

CANADIAN MENNONITE

May 8, 2017

Volume 21 Number 10



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the matter

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EDITORIAL

Beyond guilt and lament

VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Years ago, I needed some practical help. A person close to me—someone who had the ability to lend a hand—saw my need and said repeatedly, “I wish I could help, but I can’t. I feel so guilty.” That guilt did me no good. Instead of feeling supported, I felt resentful.

Today we are learning about ways in which our ancestors—and we—have deeply wounded the indigenous peoples of this land: the historic taking of land and the residential schools, and also the present inequalities in health, education and community support, along with the insidious racism of our society.

We are sorry for the part we have played in perpetuating a system of hatred and discrimination. Some of us have already lamented and confessed our guilt before God and others. We may have even asked for forgiveness from those we have wronged.

But guilt and lament are not enough.

Often a feeling of guilt simply paralyzes us—both as individuals and communities. We remain stuck, unable to bring about any meaningful change.

An alternate ending to the Zacchaeus story in Luke 19: He gets down from the tree, invites Jesus to his house, offers a nice meal, and—with tears in his eyes—expresses deep regret for the people he has defrauded. Then he gives Jesus a warm farewell, and life goes on. Zacchaeus’s victims don’t see his

transformed attitude because he makes no attempt at restitution.

How do we move beyond guilt in our relationships with indigenous peoples? The love of God and neighbour calls us to do something more than simply feel shame and regret.

In this issue’s feature on page 4, Roger Epp says, “. . . the work of reconciliation is most necessary in face-to-face settings where people must decide whether to live as neighbours.” He suggests that we need to recognize that the question of the land is still at the heart of the matter.

In the web-only piece, “Making words matter” (bit.ly/2qexakN), Sara Anderson and Joe Heikman offer other suggestions, such as organizing friendship-building potlucks, planning Bible studies on themes of conquest, and supporting indigenous-led projects of reconciliation.

As I write, Mennonites and their friends are taking part in the Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights. They are walking 600 kilometres from Kitchener, Ont., to Ottawa, calling Canada’s attention to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and they’re asking that it be recognized by our government, with the approval of Bill C-262.

Organized by Mennonite Church Canada and Christian Peacemaker Teams-Indigenous Solidarity, the pilgrims are stopping along the route to connect with local communities, to teach and inspire them to take more concrete actions.



These are ordinary people, not superheroes. They have acknowledged their part in the system that has kept the original inhabitants of this land down. They have lamented and repented. But they are moving beyond the guilt, to positive action.

A camp nature instructor learned about the history of the Manitoba land on which the camp stood and realized its significance to the Dakota peoples. She and her colleagues met with a Dakota elder and heard more about his people’s reality. Then she poured her energy into helping coordinate the pilgrimage.

A mother is walking with her nine-month-old daughter, creating art along the way. She says, “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.”

An 87-year-old self-described settler is walking and playing a drum gifted to him by indigenous friends. He is drumming and singing Christian faith songs in English and Ojibway, as an expression of his commitment to God and to indigenous peoples.

The pilgrimage has gained the attention of many through social media. At this point, we can’t know what its larger impact will be. How will changed minds and hearts take another step on the road to reconciliation? How will we, as a Christian community, move beyond guilt?

Each individual and community can respond within our own unique context. But, like Zacchaeus, who resolved to act out his repentance, we must move beyond guilt to show that we mean what we say to our indigenous neighbours.

ABOUT THE COVER:

‘The story of how Prairie land,’ including the Saskatchewan riverbank where this fancy dancer was photographed, ‘became freehold property under the sovereign authority of Canada, inherited from British “discovery,” is recent and well-documented,’ according to Roger Epp in our page 4 feature, ‘Land is the heart of the matter.’

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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 WORLD FEATURE

Land is the heart of the matter

Are the Prairies the last frontier for reconciliation?

BY ROGER EPP

In the opening half of Steven Ratzlaff's play *Reservations*, first staged in Winnipeg in 2016, an Alberta Mennonite farmer informs his two children that he plans to give a section of land—most of what he owns—to the Siksika First Nation. The farmer has heart troubles and he's already renting the land out.

His daughter, visiting from Toronto, is aghast. She's counted on her full inheritance. From a call to a realtor, an old friend, she estimates the value of those 260 hectares at more than \$3 million. She accuses her father of acting out of misplaced settler guilt. She warns that he will "be the talk of the town, and it won't be pretty," since he'll be insulting both his neighbours and the generations that preceded him on the land.

The farmer can't quite explain himself. But neither can he shake the unsettled feeling he got as a child finding an arrowhead. The treaties, he declares, were a land grab; his grandparents, for all their hard work, got their start for next to nothing. He knows there is no way to make conquest right, and certainly no reason to expect that governments will take real responsibility, so he has decided on what he calls a gesture of restitution, not reconciliation. He will still leave something for his children, but they will pay a financial price for what he feels compelled to do.

The premise may be far-fetched, but it does put the sharpest possible point on the problem. The idea that a farmer—even a farmer who knows his gospels—would relinquish land to the nearest first nation is intended to be more challenging for the audience and the neighbours, say, than the fact that this farmer, once a widower, is remarried to the Cree woman who came out to the field to deliver parts for his seeder, found him on the ground and called the ambulance.

For land is the heart of the matter.

"If you understand nothing else about the history of Indians in North America," writes Thomas King

The mythology goes like this: There was no one here when we came. This country gave us freedom—land—and we made something of it through our own hard work and sacrifice.

'If you understand nothing else about the history of Indians in North America, you need to understand that the question that really matters is the question of land.'
(Thomas King in *The Inconvenient Indian*)

PHOTO © ISTOCK.COM/NINAHENRY



in *The Inconvenient Indian*, “you need to understand that the question that really matters is the question of land.” For indigenous peoples, land is intertwined with language, history, ceremony, sustenance and, in particular places, a sense of home; their removal from the land was the main goal of governments.

Into unsettling territory

The story of how Prairie land became freehold property under the sovereign authority of Canada, inherited from British “discovery,” is recent and well-documented. It includes the public purchase of Rupert’s Land from the Hudson’s Bay Company in 1870, to the bewilderment and anger of indigenous leaders who did not know how it could be owned outright, or sold, even as treaties were being negotiated. The surveyors and homesteaders followed quickly.

The details take those of us who are settler people into unsettling territory.

That must surely help to explain why there has been such muted response in the countryside to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s final report into the residential school experience and its call for all Canadians, not just their institutions, to renounce “concepts used to justify European sovereignty over indigenous lands and peoples.”

What might it mean for farmers and farm communities to renounce the Doctrine of Discovery? What might the work of reconciliation look like in places where land still matters?

Other narratives are possible

These are difficult questions, to be sure, but not impossible ones, even after the shooting of a young Cree man on a Saskatchewan farmyard last July exposed racial tensions and fears. For it is downright dangerous to assume that no other narrative is possible in the countryside.

Let’s start by dealing with the standard deflections:

- **FIRST, THE** work of reconciliation is not about the wholesale transfer of land back to indigenous peoples; no one is suggesting that.
- **SECOND, RECONCILIATION** does not require the rejection of one’s own settler ancestors; their stories may, in fact, offer helpful points of connection and understanding.
- **THIRD, RECONCILIATION** is not simply the government’s mess to clean up; if anything, the work of reconciliation is most necessary in face-to-face settings where people must decide whether to live as neighbours.

The real challenge of a different relationship is that it requires that we step outside the settler mythology that has substituted so comfortably for honest history.

The mythology goes like this: There was no one here when we came. This country gave us freedom—land—and we made something of it through our own hard work and sacrifice.

The mythology contains some truth and hides more. It assigns to cultivators the status of natural successors on the land. Productive use and improving the wilderness is entitlement enough. In North America, since governments supposedly had dealt with the Indians, the only obstacle was nature itself.

The mythology also assumes that indigenous peoples were unsuited to agriculture and unwilling to work hard enough to succeed at it. Such assurances are false and self-serving. They overlook, for example, that despite the federal government’s well-documented indifference in meeting its treaty commitments after the rapid decline of the prairie bison herd, some first nations actually experienced success at farming and ranching—enough that settlers, unhappy for the competition, demanded what became restrictions in the Indian Act on the right to sell grain and livestock off-reserve. The frustration of commercial agriculture became the pretext for poorly compensated surrenders at places like Siksika, Alta., which evidently couldn’t use, and therefore didn’t need, reserves that big. Better to open the land to immigrants.

While the settler mythology is powerful, it is wrong to typecast farmers either as its self-interested beneficiaries, especially since the logic of productive use has turned against so many of them, or as its captives. It was a farmer who first told me I needed to read *The Inconvenient Indian*.

Local actions

We should take heart from a couple of recent countercultural examples:

- **THE FIRST** involves a farm friend near Viking, Alta. He turned the discovery on his field of 200-year-old skeletal remains—likely those of a young woman, her beaded clothing and jewelry still intact—into an opportunity to engage Cree elders and his own community in ceremonies of reburial and relationship. He could have saved himself the trouble. As a Catholic, however, he thinks of himself as a steward; his farm is not his absolute domain.
- **THE SECOND** is documented in the film *Reserve 107*. It involves some of the descendants of Mennonite and Lutheran families who settled on fertile soil soon after a reserve allotted to the Young Chippewyan First Nation under Treaty 6 was dissolved in the late 1880s. Four decades ago, the land question was raised in farmyard confrontations that produced fear and defensiveness. Through a long process of learning and trust-building, however, local people have now joined with the Young Chippewyans to celebrate on Stoney Hill, Sask., a sacred place for all, and support the band's claim. The rural municipality has added the hill's Cree place-name on local signage.

Such local actions, of course, fail the test of grand political declarations. What characterizes each of them, however, is a willingness to accept the responsibilities that the land itself presents, to take the risks of real relationships with indigenous peoples. These examples do not take land as a zero-sum commodity; they make it a place for gathering and ceremony. They are a start.

Other initiatives will emerge, allowing farmers to listen to their indigenous neighbours. Older names for creeks and landforms might be restored. Sacred places might be identified, and access made possible. New coalitions might form, like the one in Saskatchewan involving ranchers, first nations and conservationists around a vision for prairie grasslands other than the one behind the

previous federal government's sell-off of community pastures. They might work together creatively in support of indigenous initiatives to restore the bison to the Prairies.

Farmers in the industrial countryside who themselves have been in the way of resource development and energy corridors—and sometimes stood their ground—might stand, in turn, with indigenous neighbours whose land is often the first and last resort for the kind of messy projects that are safely out-of-sight/out-of-mind for most people. Like Standing Rock in North Dakota. Or the next one.

