

CANADIAN MENNONITE

March 27, 2017

Volume 21 Number 7



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EDITORIAL

Farewell, my friends

DICK BENNER

EDITOR/PUBLISHER

It's been a good eight-year ride, my friends, with a few bumps along the way. I will miss this biweekly meeting with you on the second page of *Canadian Mennonite*. While it's been a monologue, I have felt it had the makings of a dialogue, of one friend sharing thoughts with another friend. I have tried to make it more of a conversation than a lecture.

Having my roots in the United States, and more particularly as a Swiss-German emigrant, I have enjoyed the adventure of learning another culture, both political and religious, that challenged some of my assumptions and stereotypes about Canadians, bringing me face-to-face with a gentle and articulate people. Your naturally peaceful and friendly nature has nurtured my spirit and quieted my soul.

While you are certainly not a passive people, you seem to have a higher sense of honour and decorum as you have engaged with me and with each other. This dynamic has both challenged and humbled me as I have attempted to lead the conversation among us as both friends and fellow-Christians travelling on the same Anabaptist-anchored journey. We have a rich spiritual heritage that transcends national and cultural boundaries and that gives us guideposts along the way.

I have tried to regard those markings as we have plunged headlong into an uncertain and rapidly changing

post-Christendom era in which we have needed to pay attention, through discernment at the congregational level and a new hermeneutic in our theology, to find our way through some of the fog.



Along the way, I have pleased some of you, annoyed others and incensed some of our leaders. That is the risk of my role as a journalist, and it goes with the territory. Being in this craft for more than 50 years, I can say this

comes as no surprise. It gives the conversation richness, depth and substance, and hopefully shapes our identity in the process. Our diversity gives us character and keeps us from becoming complacent and self-serving.

Relying on Scripture as our guide and the Holy Spirit as our inspiration and mentor, I have tried to point the way through some of the thorny issues confronting us. Like the wind, we don't know from whence it comes nor in which direction it will take us, but we are confident that this is of God, and therefore rest in the confidence that a way will become clear.

Feeding into this dynamic are some humble attempts during my tenure, such as carving out a section to hear our Young Voices, inviting them to be more intentionally a part of our communion, hearing their individual voices and recognizing the energy that contributes to the body's health and welfare.

We have given prominent place to

the local stories across the country by continuing to hear from our area church correspondents, a feature unique to this publication in which we pay these "eyes and ears" on the ground so that we can keep in touch with each other across the vast spaces of Canada. It guards against parochialism and a top-down approach to church life.

We have given place to various viewpoints in our opinion pieces, never insisting on one point of view in the conversation. We have printed all letters unless they attack another person rather than his or her ideas.

And we have done all of this with a model of independent journalism—having our own governing board that has full representation from the denomination and area churches, but with the editorial freedom to critique as we find it appropriate, all within the framework of "fostering dialogue as we share the good news of Jesus Christ from an Anabaptist perspective," as our mission statement declares.

On this topic I leave with a cautionary note. As the new structure for Mennonite Church Canada takes shape in the next two years, there may be a tendency to push *Canadian Mennonite* to be more closely aligned with the governing bodies that will emerge, resulting in our pages becoming more of a cheerleader than they have been historically.

In my view, that would diminish the quality of the publication and quiet the voices of dissent so necessary to retain the integrity and quality of our communion. Unfortunately, this "alignment" would follow a trend with some of our Mennonite cousins in the U.S. and Canada.

With this I take my leave. This is my last editorial. I will miss talking with you every two weeks.

ABOUT THE COVER:

'The Parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector' (acrylic on canvas, detail). Read Pastor Dan Kehler's modern take on Jesus' parable, 'Dependent on God's mercy,' on page 4.

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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

Dependent on God's mercy

BY DAN KEHLER

*Adapted from a sermon he preached at Altona (Man.) Mennonite
Church on Oct. 23, 2016; based on Luke 18:9-14.*

A Pharisee and a tax collector

This parable of Jesus seems self-evident. It compares the attitude of two men's prayers: a Pharisee and a tax collector. The Pharisee's seems rather arrogant, while the tax collector's only petition is of God's mercy. The Pharisee's self-centred prayer is all about his supposed place in God's favour. The tax collector's prayer is humbly centred on God. In the end, it is only the prayer of the humble one that God hears with favour. For only the tax collector goes home justified; that is, he is made right with God.

The lesson to be learned from the parable is that we, like this tax collector, must be humble in prayer and contrite in heart if we want our prayers for forgiveness to be heard.

However, if we are to truly enter this little story of two very different men who went to the temple for afternoon prayers, we will have to look beyond what we see on the surface. For if we don't, we miss one of the most powerful ideas that Jesus presents: an idea that has the power to change the world.

Modern Pharisees and tax collectors

A good parallel of the Pharisee today is a faithful Christian: a weekly churchgoer, a leader in the congregation and community, one who gives to the poor and needy, a good citizen, someone respected by his or her peers. Think deacon, commission chair, regular worship leader. These are the individuals we should have in our mind's eye when we read this parable.

It's not so easy to find a modern parallel to the tax collector. His job was to sit at the gate of the city and collect the Roman head tax from the people as they entered. He worked for an empire that was oppressive and in opposition to the temple and the nation of Israel. He would have been seen as a sell-out or a traitor. His presence in the temple that afternoon was trespassing

The chorus in the U2 song 'Invisible' captures the idea that the mercy of God is for everyone: 'There is no them / There is no them / There's only us / There's only us.'

'PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN,' BY CLAES JANSZ, 1643



Jesus is expanding the boundaries of God's mercy to include this tax collector. Now he, too, can be made righteous by the mercy of God. That's what justification is: being counted righteous by the Holy God of Israel.

on holy ground. He didn't belong in the presence of God. If there ever could be a polar opposite of the faithful Pharisee, it was this tax collector.

So who might be a modern-day parallel? It has to be someone whose very presence in our sanctuary would make us feel uncomfortable, someone who shouldn't be here, someone who has betrayed the trust of the church. Like the treasurer of one faith community in Winnipeg who got caught embezzling \$400,000 from church donation revenues. Or a parolee who was generously helped out by the church only to return to selling drugs to kids in the community that had reached out to him. Or a church leader convicted of sexual exploitation of minors, betraying the trust of the very people he is to serve—someone whose very presence makes one desire some

distance between us and them—because we are over here with God and they are over there where God is not.

That is what this Pharisee did with his stance and words in the temple: "Thank you, God, that I am not like that person over there! I'm over here with you, God. Thank goodness for that!"

In Jesus' day, this is how the world was ordered. This is how God's mercy was viewed. There are those like the Pharisees, who are recipients of God's mercy, and then there are those other ones over there . . . like the tax collector, outside of God's presence, beyond God's grace.

Now before anyone can defend the Pharisee's position and guffaw at the foolish tax collector, Jesus gives the parable its punch. He says that even that outsider is covered by the mercy of God:

"I tell you, this man went down to his home justified, rather than the other." And suddenly this parable isn't about the right way to pray or one's own humility. It is about God and the far-reaching mercy of God's love. Mercy, it seems, isn't just for the righteous, but is for all of God's created ones.

We miss the connection between justification and righteousness. If you recall, Jesus says that the Pharisee is righteous; he has done everything necessary to be in right relationship with God through the Law. But Jesus is expanding the boundaries of God's mercy to include this tax collector. Now he, too, can be made righteous by the mercy of God. That's what justification is: being counted righteous by the Holy God of Israel.

A too-small vision of God's mercy

Do we still have a too-small vision of God's mercy? Do we still divide the world into insiders and outsiders when it comes to God's mercy?

A brief look at the tax collector's simple prayer might help us expand our understanding of God's mercy. That is what this parable does. It expands the reaches of God's mercy. Notice how he stands as far away from the centre of the temple as he can while still being in the temple. His head is bowed down, looking at the ground. He is beating his chest, a sign of deep mourning in ancient times. And finally he self-identifies as a "sinner." Of each of his public displays, this is the most significant.

Insiders and outsiders

When we think of a "sinner," we are already thinking like first-century Christians, that all have sinned and fall short of God's righteousness. But in Jesus' time, "sinner" was the term given to the outsiders. "Sinners" were people who were outside of God's grace. It was believed they had separated themselves from God simply by being who they were.

Unlike the Pharisee who was inside God's favour, they had no hope of ever being in God's favour. This is how the tax collector identifies himself. This is what he is mourning when he beats his

chest—that he can never be covered by God’s mercy. By looking at the ground he is acknowledging that he cannot see God. By standing at a distance he symbolizes that he is outside the presence of God, beyond the reach of God’s mercy.

The only recourse he has is to plead for God to have mercy on him. And maybe, just maybe, God will somehow find the mercy that he, too, might yet be counted among those who find favour in God’s presence. When Jesus says that the tax collector is justified as he leaves the temple, it means that, yes, indeed, he is among those favoured by God. What Jesus does by telling this parable is to say that there are no insiders and outsiders. When it comes to God’s favour, there are only insiders. When it comes to God’s mercy, all are in by God’s grace.

A new covenant

The sad thing is that we still do this today. We still try to make distinctions between insiders and outsiders. It is still the same game of “God is on my side and not your side.” But Jesus says that God is on both sides, no matter what you—or they—say or think or do. That is the nature of God in the world.

The chorus in the U2 song “Invisible” captures the idea that the mercy of God is for everyone: “There is no them / There is no them / There’s only us / There’s only us.”

Interestingly, these words are borrowed from a most remarkable speech. On July 16, 1992, at Madison Square Garden in New York, Bill Clinton, then the newly nominated Democratic candidate for the presidency of the United States and soon-to-be president, included the following in his acceptance speech:

“And so we must say to every American: Look beyond the stereotypes that blind us. We need each other—all of us—we need each other. We don’t have a person to waste, and yet for too long politicians have told the most of us that are doing all right that what’s really wrong with America is the rest of . . . them.

“Them, the minorities. Them, the liberals. Them, the poor. Them, the homeless. Them, the people with disabilities. Them, the gays. We’ve gotten to where we’ve

nearly ‘them’ed ourselves to death.’ Them, and them, and them.

“But this is America. There is no them. There is only us. ‘One nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.’ That is our Pledge of Allegiance, and that’s what the ‘new covenant’ is all about.”

Does this not make you wonder about the recent presidential race? If only America could have lived into this speech, maybe they could have added “Them, the Muslims” 25 years later. In this speech is a modern-day parable:

And let us realize, we don’t have a person to waste. And yet for too long mainline religions have told the most of us that are doing all right that what’s really wrong with the world is the rest of . . . them. Them, the minorities. Them, the liberals. Them, the poor. Them, the homeless. Them, the people with disabilities. Them, the gays. Them, the Muslims. We seem to have gotten to where we have “them’ed ourselves to death.”

But this is God’s creation, this is God’s domain. There is no them. There is only us. “One people, under God, indivisible, with mercy and justice for all.” That is our Pledge of Allegiance, and that’s what the

“new covenant” in Christ’s blood poured out for us all is about.

May God grant us the courage to live out these words: “There is no them. There’s only us!” ❧

MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA FILE PHOTO



When Dan Kehler is not actively leading the Altona Mennonite congregation, he can often be seen cycling the highways of southern Manitoba.

