials needed for seeding an acre. The wheat will be harvested and sold for roughly \$500 an acre, and the donation is then matched by the federal government, up to three times.

Epp, who tours across Canada and Europe, expressed his appreciation for "MCC being present and getting their hands dirty." His parents work for MCC, focussing on the Low German Mennonite population in southern Alberta.

The concert was inspired by Epp's life and travels. He has a passion for a loving and just world. From his own background as a Mennonite migrant, he muses, "We own land but pay property taxes to a government that took from people who never

thought they owned it in the first place." With a keen awareness of Indigenous Peoples in Canada, and a commitment to the love needed in the world, he led the evening with a spirit of giving.

Betty Brown's family was one of many who bought an acre. "MCC is important to me, as this is my opportunity to be involved in social justice and peace issues, something that Jesus constantly exemplified, and . . . is a very real way of sharing the gospel." Brown's grandson Zander helps on their family farm and enjoyed planting his own wheat during the fundraiser as part of the children's activities. He said, "The concert was awesome, especially the harmonica."

The event also included food from around the globe, fellowship and a Ten Thousand Villages display.

At press time, 43 of the 100 acres had been sold. ☘

MCC Alberta hopes to sell all 100 acres before planting in April.

To "buy an acre," visit mccab.ca/grow-hope or call the MCC Alberta office at 403-275-6935.



PHOTO BY ANGELA BENNETT



Matt Epp sings at a fundraising concert at Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary on Feb. 3 for Mennonite Central Committee Alberta's Grow Hope campaign to assist the Canadian Foodgrains Bank with its food security initiatives.

☘ Briefly noted

CMU creating new Centre for Environmental and Economic Resilience

Just before the Christmas break, Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) announced that the provincial and federal governments have joined forces to grant \$1.1 million dollars in funding for the creation of the Centre for Environmental and Economic Resilience. The centre is to take over the fourth floor of CMU's 500 Shaftesbury campus, and will cost approximately \$1.6 million in total. James Magnus-Johnston, CMU's primary instructor for both political studies and economics, has been appointed director of the new centre. Ian Wishart, Manitoba's minister of education, and local MP Doug Eyolfson joined CMU president Cheryl Pauls for the announcement, which was hosted at the university's Marpeck Commons early in December. Wishart conveyed the province's pleasure in supporting an initiative that will "encourage dynamic partnerships" that will both stimulate the economy and safeguard the environment. Eyolfson echoed these sentiments, saying Canada's government is "proud to support this important project, which will create opportunities for research and development of innovative solutions to address climate change and help build a sustainable economy." An estimated completion date for the new centre has yet to be released.

—BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY

PHOTO BY ANNALEE GIESBRECHT



James Magnus-Johnston, CMU's primary instructor for both political studies and economics, has been appointed director of the new Centre for Environmental and Economic Resilience.

GOD AT WORK IN US

'Someone prayed for me, and it changed my life'

By DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
ROSTHERN, SASK.

Simon Rueb doesn't know exactly what happened to him that evening, but he does know one thing: "There was God."

He had a lot on his mind that summer evening in 2015. He was anticipating changing jobs and was feeling anxious. "I was scared because it was something new," he says softly in his German-accented English. He knew his wife Julia wanted him to quit smoking. She had urged him to quit many times, and many times he had told her, "Okay, later."

On that evening, the couple had just returned from Saskatoon to their home in Rosthern. Feeling the need for a cigarette, he made an excuse and headed outside. When she came outside later, he didn't want her to see him smoking, so he went in the garage and closed the door.

That's when it happened. He suddenly felt he was in the presence of the holy. Simon says he fell to his knees in the middle of the garage and cried out, "Oh my God, oh my God, you really exist." It felt, he says, as if he had been falling and someone reached out and grabbed him. He suddenly felt free of his sadness and his anxiety. "It was so unexpected," he says. "It was such a great feeling."

Overcome with emotion, he walked to the corner of the garage and covered his face with his hands. He says he told God, "[Since] you really exist, then I would like to see you." Rueb lifted his face, but he didn't see the God whose presence he could feel so strongly.

Wanting to share his discovery, he went inside to find his wife. She noticed he'd been crying and asked what had happened. He says he told her, "Julia, there was God. I felt God." Then he took the cigarettes out of his pocket, broke them in pieces and threw them in the garbage, promising her



he would never smoke again.

The couple's oldest son, Dean, overheard his father exclaiming that God really did exist. Simon says he came into the room and said, "Dad, you didn't know that?"

Simon grew up in Germany. His family didn't attend church. He remembers his older brother telling him, "When we die, then we're gone." And he believed him.

Then he met Julia. She and her family attended church, but they knew Simon didn't share their faith. He knows they prayed for him, especially Julia and her grandparents. "They prayed for me for six or seven years, every day, that I would come to God one day," he says.

This knowledge has clearly made a deep impression on him, because he mentions it frequently. "Someone prayed for me, and it changed my life."

Today, the family attends Eigenheim Mennonite Church where, in August, 2015, Simon was baptized on confession of his newfound faith in Jesus Christ. For him, the commitment was total. "When I got baptized it was really baptized. It was 100 percent," he says.

Now, says Simon, "I'm happy to go to church with my children and [I want them to] grow up different than me." He knows his sons will eventually have to choose Christ for themselves, but now, while they are young, he hopes to teach them how much Jesus has done for them.

"Many teenagers, they go a different

PHOTO BY MARYVEL FRIESEN



Pastor Allan Friesen baptizes Simon Rueb at Eigenheim Mennonite Church in Rosthern, Sask., in August 2015.

way," he says, "but it's so important that they stay with God, because when something happens they can trust in God."

When he was 19, his cousin was killed in a car accident. He grieved deeply for several years. He wonders now whether he would have grieved differently had he known God back then. "When you really believe, when you have strong belief, and you feel everything with God, it would make it easier. I know it's still pain, but there's hope," he says.

It's been nearly two years, but Rueb says he hasn't been tempted to take up smoking again. "When you think, 'Okay, I would like to smoke,' there is God. You can't. He's helping you. So how can you go and fight against him?" he says. "He made that work for me and he did so many good things to me. I can't."