The changing countryside

The greater challenge is not necessarily that farmers are incapable of stepping outside the settler mythology. Instead, it is that the countryside is now subject to such economic pressures and accelerated change, including larger, more capital-intensive farms and land assembly by outside investors. In many farm communities, the status of the next generation is in question. (Indicatively, the children of the farmer in the stage-play

live elsewhere.)

The possibilities of a different kind of rural relationship with indigenous peoples diminish in a countryside turned into a food-resource plantation, not a place of settled communities.

Put another way, the work of reconciliation is not so separate from that of building respectful rural futures in which responsible practices of food, livelihood and mutuality can be sustained—inclusive of indigenous communities. For, in the most practical terms, land is still the heart of the matter. ❧



*Roger Epp is a professor of political science at the University of Alberta and author of *We Are All Treaty People*. Originally published in the Jan. 11 Prairie*

Messenger. Reprinted with permission of the author.

For discussion

1. What are some of the names of rivers, creeks or other landforms in your part of Canada? Which names have connections to the original inhabitants? How might you discover the names used by indigenous people? What is the significance of using an indigenous name? Do you consider “Ottawa” or “Saskatoon” as indigenous names?
2. Where does your community have plaques or signs to designate places of historical interest? Who decides what historical places or landscapes are acknowledged? What do these plaques tell us about ourselves or our society? What other ways are there to acknowledge meaningful locations?
3. Roger Epp says that “land is the heart of the matter.” What does he mean? Is this true for all societies? What is the attitude towards land in your community? How does the concept of personal ownership influence our attitude towards the land?
4. What are the opportunities in your community for real relationships between settlers and indigenous people? Can you think of other ways to work at fostering such relationships? What are some possible ways to recognize past injustices regarding land?

—BY BARB DRAPER

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www.commonword.ca/go/182

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'Then the river shall flow again'

Church group hosts family at epicentre of hydro mega-project

Interchurch Council on Hydropower
WINNIPEG

When the water goes up behind the \$8.7-billion Keeyask Dam in northern Manitoba, one family will lose more than any other. At a church-sponsored event in Winnipeg on March 18, they told their story.

The seven Kitchekeesik sisters from Tataskweyak Cree Nation made the 900-kilometre trip south to speak at the premiere of a short film that takes viewers down the Nelson River to the area that will be flooded by Manitoba Hydro's Keeyask Dam, slated for completion in 2021.

For Love of a River: Two Stories of Loss and Longing was co-directed by Brad Leitch, a graduate of Canadian Mennonite University, and Will Braun; commissioned by the Interchurch Council on Hydropower, the group that hosted the Winnipeg event; and funded largely by Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba.

While the sisters and their two brothers live in the Tataskweyak community of Split Lake, they consider the downriver area to be flooded as their home. The film shows Ila Disbrowe, one of the sisters, standing at the site of her dad's first cabin. "We grew up here, we were raised here," she says. "When we feel lonely, we come here."

Many family members still spend time hunting, fishing and just enjoying the peace and quiet of the area. But now, construction cranes loom on the horizon, large areas have been clear cut to make way for flooding, and a Manitoba Hydro construction hat was nailed to a tree at their dad's old camp when the film crew arrived.

"They're destroying our home," says Marilyn Mazurat, another of the sisters.

In 2009, the Tataskweyak people voted 61 percent in favour of becoming partners in the dam. The centrepiece of the partnership was an opportunity for Tataskweyak and three other first nations to purchase a

combined 25 percent share in what was expected to be a lucrative mega-project. Since then, project costs have soared, the completion date has been pushed back by almost two years, and the export market—which the dam requires to be profitable—has tanked. Manitoba Hydro now assumes the first nations will end up with a 2.17-percent share in the dam, instead of 25 percent.

A particularly sharp point of pain for the family relates to their late brother, Leon. Since he could not speak, he had a special place in the family, and the siblings all watched out for him. Despite that, while the kids were sledding one day, he wandered off and fell through the ice when he was 7. Although it has been three decades, the fact that his body was never found adds to the large and lasting hole that his death

left in the family.

For the rest of their father's life, he would scan shorelines in the area for any trace of his son. Today, a cross stands on "Leon's Island" near the place where he drowned. But the trees around it have been cleared to make way for water. The memorial will have to be moved, re-opening the wound and adding salt to it.

For Love of a River also tells the story of Cree elder Ellen Cook, who grew up in the shadow of another dam in northern Manitoba. Looking over the dry, silent riverbed that was once the site of the roaring Grand Rapids, for which her home community was named, she speaks of the decades of grief caused by the dam. Cook, who serves as co-chair of the Interchurch Council on Hydropower, concludes the film by saying that concrete does not last forever: "It's eventually going to get old and it's going to die. And then the river shall flow again." ❧

For Love of a River can be viewed online at hydrojustice.org. Read Beth Downey Sawatzky's online report of a showing of this film and Reserve 107 at canadianmennonite.org/film-night.



PHOTO COURTESY OF INTERCHURCH COUNCIL ON HYDROPOWER



Filmmaker Brad Leitch, standing, prepares to head down the Nelson River with Marilyn and Bob Mazurat of Tataskweyak Cree Nation.

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.

✉ An appeal from MennoMedia's Canadian board members

AT OUR MOST recent MennoMedia board meeting, executive director Russ Eanes predicted that our organization is at the forefront of the transformation that is taking place in our denominations. Both Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A. are undergoing significant changes in size and structure. Because MennoMedia supplies faith resources to congregations, it is the first barometer registering the winds of change.

At denominational meetings and on the board, we note trends. Church attendance is declining. Families of young children participate in church differently and less frequently than a generation ago. An expanding hymnody is enlivening our worship. Loyalty to the church as an institution and to church resources is giving way to a vast, Internet-fuelled smorgasbord

FROM OUR LEADERS

Freedom powered
by love

GARRY JANZEN

On August 28, 1963, Martin Luther King Jr. spoke of his dream. His dream was that people would be judged by the content of their character and not the colour of their skin. His dream was that there would be equality for all, that the ground would be level for everyone. His dream was that all would work together in peace and nonviolence until there is freedom for all.

What is our dream for a church that will carry us forward? Miroslav Volf, in *Exclusion and Embrace*, quotes Jürgen Moltmann in saying, "The ultimate goal of human beings is not the kingdom of freedom. Rather, the kingdom of freedom is a process toward the kingdom of God, which is the kingdom of love." This is not to challenge Martin Luther King Jr., but



to recognize that his dream of freedom is powered by love.

What does the church look like when love leads the way? It is a church that is guided by passages like John 17, I Corinthians 13 and I John 4. It is a

What is our dream for a church that will carry us forward?

church that is committed to believing the best of each other and to listening to each other for the purpose of understanding, and it is made up of people who are slow to judge. It is a church that is a people of reconciliation; it is about building bridges rather than walls of separation.

This kind of church is an upside-down kingdom that reflects Jesus' way of empowering people rather than overpowering people: power under, to uplift, rather

than power over, to dominate. I love the song, "The Power of Your Love"; it turns the "love of power" on its head with the "power of Jesus' love."

This kind of church relies on humility as an undergirding principle. The Apostle Paul singled out this characteristic of Jesus, who "emptied [humbled] himself" to become human (Philippians 2:7-8). Richard Rohr, in his Jan. 12 online meditation, said, "Transformation is found in one of God's favourite and most effective hiding places: humility." This is the pic-

ture of the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12).

I Peter 1:22 calls us to "love one another deeply from the heart." Whenever I am helping a pastor through challenging times in a congregation, I always say, "Above all else, love the people." When the people know that you love them, grace abounds.

Garry Janzen is executive minister of Mennonite Church B.C.

of possibilities. Younger generations are more visual, experiential and story-focussed. Older generations want to preserve the methods and means they know best. Church conflicts are creating fractures in our denominations. MennoMedia is impacted by dramatic, unpredictable shifts in church life, new technologies, publishing and print materials.

To facilitate the required transformation,

MennoMedia has engaged in a trimming, reshaping process. The goal is an organization that fits current capacities, one that is lean, nimble and flexible. Recently, the office building in Harrisonburg, Va., was sold to lighten overhead and sharpen organizational focus. Earlier this year, the Canadian office in Kitchener, Ont., was closed.

(Continued on page 10)

KINGDOM YEARNINGS

Honouring the bride of Christ

RYAN JANTZI

A bride walking down the aisle to meet her groom is always a moment of anticipation and honour. The groom beams with joy. Perhaps he gives her a wink or sheds a tear. The bride gazes into his eyes. The assembly stands, craning their necks for a better view. Smiles abound. Arrayed in all her splendour, the bride is adored.

The bride of Christ is not. Rather, as she proceeds down the aisle towards her beloved groom, too often she is mocked and spurned. We point out one flaw after another. We wonder and dream for all she could be, and miss, right before our eyes, the beauty of who she is. This is the story of the people of God today: all those who confess Jesus as Lord, who through faith have been cleansed from their sin and shame.

Criticizing the church can be a blood sport. In the realm of social media, with many critics and few creators, we churn out one article, status update or tweet after another calling out “the people of God.” I can be guilty of it, too. As a pastor, I spend much of my time thinking about the church. I wonder, worry, hope, despair and yearn for her future. This is one aspect of my calling. However, too easily

it becomes my primary calling. My dominant posture can be that of a wild-eyed prophet making clear that the church is wandering in the wilderness, pointing with great angst to the “Promised Land” I’m so certain she must pursue.

I do not see this in the ministry of Jesus. Of course, he served as a prophet, a sharp-tongued one at times. However, he loved his bride deeply. He walked with her daily. He adored her. He became nothing, obedient to death, giving up his life for her. This was his primary posture

developing glimpse of the kingdom of God. Do you want to see how wise God is? Gaze upon his people, the church of Jesus Christ.

Recently, I was in a congregational leadership team meeting that contained a difficult conversation. Our souls felt weary as we grappled with the pain some dear sisters and brothers were walking through. And so we closed by honouring the bride. One-by-one, we went around the circle and verbally identified various evidences of beauty on display in the



Not only does he love his people, but the Divine chooses his bride as the primary canvas on which to illustrate how marvellous he is. Fascinating!

towards the people of God.

One of the most surprising and puzzling verses I’ve come across in the Scriptures is Ephesians 3:10. Here, Paul writes that God chose to put his revealed wisdom on display through the church. Not only does he love his people, but the Divine chooses his bride as the primary canvas on which to illustrate how marvellous he is. Fascinating!

She’s not perfect. She’s not yet fully renewed. But she’s beautiful. A partial,

church. This was a gift. A breath of fresh air. Maybe, just maybe, it could be true that God has decided to show his wisdom through us, his beloved bride.