❧ For discussion

1. What kind of people would make us feel uncomfortable if we found them sitting in our sanctuary on a Sunday morning? What do we expect of people before we accept them into our circles? Do we truly believe that God’s mercy extends to all people?
2. In what areas of our lives are we most apt to justify our actions? What does the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector tell us about the proper way to pray? What is the basis for justification and right relationship with God?
3. Can you think of situations in which there are clear lines between “us” and “them”? Who have we tended to see as insiders or outsiders when it comes to God’s favour or God’s mercy? Why do we hesitate to welcome some of “them” to become part of “us”?
4. Dan Kehler quotes from a speech by Bill Clinton, who said, “There is no them. There is only us.” What does this phrase mean? What are some things we can do to help ourselves see beyond “us”?

—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.canadian-mennonite.org. All letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines. Send them to letters@canadianmennonite.org and include the author's contact information and mailing address. Preference is given to letters from MC Canada congregants.

✉ That's not who we are . . . as Mennonites or Muslims

RE: "A NOT-SO-PURE depiction of Mennonites," Feb. 13, page 20.

I read with interest the various online responses by Mennonites concerned about how Mennonites are depicted in the CBC drama series *Pure*.

I spent several years working in the tour program in the Elmira district, explaining Mennonites to curious tourists who typically came with the stereotype that all Mennonites get around by horse and buggy. Therefore, it does not surprise me that the CBC producers felt they needed to have horse and buggies on the set so the audience can immediately identify that the story is about "Mennonites."

Let me add another dimension to this conversation. As Anabaptist/Mennonites, we have a long history of

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FROM OUR LEADERS

The power of imagination

TIM FROESE

When communicating about the ministries of Mennonite Church Canada Witness, my former colleague Al Rempel used to tell me, "Help your listeners imagine the work that is being done."

Imaginations are powerful, liberating gifts of God. Through our imaginations, God meets us. God helps us draw from current realities, Scripture and history to paint possibilities, evoke emotions and inspire ideas. God's imaginative work is seen in the created world. My colleague Dan Dyck regularly posts "sky of the day" photos on social media. These images remind us of God's limitless and inspiring creativity in shaping, colouring and texturing the heavens.

God's imaginative work also illuminates the political, social, cultural and spiritual realities of our lives. The more we, as the church, experience change and challenge, the more critical it is that we

have an imagination shaped by God.

How are our imaginations seeded and cultivated? In Luke 1, Mary was invited to imagine that she would give birth, and that her son would have a kingdom that would never end. In Acts 9, Ananias was told to imagine Saul not as a first-century terrorist but as someone who would carry God's name to gentiles, kings and the children of Israel. And Jesus called his disciples to imagine God's kingdom at hand, to be "fishers of men."

Imagination can be prodded by reality. Here in Cuba, from where I write, our Anabaptist brothers and sisters reminded me: "You can come and visit us, but we cannot visit you." How do we imagine the future Cuban church and its nascent Anabaptist movement with such limited opportunity for reciprocity?

Imagination sparks thoughts of alternative realities. What would an Anabaptist community look like in Kurdistan or Sudan or Iran? How might we imagine the Mennonite church if we took the initiative

to go to places in need of peace, instead of waiting for an invitation followed by a lengthy discernment process?

Many times, imagination can be sparked by observing what God is already doing. In Thailand, where the Maliwan church community is growing, leaders dream of integrating faith, farming and business, and they encourage support for believers in nearby Laos. In Burkina Faso, Siamou speakers are introduced to Bible stories in their language and imagine ways to live out what they have learned. In Germany, leaders from North America are responding to an influx of refugees by imagining a new community of peace connecting newcomers with German hosts. In the Philippines, leaders imagine peace and reconciliation teams in each of the country's 81 provinces. And in Santiago, my Chilean brother, a self-confessed former drug addict and alcoholic, imagines a ministry serving the poorest in society becoming a model for an alternative church.

MC Canada and its area churches are living in a time of structural change, and we must draw from our imaginations to give shape to those structures.

What's in your imagination?

Tim Froese is Mennonite Church Canada's executive minister of Witness.



(Continued from page 7)

being misunderstood and often maligned. Consider the early Anabaptist peasant revolts encouraged by Thomas Müntzer. Consequently, all Anabaptists were tarred with the same brush as “Müntzerites.” And the rest of the group constantly disavowed this link and said, “We are not Müntzerites, those violent people. We are Mennonites, a people of peace.”

So from the outset we felt the need to explain ourselves to our neighbours and to the authorities. And today we wish to distance ourselves from that small group of Old Colony “Mexican” Mennonites who engaged in drug running.

Having drawn a straight line back to our Anabaptist beginnings, let me draw another line to form a triangle. Our Muslim neighbours, too, feel much

FAMILY TIES

Unveiling secrets

MELISSA MILLER

One day my normally cheerful, no-nonsense coworker surprised, or I should say shocked, me. She suddenly and briefly opened the door to her past, a dangerous time of war and famine.

“Those days were horrible,” she said fiercely in a low voice. “Things were so bad, they ate people. We never speak of them.”

Just as suddenly, the door swung shut, and she turned away from me and toward other tasks. I was young and curious, but I knew not to pursue her or the topic.

Over the years, I have recalled that moment many times, especially when considering secrets that are held or released.

Later, in grief studies, I learned that, for many survivors of atrocity, secret-keeping is deemed to be a necessary means of coping. To recall and speak of the horrors they witnessed, drags them back into bleak despair and unanswerable questions: “Who could do such terrible things? And why? Where is God, or even caring people, when violence is unleashed? What to make of the fact that I survived and so many others perished?”

Such harsh realities give me pause.

On the one hand, I know the value of unburdening oneself. I have been the recipient of many secrets over the years. Personally and professionally, I make

space for deep interactions. Into that space, people unveil secrets, sometimes for the first time. These moments are sacred, as speaker and listener, enfolded in the heart of God, give witness to the truth. The Spirit hovers, bringing courage, providing words, tending wounds and lightening heaviness. We are not the same on the other side of such intimacies.

Given these experiences, I encourage the telling of secrets. To tell a secret is to move towards the truth. I believe God lives in truth and invites us into that same reality. In our inner hearts and in our relationships with each other, the more open and honest we can be about ourselves, the deeper our capacity to connect at intimate and meaningful levels becomes.

Finally, we must examine what privileges and protections are in force, because secrets afford cover for abuse and

At the same time, it is not a comfortable task. I confess that I have sometimes flinched when a friend or family member shared a disturbing secret. It’s hard to receive such information. Like the biblical teaching, I am tested, for “*the [truth] of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, and joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Before God, no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare . . .*” (Hebrews 4:12-13 paraphrased).

Gentle Reader, in spite of the challenges, I assert that truth-telling is a Christian virtue and a quality of healthy families. As you contemplate secrets, the keeping and releasing of them, consider the following: What kind of secret is it? Who will be harmed from the telling of it? Who will be helped? What justice will be unleashed or denied? What level of compassion is present and can be drawn



The Spirit hovers, bringing courage, providing words, tending wounds and lightening heaviness.

wrongdoing. The keeping of secrets can perpetuate wrongdoing that should be exposed, enabling oppressors to continue to harm. It can privilege some individuals at the expense of others, by maintaining unjust practices and systems. The tragic legacy of Canada’s Indian Residential School system is but one of many examples of such destructive secret-keeping.

upon? How might healing flow?

They are not easy questions. Yet we are dared to know the truth and allow it to free us.

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

misunderstood and often maligned as “terrorists” or belonging to Islamic State. They keep on saying, “That’s not who we are as true Muslims.” And we keep on saying, “That’s not who we are as true Mennonites.”

So maybe this fuss over *Pure* could help us better understand our Muslim neighbours and what they need to endure.

MAURICE MARTIN, NEW HAMBURG, ONT.

✉ Moral dilemmas—not Mennonite stereotypes—are at the heart of *Pure*

RE: REVIEWS OF CBC’s drama series *Pure*, Feb. 13, pages 20-21 and online.

The main criticisms speak of bad research and thus wrongful portrayals of Mennonites; non-existent

(Continued on page 10)

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Giving as protest

DORI ZERBE CORNELSEN

Does the headline for this article pique your curiosity or does it irritate you? The word “protest” often evokes strong positive or negative emotions. Like it or not, we seem to be in a time marked by protests of one kind or another.

Beyond giving as duty, the Bible offers us an array of metaphors for giving that can move us to live more generously. The story of the widow’s offering told in the gospels of Mark and Luke offers us one of those metaphors.

When you think of this very familiar story, often called “The widow’s mite,” have you ever imagined what the widow looks like? How old is she? How does she carry herself? What is her facial expression?

I had always imagined this widow as an older woman who showed signs of a very hard life. In my mind, she was embar-

rassed to be in the temple, as she shyly approached the treasury, hoping not to be noticed, and apologetically put her two lowly coins in the box.

An illustration of this story from the Jesus Mafa community of Cameroon completely changed my mind. Their illustrator sees a young woman with a baby on her hip and a basket on her head. She is dressed shabbily but confidently approaches the treasury, boldly giving her offering among the high-status men who are also contributing, as

In both texts, just before this story Jesus was teaching in the temple and said, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honour at banquets! They devour widows’ houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.”

What if this widow heard Jesus’ teaching and decided to stage a protest at the treasury? Had her house been devoured by an upstanding community leader? Was she reacting to those “upright” citizens who accumulated wealth for themselves at the expense of the poorest and most vulnerable? Widows and orphans

[O]ur financial giving can demonstrate that we desire to participate in Jesus’ love poured out for the world.

were supposed to be cared for, not taken advantage of! Throwing all that she has in the offering, the widow throws herself on God and the community, creating an obligation on both to make things right.

This idea is summarized in an offering prayer adapted from the book *Be Our Freedom, Lord*, edited by Terry Falla (adapted): “God of extravagant mercy, with hands outstretched you have poured out wonder and pleasure and delight, goodness and beauty and bounty. Take our offerings, we pray, as

our protest against all that is evil and ugly and impoverished, trivial and wretched and tyrannical, in our world and in ourselves—that we, too, may be poured out for the world.”

Yes, the widow’s story might express that no matter how small the gift, it matters. Or no matter what the gift, it’s the attitude that counts. But Jesus tells his disciples that the widow, “out of her poverty, put in everything she had.” She gave her whole life. It foreshadows that in just a short time after this incident, he, too, will give his whole life in order for new life to emerge. In the same way, our financial giving can demonstrate that we desire to participate in Jesus’ love poured out for the world.

There are different types of protests. Some are peaceful and others are splashier or more extreme. Not everyone has an appetite for marching, demonstrations or even boycotting. Our giving can be our protest against the “ugly” that we see around us and around the globe. Any

good protest requires planning to have the greatest effect. Perhaps it is time to look at how your giving plan is set up for new possibilities to emerge.

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



(Continued from page 9)

showing of the predominant faithfulness, integrity and kindness of the overwhelming majority of Mennonites; and an avoidable stereotyping of Mennonite people generally. The reviewers say CBC exploited a whole people for ratings using a now-past, minor episode in their history.