Simon says he now knows why he wasn't able to see God when he asked to: "I didn't see him because I have to follow him. I can still choose. I am still free. But I have to follow him the rest of my life." ❧

A kidney for a guitar

'Small steps of faith' lead to organ donation

BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Gerald Neufeld of B.C. and Russ Sawatsky of Ontario have several things in common: they both served as missionaries in Japan, where they met their wives; and they both attended Canadian Mennonite Bible College in Winnipeg at the same time. But the donation of a kidney for one and the receiving of a kidney for the other gives the two a life-transforming connection like no other.

Neufeld, pastor of Mennonite Japanese Christian Fellowship in Surrey, also serves part-time as music coordinator of Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford. One Sunday morning in November 2012, his 12-string guitar was stolen from Emmanuel as he was preparing to lead a worship team. He shared the loss as a prayer concern at a Vancouver pastors meeting. In response, the pastor from First United Spanish Mennonite Church said he knew one of his members had a 12-string guitar he wasn't using. The member offered Neufeld the guitar at no cost, and he gratefully received it. Another request that later came from the pastors group was that someone from the Spanish church needed a kidney transplant.

Meanwhile, Sawatsky had been struggling for years with kidney failure and blogging about his journey (kidneyforuss.wordpress.com). He went on medical disability leave when he began dialysis in 2014.

Neufeld had already given some thought to being a living organ donor when he read in *Canadian Mennonite* (March 27, 2013) of fellow Mennonite pastor Carol Penner's positive experience of donating a kidney. When he learned that the person from the Spanish church in need of a kidney was from the same family that had given him the guitar, he began to feel that donating one of his kidneys was something he could—and should—do.

"I started thinking about it more, started researching," says Neufeld. "I found out

there was a very slim chance of complications [for the donor]. The only restriction was that you can't go skydiving!" He says he prayed a lot about the decision to consider being a donor. One verse that came to mind was Luke 3:11: "*The man with two tunics should share with him who has none.*" Could this possibly apply to kidneys as well?

The next step for Neufeld was to register with the Paired Kidney Exchange Program. In this program a person in need of a kidney has a willing donor, but the two are not a match. Another patient has a potential donor, and they are not a match, but that donor is a match for the first patient, and likewise the other donor is a match for the second patient. The surgeries are coordinated so both patients receive the donated kidneys around the same time.

During his year of waiting, Neufeld learned that the person from the Spanish church had received a kidney from a deceased donor, but he decided to stay with the program anyway. Then he learned that his friend Russ Sawatsky was on the list for receiving a donated kidney, and because Sawatsky had another potential donor as well, Neufeld became a co-donor.

Sawatsky's chances for getting a kidney were now increased.

Sawatsky eventually received his new kidney last summer, and Neufeld donated his in fall. "I don't know who donated a kidney directly to me, and I am not meant to know," Sawatsky says.

For Neufeld, after-effects from the surgery were minimal, and he chose not to dwell on the possible complications. The worst he experienced were sleeplessness and "wild reactions" from pain medication, a time he says he prayed the most. He also sensed the prayers and support of his family and wider church community.

Neufeld is often asked if he feels God was leading him to donate a kidney. He answers that it always felt like a series of steps, beginning with the prayer request following his guitar loss. "A lot of people see kidney donation as a huge decision," he says. "It didn't feel like a huge decision for me. Maybe part of it comes out of an obligation to help people where I can. How do we bear one another's burdens? Where might God be calling us? It might be to take small steps of faith and see what God can do."

For his part, Sawatsky does have to take anti-rejection drugs, but says he now feels freedom in not being tethered to a dialysis machine. "[Gerald's] willingness to undergo surgery and weeks of recovery in order that I might regain health expresses a degree of altruism and generosity that I find hard to comprehend. What else is there to say . . . except thank you!" ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF GERALD NEUFELD



Gerald Neufeld prepares to donate one of his kidneys in the Paired Kidney Exchange Program last year.

ARTBEAT

MUSIC REVIEW

Saint or sinner?

You Want it Darker.
Leonard Cohen, Sony Music Canada, 2016.

REVIEWED BY DAVE ROGALSKY
EASTERN CANADA CORRESPONDENT

“There’s a crack in everything / that’s how the light gets in,” is often quoted by Christians as hope that God will “get in” to any situation. But the quote has a strange source, penned and sung as it was by Canada’s own beat poet, Leonard Cohen, that Jewish? Christian? Buddhist? lady’s man, from the song “Anthem” on his 1992 album *The Future*, which contains references to drug use and sex acts. Leonard Cohen: Is he a saint or sinner?

I was at a meeting of Mennonite Church Canada leaders on Nov. 7 last year when one of them leaned over with his cell phone and showed me, “Leonard Cohen, dead at age 82.” “Have you got his last CD,” he asked.

I replied that I didn’t yet, having it on my Christmas gift list so that my children could give it to me if they wanted. “You’ve got to get it,” he said. “It’s his best yet.”

We then entered into a conversation about his last few discs, including *Common Problems*, which won the 2015 Juno Award for Album of the Year. I noted that the last two songs of that album, “Born in Chains” and “You’ve Got Me Singing (The Hallelujah Hymn),” seemed to me to be Cohen making his peace with God, returning to his Mosaic faith, on the one hand, and hoping in the One to whom hallelujahs are addressed, on the other. The leader agreed.

Cohen has always given me a mixed set of feelings. It seemed that every time he released a new album over the past 25 years, there was a different woman on his arm, and there were a string of women in his past. Could a womanizer like him have profound things to say to me and other Christians? In later years, he

seemed to have gotten his drinking under control, perhaps at the same time he had come to terms with clinical depression at the Mt. Baldy Zen Center in Los Angeles, Calif., where he went in 1994 and was ordained as a Buddhist monk in 1996.

But then there were the lyrics whose sources came from Christian and Jewish themes and stories, even his much-sung “Hallelujah” (*Various Positions*, 1984). He seemed to straddle the holy and profane easily.

In “Going Home,” the lead song on his

*Faced with his inevitable death, in pain and grief,
... did his life of immoral choices begin to suggest
that he did not have a future with God?*

2012 *Old Ideas* album, he names that chasm, with God speaking: “I love to speak with Leonard / He’s a sportsman and a shepherd / He’s a lazy bastard / Living in a suit / But he does say what I tell him / Even though it isn’t welcome / He just doesn’t have the freedom to refuse / He will speak these words of wisdom / Like a sage, a man of vision / Though he knows he’s really nothing / But the brief elaboration of a tube.”

The refrain has Leonard responding: “Going home / Without my sorrow / Going home / Sometime tomorrow / Going home / To where it’s better / Than before.”