Following five years with the Kingsfield-Clinton church plant in southwestern Ontario, Ryan Jantzi now pastors the nearby Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite Church, where he’s fascinated with exploring the interplay between traditional church and new expressions of mission.

(Continued from page 9)

But the mission of MennoMedia is still to engage and shape church and society with resources for living out Christian faith from an Anabaptist perspective. Many Canadian churches are loyal customers. Typically, 20 percent to 25 percent of MennoMedia sales are to Canadians.

We urge you to continue to purchase and promote

these resources in your homes and churches, a valuable means of supporting MennoMedia, and an effective, dynamic way to spread Jesus' message of compassion, grace, reconciliation and peace in your neighbourhood and around the world.

MELISSA MILLER, WINNIPEG,
AND CHRIS STEINGART, KITCHENER, ONT.

GATHERING AROUND THE TABLE

Rice pudding is comfort food

BY BARB DRAPER

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Terry Martens believes that rice pudding is comfort food. It reminds her of her childhood when she would arrive home from school on winter afternoons to the smell of rice pudding cooking in the oven.

"We could barely wait for this delicious dessert to be ready so we could indulge," she says.

Martens grew up in a small community in Nova Scotia but now lives in Saskatchewan and is a member of Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church. After retiring as a teacher, she looked for voluntary service opportunities and became involved as a cook for Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS). She believes that when volunteers work hard at cleaning up or rebuilding after a natural disaster, they need to be well fed. For the first supper with a new crew, she likes to provide rice pudding for dessert, using an old family recipe.

At a cooking assignment with MDS in California earlier this year, her first day was quite an experience, and she also needed comfort food at the end of it.

For the month of January, Martens organized meals for MDS crews rebuilding houses in Calaveras County, where wildfires destroyed many homes in September 2015. Cooking and lodging

facilities were set up at Lodestar Camp, a fairly remote location normally used as a summer camp in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The cooking facilities were wonderful. Martens says it was a "Cadillac" kitchen—especially given the conditions MDS cooks sometimes work under.

The weekend she and other MDS staff arrived, there was a massive wind and rainstorm. The rain poured down and the wind brought down trees and power lines. Even the famous big sequoia "tunnel tree" came down in the storm.

When Martens and her assistants got to the camp kitchen early Monday morning, the power was still off. How were they going to feed 27 men for breakfast? Using their cell phones, they anxiously made their way inside and discovered the gas stove and water system didn't require electricity. With no lights except for cell phones, they managed to put together a hot breakfast and pack the lunches for an astonished and grateful group of volunteers.

It was a challenging day, but the kitchen crew managed to get supper cooked, complete with rice pudding topped with caramel sauce. One man who came to pick up his dessert looked at the individual bowls of pudding and topping, and

PHOTO COURTESY OF TERRY MARTENS



For the month of January, Terry Martens cooked for Mennonite Disaster Service volunteers in a well-equipped kitchen in California.

asked, "What's this? More mashed potatoes and gravy?" Like the rest of the crew, after a taste he found it delicious and was ready for a second helping.

Martens had been feeling apprehensive because the previous evening one of the men enthusiastically announced he was a rice pudding specialist. But after that first supper, he asked to see the recipe, which restored her confidence in her mother's recipe.

During Martens' time in California, some of the building crews worked in miserable rainy conditions, but MDS made good progress on five houses. And rice pudding will now evoke the memory of a California storm.

Visit canadianmennonite.org/rice-pudding-recipe for the recipe.



✉ More than sexuality discussed at MC B.C. annual general meeting

RE: "MC B.C. wrestles with tough issues: BFC 7 sparks spirited discussion at annual general meeting," March 13, page 14.

It is sad that there is no reporting in this article of any part of the rest of the pastors or the Lead conference, which seems to reinforce that sexuality is the most important conversation. I found the teaching and the questions we were asked to reflect on meaningful and thought-provoking.

We were gathered into groups to reflect on questions that came from Jean Vanier's book *Community and Growth*:

- "THE PROBLEM comes in living with brothers and sisters whom we have not chosen, but who have been given to us, and in working ever more truthfully towards the goal [of shaping community]." We would invite you to reflect on this quotation given your experience living in, or even shaping, your community.
- REFLECT ON how you might envision embracing those "who have been given to us." Who might those be in your community? Why might it not be easy to "live with them," as Vanier says?

After a skit on the virtues of truth, mercy, justice and peace, we were asked:

- WHERE DO you find yourself on the truth-mercy, justice-peace continuum?
- WHAT DO you find the most valuable in helping you feel belonging in your community?
- IN WHAT way might you contribute to your community's hospitality and nurture a sense of belonging and authenticity in your community?

Could it be that we need to learn to ask more honest questions of ourselves?

No matter what happens, will I remain faithful to God's call upon my life?

GEORGE W. GOERTZEN,
NEW WESTMINSTER, B.C.

✉ Little Free Library was a 'community project'

RE: "BETHEL MENNONITE launches its very own Little Free Library," March 13, page 17.

Our Little Free Library was very much a Bethel community project. It was designed by architect Brock Klassen and built in the workshop of carpenter Delmer Epp. Funding and support for the project was

provided by Bethel's Education and Faith Formation Committee, and books have been donated by many congregational members. Thank you for the opportunity to provide important additional information.

MARYLOU DRIEDGER, WINNIPEG

✉ A veteran's thoughts about Vimy Ridge

VIMY RIDGE HAS been in the news continuously for many days, remembering the 3,600 Canadian soldiers who were killed in four days in a battle on that ridge in France in the First World War a century ago.

We have built a beautiful monument in remembrance of the soldiers who lost their lives in that unfortunate conflict. However, I can't help but wonder whether, by putting so much emphasis on this event, we are actually glorifying war itself.

Wars are terrible.

My father was in the medical corps in the First World War. He hardly ever spoke about the horrors, but they affected him for some time in his life and led to post-traumatic stress disorder, which later may have been a cause of his suicide.

I am a veteran of the Second World War and was conscripted to fight on the Russian Front. All soldiers, no matter from which country, were trained and ordered to kill, and they did so. But are we really heroes by killing each other?

Historica Canada had a unique way of honouring the ones who died in recent wars. They made an appeal to the still-surviving veterans of the Second World War and other wars, asking if they would be willing to share their war experiences with a younger generation of high school students.

I responded and was invited by several schools. A teacher who invited me to her school wrote to the Memory Project organizer: "The first-hand accounts of his experience as a soldier on the front allowed us an incomparable and invaluable view into the effects of war on real individuals and their families." I hope this experience will encourage these young people to promote peace and work for it.

HELMUT LEMKE, VANCOUVER

✉ Former editor/publisher lauded for his service

WE WANT TO say how much we valued Dick Benner as editor of *Canadian Mennonite*. He made the Mennonite community come alive in its various perspectives, good and troubling. His editorials were on the mark; we never failed to read them. We thank him

for what he meant to the Mennonite community and for giving us their story.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Bauman—Sadie Leigh (b. March 27, 2017), to Edgar and Kaleigh Bauman, Floradale Mennonite, Ont.

Carther-Krone—Olivia Abigail (b. Jan. 23, 2017), to Chris and Tiffany Carther-Krone, Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

WALTER AND MABEL PAETKAU,
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Lichti—James Alexander (b. Feb. 25, 2017), to Tim and Annie Lichti, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.

Marriages

Buhr/Friesen—Andrew Buhr and Cari Friesen, both of First Mennonite, Edmonton, at First Mennonite, Feb. 18, 2017.

Deaths

Beckert Wiens—Joanne (nee Wiens), 93 (b. Jan. 12, 1924; d. March 30, 2017), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg/

Friesen—Katie (nee Dirks), 90 (b. July 31, 1926; d. Jan. 18, 2017), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Gerber—Steve, 99 (b. Feb. 11, 1918; d. March 27, 2017), Crosshill Mennonite, Ont.

Gimbel—Ronald Eugene, 83 (b. Sept. 2, 1933; d. April 1, 2017), Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Heinrichs—Erna (nee Klassen), 91 (b. March 9, 1925; d. Feb. 26, 2017), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Neufeld—Russell Lee, 40 (b. Jan. 16, 1977; d. Jan. 21, 2017), Shalom Mennonite, Newton, Kan.

Rempel—Gerhard (George), 92 (b. Jan. 28, 1924; d. Jan. 26, 2017), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Zehr—Lydia (nee Wagler), 84 (b. June 29, 1932; d. April 15, 2017), Maple View Mennonite, Wellesley, Ont.

/// Corrections

• **OMAR RAMAHI'S** surname was misspelled in “A ‘manufactured narrative?’” on page 18 of the March 27 issue.

• **CAROLYNE EPP-FRANSEN** was wearing a Jordanian *keffiyeh*, which is designed to provide warmth and shade in that desert region of the world, during a workshop at the Mennonite Church Manitoba annual general meeting in early March—not a prayer shawl, with its religious connotations, as was indicated in “Not just an activist political group,” on page 12 of the April 10 issue.

• **THE CANADIAN** government has withdrawn its “objector status” to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Incorrect information appeared in “A personal pilgrimage,” April 10, pages 28-29.

• **THE APRIL 24** front cover photograph of the Trail of the Conestoga wagon was taken in Cambridge, Ont.

Canadian Mennonite regrets the errors.

A moment from yesterday



Mennonite Church Canada has created lasting relationships with indigenous communities such as Cross Lake, Man. In 1943, Henry Gerbrandt served the community in fulfilling his commitment as a conscientious objector to war. In 1956, Otto and Margaret Hamm moved to the community. A church was built in 1957, and a new one in 2005. Pictured, Jeremiah Ross (1909-2002) of Cross Lake was ordained as minister of the congregation in 1968; he retired in 1998. With the many changes to MC Canada programs over the years, today no workers remain in indigenous communities. For the past number of years, Sterling Mennonite Fellowship of Winnipeg has been invited to bring a one-week Vacation Bible School program to the children of Cross Lake.

Text: Conrad Stoesz / Mennonite Heritage Centre

Photo: Ike and Margaret Froese



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WOMEN WALKING TOGETHER IN FAITH

Levelling the playing field

BY SHIRLEY REDEKOP

Mennonite Women Canada



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SHIRLEY REDEKOP

The saying goes, “There are two gifts we should give our children: one is roots, the other is wings.” My husband and I encouraged our children to fly and prayed we gave them roots.

One day in a sermon my husband said, “I believe in what Christian Peacemaker Teams [CPT] does, but I also fear one of our sons will join them,” referring to its placing of teams in communities confronted with situations of life-threatening conflict.

