

CANADIAN MENNONITE

July 24, 2017
Volume 21 Number 15

Immersive experience

Tavistock pastor gets into
the spirit of church's 75th-
anniversary celebration
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EDITORIAL

Is there a future for missions?

VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Lately I've been thinking a lot about missions. The feature in this issue is Pt. 2 in a series focussing on partnerships between congregations and Witness workers. These workers were sent by Mennonite Church Canada on our behalf, to use their skills and their passions alongside local Christians for the work of God in those unique settings.

I encourage you to read this feature, and the one in the July 3 issue, if you haven't already done so. You'll learn about some unique ways Witness workers are sharing the good news, and how people here in Canada are a part of that ministry.

Then there are the accounts of what might be called career missionaries, stories we have told on these pages and online. Mary and Peter Derksen served for 45 years in Japan and made lasting connections that continue until today. There's the tribute to Florence Kreider, who, along with her husband Roy, spent 32 years in Israel working in peacemaking and interfaith reconciliation. Last fall, we carried a tribute to my father, Kenneth Schwartztruber, who, along with my mother Grace, served for 32 years in Brazil, primarily with Christian literature. We carried the obituary of Peter Kehler, who served for 16 years in Taiwan, worked in pastorates and conference leadership in North America, and, in later years, served in Ukraine. And Marianne

Thiessen, whose January 2015 obituary states simply that she had a "lifetime of service," serving mostly with Mennonite Central Committee in Canada and abroad.



I learned about a recent survey conducted by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and the Canadian Missions Research

Forum. The Canadian Evangelical Missions Engagement Study looked at people's attitudes and involvement in "mission" or "missions." Researchers polled more than 3,400 Canadians and conducted interviews with 56 individuals, examining why Canadians engage in missions, what the priorities are and how they promote missions. Two sections of the research studied people's involvement in long-term and short-term mission work. *(Note: MC Canada belongs to the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, and a category of survey respondents was labelled "Anabaptist." Our national church also connects with the Canadian Council of Churches.)*

The researchers wrote "mission" and "missions" intentionally in quotation marks, because they found that people's definitions varied as to what this activity entails. That ambiguity is also present in Mennonite circles.

For some of us, the attitude toward missions goes beyond ambiguity. In

fact, Mennonites have been accused of being "allergic to missions!" Hippolyto Tshimanga, one of the speakers at the Mennonite World Conference 2015 assembly, challenged the crowd to get over that uneasiness around mission. "There is no such thing as a church without mission; mission is the DNA of the church," he declared.

In recent years, we have been aware of the ugly legacy colonialism has left in many parts of the world. And we have seen how Christian missions—however well intentioned—have played a part in that legacy of paternalism and exploitation. Some suggest that the era of foreign missionaries is over, and that North Americans should concentrate our efforts here "at home."

Yet there's something winsome about the stories of our current overseas workers, and of those who dedicated their entire work lives, sometimes even their retirement years, to some form of mission. Hearing their stories—and the stories of those they served with—we can see how God worked through these imperfect human beings to carry out the work of healing and hope.

Now is a good time to consider what we mean when we, as a Mennonite church, talk about and engage in missions in today's reality. Do we want to continue affirming—and supporting—the calling individuals feel toward overseas work? As the structure of MC Canada embarks on new directions, we need to consider carefully what role we want the Witness program to play. And whether our congregations are seriously committed to mission work in the future.

Summer publishing schedule

The next print issue of *Canadian Mennonite* will be published on Aug. 28. After that, we will return to our regular two-week schedule throughout the fall.

ABOUT THE COVER:

Jim Brown, Tavistock (Ont.) Mennonite Church's intentional interim pastor, emerges from the dunk tank during the congregation's 75th-anniversary celebration on June 25. See story on page 15.

Funded by the
Government
of Canada

Canada

CANADIAN MENNONITE

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40063104 REGISTRATION NO. 09613

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE ITEMS TO:

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WATERLOO, ON, N2L 6H7

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Web site: canadianmennonite.org

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Please send all material to be considered for publication to:

General submission address: submit@canadianmennonite.org

Readers Write: letters@canadianmennonite.org

Milestones announcements: milestones@canadianmennonite.org

Paid obituaries: obituaries@canadianmennonite.org

Calendar announcements: calendar@canadianmennonite.org

Material can also be sent "Attn: Submissions/Readers Write/Milestones/

Obituaries/Calendar" by postal mail or fax to our head office.