Naming himself as both “lazy bastard” and “a sage, a man of vision,” seems to describe him, perhaps referencing David, the “sportsman and shepherd” of Cohen’s Jewish background.

He seemed at peace with this—until his final album before his death: *You Want It Darker*. Suffering from “severe



back injuries and other disagreeable visitations,” he and his long-time collaborator, Patrick Leonard, who also suffers similar conditions, had given up on the album until Cohen’s son Adam came and helped him produce it. *You Want It Darker* has God demanding suffering while dealing out rejection.

In “Treaty,” the second song that is reprised at the end of the album, Cohen sings, “I wish there was a treaty we could sign / between your love and mine.” These last words to his public on record seem fatalistic and final, suggesting that his carnal life and God’s spiritual love

cannot be bridged. There is no “treaty,” no covenant.

As many writers have noted, this felt like a final album, a goodbye much like David Bowie’s *Black Star*, released days before his death in early 2016. Faced with his inevitable death, in pain and grief, did Cohen begin to wonder about his eternal future? Did his life of immoral choices begin to suggest that he did not have a future with God? Or did he still wonder? Backed by a Jewish cantor choir and soloist, he also sang, “Hineni Hineni, I’m ready, my Lord.”

In spite of God’s coming judgment and the suffering of people all over the world—and perhaps more particularly the innocents who suffer in so many of his songs—he was ready to put himself into God’s hands, whatever the outcome. Not resting on any laurels or claiming any rights, he seemed to depend on grace.

Not a bad role model to follow. ❧

'A view from the trenches'

Robert J. Suderman launches Re-Imagining the Church, his book of church essays

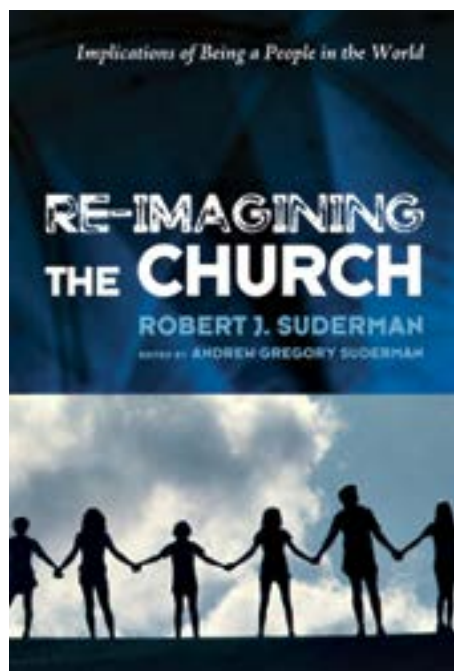
STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

Robert J. Suderman has spent his career working in churches or church institutions. In "retirement," he has taught in more than 40 countries on the implications of being Anabaptist Christians in this time.

Through the years, he has written extensively, usually in response to a request from an institution like the World Council of Churches, the Canadian Council of Churches, Mennonite Church Canada, Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite World Conference, Conrad Grebel University College or the Jakarta University in Indonesia.

On Jan. 18, he launched a collection of these essays at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo. *Re-imagining the Church: Implications of Being a People in the World* from Wipf and Stock Publishers is edited by his son Andrew Suderman, now teaching Bible and religion at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va.



In his introduction, Tom Yoder Neufeld, professor emeritus of religious and theological studies at Grebel, sums up the book with Suderman's own words: "Do we really believe that the paradigm-busting, all-encompassing, alternative-generating, incarnational, reconciling/saving vocation of peoplehood [the church] is the foundational strategy of God for the transformation of the world that should in turn inform our own strategic planning?"

In other words, does the church, and do the people of the church, believe that they are the foundational or primary way God is working to transform the world?

In the essay "The grand design," Suderman notes that Paul Minear, former professor from Yale University, found almost a hundred images for the church in the New Testament. Such a plurality of images leads to many ways of thinking about how the church might be structured. But, Suderman believes, no matter which image one uses, all of them point to the one basic idea: the people of God are God's central method for bringing about the transformation of the world.

Three practical theologians responded to the book and asked further questions of Suderman during the launch event.

Joy Philip, assistant professor of Lutheran global theology and mission at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, wondered at Suderman naming political correctness as a hindrance to God's call to the church. In response, Suderman noted that Jesus' exclusivity is not politically correct, but leaving him out means that the church is not fulfilling its call.

Noe Gonzalia, a pastor and teacher from Kitchener, Ont., wondered how to move the content of this book beyond academia and into the pews where congregants sit. Suderman said that a checklist he had provided to the publisher to



Respondents Joy Philip, assistant professor of Lutheran global theology and mission at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, left, and Noe Gonzalia, a pastor and teacher from Kitchener, chat with Robert J. Suderman at the launch of his book Re-Imagining the Church on Jan. 18 at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont.

determine if a congregation was being God's people in the world did not end up in the final edition of the book. An audience member suggested that the tool be posted online.

Carol Penner, an assistant professor of theological studies at Grebel, wondered about a sequel to Suderman's book that would apply the ideas of a re-imagined church to one situation. Suderman noted that his 2006 essay, "Seniors and the future of the church," was part of a larger work, *God's People Now*, which was a response to his visits as general secretary of MC Canada to all the congregations in the national church. He sees that book as an application of the idea that the church is God's way to be at work in the world.

As a summation of Suderman's many years of service—"a view from the trenches," he calls it—and his firm belief that the church is God's primary way of working in the world, this book can prove useful to practical theology departments and

/// Briefly noted

Grebel music prof wins choral conducting award

WATERLOO, ONT.—Mark Vuorinen, an assistant professor of music at Conrad Grebel University College and the University of Waterloo, where he oversees the choral program, conducts the University of Waterloo



**Mark
Vuorinen**

Chamber Choir, and teaches courses in conducting, has been awarded the Leslie Bell Prize for Choral Conducting. He is also artistic director of Kitchener-Waterloo's Grand Philharmonic Choir, with which he has conducted choral-orchestral masterpieces, including Britten's *War Requiem*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Mozart's *Requiem* and the Bach *Passions*. The jury was unanimous in its decision, praising Vuorinen as "an impressive musical communicator," adding that he is "a strong leader supporting two very different choirs with excellent results," and that he has "enhanced the presence of choral repertoire in Kitchener-Waterloo, both inside and outside of the concert hall." Vuorinen holds a doctor of musical arts degree from the University of Toronto, along with degrees from Yale University's Institute of Sacred Music and Wilfrid Laurier University. This year he was also awarded the Choral Canada Award for Outstanding Thesis or Dissertation for his doctoral research. The Leslie Bell Singers Alumnae and friends of the late Leslie Richard Bell established the Leslie Bell Scholarship Fund in 1971 as a lasting tribute to their late conductor.