Well, it turns out it is our daughter Hannah who is now a long-term CPT volunteer in Colombia. She’s been there for four years now, walking with farmers who are at risk of being forcibly displaced from their land, and learning about the challenges women face in that setting.

My roots are in Pennsylvania, growing up on a farm with two older brothers. I was expected to help with outside work as well as in the house. My dad also taught me to shoot a hunting rifle and ride a motorcycle. But I realized my brothers were not expected to help with housework and were given cars for their 16th birthday. I felt they had an unfair advantage.

Now as I’ve mothered the next generation, I pondered what message I passed on to our only daughter. After reading an article Hannah sent me about an experience she had at a women’s regional peacebuilding meeting, I found my answer. Here’s what she wrote:

“The most impacting moment for me [at the first meeting of women from northeastern Antioquia] was a fireside conversation around apple sugar-cane tea. The women gathered around holding hands and introduced themselves, then moved into small groups to share their experiences: ‘When did you realize you were a woman?’ ‘What have your struggles been?’ ‘What is the role of women in your society today?’

“Stories came pouring forth: becoming a woman at 16 because she was [pregnant] and about to be married; realizing her womanhood as they raped her; struggling to put food on the table and care for the children while also working on the farm; missing out on her childhood because she had to work; and the expectations of submission, permission and women as property. Tears rolled and laughter ensued as the stories wove together,



Shirley, left, and Hannah Redekop walk the Camino Real in Barichara, Colombia.

intertwined and floated up on the steam from our tea cups.

“I, too, am a woman. But my story comes from a very different place than those *campesina* [rural peasant] women. I realized I was a woman when I was about four or five years old. Growing up amongst three brothers, I understood rather quickly that I was different. Not just physically, but also by the way I was treated. I remember being so very frustrated with what I experienced as favouritism from my mother.

I hated that she singled me out, made sure I was getting what I needed before the boys, and generally just took to spoiling me. Or so I thought.

“But while I shared my life’s experiences with those beautiful women, I suddenly realized that what I had received from my mother wasn’t excessive doting or coddling; she was actually creating a level playing field for me. She was giving me the step up that society never would, so that I’d have the same experiences and opportunities as my brothers. She was my ally, proving to me that I could do anything.

“The most important asset to this difficult work of undoing oppression is being an ally. We need women and men, young and old, of every nationality, ethnicity, religion and orientation, to stand together as allies, recognizing privileges and creating consciousness to tear down society’s oppressive structures. And these Colombian women are doing just that.”

So why not join the team? ❧

Shirley, left, and Hannah Redekop, foreground, visit villages along the Magdalena River in Colombia.



GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

PHOTO ESSAY

Stations of the Cross on Broadway

Five denominations unite against hunger during Eastertide

STORY AND PHOTOS

BY BETH DOWNEY SAWATZKY

Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG

On Good Friday, April 14, pilgrims from Winnipeg and beyond gather at Broadway Disciples United Church to walk the Stations of the Cross on Broadway, one of Winnipeg's oldest and most historic thoroughfares.

Before observing the first station at the



Maelle, top, and Esme Kulik enjoy bannock provided by Kairos Manitoba.



Jade Hullen sings spirituals for the gathered.

church, and setting out against the day's damp cold, guests are invited to warm themselves with music, snacks and hot coffee.

For weeks leading up to this day, organizers from five denominations—Mennonite, Lutheran, Anglican, United and Roman Catholic—have worked together with students, local indigenous leaders and others under the umbrella of Hunger Free Manitoba, to create a route that will help penitents confront the suffering Christ endured to redeem the poverty of every human soul, the poverty that persists in this province, and to repent of their part in it.

The walk boasts some peculiar



Stops 2 and 3 include the provincial legislature, and the law courts (pictured), where presenters highlight the systemically entrenched obstacles with which Manitoba's poor must do daily battle to survive.



Stop 4 is a bus shelter, made remarkable by the presence of a man who calls it home in the winter. Introduced as 'Brian Smith, poet without a home,' he leads the group in a reflection by reading some of his own writing. His title is well deserved.

iconography. Instead of intricate paintings of well-known gospel scenes, each station has penitents contemplate the equally familiar faces of public buildings, the grandeur of some contrasting against the commonness of others.

Like many historic neighbourhoods across Canada, West Broadway is home to a number of the city's highest-profile institutions and its most classic hallmarks of lack. The farther up the route pilgrims walk, the denser the mix becomes. Station 7 is a rooming house; Station 8, a stop-gap variety grocery store typical in communities where the nearest supermarket is too far away for many to access.

Some of this walk's icons are portable.



Character homes from a bygone century abound. Behind, far up the street, the turrets of the Fort Garry Hotel are just visible, a statement all their own on the reason for this pedestrian protest.



Indigenous drummer Corinna Mintuck, foreground.

Two indigenous drums lead the group in prayer and perseverance. Carried along in pieces, a replica human form evokes mixed responses. For some, it almost recalls the lame man of Capernaum carried by his friends to Jesus for healing (Mark 2:1-12); for others, it demonstrates all too viscerally the “hunger litany” chanted at each stop: “I was hungry and you gave me no food / Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you no food? / Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me / \$3.96 a day is not enough to live on. The least of these are still hungry.”

The ninth and final station is hosted



On the steps of Klinik, a local non-profit devoted to mental health support, pilgrims hold up the effigy.



The ninth and final station is hosted at Crossways, in Young United Church, from where the gathered depart, to wait and hope and pray for an Easter Sunday reality, soon.

at Crossways, in Young United Church. There, an altar is made ready. Laden with bread and lit with a candle of hope, it frames a petition addressed to Winnipeg’s mayor, requiring that the food allowance included in basic income assistance be

raised to a liveable amount. At some point, amidst name-signing and hymn singing that is our remembrance of the crucifixion, the effigy is also laid to rest. The gathered depart, to wait and hope and pray for an Easter Sunday reality, soon. ✎

/// Briefly noted

Make a Difference Auction sets new record

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.—The annual Make a Difference Auction, held on March 19 in Abbotsford, has raised its highest amount ever, with auction sales and donations totalling more than \$200,000. While cattle makes up a good part of what is sold at the auction, that’s far from everything. A wheel of gouda cheese was auctioned off for more than \$500. The original bidder then donated the gouda wheel back to the auction; it was auctioned off once more, again going for more than \$500. A 23-kilogram bag of blueberries—to be harvested and delivered in July—sold for \$400. That a charity auction should receive such deep support is a testament to the strength and commitment of the Abbotsford community, says coordinator Rod Brandsma. He also appreciates the support of the Canadian government in matching donations at the auction. “It’s great that every dollar gets stretched and helps those in need a lot more,” he says. Funds raised from the auction will be used by the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to respond to hunger emergencies around the world, including famine in South Sudan, conflict in Syria and drought in Somalia.

—Canadian Foodgrains Bank

Churches raise nearly \$17,000 for South Sudan famine relief

Good Friday services held jointly by Mennonite churches in both Calgary and Edmonton dedicated offerings to Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) famine relief efforts in South Sudan. The Calgary churches—Trinity, Foothills and First—raised \$13,441, while Edmonton churches—First, Holyrood and Lendrum Mennonite Brethren—raised \$3,344. In February, the United Nations announced that Unity State in South Sudan was officially experiencing famine. This is the first such announcement by the UN since 2011. It is estimated that more than 40 percent of South Sudan’s population of 5 million is in urgent need of food. MCC is providing a two-month supply of grain, beans, oil and salt to 245 households in Unity State. For more on this situation, see the back cover of the March 27 issue or visit bit.ly/2mC8i26.

—BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD





Volunteers show off food baskets in front of the newly rebuilt House of Friendship Emergency Food Distribution Centre on Guelph Street in Kitchener, Ont.

'A downstream solution to an upstream problem'

House of Friendship rebuilds emergency food distribution centre

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
KITCHENER, ONT.

When the first food bank was created in Canada in 1981 in Edmonton, it was seen as a short-term project that would be unnecessary when the economy improved. Fast-forward to 2017 and Kitchener's House of Friendship's emergency food program that distributes food to 1 in 20 people living in Waterloo Region.

Previously in a cramped, former print shop, House of Friendship rebuilt the centre into a welcoming place for both volunteers and clients, at a cost of \$750,000. Large windows let natural light into the indoor waiting room. In the back, where the volunteers fill boxes with food, wide aisles between the shelves and open areas to manoeuvre with a lift truck make picking the food much more efficient. And no more moving boxes to get into the freezer!

According to Matthew Cooper, program coordinator, 9,000 households comprising upwards of 20,000 people pick up food at the Guelph Street centre at least once a

year. Every neighbourhood in the region has a household that picks up food. Areas of less-expensive housing have more needy individuals and families.

Learning cycles of peace

Former gang member tells story of healing

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
PRINCE ALBERT, SASK.

"I needed to go through what I did because that's what helps me understand the people I work with," said Jorgina Sunn. The indigenous singer/songwriter was the featured speaker at Parkland Restorative Justice's Banquet in the Woods, held April 22 in Prince Albert.

Sunn, who is also a recipient of the Aboriginal Order of Canada Award,

Like Edmonton, the Kitchener centre was to be a short-term solution to an emergency situation and not part of the social framework. But 40 percent of the current users are perpetually marginalized people—many of them older, lacking training for the new economy, stuck with stagnant wages that do not provide enough to live on, working low-paying service jobs, or those who often work multiple part-time jobs. Upwards of 25 percent are single-parent, sole-support families, while nearly 15 percent are families with children, and the rest are families without children.

These people have to make decisions between paying the rent or utilities and buying food. They are often the working poor who don't make enough, even with two people working full time at minimum wage, to make ends meet.

According to Cooper, food banks "take good will to help others—neighbours—but make the struggle for food and hunger invisible" in Canadian communities. "People don't come because their food disappeared," he says, but because they lack it.

"This is a symptom of a larger problem" in Canadian society, he says, but one that has solutions. Compassionate people give food or money. Some volunteer. But what is needed, he maintains, are people willing to ask those in power to be aware of the need and to make changes in society, because food banks are "a downstream solution to an upstream problem." ❧

was born with fetal alcohol syndrome and spent her early years in foster care. Adopted by a non-indigenous family, she suffered sexual, physical and emotional abuse at the hands of her adoptive parents. By the age of five, she says she felt she was worth nothing. In high school, she began using drugs and alcohol. She eventually fled to Calgary, where she became addicted

to crack cocaine.

Along the way, Sunn became estranged from her family, served time in a federal penitentiary, and sought safety and security in street gangs. “My children were taken away because I couldn’t offer them a home,” she said.