Reprint requests: reprints@canadianmennonite.org

Mission statement: To educate, inspire, inform, and foster dialogue on issues facing Mennonites in Canada as it shares the good news of Jesus Christ from an Anabaptist perspective. We do this through an independent publication and other media, working with our church partners.

Guiding values:

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

Area churches and MC Canada financially support 38 percent of Canadian Mennonite's annual budget.

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One-Year Subscription Rates

Canada: \$46 + tax (depends on province where subscriber lives)

U.S.: \$68 **International (outside U.S.):** \$91.10

Subscriptions/address changes:

(e-mail) office@canadianmennonite.org

(web) canadianmennonite.org

(phone) 1-800-378-2524 ext. 221

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Award-winning
member of the
Canadian Church Press



MISSIONAL PARTNERSHIP FEATURE: PT. 2 OF 2

Going further together

In our last issue, we introduced readers to the idea of missional partnerships between local congregations and Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers around the world, and profiled two examples from B.C. and Alberta. In this issue, we continue telling stories from Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Eastern Canada.



Russ Friesen, right, visits Jeanette Hanson in China during a China-Canada pastor exchange. The visit helped to strengthen the mission partnership between the Hansons and Friesen's church, Tiefengrund Mennonite.

'I thought this type of support was normal'

Jeanette and Todd Hanson

BY DONNA SCHULZ
Saskatchewan Correspondent
ROSTHERN, SASK.

Although they have had other mission partnerships over the years, Jeanette Hanson marvels at the support she and her husband Todd have received from their two home congregations.

The couple served as long-term workers to China, first under the Commission on Overseas Mission, and, more recently, under Mennonite Church Canada Witness. Both Tiefengrund Mennonite Church, north of Laird, Sask., and Grace Mennonite Church in Prince Albert, have supported the Hansons for more than 20 years. "When we first went [to China], we really felt sent by these congregations," says Jeanette.

Carolyn Vis of Grace Mennonite says of the mission partnership, "Our church has always been missional. It's part of our church culture." But, she adds, "there is an emotional bond as well. They are our friends and we look forward to spending time with them." The congregation sent the Hansons weekly recordings of their Sunday services, and each Sunday worship leaders would greet each



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LORENA FRIESEN

Lorena and Russ Friesen of Tiefengrund Mennonite, left, visit with their Chinese hosts during a China-Canada pastor exchange.

Hanson family member by name.

Russ Friesen, Tiefengrund Mennonite's pastor, sees his church's partnership with the Hansons as "appropriate," since Jeanette grew up in the congregation and is still a member. In addition to exchanging letters and emails, the church copied and distributed the Hansons' newsletters to every member and posted updates on a dedicated bulletin board.

Both churches invited the Hansons to speak whenever they returned to Canada for a visit. Members of both congregations travelled to China to visit the couple. Ed and Holly Olfert of Grace Mennonite went to China as part of a learning tour. Friesen and his wife Lorena participated in a China-Canada pastor exchange.

These visits meant a great deal to the Hansons and also to the Chinese pastors they served.

"The difference for us has been not just that we personally were supported," says Jeanette, "but the relationship has been a resource to the church in China. When Russ and Lorena went to China as part of the exchange, [the Chinese pastors] wanted to sit down and talk with him because

they saw the effort that Tiefengrund had put into supporting us."

Friesen values the experience as well. "Seeing [their] ministry first-hand really brought the whole thing home for me," he says, adding that he appreciated the op-

*'When we first went [to China], we really felt sent by these congregations.'
(Jeanette Hanson, former MC Canada Witness worker to China)*

portunity "to be able to spend time in some of the churches over there and see what impact [the Hansons] and other mission workers have had."

Several years ago, Chinese church leaders wanted to strengthen ties with Mennonites in North America, and felt the Hansons could better serve them from Canada. So in 2016, the couple returned to Canada, where Jeanette continues to work as assistant director of Mennonite Partners in China under the MC Canada Witness umbrella.