—Conrad Grebel University College

pastors. To be really practical, though, this book could use a study guide with questions to start conversations in the pews. ☼

/// Briefly noted

Women share their stories of being refugees

WINNIPEG—Stories of courage amidst desperate circumstances and finding welcome in a new country graced the Manitoba legislature on Jan. 22. Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba's panel of featured speakers encompassed generations of women refugees who came to Canada from around the world. A more poignant setting could not have been imagined. Resounding through the marble hall of the grand staircase, music by the Riel Gentlemen's Choir and the Brown Bear Spirit Singers, an indigenous drumming chorus, prefaced six tales of what, for refugees, must always be a mixed triumph. Recent newcomers from Syria, Colombia and Liberia described their flights from homelands torn by war, hunger and sectarian conflict, to a safer place and a brighter future. They spoke of new family members gained in Canada and of those they were forced to leave behind, including their own children. Additionally, three elder women shared stories of mothers and grandmothers featured in Ray Dirks' *Along the Road to Freedom*, exhibit a recent painting series of women who fled from Russia, Europe and the Second World War. Afterward, guests lingered to converse and view the exhibit on display in the lower level, and for a while, the legislature building rang with kind words, dear memories and many languages.

—STORY AND PHOTO BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY



*Guests of MCC's refugee story-sharing event take in Ray Dirks' featured art exhibit, **Along the Road to Freedom**, at the Manitoba legislature on Jan. 22.*



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Camp farm program invites delight in God's creation

A nature instructor experienced joy as she guided children in Camp Assiniboia's new farm program.

canadianmennonite.org/camp-farm-program



The Bible still speaks, say Renewal 2027 speakers

Anabaptist leaders from around the world gathered for the first of 10 yearly events organized by Mennonite World Conference.

canadianmennonite.org/bible-augsburg



Working together in Ontario

In 2011 the nine-member Bueckert family moved from Mexico to Canada and experienced the challenges of settling into a new life and community.

canadianmennonite.org/moving-ontario



Lebanese thrift shop helps with winter needs

A visit to an MCC thrift shop in Virginia was revelation to Tarek Chebli, a peacebuilding student from Lebanon. He went back home and started one there.

canadianmennonite.org/lebanese-thrift-shop



FOCUS ON CAMPING

Silver Lake takes steps to deepen faith formation

Story and Photo by Silver Lake Mennonite Camp
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

How can we deepen Christian faith formation at camp?

In wrestling with this question, the leadership team at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp, located near Sauble Beach, Ont., launched a new initiative last summer to take its longstanding faith-building tradition to another level. The team created a new position called “spiritual life coordinator” and hired David Penny for the position, made possible by financial support from Mennonite Church Eastern Canada.

A big part of the role was to be a resource to staff, helping them find “creative, meaningful and authentic ways to weave the faith theme throughout the summer camp experience.”

For example, staff were invited to participate in a Devotion Committee so they could develop personal reflections, litanies or skits to share with campers at nightly campfires. Penny assisted head counselors in their role of supporting staff. He also met with staff one-on-one and informally to accompany and mentor them in their own faith journeys.

“I am still in awe of the willingness of the staff to speak openly with me and one another about their struggles, doubts and questions of faith,” Penny reflected after the summer. “I knew I wanted to be more than just a listening ear or the occasional closing prayer. . . . I wanted to push staff from the routines and ruts we can all find ourselves caught in when ensconced by a comfortable and familiar setting.”

“This was only made possible by the openness of staff to share their journeys,” he added. “[Together] we crafted a sacred, thin space along the shore of Silver Lake.”

Penny led all the Quest sessions with campers, except for the first week. The program was based on the theme “Stories

of discovering Jesus” that was adapted from the 2016 MennoMedia Vacation Bible School curriculum.

In his reflections at staff and camper gatherings, as well as with parents at opening and closing campfires, Penny often referred to the unique opportunity that camp presents to be immersed in God’s texts as found in both the Bible and in nature.

According to Karen Cornies, Silver Lake’s executive director, the camp hopes to continue the spiritual life coordinator position this coming summer, in order to



SILVER LAKE MENNONITE CAMP PHOTO

Many hands make light work. Campers help to plant seedlings in one of Silver Lake Mennonite Camp’s two large gardens.

build on the great work that was done last summer. ☘

CAMP REFLECTION

A special faith-based community

KATIE STECKLY

SPECIAL TO *CANADIAN MENNONITE*

Atending Ontario Mennonite Music Camp at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., has benefitted me in ways that I never could have imagined when I registered in 2012.

I made some incredible friendships and developed important life skills in my two weeks at camp. I was pretty nervous going into Music Camp, being a beginner musician and not very confident with my singing voice. However, I was quickly comforted by the encouraging counsellors and the kindness of my fellow campers.

I had my first experience singing in a four-part choir at Music Camp, and it

paved the way for me to be involved in several choirs following that, which I’ve enjoyed a lot. Music Camp also gave me the chance to develop my public-speaking skills and to become a more confident leader. I have very fun memories of leading chapel services and helping with planning a worship service for the Sunday morning of camp.

More than anything, Music Camp created for me a very special faith-based community that I was able to continue to be a part of for the rest of high school. Through frequent reunions, and also the fact that many of us participated in Menno Youth Singers, I was able to keep in contact with some amazing friends

CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE PHOTO



In addition to master classes, ensemble practices, chapel services and lots of camp games and activities, Ontario Mennonite Music Camp campers prepare an entire musical for their final concert. In 2016, campers put on Godspell for their families and friends.

who shared a faith background with me. We were able to connect over our shared values and have productive discussions on our disagreements. This type of community is so important for teenagers going through the formative years of high school. I certainly appreciated it.

Finally, the most recent impact that Music Camp has had on my life is that it steered me towards Grebel, where I'm now studying. If it were not for Music Camp, I might not have ultimately decided to go to Grebel, where I have continued to find a special faith-based community that has helped me grow in my leadership skills, and where I was able to sing in a four-part choir again.