Eventually, Sunn reached a turning point. She knew that if she didn’t turn her life around, she would die. And so she moved to Saskatoon, where she entered a detox program and sought counselling. She also found help through a program called STR8 UP.

Founded by Father Andre Poilievre, STR8 UP helps individuals wanting to escape the gang lifestyle. In the program, Sunn learned to break the cycle of abuse she had known since childhood and she learned about cycles of peace. “These cycles are reliant on spiritual values such as honesty, hope, faith, love, courage and empathy,” she said.

Because of these positive experiences, she said, “I have re-embraced who I am.”

Sunn now works with several agencies, including STR8 Up and the Elizabeth Fry Society, helping others who are where she was a few years ago.

She recently reconnected with her children. “Thank goodness I changed my life around,” she said, “because now that honour and responsibility has come back to me.” ☞

To watch a music video of Jorgina Sunn’s song, “Freedom,” visit bit.ly/jorgina-sunn-freedom.



Jorgina Sunn tells her life story at the Parkland Restorative Justice Spring Banquet in the Woods.

Joji Pantoja receives award for sparking change and progress

BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada

Joji Pantoja’s socially responsible business acumen is getting noticed at the highest levels. On March 30, the founder and CEO of Coffee for Peace was recognized by Go Negosyo, the advocacy arm of the Philippine Center for Entrepreneurship, as one of 26 Inspiring Filipina Entrepreneurs. The award was presented by Rodrigo Duterte, the Philippine president, at Malacañang Palace.

Now in its 12th year, the Inspiring Filipina Entrepreneurs Award is designed to acknowledge women in micro or small businesses who spark change and progress through innovation and social responsibility. To qualify, they must also be well-respected by their peers.

A Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker, Pantoja established Coffee for Peace (coffeedforpeace.com) in response to her conviction that peace is more than an absence of war. It requires justice, and part of that means access to fair wages. Coffee for Peace supports local coffee growers in Mindanao by teaching sustainable agriculture and best business practices that permit them to earn a living wage. Eighty percent of those farmers are women.

Pantoja says the farmers may not have formal schooling, but they are able to share knowledge with other farmers. Doing so gives confidence and hope to the entire community.

Coffee for Peace grew out of the work of Peacebuilders Community Inc., a ministry supported by MC Canada. Investors in the Coffee for Peace business have agreed that 25 percent of their net profit will be donated to Peacebuilders Community Inc. The funds are used to support teams that are trained to be agents of peace and reconciliation in each of their respective communities.

Pantoja received the Inspiring Filipina Entrepreneurs award in the Inclusive Business category for “engendering peace through the innovative use of coffee as [a] source of livelihood, community-building

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOJI PANTOJA



On March 30, Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker Joji Pantoja, right, was recognized with an Inspiring Filipina Entrepreneurs 2017 Award presented by Rodrigo Duterte, the Philippine president, at Malacañang Palace.

and conflict reduction,” and for “improving the plight of farmers and establishing peacebuilding mechanisms in conflicted areas of Mindanao” through Coffee for Peace.

“This award just affirms what we are doing,” Pantoja says in an email exchange. “It is ‘inclusive business.’ It is not just profit for them [the farmers], but also the developmental aspect of their humanity. Growth in their relational harmony with our Creator, relational harmony with their being, relational harmony with others and relational harmony with God’s creation.”

This is not the first time Pantoja’s efforts have been recognized. In 2015, she was awarded a Certificate of Achievement from the United Nations Development Programme for establishing Coffee for Peace. ☞

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Translating the Bible into the visual

Students create art installation for congregation

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
ROSTHERN, SASK.

A unique art installation graces Rosthern Mennonite Church's stage these days. Created by the Rosthern Junior College (RJC) worship arts class, it depicts themes found in biblical texts for the six Sundays of the Easter season.

The collaboration of the class and the church began with a conversation between teacher Jill Wiens and Craig Neufeld, Rosthern Mennonite's pastor. Neufeld says the six-week Easter season gave students "more to chew on" than a single Sunday would have done. And the time frame for this season fit well with RJC's schedule.

Bev Janzen and Denise Epp, who normally prepare visual elements for the congregation's worship, did not hesitate to give their job over to the students. Janzen says her first response was, "What a good

idea!" Neufeld admits that, for him, "The biggest challenge has been letting go." But for Janzen, the challenge of letting go has also been the greatest reward. "To trust them and see what they've done has been really good," she says.

Using banners and artwork they created themselves, as well as items found in the church's storeroom, the students assembled a multi-dimensional display portraying the joy of the season. In an introduction to be printed in the church bulletin, the students wrote, "We worked with an overarching theme of new life, growth and hope symbolized by the sunrise and the flowers bursting through the snow."

Each item used in the installation speaks to something found in one of the



From left to right: RJC students Marcus Kruger, Hailey Funk and Arienne Wichert arrange flowers as part of an art installation their worship arts class created for Rosthern Mennonite Church.

biblical passages the students were given. A grouping of books near the piano reminds viewers of the stories the women told to the disciples, as well as the stories each believer has to tell. A pathway up the centre of the stage represents the Road to Emmaus. Large stones symbolize Christ, the cornerstone in the building of God's kingdom, while a ladder at the back of the stage represents the role believers play in helping to build God's kingdom.

Referring to the various elements of the design, Neufeld says, "That's one of the things I appreciated about these kids, everything has a purpose in the visual."

Wiens also appreciates her students' ideas. "I was most proud when they actually came up with this," she says, adding, "I think they did a good job of speaking to the scriptures. They demonstrated understanding of how to take scripture and translate it into a visual element."

Neufeld values the collaboration between his church and the school, saying, "It strengthens the partnership between us. It gives the students an opportunity to do something they wouldn't ordinarily do."

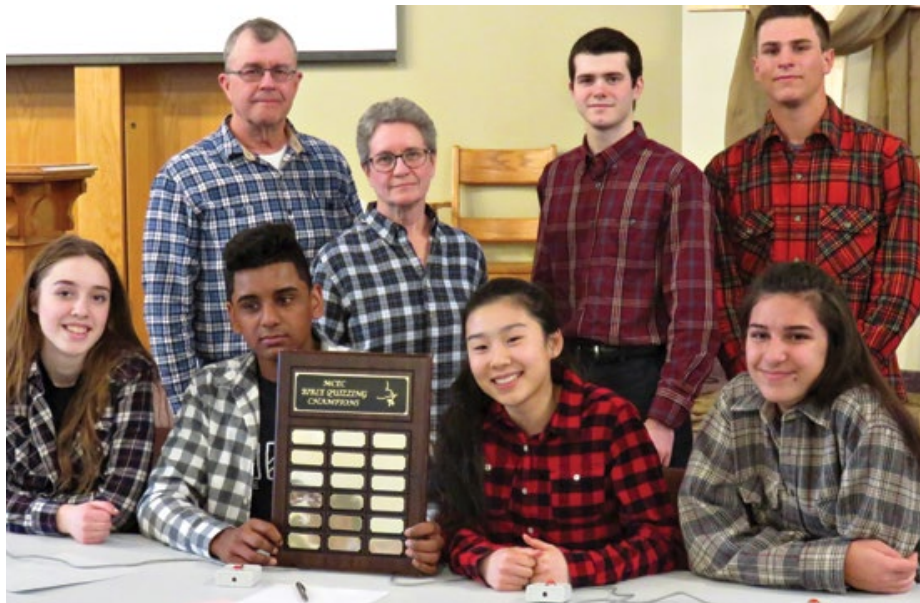
While curious as to how his congregation would receive the installation, he says he feels confident the response will be positive.

Worship arts is one of three elective Christian ethics classes offered to students this semester at RJC, the other two being social ethics, and peace and justice studies. ☸



Each element of the art installation created by the RJC worship arts class speaks to a different element found in the biblical texts for the six Sundays from Easter to Pentecost. The stone strewn pathway down the centre of the stage, for instance, represents the Road to Emmaus.

CANADIAN MENNONITE PHOTO BY BARB DRAPER



On April 8, the team from Markham/Stouffville, Ont., won the Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Bible quizzing championship this year, a title it has not held since 2012. The team includes, from left to right, front row: Sarah Taylor, Ethan Pathmanathan, Anais Chen and Juliet Reesor; and back row: coaches Bob and Sheryl Wideman, and team members Eric Mansell and Clayton Reesor. The quizzier-of-the-year award went to Alecia Weber of Community Mennonite of Drayton.

/// Staff changes

Pastoral transition in Saskatchewan

• **JULIE BERGEN** was ordained at Osler Mennonite Church for chaplaincy in Saskatoon's St. Paul's and City hospitals. Bergen has a master's degree in theological studies, specializing in spiritual care, from St. Andrew's College in Saskatoon. She lives in Osler with her husband, Matthew Braun, and children Emmett and Nora. Patty Friesen, Osler Mennonite's pastor, notes that, in 1995, Helen Kruger, the first Mennonite chaplain to serve in the province, was also ordained at Osler Mennonite. Attending the March 5 service were a number of Bergen's chaplaincy colleagues from other denominations.



—BY DONNA SCHULZ

Pastoral transitions in Ontario

• **CHRISTINA EDMISTON** was ordained for pastoral ministry at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., on April 9. She has been pastoring at First since the fall

of 2012. Her title there, she says, "is simply 'pastor,' although it's morphed over the last five years in several ways." The "other half" of her calling—since she considers herself bi-vocational, although she does not derive income from it now—is providing legal, settlement and emotional support to refugees, both asylum seekers through the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support and sponsored refugees. She has a BA from the University of Western Ontario in London in English literature and international relations, a bachelor of laws degree from Osgoode Hall at the University of Toronto, and a master of theological studies degree from Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont.

• **DAVE ROGALSKY** began May 1 as the intentional interim pastor at the Church of the Good Shepherd (Swedenborgian) in Kitchener. A small denomination, the Swedenborgians do not have their own interim pastors and contacted Mennonite Church Eastern Canada for potential ministers. MC Eastern Canada



will hold Rogalsky's credentials in the meantime. Since 1983, he has pastored at Grace Mennonite Church in Winkler, Man., and in Ontario at Poole, Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Hanover, East Zorra near Tavistock, and Wilmot near New Hamburg. His education includes bachelor's degrees from Mennonite Brethren Bible College and the University of Winnipeg, and a master of divinity degree from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

• **DANIELLE RAIMBAULT** began as a youth worker at Listowel Mennonite Church on March 1. Previously, she has worked as the chaplain at the Chartwell long-term care facility in Elmira, as children's coordinator at Mountainview Christian Church in Hamilton, and as the KidZone coordinator at Riverwood Church Community in Winnipeg. She has a BA from Providence University College, Man., with a major in worship studies and minors in music, and biblical and theological studies, and is graduating with a master of theology degree from Conrad Grebel University College.