Now that they're back in Canada,

Jeanette has even greater appreciation for these two mission partnerships. "There is lots of good stuff going on here, many opportunities to be involved in ministry," she says.

For this reason, she finds it remarkable

that the two congregations are still interested in what's going on in China. "When I was in China, I thought this type of support was normal," she says. "Now that I'm living in Canada again, I realize how special it is." ❧

Building relationships with diverse people

Jennifer Otto and Gregory Rabus

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
BADEN, ONT.

Jennifer Otto and her husband, Gregory Rabus, are Mennonite Church Witness workers in Ludwigshafen/Mannheim Germany.

Originally they and Witness thought that they would work to plant a new congregation in Mannheim, gathering together young adults from rural congregations living and working in the city. But timing brought new and different opportunities, as a flood of refugees, many from Syria and mostly single men, arrived in the area.

Otto, from Steinmann Mennonite

Church in Baden, Ont., west of Kitchener, already had the interest of her home congregation as she and Rabus went to Germany to work. The congregation supported the change in focus, as the Ludwigshafen congregation partnered with Witness to use the congregation's space to create a "peace house," ministering to the refugees, providing many services that they needed, including language training. Rabus, with a master's degree in Middle-Eastern languages, was well suited to this.

Members from Steinmann travelled to Germany for 10 days to help with renovations in 2016. And while the congregation does not have a separate budget line to support the couple, it has raised funds through a variety of projects, including banquets.

Skype, emails and newsletters, as well as visits back and forth, have strengthened the relationship. Otto's sister, Janessa Otto

Yantzi, notes that the family's roots in the congregation mean that some congregants know her well already, while others have gotten to know her and Rabus through visits and other contacts.

Both the congregation and the Witness workers find the relationship to be edifying, with the work resonating in Canada, as Steinmann has sponsored Syrian refugees as well. Rabus says that it seems to him that "both congregations would see eye to eye about the meaning of mission, that service and following Jesus in word and deed are implicit in holistic mission. That's certainly one of the reasons our relationship has thrived."

Steve Drudge, one of Steinmann's pastors, will be travelling in Europe during a sabbatical this summer, and with his wife he plans to visit the work in Ludwigshafen.

Both Steinmann and the couple note that the current uncertainty about the future of long-term missions brings uncertainty to the work. "It is difficult to plan for tomorrow before we know what tomorrow looks like," Rabus says.

Drudge sees no problems with the current support model, pointing to "the strength of direct relationships, not just money, in personal relationships." The model requires Witness, local congregations in Canada, and long-term workers abroad in order to work, he says. ☛



PHOTO COURTESY OF
JENNIFER OTTO/GREGORY RABUS

Gregory Rabus, a Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker in Ludwigshafen, Germany, is shown 'paintin' with a big stick,' as the church was being renovated into a 'peace house' with the help of Steinmann Mennonite Church volunteers in August 2016.

Two churches, one Witness family

Hippolyto Tshimanga and Miriam Maenhout-Tshimanga

BY VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER

Executive Editor

Charleswood Mennonite Church in Winnipeg was the home church for the Tshimanga family while Hippolyto served as director of Mennonite Church Canada's ministry in Africa, Europe and Latin America, working out of the MC Canada office there. In the summer of 2016, Tshimanga and his wife, Miriam Maenhout-Tshimanga, moved to Bloemfontein, South Africa, as Witness

workers with their sons, Emmanuel, 14, and Joshua, 9.

Their assignment is to work with local congregations while Tshimanga continues his part-time MC Canada director role. They are providing practical support and Anabaptist theological training to the five congregations comprising Grace Community Church.

The Tshimangas are excited about the

opportunities to help local congregations work on their own vision and become more self-sustaining. Cooperation with other organizations like Mennonite Mission Network, Mennonite Central Committee and African Inter-Mennonite Mission has helped local Christian entrepreneurs develop projects and skills.

The Charleswood congregation has also had a history with Witness workers Bock-Ki Kim and Sook-Kyoung Park, who used to attend there. Now the couple serves in Korea, strengthening the Anabaptist presence and witness there.