Overall, if it were not for Music Camp, my life would likely be very different than it is now, and I feel very grateful for everything it developed within me. I was also very pleased to be able to return to Music Camp again this past summer to produce a promotional video. It was great to revisit a community that has meant a lot to me over the years. ☘

CAMP REFLECTION

A front-row seat

CURTIS WIENS

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

A highlight of each summer at the Shekinah Retreat Centre near Waldheim, Sask., is the coffee house during our senior-teen camp for ages 15 to 18. Campers come out of their shell and display talents that we didn't know they had. It is a special time of vulnerability.

Coffee House 2016 was highlighted by a cover of "Village" by Cam—sung by our outgoing camp director, Katie Wiebe. The emotional performance was underscored by the relevance of the chorus that resonated very strongly with campers who have been mentored and inspired by Katie over her eight years as counsellor and director at Shekinah: "Your whole heart's a village / everyone you love has built it / I've been working there myself / And that's where I'll be with a front row seat / to watch you live your life well."

Listening to her sing these words, those in the room were able to reflect on the image of their own heart as a village and the ones we love who have been building that village. At camp, important cornerstones of that village are laid because the staff have a love for the campers that comes

from Jesus and is increased through a positive feedback loop of encouragement, learning, prayer and bonding as we experience camp together.

As a fellow staff member, I knew Katie had been working on building my village over the years, and I experienced a flood of emotions as her words sent scenes of camp over the years running through my mind. As camp staff members, our villages may be started, built on or completely overhauled as we commit ourselves and our summers to building the camp community and sharing the love of Jesus with campers.

What follows is a gift as we witness the fruits of the camp "village-building" grow out of our shared experience. As camp staff, we are privileged with a front-row seat to watch campers and fellow staff live their lives well in their interactions with one another at camp and as they go from this place into their lives for the rest of the year.

I hope that by doing this work, we can move towards the goals of summer camp at Shekinah: to engage a heart, inspire a mind, transform a life and influence the world. ☘

SHEKINAH RETREAT CENTRE PHOTO



Pictured from left to right: Katie Wiebe, Curtis Wiens and Kristy Hosler.

FOCUS ON CAMPING

CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE PHOTO

Peace Camp 2016 was a huge success!

BY REBEKAH DEJONG
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
WATERLOO, ONT.

Conrad Grebel University College's sixth annual Peace Camp was an opportunity to inspire young lives, strengthen community ties and make peace happen in Waterloo Region.

The Peace Camp 2016 theme was "Peace in action," with the goal of showing campers that whatever their interests may be—whether art, music, math, engineering, business or even fashion—they can use them to pursue peace. Last summer's highlights included hearing from Ten Thousand Villages' then CEO Ryan Jacobs, volunteering at Thrift on Kent in Kitchener, Ont., visiting an organic farm in Guelph, and a lot of crafts and games.

When asked about their favourite parts of Peace Camp, campers consistently mentioned that they enjoyed meeting new people, interacting with camp leaders, playing fun games, listening to interesting guest speakers, eating delicious food and going on fun field trips.

Campers had the opportunity to work on a peace-related project each day of the week, which they then presented to parents, Grebel staff and faculty, and members of the community at the annual Peace Camp showcase.

Local MP Bardish Chagger, the minister of small business and tourism, attended the showcase and made sure to comment on the "wonderful presentations from campers demonstrating what they have learned about social justice and creating peace in our community and globally." Her words of encouragement and praise motivated peace campers to continue learning and creating peace in their communities beyond their week of camp.

Campers found the Peace Camp week to be meaningful and impactful.

"I learned that there are a lot of people trying to create peace," said a 12-year-old camper, "like people at [Mennonite Central



Peace Camp campers make watercolour cards using handmade, fair trade paper, as part of a 2016 activity prepared by guest speaker Ryan Jacobs, then of Ten Thousand Villages Canada, top left.

Committee] who inspired me to volunteer somewhere next year."

Campers left inspired to create a difference in the world. "You can do small things to create peace, even though we usually

think about the big things," said an 11-year-old camper. ❧

Rebekah DeJong was the 2016 Peace Camp director.

CAMP REFLECTION

'I can't wait for summer'

BY JON OLFERT

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

The sun is shining through the tall trees today at Camp Valaqua near Water Valley, Alta., and the a hint of spring is in the air. This time of year brings hiring, planning and anticipation into our little corner of the camp world. Sometimes it is tough to keep track of why we work at this all year long and so I tell myself stories to remember. Here is

one of my favourites:

A few years ago in the middle of a challenging week a camper tromped up to me with a confident look on her face and announced, "I know you."

"I know you, too," I replied, to which the challenge came: "How?"

"Well," I stalled a bit. "I know you came here on a field trip in Grade 3 and I

CAMP VALAQUA PHOTO



A young camper climbs the rock wall at Camp Valaqua in order to ring the bell at the top.

helped your mom register you, so I know your name and address. I know you lots of ways.”

That seemed to settle it for the time being, but soon the challenge came again and I had to expand my answer. The game grew, as games tend to do, and soon I had a cabin full of campers whom I had to “know” and who knew me. As the week ground on—some weeks grind, some weeks fly, this one was the grinding type—this game of knowing began to capture me. I found I was so happy to be known myself that it was no wonder these campers wanted so badly to be known.

How we crave to be known. I sat with my Bible late that week reading Psalm 139 and thinking about just how much, and just how important it is, that I am known: *“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth”*

(Psalm 139:13-15).

I hope the kids who were here that week felt that knowing, and that love, and that those who come this summer and the summer after that and the decade

after that, will feel the same.

I can’t wait for summer. There are so many kids to get to know. ☺

Jon Olfert is director of Camp Valaqua.

CAMP REFLECTION

The beauty in difference

YUN LIN

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

I’m an archetype. My family immigrated to Canada when I was 6, and while I went to school, my parents worked tirelessly to support me. They uprooted their lives in hope of a better tomorrow for their child. My story is that of millions of immigrant children in Canada and around the world. At 10, unfortunate circumstances led to my placement in the foster-care system for six months. I became distrustful and resentful of those

around me.

One summer morning, my foster mom brought up the idea of going to an overnight camp called Fraser Lake. Initially hesitant, I was talked into it, and off I went for a week into the untamed wilderness of Northern Ontario.