We have no information, but wonder if CBC deliberately avoided showing a truly real group to actually protect Ontario Mennonite groups, which would somewhat mitigate the broadcaster's errors.

But the drug issue is real. On Feb. 24, CBC's *Fifth Estate* investigative journalism series reported on "the Mennonite drug connection," which CBC first proved existed in 1992. It still exists, with small Ontario traffic in 2016.

Since we saw the *Fifth Estate* episode, the *Pure* suggestion that threats of violence to Canadian Mennonite families may have been involved seems very real. The "bad" former colony member, totally embittered when his family in a buggy was killed by a drunk driver, who now controlled the Mexico/Ontario drug connection seems totally plausible.

Given his beliefs, the pastor's moral dilemmas were enormous, including his and his very admirable wife's willingness to risk death, to end the drug plague's corruption of community and individual addicts.

Pure was a hugely moral tale to us, not meant to stereotype Mennonites. The pastor and his wife seem like truly strong characters seeking community well-being. The police in the series strongly respected Old Order people.

We suggest that we all reconsider our dislike of *Pure* by attending to its moral dilemmas in what seems still a "real" situation for some fringe Mennonites. Seen this way, it has a powerful effect and strongly asks how we would behave in such situations.

NEAL AND SHARON MOSHER,
BURLINGTON, ONT.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Berry—Tristan Steven (b. Feb. 1, 2017), to Steve and Rebecca Berry, Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Erb—Spencer Donald Norman (b. Feb. 7, 2017), to Jeremy and Janice (Brenneman) Erb, Crosshill Mennonite, Ont.

Gerber—Colton Roger (b. Feb. 4, 2017), to Catrina and Nolan Gerber, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Heinrichs—Aubrey Anna Rose (b. Feb. 28, 2017), to Mandy and Ben Heinrichs, Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Jantzi—Mirabel Mia Fern (b. Feb. 27, 2017), to Kaitlyn and

✉ Jesus gets 'a really bad rap' from evangelical Christians

Editor's note: Canadian Mennonite received this unique letter from a reader who said, "Immediately after the Trump 'win,' this sleeper could not sleep. He arose and went forth to his computer and spoke his heart." What follows is his "spoke":

HI, JESUS. THANKS for taking the time to listen to me. I am feeling sad and frustrated these days, and it has to do with an election in my neighbourhood. I understand that its population is only a small sampling of your children, and that you have other concerns, but I have a concern that I want to bring to you for advice and counsel.

While I sort of expect that many in the neighbourhood may not be aware of you and what you are about, there is a sizeable and very vocal group there who claim to be particularly attached to you and your cause, and insist that they are so impressed with you that they want to model their lives after you. Now, this is where I have a big problem!

You would not believe what I have seen and heard from many of that special group recently, joining with enthusiasm some "leaders" in that election who have indulged in behaviour and speech that would make you blush. The unbelievable venom and bile that our neighbours have been subjected to has been hard to witness, and all this is just so unlike you, you who have been nicknamed the "balm of Gilead."

For my part, I wonder, would it be okay if I distanced myself from that group who use the moniker "evangelical Christian"? That name has assumed a stench that does not go over well with many folk, and I believe they are giving the wrong impression of who you are. You are getting a really bad rap, and that is not fair to you!

Please advise.

FRED WIELER, OAKVILLE, ONT.

Luke Jantzi, Hawkesville Mennonite, Ont.

Reesor Rempel—Anna Julian (b. Feb. 14, 2017), to Jessica and Steve Reesor Rempel, Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Ruby—Eloise Reta Mae (b. Jan. 23, 2017), to Ross and Bethany Ruby, Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Scott—Rebecca Catherine (b. Dec. 17, 2016), to Matt and Melanie Scott, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Thwaites—Brooklyn Marie (b. Dec. 14, 2016), to Graham and Emma Thwaites, Niagara United Mennonite,

Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Marriages

Fabiani/Friesen—Olivia Fabiani and Matt Friesen (Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.), at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Nov. 12, 2016.

Quick/Robinson—Angela Elizabeth Quick (Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.) and Brodie Andrew Robinson of Australia, at Faith Mennonite, Feb. 14, 2017.

Deaths

Bergen—Mary (nee Goosen), 91 (b. Jan. 15, 1926; d. Feb. 17, 2017), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Dettweiler—(Raymond) Clarke, 87 (b. Sept. 12, 1929; d. Feb. 7, 2017), Breslau Mennonite, Ont.

Enns—Erna (nee Boese), 85 (b. June 17, 1931; d. Feb. 3, 2017), First Mennonite, Edmonton.

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

Kinsie—Nellie (nee Burkholder), 83 (b. Nov. 2, 1933; d. Feb. 24, 2017), Breslau Mennonite, Ont.

Knelsen—Eleanor, 72 (d. Nov. 2, 2016), Emmaus Mennonite, Wymark, Sask.

Konrad—Justine (nee Wiens), 93 (b. July 16, 1923; d. Nov. 28, 2016), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Koop—Helen (nee Lehn), 91 (b. April 24, 1925; d. Feb. 15, 2017), North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Kopeschny—David, 78 (b. Dec. 6, 1937; d. Nov. 24, 2016),

Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Kropf—Lorne, 89 (b. July 5, 1927; d. Feb. 19, 2017), East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Martens—Gordon Peter, 70 (b. Feb. 25, 1946; d. Jan. 20, 2017), Hanley Mennonite, Sask.

Nafziger—Maynard, 83 (b. July 4, 1933; d. Feb. 15, 2017), Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

Sawatsky—Cathy (nee Dyck), 93 (b. Oct. 25, 1923; d. Jan. 22, 2017), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Shantz—Roland (Roly) A., 72 (b. March 1, 1944; d. Jan. 25, 2017), Elmira Mennonite, Ont.

Sommer—Lydia, 86 (b. March 18, 1930; d. Jan. 28, 2017), Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Wagler—Audrey Marie, 80 (b. June 5, 1936; d. Jan. 23, 2017), Living Water, New Hamburg, Ont.

Wagler—Daniel, 81 (b. Sept. 1, 1935; d. Jan. 31, 2017), Living Water, New Hamburg, Ont.

Wiens—Barbara (nee Witt), 77 (b. March 21, 1939; d. Nov. 11, 2016), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

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



This photo of six nurses from Coaldale, Alta., and the surrounding area was taken in the 1950s. Pictured from left to right: M. Willms, H. Toews, M. Dick and H. Reimer of Coaldale, with M. Janzen of Pincher Creek and M. Dyck of Grassy Lake. Can anyone provide first names of the people pictured? The medical field was an area in which Mennonite women found public service careers. Aiding people in need fit well with Mennonite sensibilities for service.

Text: Conrad Stoesz / Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies

Photo: MB Herald Photograph Collection / Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies

URL to photo: archives.mhsc.ca/coaldale-nurses



archives.mhsc.ca

LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Wisdom, where art thou? (Pt. 6)

TROY WATSON

Fourteen years ago, I asked my handy friend, Carm, if I could hire him to do a flooring renovation. He said, “No. But I’ll teach you how to do it for free.”

I laughed. The idea was absurd. The only tools I owned at the time were books and guitars. The extent of my property maintenance skills were changing light bulbs and mowing the lawn. My father, oddly enough, is a bona fide jack-of-all-trades, but apparently the “handy” gene skips a generation in our family. You should watch my brother try to hammer a nail! There’s a half-hour you won’t forget. I mean, the fact I call books and guitars “tools” says it all, really.

“That’s not a good idea,” I explained. “You see, I’m not handy, and you’ll end up doing all the work, Carm. I’d feel more comfortable just paying you to do it.”

My Italian friend responded with an offer I couldn’t refuse. “Nonsense,” he insisted. “Anyone can be handy. I’ll teach you. It’ll be fun. See you Saturday?”

He came over with his tools and taught me how to use a wet saw, mix mortar, draw a chalk line and lay tile. The following weeks I worked on the project by myself in my spare time. Carm occasionally dropped by to provide encouragement and coaching, but for the most part I finished the project myself. I was amazed at how good the slate-tile floor looked in the end. Carm was right! I could do it. I did do it!

Today, I’m confident and competent enough to attempt all kinds of repairs and renovations around the house. I’m grateful that Carm initiated me into the brotherhood of handyman discipleship



14 years ago. My inauguration into the world of power tools still amazes me.

How did Carm do it? Well, he didn’t just encourage me to do it. He disciplined me by taking the time to create an opportunity for me to actually do it. This is how Jesus disciplined, as well. He

facilitated opportunities for his disciples to do what he did—heal, preach, cast

out demons, for example—and they, too, were amazed that they could do it (Luke 10:17).

Telling someone, “you can do it” is not enough. Discipleship must include training and facilitating opportunities for people to do what they don’t believe they can do. Of course, this kind of discipleship requires coaches who are patient and wise.

I know what you’re probably thinking. How many wise coaches can a church realistically expect to have? I’ve got good news. The Bible tells us that everyone in our churches can be wise.

One of wisdom’s key features in the Bible is that she is equally available and accessible to all. Day and night she broadcasts her message everywhere.

Proverbs says: “*Out in the open she calls aloud, she raises her voice in the public square . . . she shouts in the streets, in the markets she raises her voice . . . on the hilltop along the road, at the crossroads where paths meet . . . at the city gate leading into the city . . . I call to you, to all of you! I raise my voice to all people!*”

It doesn’t matter who you are, where you are, or what advantages or disadvantages life has given you, wisdom is readily available to everyone who seeks her. Anyone can gain a heart of wisdom, and, when you do, your life will improve in very practical ways. Your physical health will improve, you will have a better handle on your finances, you will have healthier relationships, you will experience greater peace of mind, you will sleep better at night. Every aspect of your life will get better.

Wisdom is not a magic wand. It will not make your life perfect. Life will still be hard, challenging, painful and sad at times. But it will be better. Wisdom will help you dream big while accepting

I was amazed at how good the slate tile floor looked in the end. Carm was right! I could do it. I did do it!

your limitations. She’ll empower you to develop realistic but motivating goals in life, and rob you of the excuses you use to justify your fear and laziness, constantly reminding you that living life to the fullest and maximizing your potential are choices—not fantasies.

Wisdom is the original life coach. She is eager to help us, and her services are worth far more than gold, silver and precious jewels. Yet she offers them to us free of charge.

So how do we let wisdom coach us? Stay tuned. . . ❄

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




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

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

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

It's time to do 'something constructive together'

Evangelical Anabaptist Partners forms within MC Eastern Canada

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

Evangelical Anabaptist Partners (EAP) is a loosely affiliated group of pastors and lay people from Mennonite Church Eastern Canada who have been gathering regularly for worship, mutual encouragement, fellowship and discussion about their mission in the world.

At a recent monthly Sunday evening gathering at Community Mennonite Fellowship in Drayton, Ont., Craig Frere, the host pastor, challenged the 90 people present to have a faith that extended beyond Sundays into the whole week, “being good news to others” and “being the church on the way” through life.