—BY DAVE ROGALSKY

GOD AT WORK IN US

Transformed life leads to Transfigured Town

Nathan Swartz hitches his wagon to the Hogwarts Express

BY DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent

Some might wonder about a Mennonite elder running public events about Hogwarts, a school for witches and wizards. But Nathan Swartz of Kingsfield-Clinton Mennonite Church in southwestern Ontario has thought about this deeply.

People need to “see the distinction between imagination and practice in regard to witchcraft,” he says. J.K. Rowling, the



PHOTO COURTESY OF NATHAN SWARTZ



Nathan Swartz in character as Sirius Black from J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series of books and movies.

author of the *Harry Potter* series of books and films, “has created a totally fictional universe—parallel with [C.S.] Lewis’s allegory where love conquers all—just as in our world too for Christians. Self-sacrifice is the most important action for a Christian,” according to Swartz, and this “parallels the real world to Rowling’s world. People having problems with witchcraft are focussing on the Old Testament cultural realities. But Rowling’s witchcraft is totally imaginary.”

Swartz, who held a wildly successful “Harry Potter and the Transfigured Town Festival” in nearby Goderich last fall and has already sold out this fall’s follow-up event, says he believes that “Rowling imagined Hogwarts as a multi-faith school with Christians and Hindus, but with no Wiccans. Harry was baptized and his parents married at the Anglican church in Godric’s Hollow.”

Swartz, who describes himself as a lover of “role-playing board games,” invites discussion on this topic, since he was attracted by the original Anabaptist call for believers to recheck their faith with the Bible. “Anabaptists are constantly checking,” he says. “Second guessing ourselves is absolutely vital, parallel with Jesus and Pharisees, not about following rules blindly, but becoming part of God’s salvation story.”

For Swartz, meta-themes attract people or turn them off. Horror author Stephen King’s worldview turns him off, but

Rowling’s work, like much fantasy, has a clear sense of good and evil, with good conquering.

Swartz incorporated his Transfigured Town organization as a “for purpose” company, with its profits from this fall’s festival going to benefit the local Huron Food Action Network and other causes. This is being done, he says, by “harnessing the power of Geek culture to make big impacts in small communities.”

Swartz’s faith journey goes back nearly 20 years. He was resting on a futon that smelled of human sweat, marijuana and cats when he was convinced that there was a God who loved him. He was living at the time with several friends in Toronto “smoking pot and doing other drugs” when two of his housemates claimed conversion experiences. But Swartz couldn’t see any changes in their lives that would support their testimonies.

Deciding that he would get ammunition to argue with them, he took his “little red” Gideon’s New Testament and began to read in Matthew, he says, “looking for every stupid thing” to argue about. Halfway through the gospel he came to the conclusion that he was having the same problems with the church that Jesus was having with the Pharisees. And by the middle of Luke, too tired to continue, he says he knew that he “had zero problems with Jesus.”

So he laid back down and prayed, taking some time and verbiage before he could get to actually challenging God. “If you are real, prove it to me,” he said, adding, “I didn’t see anything, but it was like a beam of light touched my chest.” At that point, he knew that there was a God who loved him. “From that point on, God was real,” he says.

Swartz moved back home to southwestern Ontario, where he married Amanda Henry, sister of one of his convert friends, Daryle, who was also straightening out his life. Together, he and Amanda applied to schools and mission agencies, wanting to share their very new faith. When they weren’t accepted, the leaders at the Salvation Army church they were attending encouraged them to be “missionaries in our own backyard,” he says.

In 2006, they were officers-in-training in Winnipeg, where they met Mennonites

TRANSFIGURED TOWN
LET YOUR GEEK FLAG FLY!

and worked with them in a church purposely planted in one of the roughest neighbourhoods. Moves took them to New Liskeard in Northern Ontario as well as to Goderich, and Victoria, B.C. When the Victoria church was re-imagined by

the denomination, the Swartzes returned to Clinton and began attending the Kingsfield-Clinton congregation.

A job with the Huron Food Action Network in 2016 meant fundraising, which led to the first Harry Potter event. When his contract with the network ran out, he, Amanda and Daryle decided to try to go it on their own, incorporating as Transfigured Town. Calling himself a “total geek” and a lover of fantasy, this is both a job and fun, he says. ☘

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Elderly drummer joins pilgrimage to bring awareness

By DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada

Henry Neufeld is joining more than 50 other walkers in the Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights. From April 23 to May 14, participants will cover the 600-kilometre stretch between Kitchener, Ont., and Ottawa, in support of the adoption and implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

The walk will be a challenge, but perhaps especially so for Neufeld. He's 87 years old and he is taking along his drum.

"I can't go without my drum," he says. Neufeld's passion for drumming and singing Christian faith songs in English and Ojibway is deeply rooted in his commitment to God and to indigenous peoples. As Mennonite Church Canada workers, he and his late wife Elna lived in indigenous communities for almost 20 years, developing friendships that continue today.

In *The Drum Speaks* (commonword.ca/go/793), a video sharing the story of Neufeld's journey to the drum, he says, "For many years, the drum has been condemned. It has not been acceptable. In fact, the government has acted very much against the use of the drum and the people using it."

That position was also assumed by the church, yet the drum is intrinsic to indigenous spirituality and ceremonies. "It's like a heartbeat," Neufeld explains, "the first sound we hear in our mother's womb." It is an instrument of healing and celebration.

Just as Peter was prompted several times by God to eat previously forbidden food in Acts 10:11-18, Neufeld says he was prodded several times to accept the role of a drummer. Indigenous elders invited him to sing and drum using their instruments. Eventually, an elder gave him her drum, and yet another elder blessed it for him as an instrument to honour and glorify God. When that first drum wore out, Neufeld

PHOTO BY D. MICHAEL HOSTETLER



Henry Neufeld and his drum are ready to begin the Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights, after the opening ceremony at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., on April 23. The pilgrimage is organized by Mennonite Church Canada and Christian Peacemaker Teams-Indigenous Solidarity.

mounted it on his wall and had another drum made.

He knows he may be criticized for using a drum. "But I am ready to take that," he says. "If I had said no to the drum, I would have missed many blessings of building a bridge between the different cultures." The drumming and traditional songs of Christian faith seem to resonate with indigenous peoples and settlers alike.

Neufeld considers himself a settler. He arrived in Canada as a three-month-old infant in the arms of his parents, who, like

many Mennonites, left Ukraine to make a new home in a safer land. But settlers, he says, are part of the problem. "In the late 1800s, a treaty was signed and an agreement made between the indigenous and the settlers of all the things that would happen, but they have not."

While settlers often refer to indigenous people as "treaty people," it is clear that settlers are treaty people too. "A treaty cannot be signed by one person only," he points out.

Neufeld isn't taking the commitment to join the pilgrimage lightly, and neither are his family members, who support his decision. A van will accompany the walkers and provide respite as necessary, but Neufeld may surprise a few people with his level of endurance. He began preparing in February with a five-kilometre or so jaunt every morning, adding an evening walk of the same distance in April. He's strong and energetic, with a firm handshake that belies any sense of age-related frailty.

Ever open to symbolism, Neufeld is also

PILGRIMAGE FOR INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

bringing along a sculpture of unity created by nature—two saplings, a diamond willow and a poplar, that grew together entwined. Branches of the diamond willow represent the indigenous peoples reaching out to embrace the poplar, the settlers. He placed both saplings on a base representing Turtle Island (North America). The two nest neatly together, yet slip easily apart. "One will never be the other," Neufeld says, "but we need to recognize and intermingle and live together."

The sculpture represents Neufeld's vision for the pilgrimage. "With this walk, I hope to bring some awareness about the Declaration and what it means to be treaty people together," he says. ☞

Learn more about the Pilgrimage for Indigenous Rights at pfiir.ca.



ARTBEAT

BOOK REVIEW

Laying it on the line

(Re)union: The Good News of Jesus for Seekers, Saints and Sinners.
By Bruxy Cavey. Herald Press, 2017. 229 pages.

REVIEWED BY DAVE ROGALSKY
EASTERN CANADA CORRESPONDENT

Bruxy Cavey is unapologetic about particularism. In his new book, the pastor/author sums up the good news in one word (Jesus), three words (Jesus is Lord) and 30 words (Jesus is God with us, come to show us God's love, save us from sin, set up God's kingdom and shut down religion, so that we can share in God's life).

Particularism—the focus on one way to being right with God, rather than universalism, which would suggest that there are many ways to be right with God—is both this book's strength and weakness.

Cavey is pastor of the 10,000-plus-member Meeting House, a Brethren in Christ church with its home congregation in Oakville, Ont. According to its website, the church also gathers in 20 other locations across southern Ontario, mostly in movie theatres not being used on Sunday morning. In those locations, the congregants and seekers hear Cavey, the teaching pastor, give the message via DVD. Each location has other pastors who work at guiding staff and volunteers in running adult, youth and children's programs. An intense small-group ministry operates to connect people to each other, discuss the sermon and put the teaching into action.

The Meeting House is one of those kinds of congregations described in "Theology matters: Comparing the traits of growing and declining mainline Protestant church attendees and clergy," a 2016 study of why conservative theological congregations are growing and liberal ones are shrinking in the mainline Protestant congregations in southern Ontario.

Cavey's particularism means that he

can freely read the Bible to see where God has been at work through human history, describing an arc of God's action in what postmodern philosophers call a meta-narrative, a controlling story describing everything. The story runs from creation to the coming again of God to set the world right.

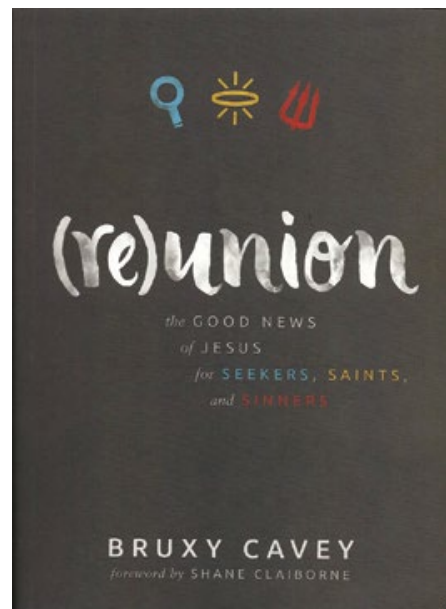
The strength of this is that Cavey can challenge common Christian ideas and practices from the inside, to make room for new ways of thinking and being followers of Jesus. In clearly Anabaptist ways, he describes salvation as choosing to be in relationship with Jesus, loving both neighbour and enemy. But this does not need to be done through a specific church, denomination, congregation or set of rituals. "The day I start preaching

Faith—not religion—is first and foremost a relationship between an individual and Jesus, then lived out in a community that loves Jesus, neighbour and enemy. Cavey calls this 'the end of religion.'

that people need The Meeting House specifically to be right with God, I need to be fired," he writes in *(Re)union*.