In that one week at camp, I had the privilege of experiencing an environment away from the city. Fraser Lake was a haven where I swam in a lake for the first

FOCUS ON CAMPING

time, which, by the way, is an incredibly healing thing. It's where I learned how to canoe, build a fire and play guitar; where I spent days running around trying to figure out what exciting thing to tackle

FRASER LAKE CAMP PHOTO



Yun Lin is a staff member at Fraser Lake Camp near Bancroft, Ont., and brings joy to everyone she meets.

next, and nights laughing in the cabin while practising for the talent show at the end of the week.

Most importantly, it was where I realized that for the first time in forever, I was genuinely happy. After I went home, I made a promise to myself that I would keep going back to camp and eventually become a staff member.

Apart from the practical skills acquired, that week at Fraser Lake Camp placed me back on the journey towards realizing my own worth. In what would normally be a point of contention back at home, the diversity of the campers at Fraser Lake was a celebration of the beauty in difference—a wonderful

portrait of love, friendship and acceptance regardless of where you were from.

I often reflect on how I've gotten to the position that I'm in right now, happily serving as the president of Amnesty International at York University in Toronto, from which I will graduate in June, while gearing up for a master's degree in social work. It always comes back to camp.

Fraser Lake has moulded me into the conscientious, communicative and outgoing person that I am today, and continues to provide guidance for my envisioned future. The lessons I've learned from camp will stay with me for the rest of my life. Oh, and probably also the piece of glitter that's permanently in my hair! ✎

CAMP REFLECTION

'So supported'

ANDREW ZETTEL

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE



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Conrad Grebel
University College

The summer of 2016 was one the most memorable summers of my life.

When the opportunity to work as a camp counsellor first came up, I was admittedly a little apprehensive. Having never counselled before, I was unsure of what to expect. What I experienced, however, was nothing short of spectacular.

Although it's likely been said before by others, Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp near New Hamburg, Ont., is a truly special place. Very few workplaces offer the opportunity for employees to work and live in such close proximity. And yet, at Hidden Acres everyone is able to collaborate effectively because of a shared set of values and a genuine concern for each other's well-being. Over the course of the summer, I always felt so supported—as a counsellor, as a young adult and as a Christian.



Andrew Zettel

I was also so blessed to work with a variety of young campers. These kids sometimes have boundless energy and an insatiable curiosity, which is inspiring to everyone around them. Watching my campers canoe for the first time, work together to pitch a tent or sing songs of praise during Focus, gave me clear confirmation that the work I was doing was very meaningful.

It's safe to say my summer at Hidden Acres proved to be an unconventional work experience, particularly for a University of Waterloo co-op student. But the growth I experienced, coupled with many happy memories and new friendships, made last summer very special. I wouldn't trade it for the world! ✎

Andrew Zettel was the boys inclusion counsellor at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp in 2016.

Visit canadianmennonite.org/cwm-2017 for a story and photo about Camps with Meaning in Manitoba.



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"I love how I can be in my ministry setting and learning at the same time — applying what I'm learning in my context." Margaret De Jong of Fredericton, New Brunswick, is an MDiv Connect student and mission worker in Senegal.

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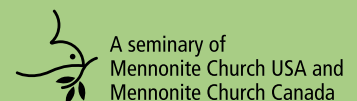


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PERSONAL REFLECTION

'I eat your garbage'

Why I dumpster dive and why I wish I didn't have to

NATHANIEL DE AVILA

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

I am a thief. I steal our food system's waste.

Let's be clear. Grocery stores throw edible food into their dumpsters. I go to those dumpsters and jump in. I dig through boxes and bags, and salvage everything I can find. I take it to my house and painstakingly sort through it. I cut and clean vegetables and fruit. I repackage damaged and open packages of dry goods. I rinse and re-label canned goods. I dry herbs and peppers. I freeze bread, meat, cheese, vegetables, fruit and almost everything else.

The last time I purchased groceries was a year ago because I can find everything in the garbage. And I eat your garbage. In fact, I have so much food that my spouse, my friends and my greater community cannot eat it all.

We began operating a donation-based community food share in our church basement at Sargent Avenue Mennonite in Winnipeg. We have moved 1.8 tonnes of food through its refrigerator since last June. Remember that this food is what is left after we give our friends as much as they can reasonably store. Our fridges are packed and our freezers often don't close properly.

Why is there a single hungry person on the planet when we waste this much food?

Farming is a resource-intensive human necessity, involving labour, water, fertilizer, fossil fuel and soil. It's entirely disrespectful to expect a worker to bend over, cut and trim a head of lettuce, and

place it on a conveyor for you to look at it in the store, say it's not good enough and allow it to be thrown into the garbage.

Every time I reclaim, sort and eat food, I remember to respect the humans who are responsible for getting the food to me. I prayerfully remember the first time someone picked up that lettuce from the dirt.

Foraging for food around the city regularly leaves me discouraged, angry and, at times, feeling hopeless. Our society is wasteful, gluttonous, irreverent and self-serving. You probably aren't aware of the amount of food you waste simply by living in our "developed" economy. Over a third of the food produced in our world is wasted, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Europe, Canada and the U.S. are the worst offenders.

The facets of this waste are numerous. According to the David Suzuki Foundation, impossible esthetic standards force growers to cull and trash 30 percent of their products because grocery stores will not purchase blemished fruits and vegetables. Grocers abide by ridiculously arbitrary "best before," "sell by" and "use by" date-stamping standards, which increase profit margins by requiring food to sell faster.

Governments are generally responsible for food-date standards, but these dates, among other factors, have enabled food-safety illiteracy. In a society that discards food past its "expiry" date, we have lost

(Continued on page 36)

PHOTO BY AARON EPP



Thanks to dumpster diving, Nathaniel De Avila hasn't had to purchase groceries in the past year.

FOOD PHOTOS COURTESY OF
NATHANIEL DE AVILA



Nathaniel De Avila and his fellow foragers found all this food in dumpsters.



Growers trash 30 percent of their products because grocery stores won't purchase blemished fruits and vegetables.



This meal brought to you by dumpster diving.

(Continued from page 35)

touch with our creativity and resourcefulness when it comes to nourishment. When milk begins to sour, make yogurt or cottage cheese. Once it has soured, bake with it.