Those gathered shared good news stories of where they had seen God at work—people becoming Christians, and Christmas hampers being handed out—and then offered prayers of thanksgiving. After singing songs filled with the theology they embrace, they recited the Apostles' Creed. Afterward, they continued to encourage each other to be God's people in their own communities.

EAP formed after several of its members participated in Evangelical Anabaptist Network (Evana) meetings in Indiana and Ontario last year. While a few have joined or plan to join Evana, most felt that its quasi-denominational format wasn't a fit for them.

Instead of needing a new denomination, what they wanted is a place where they do not feel they have to defend their basic beliefs:

- **THE AUTHORITY** of the Bible.
- **THE LIFE**, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus as central to their lives as Christians.

- **JESUS' PEACEMAKING** as central.
- **LIVING OUT** the Christian life is only possible through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in and among them.
- **“JESUS CHRIST**, who lived, died and rose from the dead by the power of God's redeeming love, is the only way to salvation.”

The new organization is currently directed by a four-person team who see their job as coordinators rather than as vision setters: Ryan Jantzi, pastor of Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite Church; Fanosie Legesse, pastor of Zion Mennonite Fellowship in Elmira; David Tiessen, pastor of Bethel Mennonite Church near Elora; and Taucha Inrig, a lay person from Wideman Mennonite Church in Markham.

They are clear that there are no plans by the group or individuals on the EAP steering committee to separate from Mennonite Church Eastern Canada or MC Canada. (A number of EAP participants, including Norm Dyck, pastor of Listowel Mennonite Church, are equally clear that if EAP began to separate from the denomination, they would leave EAP.)

EAP's leadership team has held several lengthy and honest meetings with area church leaders, in which they expressed their basic beliefs and some of their concerns for MC Canada.

According to Jantzi, in four hours of meetings, same-sex issues and the Being a Faithful Church process were not mentioned. Instead, discussion centred around issues of biblical authority, the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, and how far pastors can diverge from traditional theology before they would not fit into MC Canada.



Worship band members from Elmira's Zion Mennonite Fellowship lead singing at the Evangelical Anabaptist Partners worship gathering at Community Mennonite Fellowship in Drayton, Ont., on Jan. 15.

David Martin, MC Eastern Canada's executive minister, says that EAP has much to offer the wider church, especially as a reminder to “share faith [and] to be a Christian presence in a secular society.” He says he hopes that “those questions would continue to be asked by everyone, spurred on by EAP, and from different experiences. Society is changing; the church is changing.”

Martin believes that this is uncharted territory for the church. “How is the church relevant? What does a faith-based worldview do today? How do we serve people who are looking for meaning?” he wonders.

To help churches answer those questions, MC Eastern Canada has facilitated ReLearning Community groups to help congregations reclaim their mission focus, including one to be made up of EAP members.

But lest some think that EAP's mission focus is only about spiritual salvation, Legesse says that with the “world becoming a worse place . . . Anabaptist churches need to be assertive.”

Jantzi says he is “encouraged and refreshed being with colleagues of the same mind,” believing that the “Holy Spirit is stirring something” within EAP. “We've grumbled for long enough. Now we need to do something constructive together.”



The Gospel According to Food, a play written and performed by members of Pleasant Point Mennonite Church, encourages MC Saskatchewan delegates to re-examine their relationship with food.

MC Saskatchewan 'extends the table'

Delegates explore theme of generosity while looking to the future

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent

SASKATOON

“**E**xtending the table: Enough for all.” That was the theme chosen for Mennonite Church Saskatchewan’s annual delegate sessions this year, and as delegates and guests broke bread together, literally and metaphorically, they found there was indeed enough for all.

Held March 10 and 11 at Nutana Park Mennonite Church in Saskatoon, the sessions were co-hosted by the Nutana Park and Pleasant Point Mennonite congregations.

The March 10 evening worship featured a play, *The Gospel According to Food*, which was written and performed by members of Pleasant Point Mennonite along with friends from other congregations. In the play, a family addicted to junk food takes a closer look at their relationships with food. Along the way, the family discovers that

food shared with friends can bring them into the presence of God.

Susanne Guenther Loewen, pastor of Nutana Park, spoke about what the Bible has to say about sharing food. “Other meals are just as sacred as communion,” she said. That’s because “God becomes present in the gathered people.” As they eat together, “the community becomes transformed into the body of Christ,” she said.

In her second message, Guenther Loewen addressed the topic of sharing with those who don’t have enough. “God depends on our sharing when we have more than enough to eat, to provide for those who don’t have enough,” she said. “‘Do this in remembrance’ both is and is not a reference to communion,” she added. “Transform the world by extending the table. This is what we are called to do in

remembrance of our generous God.”

Business was also on the menu at the annual gathering. MC Canada’s transition coordinator, Keith Regehr, presented the plans and proposed covenant for the new national body. The questions and comments delegates offered Regehr seemed to also reflect the theme of extending the table.

“As area churches, I think we’re going to have to do some things differently,” said George Epp of Eigenheim Mennonite. “We need a celebration of some sort, rather than annual delegate sessions. We’re going to have to cultivate solidarity.”

Eric Olfert of Mount Royal Mennonite in Saskatoon echoed Epp’s point of view. “How do we nurture our sense of family?” he asked, suggesting, “We need family reunions across the country.”

Regehr replied that this need for solidarity, or family gatherings, is “part of the reason for the shift to annual, rather than bi-annual, gatherings,” but, he added, “there are far more ways than national gatherings of shaping unity.”

Florence Driedger of Peace Mennonite in Regina wondered, “How can we reflect the growing racial and cultural diversity [of the] church?” To which Regehr admitted, “The current leadership doesn’t reflect this diversity.”

Brent Gunther of Nutana Park asked, “How do we bridge the gap between our churches and those who have different understandings of what it means to be Mennonite or Anabaptist?” Regehr replied, “I think that comes under rubric of what it means to strengthen local congregations.”

Even the budget deliberations were a reminder that there is enough for all. Finance chair Gordon Peters explained that funding for the area church’s three camps had been removed, resulting in a surplus of \$9,418. Reinstating the funding as it had been in 2016 would result in a \$5,000 deficit.

Ike Epp of Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite in Glenbush said, “If the camps do not receive the subsidy this year, they will survive, [as it represents] a lot smaller percentage of their budgets than it was years ago.”

But Christy Martens-Funk of Osler Mennonite was uncomfortable with removing the subsidies entirely. “I have difficulty with cuts because there is still a surplus,” she said. “I would be in favour of designating the

surplus toward the three camps.”

Ultimately, this is what delegates decided to do.

Area church minister Ryan Siemens announced that MC Saskatchewan has contracted Betty Pries of the L3 Consulting Group to help the church set a direction for the future. Dubbed “Refresh, refocus, renew,” the process will begin

immediately with a survey of congregations. A mini-retreat, to be held at Mount Royal Mennonite in Saskatoon at the end of April, will engage the results of the survey. A second mini-retreat is being planned for September. The final phase of the process will take place at next year’s annual delegate sessions. An appointed committee made up of Martens-Funk,

Pauline Steinmann, Josh Wallace, Siemens and Kirsten Hamm-Epp will work closely with Pries throughout the process. ❧

For more information, photos and a video of the annual delegate sessions, visit canadianmennonite.org/sk-ads-2017.



MEI student dies on ski trip

By AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

A school outing turned to tragedy on March 3 when a student from Mennonite Educational Institute (MEI) in Abbotsford died during a ski trip to Whistler Blackcomb ski resort.

Reports said an unresponsive male was found at the bottom of Blackcomb Mountain after he was reported missing in the afternoon. The student’s name was not officially released to news media, but links on the MEI website identified him as Julian Osis, 14.

In an official statement, Vijay Manuel, MEI’s head of schools, said, “On Friday, March 3, 11 students and two staff who are members of the MEI Secondary Ski and Snowboard Club travelled to Whistler, B.C. That afternoon, MEI was notified that one student was missing, which resulted in a search by Whistler personnel. The results of the search led to the devastating news that our student had died. MEI is working with our staff, students, parents and supporting community to process this tragic news.”

Grief counsellors were on hand at the school the next day and the following Monday to help students and staff process the news.

“It’s just a moment in time where, as we process how this family is going to address this, this void and this loss, for us, we’re just going to care for each other,” Manuel told local media. “And what we do is we cry out to God for help.”

A GoFundMe page entitled Julian’s Legacy was set up to help his family defray funeral expenses. A description there of the youth says, “Julian loved skiing, he was a good cook, he was passionate about learning and full of potential, he was committed to his faith, optimistic about the future, and deeply devoted to his friends and family.

He had a good sense of humour and is missed by his parents, siblings and friends.”

Memorial services were held at Northview Community Church in Abbotsford on March 13. ❧

With files from MEI Schools, Global News and the Abbotsford News.



Julian Osis

/// Briefly noted

Church updates ministerial sexual misconduct policy manual

A newly updated Ministerial Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure manual builds on previous policies and procedures developed by denominational leaders from Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A. in 2000 as a guide for congregations and area conferences in addressing ministerial ethical misconduct, including sexual and ethical misconduct. The revised and updated manual incorporates valuable input from area church/conference ministers, survivors of ministerial sexual abuse, professionals who work with sexual abuse, and legal counsel in both the U.S. and Canada. “This updated [manual] takes seriously the insidious nature of ministerial sexual misconduct,” says Karen Martens Zimmerly, MC Canada’s executive minister of formation and pastoral leadership, “and therefore it includes more checks and balances to hold both the accused minister and the area church accountable, and requires that an individual with professional training in sexual abuse is a part of each team involved in the procedure.” It is intentional about offering a fair and deliberate process that also offers care for the complainant. “The revised [manual] pays special attention to the complainant to insure that . . . the safety of the complainant is named and that the complainant is kept informed throughout the process,” says Nancy Kauffmann, MC U.S.A.’s denominational minister. “There is also an option for the complainant to appeal a judgment made by the Ministerial Leadership Committee.”

—MC Canada/MC U.S.A.

'Being like a family'

MC Manitoba congregations affirm mutual commitment in the face of painful disagreement

STORY AND PHOTO BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY

Manitoba Correspondent
WINKLER, MAN.

Mennonite Church Manitoba gave its final comments on the Being a Faithful Church (BFC) 7 process, which has dominated public attention since last summer, at the area church's annual general meeting held the first weekend in March at Winkler Mennonite Church.

In an official statement, "Responding to BFC 7," the area church "recognizes and endorses the recommendations" of the BFC Task Force, commending local congregations to continue in prayer, study and humble mutual respect:

"We encourage congregations to try to understand each other's contexts and respect each other's conclusions . . . to continue to focus on what brings us together, and to work together with joy in sharing the very good news of Jesus. It is our hope that our faithful relationships will strengthen our witness and mission in Manitoba and beyond. We now let the issue of same-sex marriage rest and commit to coming together in three years to share how the Spirit has moved in our midst, and at that time to determine if our decisions have been a nudging of the Spirit."

A time for response was provided on March 4, when several congregations and independent members read letters of reply to the area church's decision regarding BFC 7.