Faith—not religion—is first and foremost a relationship between an individual and Jesus, then lived out in a community that loves Jesus, neighbour and enemy. Cavey calls this "the end of religion." This message is obviously attractive to many. He ends the book with a call to commitment to a life of faith in Jesus and following him in community of likeminded believers.

But particularism is also a weakness. To begin with the narrative, as he does,



is the opposite of what the early church did. According to Alan Kreider in his book *Worship and Evangelism in Pre-Christendom*, the early church spent two to three years teaching people interested in joining the Christian church this Christian meta-narrative before expecting them to make a full commitment to Jesus. Cavey's acceptance of details like the virgin birth of Jesus means that he is speaking to those who are already in the paradigm, grew up in it and know it, or

who are learning it now. It really does not connect with many of the seekers he is obviously addressing.

I share Cavey's love of the meta-narrative of God's creation, redemption and pervading love, but I find that many people with whom I am in contact have little or no knowledge of it. And if they do, they often do not trust it in a post-Christendom world. Cavey's book is not an attempt to defend the meta-narrative, so to demand that it do so may not be fair. But it raises questions about the effectiveness of outreach based on a prior acceptance of a story many do not know. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Worship and Song Committee begins selection process

Practically speaking, how does a group of 13 people review thousands of pieces of music and worship resources in the next three years? This was the focus of conversation in early February, when the Mennonite Worship and Song Committee met in Elkhart, Ind., at the offices of Mennonite Church U.S.A. To accomplish the giant task before it, the committee has divided into subcommittees organized into two tiers: content and delivery; and contemporary and intercultural worship. The subcommittees began evaluating and tagging content that fits the vision of the project. "This meeting helped address questions about where we see the collection moving," said Bradley Kauffman, project director and general editor. "A clear structure helps us choose the content for this new hymnal." Meeting highlights included an afternoon tea with Rebecca

Slough and Mary Oyer, key figures in previous collections, including *Hymnal: A Worship Book* (1992) and *Mennonite Hymnal* (1969); and a session with David Eicher, who served as general editor for Presbyterian Publishing on its recent hymnal, *Glory to God* (2013). The Mennonite Worship and Song Committee is working toward a 2020 release of a new hymnal to be published by MennoMedia in cooperation with MC Canada and MC U.S.A. To submit content for consideration, visit MennoniteWorshipAndSongCollection.org.

—MennoMedia



Ontario pianist wins CMU's Janzen Music Competition

WINNIPEG—A pianist hailing from southern Ontario is the winner of the 12th annual Verna Mae Janzen Music Competition at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU). Anneli Loepp Thiessen's performance, which included a piece by classical Austrian

composer Joseph Haydn that she learned just one week before the competition, held on Feb. 15, earned her first place and the \$700 prize that comes with it. "It was very exciting," said Loepp Thiessen, who grew up in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ont. "I still feel like I'm a little bit in shock." A gifted musician who has played her instrument for 16 years, Loepp Thiessen is in her fourth year of a music degree at CMU, with a double major in piano performance and music ministry. This was her third time participating in the competition. Pianist Emma Heinrichs placed second and received \$500. Third place and its \$300 prize went to tenor singer Nolan Kehler. The competition is made possible by donations from Peter Janzen of Deep River, Ont.; the event is named in memory of his wife Verna Mae, who died of cancer in 1989.

—Canadian Mennonite University



Anneli Loepp Thiessen

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CMU teaches interconnectivity

By Jason Friesen, Canadian Mennonite University

When I chose the communications and media program at CMU, I would not have named Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI) as the place where I would be completing my practicum requirement. Nonetheless, that is where I found myself, with the title of “community relations assistant.”


My communication did not take the form

that people typically think of when they hear the words “communications and media.” Instead, I engaged with people face-to-face on a daily basis on behalf of MPI. In a short time, it became obvious that interacting and connecting with communities and individuals across Manitoba was meaningful.

At one country fair, a man told me of his car crash, and that he had to go through significant rehabilitation in his recovery. He then thanked me and MPI for all the funds and assistance he had received.


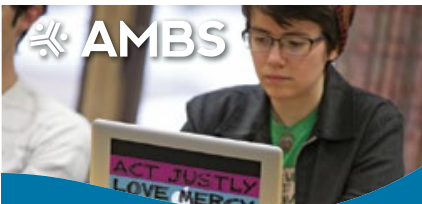
Not only did this interaction make me feel like I was building community, but it made me feel that, even in a large corporation like MPI, everything is tied together.

(Continued on page 30)



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Adventures in the Middle East

Westgate study tour allows students to learn from other cultures and examine their faith

By AARON EPP
 Young Voices Editor

It was while she was in Bethlehem, spray painting a black heart onto the Israeli West Bank barrier, that the reality of the Israel-Palestine conflict truly began to sink in for high-school student Jaymi Fast. “I found it was easier to understand [the political situation] when I was there,” she says. “It was still confusing—there’s so much going on—but I could put places to names and I could get more out of it.”

Fast was one of 33 Grade 11 and 12 students and five chaperones from Westgate Mennonite Collegiate in Winnipeg who participated in a study tour of the Middle East from March 21 to April 10. In addition to stopping in Bethlehem and Jerusalem to speak with Israelis, Palestinians and Christian Peacemaker Teams workers about the conflict, the tour included a hike along the Jesus Trail, a 65-kilometre path in the Galilee region of Israel that connects important sites from the life of Jesus.

The group’s stops also included Petra, a historical city in southern Jordan, and Wadi Rum, a desert valley in southern Jordan. Along the way, the group met and interacted with a variety of different groups of people of all ages, including Muslims, Jews and Christians.

The objectives of the trip included meeting with Mennonites working in other countries, visiting the historical centre of the Christian faith, meeting with people

of other cultures, and learning to travel in such a way that respects cultures and traditions in intentional ways, says James Friesen, the Westgate teacher who organized the trip.

“In North America right now . . . we’re very suspicious of difference, and here we are, throwing ourselves into difference,” he says. “It’s great to realize the first response doesn’t have to be fear; it can be [asking questions].”

Watching Israeli soldiers interact with Palestinians was particularly emotional for student Andrew Hutton. “The things they did to the Palestinians, searching them for no reason, that’s the biggest thing that stuck out to me,” says Hutton, who was angered by what he saw.

The group spent an evening hearing from members of the Parents Circle, a grassroots organization of bereaved Palestinians and Israelis. An Israeli man related how his daughter was killed by a Palestinian suicide bomber, and a Palestinian woman shared how an Israeli soldier captured her brother. Hearing about the losses that have occurred on both sides of the conflict showed the students that there are no easy answers when it comes to resolving the conflict. It also showed them how some Israelis and Palestinians are reconciling with one another.

(Continued on page 28)

*‘Pain is pain—everyone feels it—and it’s powerful to see an Israeli man comforting a Palestinian woman.’
 (Jaymi Fast)*

PHOTO BY KATE FRIESEN



Jaymi Fast spray painted a heart onto the Israeli West Bank barrier to symbolize the suffering Palestinians’ experience.

PHOTO BY ALEX SCHONWETTER



Thirty-eight students and chaperones, pictured at the Treasury in Petra, participated in Westgate’s recent study tour of the Middle East.

(Continued from page 27)

“Even though there’s so much political tension in their lives, it was really neat to see love has no borders,” Fast says. “Pain is pain—everyone feels it—and it’s powerful to see an Israeli man comforting a Palestinian woman.”

For Nathan Dueck, visiting historical sites from the Bible, like the Sea of Galilee and the Garden of Gethsemane, was particularly impactful. “There’s so much religious importance [in the Middle East], that I came away from the trip profoundly, profoundly impacted by the experience from a religious standpoint,” he says.

Kristjanna Pensato agrees. When she returned home and told her father about the flowers she saw on the Jesus Trail, he quickly looked up all the instances in the Bible where Jesus mentions flowers, such as when he asks his followers to consider the lilies of the field. “It was really incredible along the Jesus Trail, walking through these fields of flowers that Jesus talked about,” she says.

One of the trip’s unexpected moments occurred toward the end of the group’s first day on the Jesus Trail, when they visited the Roman Catholic church at Cana that commemorates Jesus’ first miracle

of turning water into wine at a wedding there.

A Baptist couple from Texas was walking with the group, and had planned to renew their wedding vows when they arrived at the church to commemorate their 25th wedding anniversary. When they arrived, the priest declined to officiate the ceremony because the couple were not Roman Catholic. They turned to Friesen and asked if he was Christian and if he would officiate the ceremony.

In a sanctuary filled with Westgate students, Friesen told the story of the wedding at Cana and led the couple in renewing their vows. It was an emotional experience for all involved, particularly the couple, who insisted that Friesen had saved their wedding.

Experiences like that created a sense of camaraderie among students, Dueck says. “We really bonded as a group. I thought, wow, I’m so happy that I got to grow and maintain and create these friendships with my fellow students.” ❧

For more photos of the trip, visit canadianmennonite.org/westgate-study-tour.



PHOTO BY KATE FRIESEN



The group’s travels included riding on camels through Wadi Rum, a desert valley in southern Jordan.

Messages to the Class of 2017

Valedictorians from three post-secondary schools share their hopes for their peers

PHOTO BY STEPHANIE JANTZEN



Ryan Newman, left, and Jenna Song are the valedictorians at Columbia Bible College this year.

BY AARON EPP
Young Voices Editor

Canadian Mennonite spoke with the 2017 valedictorians from the three Canadian post-secondary institutions affiliated with Mennonite Church Canada, to find out who they are, what their undergraduate experience has been like, and what wisdom they hope to impart on their peers.

Jenna Song and Ryan Newman
Columbia Bible College
Abbotsford, B.C.

At Columbia Bible College, where graduates vote for their valedictorian from a faculty-approved list of candidates who

are nominated based on their grade point average and involvement on campus, this year’s vote ended in a tie.

As a result, 26-year-old Jenna Song and 22-year-old Ryan Newman delivered their address together at the school’s

2017 graduation ceremony on April 22 at Abbotsford Pentecostal Assembly.

Song grew up in Vernon, B.C., and was drawn to study at Columbia by her desire to know God more. During her four years at the school, she was involved on campus in a variety of ways. She sang in a travelling ministry team, served as a leader in the residence, and sang and played keyboards in chapel.