What is perhaps even more jarring is that you are participating in this culture of food ignorance. According to a 2014 report by VCM International, Canadian consumers are responsible for 47 percent of the national food waste. We purchase food, it gets forgotten about, doesn't get used and then we discard it. We are literally throwing money away. There might as well be a dumpster in front of the grocery store so you can throw food away before you waste energy keeping it cool in your refrigerator.

So I dive. For one, I have as much food as I could ever want and hope to share with friends and strangers alike. I have become more hospitable and give more of my food and myself to those around me.

What do I find? It may be bread, grapefruit juice or yogurt, or it might be bacon, avocados, brie, orange pekoe, pâté, a box of mangos or a pallet of red bell peppers.

This uncertainty has inspired more creative food preparation, learning about food storage and the discovery of new

ingredients. While many young adults go for drinks or to movies at night, I enjoy late evenings with friends reclaiming, cleaning and growing a sub-culture and community around society's trashed food.

If you have the chance, try it sometime. Or you could help me with my next task: working to educate the church, the public, politicians and policy makers, in an effort to bend the system toward better practices.

I've been hounded to explicate the theological underpinnings guiding my actions. Why should I? Would it be better to write an essay in the presence of hungry people or to present them with food? Did Jesus' disciples learn more from his words or from his behaviour? What is Christ's call in the midst of injustice?

I could talk to you for hours answering these questions, but you'll have to come dig in the garbage with me first. ☘

Nathaniel De Avila, 28, lives in Winnipeg, where he attends Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church. He wrote this article in consultation with five of his fellow foragers: Lauren Harms, Raven Nickel, Jonah Langelotz, Maria Dueck and Paul Dyck.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ALLISON GOERZEN



Allison Goerzen has worked for Mennonite Central Committee Alberta for the past year-and-a-half.

Passion for reconciliation leads to recognition

Young MCC Alberta employee named to Top 30 Under 30 list

BY AARON EPP

Young Voices Editor

An organization that works toward ending poverty and achieving a better world has recognized a young Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Alberta employee for the reconciliation work she does with indigenous peoples.

The Alberta Council for Global Cooperation named Allison Goerzen to its annual Top 30 Under 30 list of young people who are creating a more just and sustainable world. The 2017 list was

announced at the beginning of February in a special magazine the Council published.

Goerzen, 24, who works at MCC Alberta as the indigenous neighbours coordinator and peace programs assistant, said it feels "a little overwhelming" to be included on the list. "I know there are a lot of young, inspiring people that are doing good things for the world," she said. "My whole office here at MCC Alberta [is full of them]."

The Council's list recognizes young

people who are working at one or more of the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Canada adopted the goals in September 2015 and is committed to achieving them by 2030.

The goals include ending hunger, achieving gender equality and taking urgent action to combat climate change. Goerzen was recognized for her work on the 10th goal: "Reduce inequality within and among countries."

Her work as indigenous neighbours coordinator includes educating church and school groups about Canada's history and legacy of persecuting indigenous groups, as well as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's 94 Calls to Action, which aim to redress the legacy of

ways indigenous peoples have been subordinated," Goerzen told the magazine. "I learned so much about myself and the world in that year. When I came back, I knew my work had to matter and I wanted to focus my efforts locally—within my own community."

When asked by the magazine what change she would like to see in the world by 2030, she responded that she would like all Canadian cities and towns to be safe places for all women. "This would mean, for example, ensuring it is safe for women to walk home at night, eliminating rape culture, creating equality for women within religious groups, and supporting freedom of fertility choices without discrimination," she said.

'By supporting [people] to learn about the history of indigenous peoples and to understand inter-generational trauma, I hope to encourage a shift in perceptions and a more equitable future for indigenous peoples.'
(Allison Goerzen)

residential schools and advance the process of reconciliation.

One approach Goerzen uses is the Blanket Exercise, an interactive, educational tool by Kairos Canada that invites participants to experience Canadian history from indigenous perspectives.

"By supporting [people] to learn about the history of indigenous peoples and to understand inter-generational trauma, I hope to encourage a shift in perceptions and a more equitable future for indigenous peoples," she told the Council magazine.

Originally from Didsbury, Alta., where she attended Bergthal Mennonite Church, Goerzen has worked for MCC Alberta in Calgary for the past year-and-a-half. Her interest in the work of reconciliation with indigenous peoples in Canada was sparked when she was a student with Outtatown, Canadian Mennonite University's one-year discipleship school.

She spent the second half of the year in South Africa, where she learned about the country's history with apartheid. "I began to see parallels to Canadian history and the

Goerzen's passion for women's health and well-being has led her to become a certified yoga instructor. She uses yoga as a tool for discovering awareness, positive well-being and resiliency. "Yoga's all about being present, being mindful and then honouring who you were created to be," Goerzen told *Canadian Mennonite*. "[As we learn] that our mind and our body and our spirit are all connected, we start to listen and then make better choices for our overall well-being."

In a letter published in the Council magazine, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau praised the 30 young people included on the list: "To the Top 30 Under 30, congratulations on your incredible work; you are truly deserving of our admiration."

Goerzen, who currently attends Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary, hopes that ultimately the list inspires people to make a difference. "That's something the Top 30 Under 30 stories display," she said. "People have taken what they're passionate about and found a way to use it in a really good way." ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF ALLISON GOERZEN



Calgary mayor Naheed Nenshi, back row, third from right, poses with some of the Alberta Council for Global Cooperation's 2017 Top 30 Under 30, including Allison Goerzen, front row, middle.

MCC PHOTO BY ALISON RALPH



The Blanket Exercise invites participants to experience Canadian history from indigenous perspectives.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THOMAS COLDWELL



The work of Allison Goerzen, bottom left, includes participating in things like Uprooted, a three-week learning tour for young adults through Mexico, Guatemala and Arizona.

CANADIAN MENNONITE

Notice of the 2017 Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service Annual Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the members of the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (CMPS) for the year ending December 31, 2016, is scheduled for April 22, 4:00 p.m., at First Mennonite Church, 800 King St. E., Kitchener, ON N2G 2M6.

CMPS is the non-profit corporation that publishes *Canadian Mennonite*. The agenda includes receiving reports from the board of directors, the 2016 financial statements, and election of new directors. The meeting is public, but voting is limited to CMPS members (individuals who donated at least \$25 in 2016 and who registered in advance), and board members who represent the area and national Mennonite Church (see names and nominating bodies on page 3). To register as a member for the annual meeting, please email office@canadianmennonite.org by April 17, noting "CMPS annual meeting" in the subject line.