Gerry Rempel, board chair of Niverville Community Fellowship, read a letter describing other congregations' choices to become affirming as "painful" to his congregation, but expressed amidst that pain a longing to remain in the church body: "Being like a family means that we value speaking honestly with one another, even though we know that our words may cause pain before they create a deeper, more meaningful relationship."

Members from churches across the spectrum of opinion, including Hope Mennonite

in Winnipeg, responded with great warmth to the candour of this statement.

Moses Falco, pastor of Sterling Mennonite Fellowship in Winnipeg, also read a letter on behalf of his congregation, which portrayed the area church as a family facing the tragedy of divorce, and pleading with local congregations not to split up over a disagreement, but to remember their need for one another and to press forward in love.

Other business covered at Gathering 2017 included reports from the Future Directions Task Force, Camps with Meaning and the Partnership Circles.

The Future Directions report, whose recommendations were approved by the area church in January, describes a restructuring whereby local congregations will be given more focus, attention and resources as the "central place for worship, mission and ministry."

Under this system the main work and purpose of new regional churches—currently area churches—will be to support local congregations, enabling them to work out their mission at every level, from the local to the international. Similarly, the national church will be understood as "a place where our sense of peoplehood and identity is strengthened, and as a place where the regional churches define national priorities and give life to them."

Camps with Meaning announced completed construction of four new cabins at Camp Assiniboia this year. It also underlined a need for extra volunteers to run fall-to-spring programming, and funding to implement plans for further improvements in the coming year, including the development of a new trail system that will enhance guests' appreciation of the natural environment and their commitment to protect it through sustainable living.

Partnership Circle highlights of the past



Byron Rempel-Burkholder, centre, leads a workshop at the MC Manitoba annual general meeting in early March in Winkler focussing on the Israel-Palestine resolution passed at last summer's national church assembly.

year include two major whole-community events focussed around improving public awareness and understanding of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and its implications for all church members. The program is also actively discerning whether it is being called to expand its official scope of operation to include partnership with other "circles," such as those working on issues of water justice, Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women, UNDRIP and others. ❧

PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ



Nutana Park Mennonite Church in Saskatoon had an Easter tree on display for the MC Saskatchewan annual delegate sessions in mid-March. The eggs, crafted by children in the congregation, are a symbol of resurrection and new life. Each egg represents a child in the congregation.

Surviving against the odds

West Hills Mennonite Fellowship celebrates 25 years

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

BADEN, ONT.

West Hills Mennonite Fellowship has gone through several cycles of boom and bust, seeking to follow God west of Kitchener-Waterloo. A place of refuge for people burned out or just plain burned by other congregations, West Hills, now a member of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, has seen its numbers rise and fall through the years.

Stan Gingerich, a founding member and the congregation's second pastor, doesn't think the church will ever get big, as people come, get healing and then move on.

With a vision of being a "non-traditional" church in Wilmot Township, home to eight other MC Eastern Canada congregations, the original five couples were commissioned by their home congregation, Steinmann Mennonite, and Fred Lichti, the pastor in 1991, to begin a new congregation on the west side of Kitchener. Their reasons for forming included the desire for a smaller, more intimate group; opportunities for evangelism; and a slightly different style of worship.

At first, West Hills met without a pastor, finding speakers week by week. It also tried to be a full-service church but found that doing too much was burning people out. After a year, a pastor was hired, but the relationship did not work out, and Gingerich asked the congregation and MC Eastern Canada leaders if he could test pastoral leadership. He led for almost 10 years before retiring.

West Hills has had its share of building woes. Its first place of worship, the Baden Mission building, burned. It then used space from Wilmot Township but had to leave when the township needed the space. In time, the congregation bought a surplus United Church building in Lisbon, Ont., in the countryside near Wellesley, for \$10. But in a few years, congregants felt a call back to Baden, and the Baden Emporium, a century-old building, was purchased



The Baden (Ont.) Emporium is the building West Hills Mennonite Fellowship owns and hopes to occupy soon.

with the idea of renovating it into a place of worship.

West Hills is currently worshipping in St. James Lutheran Church, sometimes feeling

like "a continuation of what we've felt this entire 25 years as a congregation, which is that, despite St. James hospitality and compassion, we still just don't feel quite at home, and are wrestling with what this means," says current pastor Sean East. But he and Gingerich believe that it is right for them to be back in Baden, and that the relationship with St. James has been good for both congregations.

Working half-time for the church and the other half as MC Eastern Canada's financial manager, having previously worked as an accountant, East says the congregation is currently meeting its responsibilities but has recently gone through a downturn in numbers. Still, he is hopeful.

The current leaders are all involved with ReLearning Community, a program sponsored by the area church to enhance leaders' spiritual lives and commitment to following where God is already active in the community where a church finds itself. There is energy and hope in the new perspectives and strengths the congregation is finding.

A quiet anniversary service was held in the fall of 2016. ❧

❧ Briefly noted

Supper club for seniors and inmates in danger of closing

KITCHENER, ONT.—A supper club for seniors living at Fairview Mennonite Home in Cambridge and inmates at Kitchener's Grand Valley Institution for Women may have to close, as the aging congregation at Pioneer Park Mennonite Church in Kitchener considers its own future. The suppers began after the fall of 1998, when Marilyn Rudy-Froese, then chaplain at Fairview, attended a local ministerial meeting and told how one of the great needs of seniors is visitors. At the same meeting was Rosemary Redshaw, then chaplain at Grand Valley, and Brian Laverty, pastor at Pioneer Park, who immediately saw the potential for the church to bridge the gap between the seniors and the inmates. At first, Pioneer Park volunteers and the inmates prepared, served and cleaned up, but now the staff at Fairview prepare the food, which is then shared by all. Clean-up is still done by the congregants and inmates. With the success of the program, Pioneer Park hopes it can continue. The church also wonders if other congregations in other places across Canada might pick up the model and run with it in their communities. A senior from Fairview said, "Having felt like an 'outsider' myself, abused by teachers and peers, I know many of the women at [Grand Valley] have felt the same way. Supper Club gives us the opportunity to bring the love of Christ to the women serving time. Thanks, Pioneer Park, for enabling you and us together to reflect the love of the Lord to the women."

—BY DAVE ROGALSKY

A 'manufactured narrative'?

BY DICK BENNER

Editor/Publisher
WATERLOO, ONT.

“Moral selectivity is worse than immorality,” insisted Omar Ramahl, a Muslim Canadian invited to address an adult Sunday school class at Waterloo North Mennonite Church recently, to give his perspective on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. He was referring to the biblical narrative that justifies occupation and injustice as a “manufactured narrative.”

“People entrenched in the principles of religion, namely justice and peace, cannot pick and choose when and where to apply or exercise morality,” he further elaborated. “As people of religion, we need to ask ourselves, ‘If Moses, Jesus or Mohammad were present amongst us, how would they react in light of our interpretation of the sacred religious/guidance texts that they espoused and were revealed through them? Would they sanction privilege based on injustice?’”

Ramahl, born in Jerusalem in 1963 and now a professor of electrical and computer engineering at the University of Waterloo, said that if Jews invoke God in justifying conquest, it shouldn't be surprising if Muslims and Christians invoke God for the same ends.

He called anti-Semitism a “dreadful disease,” just as racism and anti-Muslim hatred are. He said all three are the triggers that fuel, in particular, the injustice perpetrated against the Palestinian people: the confiscation of their land and the system of apartheid championed, articulated and practised by the state of Israel.

His own family history colours his view of the conflict, as his father comes from a small village that was completely blown to pieces with explosives by the Irgun and Haganah Jewish groups in the 1947-48 war. No one remained in the village, as it was in the most strategic area that the Zionist



Omar Ramahl

movement targeted for its state.

The family had to keep fleeing from village to village, and finally wound up in the al-Zarqu refugee camp. This history has convinced Ramahl that the Zionist-Jewish conquest of Palestinian land started way before the Holocaust.

Bringing the conflict to more recent times—especially the

savage bombardment of Gaza killing more than 500 children in 2014—has brought the realization that the Zionist project has gone too far, making it harder to defend as time goes by. “The liability is excessive, and Israeli’s behaviour in fuelling anti-Semitism is a reality,” he said.

Agreeing with these sentiments was David Chodos, an adherent at Waterloo North, who, with his Christian wife, Natasha Krahn, and two children, still practises his Jewish faith. Chodos, who grew up in the Kitchener-Waterloo Jewish community in the 1980s, was invited to give the “Jewish perspective” in a separate Sunday presentation.

“I sympathize with the injustice the Palestinians are facing, and believe that we need to seek, and advocate for, solutions that address this injustice,” he summed up in his remarks.

“However, we also need to consider the Israeli/Jewish perspectives—including both historical and current security concerns—as we tackle this issue. It is also essential to keep in mind that, within the ‘Israeli side’ of the conflict, there are a wide range of opinions spread across religious, political and cultural lines. Thus, one cannot consider ‘the Israelis’ or ‘the Jews’ as having a single, unified, position on Palestinian rights, the settlements or

other contentious topics.”

Chodos grew up hearing the pro-Israel side of the story, starting with the Zionist dream of leaders like Theodore Hertzl, continuing with the darkness of the Holocaust and followed by the worldwide acceptance of the Jewish state in 1948.

“Supporting Israel was not a key part of my Jewish identity growing up, but I didn’t question it at the time, either,” he said. “The liberal Jewish community, both in Israel and North America, is very much aware of Israeli injustice toward Palestinians, and has been grappling with this issue for years.”

The Jewish community in Israel is quite complex, Chodos further explained. “There is a broad spectrum of observance ranging from secular to ultra-Orthodox,” he said.

“Orthodox Jews tend to have the most sway in government and control key parties in the coalition governments that dominate Israeli politics. They also tend to have the loudest, most divisive demands. However, more liberal groups are present, as well, and some are actively working for peace between Israelis and Palestinians. There has also been some injustice encountered by Reform [liberal] Jewish communities in Israel, confronting restrictions from Orthodox Jewish leaders on where they can pray and who is considered Jewish.”



David Chodos

He sees some interesting historical similarities between Jews and Mennonites. Both groups moved around Europe, then to North America, to find a safe place to exist. In Israel, however, the biblical context for that particular place adds extra layers of complication.

There is also a similarly strong affiliation within communities. The Ashkenazi (Eastern European) Jews tended to have much more in common with each other than with the larger societies they lived in (Poland or Russia, for example), which is reminiscent of Russian vs. Swiss Mennonites, he noted. ❧

A voice from 'outside the gate'

Ontario LGBTQ parents support group disbands after 30 years

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

“We are exhausted.” So say members of a group of Mennonite parents of LGBTQ children, who met together for 30 years to worship, pray, exchange stories and support each other and their children, of their decision to call it quits last fall, as age and changing times have taken their toll.

In 1987—six years after Toronto police officers raided bathhouses across the city and arrested 250 homosexual men, parading them through the streets naked and handcuffed, humiliating them and destroying many of their lives, as employers, friends and family found out their secrets—parents of Mennonite men and women were finding out that their own adult children were homosexual.

Some were “out” publicly, while others were out only to a few family and friends. A major difference for these young adults, compared to many in the LGBTQ community, was that they wanted to remain in the church and wanted to live moral lives—just not as heterosexuals.