At this point, Charleswood has not formalized an official partnership with either family. “The Pastoral Care and Deacons Committee is committed to keeping in touch with both of them,” says chair Titus Guenther, noting that the congregation had a commissioning service for the Tshimanga family, and individual members designate their donations to MC Canada Witness for the family’s support.

Across town, Sterling Mennonite Fellowship has begun to develop a more intentional partnership with the Tshimangas and their work in South Africa.

“Our highlight so far has been a Sunday morning Skype call with the whole congregation,” Pastor Moses Falco reports. The 30-minute call happened in April during a Sunday morning service, with the Tshimanga family’s image projected at the front of the church and a camera pointed at the congregation. Miriam and Hippo told about their assignment and the community they’re relating to, and suggested ways Sterling might be able to help in their ministry.

“We are already thinking of ideas of how we can help them build churches,” says Falco. “But we also have a lot to learn, and a mutual relationship of prayer and support is what we are longing for.”

Cornie Thiessen, Sterling’s mission and service coordinator, says, “We started down this road because, as a committee, we challenged ourselves to find opportunities for our congregation to be relevant globally, nationally, provincially, locally and to each other.” The committee is exploring what a partnership with the South African ministry might look like.

Back at Charleswood, both Guenther and Pastor John Braun recognize that changes



PHOTO BY EMMANUEL TSHIMANGA

Witness workers Hippolyto Tshimanga and Miriam Maenhout-Tshimanga, at left, pose with friends from Grace Community Church in Bloemfontein, South Africa. This group of five churches belongs to Mennonite World Conference and relates to the Anabaptist Network in South Africa.

are coming in how mission work is funded. Until now Charleswood has supported international missions indirectly, assuming that MC Canada Witness was the point of contact with the workers. But with the reshaping of the national church structure, that model will likely need to change. “How will [mission workers] get financial support

and is it from us?” asks Braun.

What responsibilities for international mission work will now fall to Canadian congregations and regional bodies? That is the question these congregations—and others across Canada—will continue to explore. ❧

/// For discussion

1. When you hear the word “missions,” what comes to mind? Donna Schulz quotes Carolyn Vis as saying, “Our church has always been missional. It’s part of our church culture.” What do you think she means by that? What kind of “missions culture” does your congregation have?
2. Fifty or a hundred years ago, having mission workers sent to far-off countries was an exciting venture for congregations. What are the mission stories and connections that you remember from earlier years? How has the vision for missions changed over time?
3. How has an increase in world travel changed the face of missions? Donna Schulz writes that “Chinese church leaders wanted to strengthen ties with Mennonites in North America, and felt the Hansons could better serve them from Canada.” What does this statement say about the changing role of mission workers?
4. What kind of mission partnership would best suit your congregation? What role could Mennonite World Conference play in these partnerships?

—BY BARB DRAPER

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VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

We welcome your comments and publish most letters from subscribers. Letters, to be kept to 300 words or less, are the opinion of the writer only and are not to be taken as endorsed by this magazine or the church. Please address issues rather than individuals; personal attacks will not appear in print or online. In light of the many recent letters on the topic of sexuality, we will edit any letter on this topic to a paragraph and post the rest online at www.canadian-mennonite.org. All letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines. Send them to letters@canadianmennonite.org and include the author's contact information and mailing address. Preference is given to letters from MC Canada congregants.

✉ Millennial wants to sing a variety of music in church

RE: "WHAT MUSIC rankles you?" column, March 13, page 8.

I couldn't agree with this article more. As a millennial teenager, I am mixed in with the generation of people who only like church if it's like a concert. My opinion is that there should be a mixture of music in church every Sunday. We have to find a middle ground between hymns and contemporary music to help the church grow.

I have attended Mennonite churches all my life, so I have sung my fair share of hymns, and they're not that bad. Sometimes they can be boring and long winded, and you don't feel the Spirit's presence all the time while singing them, but the words are so deep and meaningful. I definitely favour contemporary music, but I have nothing against hymns.