The annual report and audited financial statements will be posted at www.canadianmennonite.org, after the meeting.

Calendar

British Columbia

March 11,12: Lenten Vespers with Abendmusik Choir: (11) Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford; (12) St. Philip's Anglican Church, Vancouver. Both events at 7:30 p.m.

Alberta

March 17-18: MC Alberta annual general meeting and assembly, at Trinity Mennonite Church, DeWinton.
May 26-27: MCC Alberta Summerfest and Relief Auction, in Sherwood Park. For more information, visit mccreliefsale.com.

Saskatchewan

March 10-11: MC Saskatchewan annual delegate sessions, "Extending the table: Enough for all"; at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.
April 22: Parkland Restorative Justice holds its "Spring banquet in the woods" fundraising event at the Prince

Albert Wildlife Federation.

May 26-28: Junior-high retreat, for youths in grades 6 to 9, at Shekinah Retreat Centre, Waldheim.

Manitoba

March 10-April 29: The Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg, presents the works of three local artists: Timothy Joel Dyck, Seth Woodyard and Frank Livingston. Opening: March 10, at 7:30 p.m.

March 18: Camps with Meaning's "Raise the roof" song-a-thon, at CMU's Great Hall, Winnipeg, from 1 to 9 p.m.

April 5: CMU spring fundraising event, in the evening.

April 9: Mennonite Community Orchestra presents its spring concert at the CMU chapel in Winnipeg. Works include Brahms' "Four Serious Songs," Bach's "Brandenburg Concerto No. 5" and Beethoven's "Pastoral Symphony."

April 14: "Good Friday through the senses," a half-day contemplative retreat through taste, sound, smell, sight and touch, in Winnipeg, from 1 to 5 p.m. For more information, visit

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April 14: Winnipeg's Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church Adult Choir presents Stainer's "The Crucifixion," at 11 a.m., at the church.

April 14: Winnipeg First Mennonite Church, with orchestra, presents Mozart's "Requiem, at 7 p.m., at the church.

April 22: Spring choral concert, at CMU's Loewen Athletic Centre, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

April 27-29: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Winnipeg, presents its senior-high musical.

April 29,30: Faith and Life Choirs concerts: (29) Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.; (30) Morden Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m.

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

May 17: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate work day, Winnipeg.

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

Ontario

Until April 13: "Tesatawiyat (Come in)" photography exhibit at the Grebel Gallery at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. The community photography project features indigenous people near Hamilton, Ont., sharing their stories in their homes.

Until April 21: Exhibit at the Mennonite Archives of Ontario at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo: "Conchies speak: Ontario Mennonites in Alternative Service."

March 3: Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, presents the 2017 Rodney and Lorna Sawatsky Visiting Scholar Lecture. Speaker: Mary Jo Leddy. Topic: "Room enough for hope: Canada's response to the refugee crisis."

March 14-18: Explore a new way to be church at "TOOLS Urban Intensive 2017," at Danforth Mennonite Church, Toronto. For more information, or to register, email peteolsen@mcco.ca.

March 22-April 4: MC Eastern Canada cluster meetings to review "A proposal for revitalizing MC Canada": (22) Danforth Mennonite Church, Toronto, at 7:30 p.m.; (29) Waterloo

North Mennonite, Waterloo, at 7 p.m.; (30) Vineland United Mennonite Church, at 7 p.m.; (4) Wellesley Mennonite Church, at 7 p.m.

March 25: Menno Singers present Bach's "St. John Passion," with orchestra and soloists, at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener.

March 24-25: Conrad Grebel Student Council presents "The Music Man," at the Conrad Centre for the Performing Arts, Kitchener; (24) 6 p.m.; (25) 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. Tickets available at the door or at Grebel's main office.

April 22: Women of MC Eastern Canada Enrichment Day, at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Topic: "Body and soul." Speaker: Carol Penner.

April 29,30: Pax Christi Chorale presents Elgar's "The Apostles," at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto; (29) at 7:30 p.m.; (30) at 3 p.m.

May 1,2: Seniors spring retreat at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg. Theme: "Dancing in the wind: The vocation of the church in society." Speakers: Jack and Irene Suderman. Same program each day. For more information, call 519-625-8602.

May 6,7: Soli Deo Gloria Singers present "Faith alone, grace alone," a spring choral concert: (6) UMEI, north of Leamington, at 7:30 p.m.; (7) Leamington United Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m.).

May 6,7: InterMennonite Children's Choir 50th-anniversary weekend: (6) alumni choir rehearsal, dinner and evening entertainment, at Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church, beginning at 3:30 p.m. (for more information, visit <http://bit.ly/imcc-50th-anniversary>); (7) anniversary concert, at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, at 3 p.m.

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



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Travel

COME AND SEE: Tour to Israel/Palestine—May 9-22, 2017. Visit Christian, Jewish and Muslim religious sites; hear Palestinian and Israeli voices working for a just peace for all; find ways to work for peace after you return. Led by seasoned tour leaders with decades of experience in the Middle East. For more information contact: **Kathy Bergen** (bergenkathy@gmail.com) and **Joy Lapp** (lappj@earthlink.net).

Employment Opportunities

Bethel College

Employment Opportunity
President

The oldest Mennonite institution of higher learning in North America, Bethel is a residential liberal arts college located in North Newton, Kansas, emphasizing academic excellence and an ethic of service and peace-making grounded in the Anabaptist faith tradition. Our next president should bring rich experience in academia and institutional leadership, together with a strong personal faith, a passion for undergraduate education, and a clear vision for how Bethel can adapt and thrive in the coming decades.

Requirements for the position include:

- Terminal degree (or equivalent experience)
- Institutional leadership experience
- Familiarity with Mennonite/Anabaptist faith and culture

Strong candidates will also bring experience and skills in many of the following:

- Classroom teaching
- Academic research
- Institutional finance
- Fund-raising
- Promoting diversity, inclusion, and equal opportunity
- Student recruitment
- Mennonite church ties
- Inter-cultural experience and competency
- Public presentation

Nominations and letters of application with CV or resume may be submitted to the Bethel College Presidential Search Committee at

pressearch@bethelks.edu

or through postal mail to

Presidential Search Committee
Bethel College
300 E. 27th St.
North Newton, Kansas 67117

Candidates from a diversity of backgrounds are strongly encouraged to apply. Bethel College is an equal opportunity employer.



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