Slowly, their parents found each other, and in the fall of 1987 began to meet at the initial impetus of Paul and Martha Snyder and Mary and Roy Gascho, who met with Pastor Doris Gascho and her husband Ivan. Soon, Dave and Mary Ann Lichti joined them. Over the years, the group swelled to as many as 25.

Originally meeting monthly, at the end it was quarterly meetings with worship in someone’s home followed by dinner at a nearby restaurant. *Canadian Mennonite* recently met with the Snyders and with Victor and Rebecca Fast as the group disbanded in the fall of 2016 with communion and a celebratory dinner.

While their paths and stories were all different, the parents united because of their love and acceptance of their children,



Victor and Rebecca Fast, left, and Martha and Paul Snyder meet to share the story of the Parents Group (of LGBTQ children), which they had been members of for 30 years before disbanding it last fall.

as well as a desire that there be a place in the Mennonite church for them.

Support was a big part of what they did, but they also advocated in many ways:

- **SPEAKING ABOUT** their experiences at many churches.

As members have aged, they find that younger parents of LGBTQ children are finding other places of support, many in their own affirming congregations and families.

- **JOINING THE** Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Listening Committee for LGBTQ Issues.

- **MEETING WITH** leaders of both national and area churches to get issues surrounding LGBTQ people and the church on the agenda.

- **HOLDING “PROTESTS”** at national Mennonite church meetings in St. Catharines and Stratford, Ont. (It was being “outside the gate” at Stratford, where the Brethren Mennonite Council for Gay and Lesbian Issues was not allowed on the grounds that helped some of the parents feel viscerally what their children had already felt, says Martha Snyder.)

As members have aged, they find that

younger parents of LGBTQ children are finding other places of support, many in their own affirming congregations and families. While they feel like their work—including their efforts for a national listing of affirming congregations—is not done, they believe that it is time for them to lay down the burden, now that they are in their 70s and 80s.

But they haven’t stopped acting with grace and patience.

Valleyview Mennonite Church in London, Ont., where the Fastes attend, recently worked on how it would congregationally approach the issues related to LGBTQ people in the church. When the process seemed to be bogged down in disagreement, Victor reached out to someone who held radically different views than himself. They met secretly and then each invited two others from the congregation to join them to discuss the matter, still in secret.

At the annual meeting, they presented their inclusive statement to the congregation. A compromise—they agreed that the congregation is not ready for an LGBTQ pastor—the congregation accepted the statement unanimously and gave the six a standing ovation.

“Do we need to agree?” Victor wonders,

noting that there is much in the church on which members do not agree and yet remain a community of love and support. “We need to really listen to each other,” he believes. They also believe that Jesus calls everyone to love everyone else and to not exclude.

In closing the group down, the remaining members penned a statement that concludes: “While most [in the group] affirmed MC Canada for having made important progress, it was seen by all as still a long way from achieving reconciliation with much of the LGBTQ community. The wounds still run deeply. One parent summed up the feeling of the group: ‘Even a simple and sincere apology would be nice.’” ❧

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/// Briefly noted

Donations revitalize !Explore program

ELKHART, IND.—Major gifts from two donors are breathing new life into the summer youth leadership development program at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS). “!Explore: A theological program for high-school youth” will be able to continue on a regular basis for at least the next decade, thanks to a gift of \$751,811 USD from the estate of Leatha Zook, formerly of Orrville, Ohio, which continued the support begun in 2015 with a \$50,000 gift from Laura Ann King and the late Kenneth King of Scottdale, Pa. The program offers youth in grades 10 to 12 the opportunity to develop leadership skills and test their gifts for ministry. “These gifts are huge because they help us continue a program that has proven to be immensely successful,” says Andy Brubacher Kaethler, director of AMBS’s Center for Faith Formation and Culture, which administers the program. “Rarely do I open an issue of *The Mennonite*, *Canadian Mennonite* or *Mennonite World Review*, and not read something about a former !Explore participant. Many of them are leaders in the church in Canada and the U.S.” For more information about !Explore, visit ambs.edu/explore.



—Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

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GOD AT WORK IN US

SNAPSHOTS OF A LIFE IN MISSION

Evangelistic work still paying dividends today

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
MONTREAL

Tilman Martin turned 90 on Jan. 3. He is the last of the four original church planters sent from Ontario to Quebec in 1956 whose work continues to pay dividends to this day. The other original planters were the late Harold (d. March 12, 2017) and Pauline (d. April 6, 1980) Reesor from Wideman Mennonite Church in Markham; and Janet (Mills) Martin (d. July 29, 2002) from St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

Tilman was born into an Old Order Mennonite family in St. Jacobs in 1927. His father died when he was 4. When he was 8, his mother remarried and they moved to a farm. Through his teen years he worked on other farms and sent his money home. He was baptized into the Old Order Mennonite Church in 1945, at 18, but the summer he turned 21 he received his



Tilman Martin in October 2016, at age 89.

inheritance of \$500, held in trust for him. He bought a car with the money, ending his Old Order membership.

With a group of friends, he attended a variety of churches, ending up at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, then part of the Mennonite Church of Ontario (now Mennonite Church Eastern Canada). In 1949, under the ministry of John Garber, an



Tilman Martin knocks on doors as he begins to plant a church in Montreal Nord in 1958.

evangelist, he dedicated his life to serve God.

He attended Toronto Bible College, now Tyndale Seminary, for three years. In 1951, while in his second year, he met Janet Mills. They married in 1953 in the Baptist church in Harrow and together attended the Mennonite Bible Institute in Kitchener

HISTORICAL PHOTOS
COURTESY OF TILMAN MARTIN



House in Ville Lemoyne on Montreal's South Shore, where the Martins lived while studying French.

that winter, since students married to each other were not allowed to attend Toronto Bible College.

Interested from a young age in inviting others to faith in Jesus, he was sent by the Ontario Mennonite Mission Board to Sudbury, in northern Ontario, where he helped found Waters Mennonite Church. While there, he worked in the mines for International Nickel and served in a summer Bible school at the church.

David Shank, who had spent five years doing mission work in Belgium, went with Osiah Hurst and J.B. Martin, pastor of Erb St. Mennonite Church in Waterloo, to "scout out" potential work in Quebec. After they returned, Tilman was sent on a further two-week trip with Enos Bearinger to visit the French-speaking evangelicals. Mennonites were welcomed and invited to work in



Bible study in the Martins' basement apartment in 1958. Pictured from left to right: Pauline Reesor, Marc Reesor, Christian Chano, Deborah Martin, Harold Reesor and Mr. Chano from France, their first contact.



Harold Reesor and Tilman Martin in the chapel at 11123 L'Archeveque, Montreal, in 1960. Reesor built the pulpit.

Quebec alongside the other evangelical churches, they reported afterwards.

A year later, the Ontario Mission Board, together with the Mennonite Board of Missions from the Mennonite Church in Elkhart, Ind., called for volunteers. Montreal Nord was not taken by another evangelical group, so the Martins went there. A year later, after spending time in Montreal, the Reesors wanted to go to Joliette, about 50 kilometres north of Montreal.

These were the last years of the “social contract” between the Roman Catholic Church and the Union Nationale government in Quebec, by which the church controlled all the schools and hospitals. A local bishop could do much to control who lived and worked in his region. With the death of Maurice Duplessis, the Union Nationale lost power in 1960, and within two years the Liberal government empowered René Levesque to nationalize the schools and hospitals, accelerating the process of secularization already taking place.

Tilman finished nine months of French-language study in the spring of 1957 and began to work in Montreal Nord that summer. They began door-to-door evangelism, reporting up to 350 contacts a month, but few people would let them in. A salesman from France and his son were interested, especially in the boys club that Tilman and Harold started. They rented a house,



Pauline and Harold Reesor and Tilman Martin in their basement apartment on Avenue Lamoureux, Montreal, in 1957.

holding meetings in French and English.

The Western Tract Mission offered free New Testaments. Tilman began receiving the Mission’s responses for Laval and the northern part of Montreal Island. A married couple from France and another from Belgium were some of their first real connections.

In 1958, they began Sunday services, attended by the Martins and Reesors, the French man and his son, and, through the Yellow Pages, a German lawyer who also brought a friend. In 1960, the Ontario Mission Board bought a property for them to use at 11123 L’Archeveque. The lower level was a commercial space that was originally rented to an electronics store, but from which they eventually sold office supplies and Christian books. The building had room for 40 to 50 people in a chapel upstairs, and a back annex had room for the Martin family. The basement was at first a shoe repair and later a room for the youth.

But no French Canadians came to the outreach until Aldea Turcotte checked them out at the building’s dedication, in response to an invitation sent to the whole city. Her partner, Francis Dussault, knew of Mennonites, having worked for some in Ohio. The next Sunday, she brought a whole group of people with her, and the work was truly founded. The first baptism took place in 1961.

By 1971, a vibrant congregation filled the chapel space weekly. But then the leader of a Youth for Christ group in Montreal joined the communitarian cult The Body Movement, taking with him many youth

who had been attending the Mennonite congregation, leaving only a small French service in Montreal Nord.

The Martins worked in Montreal Nord for 15 years, resigning in 1972 and moving out of the city to near Joliette, where they bought a country home. Albert Hodder, a Salvation Army leader from France via Toronto, came to take on the Montreal Nord work. Hodder moved to downtown Montreal in 1974, forming the Montreal Mennonite Fellowship and Maison de L’Amitié, a student residence and summer guesthouse. Some Montreal Nord members joined the work in the downtown.

Tilman began to work as a chaplain for the Correctional Service of Canada on July 1, 1975, and served there for 15 years, working in institutions in Laval and Archambault. He now lives with his daughter and her husband in Gatineau, Que. His son Luke is currently the executive director of Maison de L’Amitié in Montreal.

All along, the work of Mennonites in Quebec was different from that of other evangelical groups, focussing not only on spiritual salvation but on the whole lives of people. This has influenced the current generation of leaders there, including Mario Marchand, pastor of Église Mennonite Ichtus in Montreal, who became a Christian through Joliette Mennonite Church. The Reesors served the Joliette church from 1960 to 1963 with some long-distance support by the Martins, who later helped the Reesors’ successors, Clyde and Elizabeth Shannon, in the 1970s, after moving close to Joliette. ✎



Pictured from left to right: Harold and Pauline Reesor, with Janet and Tilman Martin, holding their daughter Deborah, at the front entrance of the Institute Biblique de Montreal in Longueuil, where they studied French from 1956 to 1957.



Picture taken after a morning English service at the chapel entrance in 1962; there was also an evening French service. The Martins, including daughter Deborah, are in the back row. Harold Reesor is at left in the front row.

'Land rights apply to my church and my home'

Kandace Boos plans to make pilgrimage to Ottawa with her daughter and art supplies in tow

BY DAN DYCK

Mennonite Church Canada

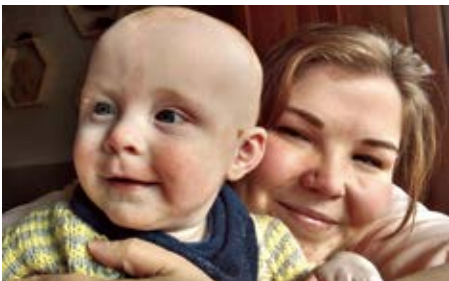
Nine-month-old Junia has just become the youngest participant to join the Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights, a 600-kilometre walk from Kitchener-Waterloo, Ont., to Ottawa, taking place from April 23 to May 14.