FROM OUR LEADERS

Serving up your inner scapegoat

COREENA STEWART

One late Friday afternoon when the office was nearly empty, two clean-cut young men showed up at the Mennonite Church Canada reception desk to inquire about pension benefits for their widowed mother. Assuming they were sons of a pastor, the receptionist sent them my way. As chief administrative officer, helping such people out is part of my job.



I invited them into my office. They sat down, positioning their chairs to block the exit. That triggered my internal alarm, and the situation went downhill from there. It quickly became apparent that their father hadn't been a pastor, and they had no association with MC Canada. Several other Mennonite organizations had also turned down their requests for assistance. When I explained that I couldn't help them either,

their behaviour fouled. Threats were made. I was terrified.

Serving others comes with its fair share of challenges. Whether you're a waitress in a coffee shop or an executive for a large organization—like the church—you can become a target for everything that is wrong. But it's more than that. It's the looming sense of responsibility, of being the person "where the buck stops," whether for a complaint about cold coffee or a floundering corporate merger.

Sometimes, it means being a scapegoat and accepting it. Jesus knew this all too well. When he consented to God's will—to sacrifice his life even though he'd done no wrong—he became the ultimate scapegoat for all of humanity. As the ultimate servant-leader, Jesus fell under the constant scrutiny of government and the religious elite. Cursed and blessed in his role as Messiah, he lived in a time when both the

best and worst of human behaviours rose to the surface in the public sphere.

So, back to my office. I offered my two intimidating visitors a promise to send them information about where they might find assistance. I reminded myself that God was still in control. That gave me the courage to stand firm in the face of their continued bullying and ask them strongly to leave. Eventually, furious and still uttering threats, they did.

Those visitors made me realize something important: I was their scapegoat. The buck stopped with me, and that made me the target of their frustration over an ongoing, unfruitful search for help.

When people are angry, it's easy to cast frustration in any direction. It might be toward the new grocery cashier assisting a long line-up, or it might be the church leader who cannot give the desired assurances. Simmering anger boils over, as if long line-ups or conflict can be spontaneously resolved, or solutions found with the sweep of a magic wand.

Most of us have likely been served up as a scapegoat at some point, whether in the role of a servant, a leader or a servant-leader. It's not fun, but it goes with the territory. I pray that Jesus' example will give each of us the strength to accept the challenge with grace.

Unfortunately, not everyone is going to like the same type of music. If we only play contemporary music, we could lose the elderly people in our church, which means that we would lose their experience and wisdom. But if we only play hymns, there is a chance that it could turn the next generation away from the church, and we want the church to grow. So I agree with Ryan Jantzi's point that the music should bug us a

little because we're not always going to love the music.

For me, music is my favourite way to connect and worship God, and it's so easy to lift your hands up to Christ when you're listening to fast, upbeat songs. I want to challenge myself and others to focus more on the words and less on the type of music.

CAROLINE REMPEL (ONLINE COMMENT)

FAMILY TIES

A spacious year

MELISSA MILLER

A year ago, I said goodbye to my job and stepped into an unknown future. In truth, the future is always unknown, or beyond certainty, as my father would qualify when he spoke of plans, concluding, "Lord willing." The same acknowledgement comes from our Muslim friends who say *inshallah* with a similar meaning.

In my situation, I felt drawn to a season of space, untethered by commitment to paid employment. I felt drawn to ministry in my family, specifically to provide care for my aging mother. I imagined this space would extend over months, maybe even a year. I was grateful for my husband's year-long sabbatical, commencing at the same time, providing income and enabling us to share the spacious year.

I also felt terrified at the outset. The unstructured days loomed ahead of me, like a barren horizon, with no markers to ground or orient me. Those fears soon gave way. The internal metaphor shifted from empty horizon to buoyant ocean. The ocean was God's love holding me up with steadfast, fluid support. I trusted I had made the right decision to step into open space.

Trust in God's ocean of care calmed me when others questioned, "But what are you going to do?" Or when my own anxieties about employability at my age spiked. Are people in their 60s valuable

to employers because of their seasoned experience? Do more years of living translate into outdated and less desirable? "I don't know what will happen," I answered myself and others. "We'll see." Paraphrasing the psalmist, I prayed to God, "Prosper our seasons of rest and renewal."