As part of her degree in counselling and human services, she did an internship with Child and Youth Mental Health Services in Abbotsford, assisting in group therapy for children.

Song's portion of her and Newman's valedictory address focussed on the importance of community. She hopes her fellow graduates will take the message to heart. "I really do hope that they . . . commit not only to Jesus, but to reaching out to others [and] pursuing community," she says. "There's so much wholeness when we're connecting with each other. It's what we're made for, and it's good for us."

Like Song, Newman felt honoured to be chosen as valedictorian. The Langley, B.C., native, who also graduated with a BA in counselling and human services, says that one of the biggest things that sticks out for him about his time at Columbia is the friendships he has made with both peers and professors.

Columbia "is so focussed on community and relationships, and I really value [that]," he says. During his time on campus, Newman had the opportunity to build friendships through his involvement as a student leader and as a volleyball player.

He hopes that his valedictory address encouraged his fellow graduates. "I hope that they can realize that what they do and who they are truly matters in the bigger scheme of God's story," he says.

Anika Reynar **Canadian Mennonite University** **Winnipeg**

Anika Reynar is the first-ever student to graduate from the interdisciplinary studies program at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU).

That means that throughout her degree she was able to study a variety of topics, including international development,

theology and philosophy, as well as mix in-class learning with her work with the Metanoia Farmers, a worker cooperative that farms on CMU's property.

"More than any one discipline or any one class, what's made my time at CMU interesting is the connections between them and the way that's encouraged a different form of learning and questioning," says Reynar, 22, who is originally from Olds, Alta.

One of her hopes for her valedictory speech, which she delivered on April 23 at Immanuel Pentecostal Church, is that students would walk away encouraged. "I hope that my fellow graduates . . . recognize they've become somebody in the course of their education, and the person they've become has been gifted by the people, professors and family members that surround them," she says. "I hope that those things they've learned continue to linger with them."

Rachel Trites **Conrad Grebel University College** **Waterloo, Ont.**

Originally from Halifax, N.S., Rachel Trites took on a variety of leadership roles while living in residence at Conrad Grebel University College. She also co-founded a study cafe where students could gather to work on homework together, started a fitness class and participated in two musicals at the university college.

The mixture of ages at Grebel appealed to the 22-year-old. "I really appreciated learning from people older and more experienced than me, as well as mentoring people when I got older," she says.

Trites will graduate in June from the University of Waterloo with a bachelor of knowledge integration degree. She was chosen as valedictorian by students, faculty and staff at Grebel.

At Grebel's 2017 graduation ceremony on April 9, she used her valedictory address to reflect on what Grebel has meant to her and her peers, saying, "My challenge to them was [to ask], how can we use what we've learned throughout our degrees in the future? How can it influence our understanding of the world and our compassion for others?"

PHOTO BY PAUL LITTLE



CMU Class of 2017 valedictorian Anika Reynar is the first student to graduate from the university's interdisciplinary studies program.

PHOTO BY JENNIFER KONKLE



Rachel Trites challenges her peers to think about how they can take what they have learned with them as they move on from Conrad Grebel University College.

Promotional Supplement

(Continued from page 26)

My education at CMU has been much the same. I have taken a wide variety of courses—from communications and business to the Bible and science. And somehow, I have been able to find connections between many of them.

Making such connections will help me in my future endeavours. David Balzer, a communications prof, summed it up best: “Any other academic discipline can be connected to communications because you won’t be communicating about communications. You’ll be communicating about science, music, business and other things.”

Jason Friesen is a fourth-year CMU student majoring in communications and media.



At one country fair, a man told me of his car crash, and that he had to go through significant rehabilitation in his recovery, says CMU student Jason Friesen (pictured). He then thanked me and MPI for all the funds and assistance he had received.

/// Briefly noted

Worship and Song Committee calls for congregational input

The Mennonite Worship and Song Committee invites congregations to appoint three leaders to give input towards a new hymnal to be released in 2020. Specifically, the committee wants to hear feedback from a pastor, a worship leader and a music leader in each congregation. Postcards asking churches to appoint three people to complete this important survey were mailed to all congregations in Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A. last month. The survey can be found at MennoMedia.org/Resonate. Laypersons are also welcome to offer suggestions through a “heart song” survey accessed at the same site. In addition, MennoMedia has unveiled “Resonate: Join the everlasting song” as the Worship and Song Collection project’s brand. An actual title for the bound collection will be decided at a later point. Currently, the committee is engaged in a period of intentional listening, discerning what to preserve from past collections, receiving submissions of new and original content, and considering what thematic areas might need more coverage in a 21st-century collection. To submit content for consideration, visit MennoniteWorshipAndSongCollection.org/. —MennoMedia



/// Calendar

British Columbia

Sept. 15-16: MCC B.C. Festival and Auction, at the Tradex in Abbotsford.

Oct. 13-15: Women’s retreat, at Camp Squeah

Alberta

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: “Wisdom 2017: Our legacy.” To register, visit mcaawomen.com.

Saskatchewan

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

May 27: RJC fundraiser golf tournament.

June 9-10: MCC Saskatchewan Relief Sale, in Saskatoon.

Aug. 12: Spruce River Folk Festival.

Manitoba

Until June 17: Opening of “160 acres: The Geography of home,” a multimedia exhibition by Darlene Derksen, at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, 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 4: Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, hosts the Heritage Classic Car Show featuring the Dave Nickel Memorial Soap Box Derby and Swap Meet, from 11 a.m. to 4 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

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.

May 30: MC Eastern Canada retired pastors event at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Theme: “Eldering: Our calling for the rest of our life.”

June 13: Annual chicken barbecue at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg. Advance tickets required. For more information, call 519-625-8602.

June 16, 17: Theatre of the Beat and musical group No Discernable Key present “Yellow Bellies,” a play about conscientious objectors during the Second World War: (16), at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, at 7:30 p.m.; (17) at Floradale Mennonite Church, at 2 and 7 p.m.

June 17: MennoHomes’ “Out-spok’n for affordable housing” bike-a-thon, at Elmira Mennonite Church. Options for cyclists, hikers and motorcyclists. Contact Dan Driedger at 226-476-2535 for more details.

June 30-July 2: Annual camping weekend at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, New Hamburg. For more information, call 519-625-8602.

/// Classifieds

Announcement



Jutzi Reunion


Descendants of Joseph and Marie (Bender) Jutzi, are invited to a reunion on Sunday, June 4, 2017 at the Shakespeare Community Centre, Shakespeare, Ontario. Potluck lunch at 1 p.m. Please bring your own dishes and cutlery. Contact 519-662-6798.

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

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



Employment Opportunities



Employment opportunity

LEZHA ACADEMIC CENTER (LAC), an affiliate Mennonite School located in Lezhe, Albania, is seeking applicants for principal of the school. LAC is a Grade 1-12 school with 120 students. Desired candidate has a master's degree or higher with educational experience. The candidate is expected to lead from an Anabaptist perspective. The position is salaried for a 12-month contract.

Contact Don Steiner <rddsteiner@gmail.com>.



Employment opportunity

Hunta Mennonite Church is currently seeking a gospel-focused minister. Applicant must be willing to relocate to the Northern Ontario community of Cochrane.

Hunta is looking for a pastor starting this coming September, who would be able to minister to an aging congregation, but willing to reach out to a younger generation. Applicant must be willing to travel for ministry purposes and live in a rural setting. Bible college/theological training is an asset.

All other terms can be discussed upon application. Applications accepted through July 1, 2017 at huntamennonitechurch@gmail.com or by mail at Hunta Mennonite Church, Site 1, Box 1, Comp 3, Hunta ON P0L 1P0.



Employment opportunity

LEZHA ACADEMIC CENTER (LAC), a growing affiliate Mennonite School located in Lezhe, Albania, seeks teachers in English (grades 9-12); math (algebra, geometry, pre-calculus); science (physics, chemistry, earth science, and biology).

Contact Don Steiner <rddsteiner@gmail.com>



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY


First Mennonite Church Edmonton is a multi-generational, urban church, of approximately 180. God has called us to be an inclusive, affirming, Christian community. This congregation is seeking an Intentional Interim Pastor for a term of approximately one year, to commence summer/fall of 2017.

We are looking for someone with the following qualifications and abilities:

- Anabaptist/Mennonite training
- experience in the field of interim ministry
- ability to teach through example and preaching
- ability to develop plans of care, plans to build relationships, and offer visits as needed
- ability to assess the congregation's needs in looking for a new permanent pastor

Please contact Adela Wedler, Chair Pastoral Search Committee at mwedler@shaw.ca for further information or to submit a resume. A Congregation Information Form is also available from Mennonite Church Canada.

<https://sites.google.com/site/edmontonfirstmennonite/>



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

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



**MCC Saskatchewan
JOB OPPORTUNITY
Program Director**

Mennonite Central Committee is a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches that shares God's love and compassion for all in the name of Christ by responding to basic human needs and working for peace and justice.

We require an individual who shares our vision and values, and is qualified to assume the responsibility of a senior leadership position within MCC Saskatchewan (MCCS). This position is full time (1.0 FTE) and available on a salaried basis.

The Program Director is a member of the MCCS Management Team and provides leadership and supervision to the MCCS Program Team. This person represents MCCS in the MCC Canada Program Director Network and communicates MCC's work in the church constituency and the broader community within Saskatchewan.

To learn more and apply: <http://mcccanada.ca/get-involved/serve/openings/program-director-0>

Applications close May 19, 2017, and the start date is June 26, 2017.

Four ways MCC is caring for creation

By Rachel Bergen

Mennonite Central Committee Canada

Around the world, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) partners with people who are negatively affected by climate change. In response to increased droughts, storms and other disastrous weather patterns, MCC is taking steps to better care for creation.

MCC PHOTO BY GORD LETKEMAN



Volunteers at the Plum Coulee Material Resources Centre in Manitoba strip the covers and spine of books, and send the paper to be recycled into blown insulation for housing.

MCC PHOTO BY RACHEL BERGEN



In September 2016, guests toured the rooftop of MCC Ontario's office in Kitchener, which features 774 solar panels.

MCC PHOTO BY ANGELA BENNETT



MCC Alberta's self-watering rooftop garden brings a bit of green to an otherwise nondescript industrial area of Calgary.

MCC PHOTO BY ALISON RALPH



Jennifer Dick, right, a regular volunteer at the MCC Furniture Thrift Shop in Winnipeg, tallies up Kelly Milne's purchase of a collection of beautiful blue and white tiles. Milne is renovating her home and says she tries to shop thrift before purchasing anything new.

Read more about these initiatives online at canadianmennonite.org/mcc-creation-care.