Kandace Boos, 28, Junia's mother, will put in the grunt work of carrying Junia on her back, alongside her task of documenting the walk through her art. Boos is an urban sketch artist, part of a global community of artists who practise drawing in the cities, towns and villages they live in or travel to.

As a "core walker," one of those who plan to walk the entire distance, she will help to raise awareness of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in churches, teach-ins and conversation circles along the way.

A mother of two, Boos's interest in peace and justice was piqued when she and her husband Mike began attending Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener about four years ago. Last year, she participated in faith formation classes focusing on indigenous relations. Recently, she joined the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) Working Group at Stirling.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KANDACE BOOS



Junia, seven months, and her mother Kandace Boos plan to walk the 600-kilometre Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights.

PILGRIMAGE FOR INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

"Land rights apply to my church and my home," she said in a Skype interview, adding that she lives right across the street from her church.

"I'm constantly surprised by the focus on peace and justice [at my church]," she said of her experience at Stirling. "It's a closer form of evangelism to what I understand Jesus would do. It's a practice and a discipline that will make a difference. I expect to be a different person after the walk. That's exhilarating!"

The graduate of the BealArt School in London, Ont., and Emmanuel Bible College in Kitchener is an active leader of worship arts at Stirling. Recently, she collaborated with Emma Smith, an Anishinaabe artist from Walpole Island First Nation in southwestern Ontario on a live art creation during a worship service at her church.

"One of the TRC recommendations is for collaborative art between settlers and indigenous peoples," she said, adding that the two have developed a growing friendship.

Boos said she hopes to create an art exhibition of her work and writing, as well as that of other artists she hopes to encounter on the pilgrimage. She said she wants to participate in the pilgrimage because there is so much negativity in the news about

ARTWORK BY KANDACE BOOS



A 30-minute drawing of a male model by Kandace Boos. 'I was trying to capture a sense of peace, as well as the very technically demanding foreshortened angle,' says the artist. 'It's a style I hope to use in portraiture of each core walker over the course of the Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights.'

minorities and women's roles in society.

"Part of why I am taking Junia on this pilgrimage is to show her that we can do very hard things, and that the voices and presence of women, even a baby girl and her mother, mean something," she said. "That we can take on this challenge that many men would never do, to use the white privilege in our presence in Ottawa to amplify the voices of those not as recognized in white urban society."

Boos has been struggling with severe post-partum depression and is deeply grateful for all the supports—including her church—that are in place for those with mental-health struggles.

"If my brain had been in the body of an aboriginal woman, I would not have survived," she said. "I am walking for every aboriginal mother without access to solid prenatal care and post-partum support, every foster kid who doesn't believe life will get better, and for every baby girl growing up with a depressed mother unable to get help." ❧

To learn more about the Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights, visit pfor.ca.



/// Staff change

Vietnam Mennonite Church elects new president

• **PASTOR HUYNH DINH NGHIA** was elected president of the Vietnam Mennonite Church at the denomination's third general assembly in early December 2016. He replaces Pastor Nguyen Quang Trung, who led a 40-year struggle to see the denomination legally recognized, finally succeeding in 2007. Nghia, pastor of the Tan Hiep church who previously served as the denomination's second-vice-president, will serve a four-year term as president. One hundred and ninety voting delegates from churches across the country cast their votes. The new president brings a passion for evangelism to the position. Originally part of the Pentecostal movement in Vietnam, Nghia established his first congregation as part of the unrecognized house church movement in 1989. In 2006, he joined the Vietnam Mennonite Church, then not an officially recognized institution, after becoming acquainted with Trung. Nghia said the church must continue to develop the leadership training begun by Trung. Pastoral certification training, lay leader training in local districts and Vacation Bible School for children are all top priorities for Nghia, who also said that the younger generation of leaders must work alongside more experienced pastors. He called for a renewal of ministry focus.

—Eastern Mennonite Missions



/// Staff change

Eden CEO James Friesen retires

• **JAMES FRIESEN**, the chief executive officer (CEO) of southern Manitoba's Eden Health Care Services, retired from his position effective Jan. 15. He worked in the Eden organization since 1981, beginning as staff in the housing program for 10 years and then as director of this service for a further 10 years. In 2001, he became director of development at the Eden Foundation and, among other work, developed the very successful "Head for the hills" bike ride. He became CEO of Eden Health Care Services in January 2008. During the last nine years, he led the organization through many significant changes, including the completion of housing developments in Steinbach (Wilson Courts) and in Winnipeg (Concordia Village IV).

—Eden Health Care Services



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Mennonite observes Lent with 'Fast for Healing Justice' and tweets to Trump

The executive director of the EMU Center for Justice and Peacebuilding is fasting, meditating, writing and tweeting to President Donald Trump.

canadianmennonite.org/lent-fast-justice



Is there room enough for hope?

Mary Jo Leddy tells stories of encounters with refugees and asks listeners what kind of Canada they want—a mean-spirited or a welcoming country.

canadianmennonite.org/room-hope



Ministry on a human scale

Pastors gather at the annual School for Ministers to hear the call to acknowledge their human limitations and stop trying to be superheroes.

canadianmennonite.org/human-ministry



'Communities so full of love that it's contagious'

In the secularized culture of England, where self-reliance and independence are seen as ultimate strengths, how does one encourage true community?

canadianmennonite.org/contagious-love



/// Briefly noted

Pastoral ordination in Ontario

• **RENE BAERGEN** was ordained at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, on Feb. 12. His work is primarily with the Hispanic community that gathers on Saturday evenings, often with food, and always to sing, pray and study the Bible together. While there has been much refugee/immigrant settlement work at the church, an increasing amount of his energies go toward working out what it means for First Mennonite to be a multicultural community. He earned a doctorate in biblical studies from the University of St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto in 2013. He has taught at Emmanuel College (University of Toronto) and Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

—BY DAVE ROGALSKY



Staff change

Pastoral transitions in Ontario

• **ERNIE HARRIS** began as the pastor of community development and outreach at Nairn Mennonite Church near Ailsa Craig on Jan. 1. He



has spent most of his adult life in education and lay ministry in Grenada and Canada. As a Brock University student in the late 1970s and early '80s, he served in many capacities throughout the Niagara Region's Mennonite churches as a youth Sunday school teacher, conference speaker, spiritual life resource for Mennonite Christian high schools, and as a preacher. He has done studies at the doctoral level in educational linguistics and is trained

as a mediator with certificates in conflict resolution. Transitioning into God's call to pastoral ministry provides an opportunity for him to devote more time to prayer, study, preaching, serving and engaging a post-Christian world with Christ's gospel of love and caring. He and his wife Jan are parents to three grown children and grandparents of two.

— BY DAVE ROGALSKY

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Step back in history

'We hope to . . . use [Brubacher House] as a place that can further reconciliation,' says Laura Enns

BY AARON EPP
Young Voices Editor

Joshua Enns goes through less than two kilograms of flour each week baking bread for himself and his wife Laura. By comparison, the original inhabitants of the house they live in went through 45 kilos.

That's just one of the facts Joshua and Laura have learned since they took over as hosts of Brubacher House in Waterloo, Ont., at the beginning of February. Once home to Magdalena and John E. Brubacher and their 14 children, Brubacher House now operates as a museum on the University of Waterloo campus and serves to educate and interpret the Pennsylvania German Mennonite way of life to visitors.

'One thing we're really excited about . . . is the gardening. There's a sizable gardening plot that we'd really like to dig into a bit this spring and incorporate into the tour as much as possible.'
(Laura Enns)

As hosts, the Ennses live in the house, serving as its guides and caretakers.

The couple, who attend Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church in Waterloo, applied for the job after spending time as volunteers with the Iona Community in Scotland. "Having had these experiences . . . we were interested in learning [more] about our own heritage and sharing that with others, so it felt natural to come back and continue doing that in Waterloo," Laura says.

In Scotland, the couple lived and worked at heritage sites. Joshua, 27, volunteered at an off-grid activity centre in an old fishing *bothy* (cottage), and Laura, 26, served as a

music assistant in an abbey.

"We were inspired by how these organizations were doing a lot of amazing and very relevant peace and social justice work . . . using these old buildings," Laura says. "They brought together these historical values [and] traditions, and [made] them relevant for today."

The University of Waterloo bought Brubacher House, which was built in 1850 in a style typical of Pennsylvania German architecture, in 1965. The university has preserved and restored it as a reminder that the total 405 hectares of the university campus were once owned by Mennonites

and devoted to agriculture.

Marlene Epp, professor of history and peace and conflict studies at Conrad Grebel University College, says that the location of Brubacher House on the edge of the David Johnston Research and Technology Park is noteworthy.

"It's a large public university, it's known for its engineering and IT [information technology] innovation, and so to have the contrast of this mid-19th century homestead of Mennonite settlers and the research technology developments around it makes it interesting," Epp says. "It's an opportunity to step back into history and
(Continued on page 28)

PHOTO BY AURREY DRAKE



Laura and Joshua Enns were inspired to work at Brubacher House after volunteering with the Iona Community in Scotland.

PHOTO BY JENNIFER KONKLE



Brubacher House was built in 1850 in a style typical of Pennsylvania German architecture.

PHOTO BY AUREY DRAKE



Joshua and Laura Enns took over as hosts of Brubacher House in Waterloo, Ont., on Feb. 1.

(Continued from page 27)

learn how people lived in this area in the mid-19th century.”

Brubacher House is open from May 1 to Oct. 31, Wednesday to Saturday in the afternoon, or at other times throughout the year by appointment.

Joshua and Laura are excited about their work because it provides an opportunity to live closer to the land, and to build community around the arts, social and environmental justice, and their Mennonite heritage.

“One thing we’re really excited about . . . is the gardening,” Laura says. “There’s a sizable gardening plot that we’d really like to dig into a bit this spring and incorporate into the tour as much as possible.”

As a community musician, Laura is hoping to facilitate music nights that will help visitors engage with Brubacher House. She is also in conversation with a local theatre group about the possibility of writing and staging a site-specific play at the house.

The majority of people who visit Brubacher House are not familiar with Mennonite history. Joshua says that he is looking forward to having conversations with visitors about historical Mennonite values like simple living and pacifism, and how these values speak into Mennonite lives and culture today.

“We want to give voice to what’s so cool about being a Mennonite,” he says. “We want to ask: ‘What do the values of the people who lived in these historic places 150 years ago have to say to us today?’”

Epp points out that Brubacher House has much broader value than simply telling the Mennonite story. The story of Brubacher House is also the story of white settlement in Waterloo Region, and telling that story today means acknowledging the people who were on the land before Mennonites arrived.

“There’s an opportunity for people who do heritage narratives or history storytelling in this area to think in new ways about that,” Epp says. “Laura and Joshua are the kind of people who will probe those questions, and I’m certainly excited and happy if they do.”