I also had a strong sense that there are many ways to do God's work. While I have been privileged to hold employment as a counsellor and a pastor, I recognize there are many avenues in which God invites each person to join in God's mission of healing and reconciling the world. This was further solidified when I read an unnamed person's response to the question, "How do you know when your

will discover. Immediately as I stepped into the space, I encountered an unfamiliar void. There was no to-do list!

I realized I'd been marching toward sequential goals my entire adult life: go to school, get a job, get married, have a baby, buy a house. The odd sensation of having no life goals ahead of me was quite striking. With it came a huge, full-bodied exhalation. My shoulders felt wondrously lighter. I chuckled that I'd been so driven.

I was also curious. How could my life possibly unfold without such fervent goal-setting? God probably chuckles too, as we determined but misguided humans scurry around, more focussed on illusory to-do lists than on savouring the precious moments of our days. I am grateful for



You work as long as you have breath. You live out your calling every day of your life until you die. That's when it ends.'

work is done?" (I believe the question was asked with respect to decisions about retirement, a frequent topic of conversation between me and my peers.) The answer, which hit me with piercing clarity, was, "You work as long as you have breath. You live out your calling every day of your life until you die. That's when it ends."

With nothing more to guide me, I set out. As with others who embark on the open road, one never knows what one

this and other lessons of "a gap year."

God likely chuckled again as a job came forward, beginning exactly as the year ended. A job to pastor a congregation, meshing smoothly with my training and experience. The spacious year comes to an end. The work continues.

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

✉ Church needs to be seen as 'an inspirational instrument for change'

RE: "A BIG fan of Jesus . . . the church not so much," June 5, page 4.

This feature was very insightful, and it struck me that much of what is being said about millennials were observations I made about Gen Xers when I served

as student and young adult minister at Mennonite Church Eastern Canada from 1988 to 1992. There are some subtle distinctions, but economic struggle, disillusionment with the church and a search for meaning are similar themes.

The Anabaptist principle of believer's baptism is both our strength and an Achilles heel for the Mennonite church. It demands commitment, but it

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Continuous pruning

HAROLD PENNER

With the arrival of summer, my wife and I have been enjoying more time outside. Our yard contains many different fruit trees, shrubs and grapevines that provide shade, beauty, and a harvest of berries and fruits. The trees and shrubs are easily managed. However, the grapevines are another story.

A grapevine can be an extremely productive plant. After each fall harvest, I aggressively prune the grapevines all the way back to the main vine, and each year, from the time they begin leafing out in spring until the post-harvest pruning, they don't seem to quit pushing out new growth. My goal is a blend of shade for the pagoda and plenty of grapes. Pruning is needed to maintain that balance and to keep the vines from overtaking the yard. Without it, they just keep shooting out new branches in every direction and direct less energy to producing the tasty concord grapes that make great juice and jelly.

Having experienced my own backyard grapevines, Jesus' analogy characterizing himself as the grapevine and God as the gardener in John's gospel takes on new meaning: *"I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more"*



(John 15: 1-2 NLT).

The spiritual pruning Jesus describes is not an occasional event occurring once every few years. It is an ongoing process of plant management that allows the grapevines to focus their energy on the desired result: good fruit.

The lives of many Canadian families are like grapevines on the verge of becoming a bundle of unmanageable foliage.

The Kuhns were a typical Canadian family with three young children involved in various school, sports and fine-arts programs. It seemed like every other day a new note was brought home with another commitment to add to the calendar. Too many evenings were spent figuring out where to squeeze more

The spiritual pruning Jesus describes is not an occasional event occurring once every few years.

registration fees out of the budget and more time out of the schedule. If Dad drove one child to soccer practice, Mom could take the littlest one to gymnastics and then swing around to pick up their middle daughter from school before everyone had to be at the evening choir concert. They often thought about saying 'no,' but with so much pressure to give their kids every opportunity, guilt always drove another 'yes.' They struggled to keep up with a regular offering at church, and, despite wanting to do more, they felt

constantly stretched thin.

Perhaps the Kuhns' story sounds familiar?