Laura says that she and Joshua are serious about trying to implement some of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s calls to action in their work. “This house, I think, is very much a symbol of Mennonite settlement in . . . southern Ontario, and so that carries a certain responsibility in terms of telling the history accurately,” Laura says. “We’re not just beginning from when the Brubachers arrived here, but starting with who the caretakers of the land were from time immemorial.”

“In a lot of our events and projects this year, we hope to engage with local indigenous groups to help us tell that story better, and also use this house as a place that can further reconciliation, and help us rebuild our relationships with indigenous peoples and the land,” she adds. ❧

With files from Conrad Grebel University College.

Playing for fun and credit

CMU students in the Mennonite Community Orchestra learn to play the classics alongside musicians three times their age

STORY AND PHOTOS BY AARON EPP

Young Voices Editor
WINNIPEG



Anna Lysack has played the violin for 15 years.

Legendary rock ‘n’ roll drummers Keith Moon and Neil Peart inspired Matt Schellenberg to get into percussion, but it’s Bach and Beethoven that he will be playing when he performs next month.

Schellenberg is one of a handful of young adults who are members of the Mennonite Community Orchestra (MCO) in Winnipeg. The MCO is the orchestra-in-residence at Canadian Mennonite

University (CMU) and consists of more than 50 professional and amateur musicians; it will perform its annual spring concert on April 9 in the chapel at CMU.

Five CMU students are performing with the MCO and earning school credit in the process.

“I’ve always kind of wanted to play percussion [in an orchestra] and didn’t have that opportunity in high school,” Schellenberg says when asked why he joined the MCO. “The credit was just a nice bonus.”

The 22-year-old grew up in Saskatoon and belongs to Nutana Park Mennonite Church there. Being a part of the MCO, which performs two concerts annually—one in the spring and one in the fall—has been positive for Schellenberg. “The pieces

in an orchestra before, so it was new and exciting.”

MCO conductor William Gordon praises the work that the young CMU musicians are doing as part of the orchestra. All of them have to pass an audition before joining.

“The students are warmly welcomed into the orchestra, and it is a challenge for them,” says Gordon, a semi-retired music professor at Brandon (Man.) University. “They have to work hard at [the music] and they do work hard at it, and that’s appreciated by myself as the conductor and by the other musicians.”

The repertoire that the MCO will perform at next month’s concert includes Brahms’ “Four Serious Songs” with CMU voice professor Matthew Pauls; Bach’s “Brandenburg Concerto No. 5” with pian-

Anna Lysack, a 19-year-old history major from Brandon, Man., enjoys being a part of the MCO because it gives her a reason to play her violin now that she’s no longer taking lessons.

we’re playing are excellent,” he says. “It’s a lot of fun.”

Anna Lysack, a 19-year-old history major from Brandon, Man., enjoys being a part of the MCO because it gives her a reason to play her violin now that she’s no longer taking lessons. During her first year at CMU, she sang in a choir and pursued other co-curricular interests. While they were positive experiences, she missed her violin.

Now in her second year at CMU, playing with the MCO has remedied that. “I was busy with other things [last year] and I wasn’t playing my violin as much,” she says. “That was okay, but I missed it. Orchestra was a way to have something to work on, to have music to be playing and that kind of thing.”

Dayna Wiebe got involved with the MCO for similar reasons. The 19-year-old grew up in Calgary at Trinity Mennonite Church. She began playing the clarinet in Grade 7.

“I wanted to keep music in my life [at CMU] really badly, and I wanted to keep playing the clarinet, and this was a [good] option,” she says. “It was on campus, it was intergenerational. . . . I’d never been

ist Madeline Hildebrand, flutist Laurel Ridd and violinist Karen Warner; and Beethoven’s “Symphony No. 6.”

Lysack enjoys the MCO because it allows her to interact with people who are a variety of ages, ranging from teenagers to people in their 80s. “It’s cool how there’s different ages and skill levels,” she says. “People of [higher] skill levels can help me improve.”

Wiebe agrees, adding that playing in an orchestra for the first time is thrilling. “I really enjoy it,” she says. “It’s a new opportunity to be part of an orchestra. I’ve never had that opportunity in my life yet, and it’s been such a good first experience.”

To learn more, visit facebook.com/mennonitecommunityorchestra.



Originally a rock drummer, Matt Schellenberg is one of two percussionists in the Mennonite Community Orchestra.



Dayna Wiebe had never played in an orchestra prior to joining the Mennonite Community Orchestra.

CANADIAN MENNONITE



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Calendar

Alberta

April 29: Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta meets at Bergthal Mennonite Church, Didsbury: annual general meeting at 10 a.m.; sessions at 1:30 p.m. Lunch and 4 p.m. faspas provided. For more information, call 403-250-1121.

May 6: Camp Valaqua work day, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Call 403-637-2510 to indicate how many are coming, so lunch can be provided.

May 17: Menno Simons Christian School spring concert, in Calgary, at 7 p.m.

May 26-27: MCC Alberta Summerfest and Relief Auction, in Sherwood Park. For more information, visit mccreliefsale.com.

June 5-23: Poverty Studies Summer Institute, sponsored by the Canadian Poverty Institute, at Ambrose University. For more information, visit bit.ly/2mfW7Ya.

June 9-11: MC Alberta women's retreat at Sylvan Lake. Speaker: Sara Wenger Shenk. Theme: "Our legacy of wisdom." For more information, call June at 403-208-0800.

Saskatchewan

April 22: Parkland Restorative Justice holds its "Spring banquet in the woods" fundraising event at the Prince Albert Wildlife Federation.

April 28-30: A Buncha Guys 20-year reunion, in Saskatoon.

April 30: A Buncha Guys spring concert, featuring the 20-year reunion choir, at Knox United Church, Saskatoon, at 2:30 p.m.

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

Manitoba

Until April 29: The Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg, presents the works of three local artists: Timothy Joel Dyck, Seth Woodyard and Frank Livingston.

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 butterflyjourneys.webs.com.

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.

June 1: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate presents its Grade 10-12 spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

June 12-16 and 19-23: "School of Peacebuilding," at CMU, Winnipeg. Week-long courses available for professional and personal development. For more information, visit csop.cmu.ca.

June 20: CMU Golf Classic. For more information, visit cmu.ca/golf.

Ontario

Until April 13: "Tesatawayat (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."

April 1: Dedication/reception for the launch of Lawrence Burkholder's book "The Leviathan Factor," at Wideman

Mennonite Church, Markham, at 2:30 p.m.

April 22: "Canadian Mennonite" annual fundraising banquet, Stories and Songs, at Floradale Mennonite Church, at 6 p.m. RSVP to Alexandra. LT.siebert@gmail.com before April 15. Performers: Elizabeth Rogalsky Lepock and Jason White.

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 23-May 14: National Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights, a 600-kilometre walk from Kitchener to Ottawa, stopping at 21 churches along the way and engaging in teach-ins, all in support of Canada's implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. For more information, visit pfr.ca.

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.

May 7: Homecoming Sunday at Hawkesville Mennonite Church; fellowship at 10 a.m., worship at 11 a.m.

May 13: Menno Singers present Honegger's "King David," and a world premiere of a new work by Colin Labadie, at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener.

June 13: Annual chicken barbecue

Classifieds

Employment



**Mennonite
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**EMPLOYMENT
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Executive Director - MCC Alberta

The Executive Director provides overall leadership to the work of MCC in Alberta. This position bears responsibility for upholding and implementing the vision, purpose, and values of MCC. The Executive Director guides the work of MCC in Alberta as set by the MCC Alberta Board of Directors.

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

Candidates must be legally eligible to work in Canada to apply. Application deadline May 31, 2017. To view the complete job description and apply visit www.bit.ly/MCC-AB

at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg. Advance tickets required. For more information, call 519-625-8602.

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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or
Ed Peters – SMC Personnel Committee Chair
Tel. 204-326-7917
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**Mennonite
Central
Committee**

Executive Director – MCC Canada

The MCC Canada Board is searching for a new Executive Director to start in September 2017. This position provides overall leadership to the work of MCC Canada. The Executive Director bears responsibility for upholding and implementing the vision, purpose, and values of MCC as well as the overall leadership of the relief, development and peace building work of the service agency of the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in Canada.

Interested candidates should apply by April 7, 2017 at: <https://mcccanada.ca/get-involved/serve/openings>.

Inquiries can be addressed to Karen Grace-Pankratz at karengracepankratz@mcccanada.ca or 204-261-6381.

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Travel

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Urgent help needed

Famine 'a tragic reality' in South Sudan, according to UN

Canadian Foodgrains Bank

Famine has been declared in parts of South Sudan, where about 100,000 people are facing starvation, says a United Nations release dated Feb. 20. In addition, a further one million people are on the brink of famine.

The ongoing civil war in South Sudan, now in its third year, has devastated the country's economy, disrupting normal food transportation chains, and preventing countless small-scale farming households from growing their crops and tending their herds.

This is the most serious hunger crisis there has been in South Sudan since the conflict began. The UN news release notes that 4.9 million people—or about 40 percent of South Sudan's population—are in need of urgent food, agriculture and nutrition assistance.

"We are deeply troubled by what we are seeing in South Sudan, and responding as we are able," says Jim Cornelius, executive director of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, adding, "That the food crisis has led to famine conditions for so many, is devastating."

Since the beginning of the recent civil

An internally displaced family in Mundri, South Sudan, prepares their dinner for the night.



PHOTO BY PAUL JEFFREY

conflict in December 2013, the Foodgrains Bank has committed more than \$6 million to providing emergency food and nutrition assistance to more than 114,000 people.

Currently, the Foodgrains Bank is providing emergency food assistance to conflict-affected people in and around the capital city of Juba, where many people have sought safety. In neighbouring Uganda, where roughly 700,000 South Sudanese have fled in search of safety, the Foodgrains Bank is responding to the needs of 2,500 pregnant and nursing

mothers who have arrived in the country severely undernourished.

This type of support is exceptionally critical, as children who do not receive proper nutrition while in the womb, or as infants, can bear the effects for the rest of their lives, long after the initial crisis has passed.

"The women, men and children in South Sudan are not forgotten, and they need urgent help," says Cornelius, noting that immediate assistance is needed to ensure the famine does not spread. ☘

MCC support on way to South Sudanese refugees

Mennonite Central Committee Canada

The ongoing conflict in South Sudan has prevented humanitarian organizations, such as Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), from providing assistance in Unity State.

As rainfall stopped during the dry season, fighting increased, forcing more people to flee from South Sudan to Ethiopia.

"In South Sudan, the dry season is literally called the 'fighting season' because the *sudd* [large swamp] dries

out enough for troops and equipment to once again move around the country," said Bruce Buckwalter, an MCC representative for Ethiopia, last November. "People are fleeing in anticipation of forced conscription into the rebel army."

MCC continues to work with its partners in South Sudan on securing access to areas in need. In addition, it is supporting South Sudanese refugees living in refugee camps in the Gambella region of Ethiopia and other neighbouring countries such as Kenya, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A shipment of canned meat recently left the MCC warehouse in Canada and will help supplement the diet of people in the camps—mostly children, pregnant women and nursing mothers.