In my role as a gift planning consultant with Abundance Canada, I have met many families in this situation, who know they aren't giving the way they want to, but they need simple gifting solutions to keep giving from getting lost in the busy pace of life. In discussions with donors, I often meet people who take great joy in giving precisely because they have pruned their financial commitments to produce a greater harvest of generosity.

When the Kuhns realized they didn't need to enrol in every activity to provide their kids with a happy childhood, they began cutting back the social and financial commitments that were sapping energy from the things that mattered most. Freed from the tangle, they began to cultivate first-fruits-giving in response to God's call on their lives. A new sense of purpose and happiness permeated the family, and they grew closer to God and

one another.

What about you? Has the grapevine of your life become overwhelming? Or are you involved in regular pruning to increase the fruitfulness of your generosity?

Harold Penner is a gift planning consultant at Abundance Canada serving generous people in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Visit www.abundance.ca to learn more, or call 1-800-772-3257 to arrange to meet with a gift planning consultant in your area.

means that some will not feel inspired to make the choice to join.

We are beyond the era of scaring our young people into faith with hell-fire sermons. But we have not been able to inspire young people to join the radical vision of a faith-filled life that engages issues of justice that many young people see as critical. Perhaps when more young people see that the Mennonite church is an inspirational instrument for change in our world and a source for spiritual growth, they will see the church as a place of belonging and hope.

It is heartening to see *Canadian Mennonite* involve young voices in the main feature and news, apart from the Young Voices section that feels to some like being seated at the “kid’s table” during a family dinner.

FRED W. MARTIN, WATERLOO, ONT.

✉ Salvation in Jesus alone

RE: “TEN THINGS to know about Mennonites in Canada (canadianmennonite.org/stories/10-things-know-about-mennonites-canada).

Today we need the clear gospel message. In all our deliberations about what various Mennonites believe, there needs to be a direct response that we all need Jesus (I Corinthians 3:11).

In order to become a child of God you must personally receive Jesus into your heart and life (John 1:12), confess your sin (I John 1:9), place your faith and trust in Jesus alone (John 14:6), ask him to cleanse you from sin by his blood shed on the cross (I John 1:7), surrender to his will as you obey all that he commanded in the Bible (Matthew 28:20), and be born again by the Holy Spirit (John 3:3,5).

This personal relationship with Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit, is the only way to receive

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Baker—Rhett William (b. June 20, 2017), to Graham and Sarah Baker, Hamilton Mennonite, Ont.

Martin—Ava Rose (b. June 13, 2017), to Justin and Bobby-Jo Martin, Floradale Mennonite, Ont.

Roth—Charles Deane (b. May 22, 2017), to Dan and Michelle Roth, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Baptisms

Rebecca Janzen—First Mennonite, Edmonton, June 11, 2017.
Hugo Valle—Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, June 11, 2017.

forgiveness for our sins and obtain eternal life in heaven (Acts 4:12). Without Jesus, each person is lost (Matthew 18:11, John 3:1-21).

As Menno Simons said, “We cannot obtain salvation, grace, reconciliation, nor peace of the Father otherwise than through Christ Jesus. As he himself says, no man cometh unto the Father but by me. Peter also says, there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, than the name of Jesus; and all those who accept this grace in Christ, preached by the gospel and accepted by a firm faith, and cordially adhered to by the power of the Holy Spirit through faith, become new men born of God” (from *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*).

KEN DOELL, ALTONA, MAN.

✉ Any congregation can partner with a Witness worker

RE: “GOING FURTHER together,” July 3, page 4.

Thank you to *Canadian Mennonite* for this feature.

It’s important for readers to know, though, that supporting international ministry is not limited to partnerships between workers and their home congregations. Currently, 26 active Witness workers are in 52 congregational partnerships with 47 different congregations. Some churches have more than one partner, and most Witness workers have multiple church partners.

Congregations that are interested in exploring a partnership with an international Witness worker should contact Jason Martin by email at jmartin@mennonitechurch.ca, or call toll-free 1-866-888-6785.

DAN DYCK, WINNIPEG

Dan Dyck is Mennonite Church Canada’s director of church engagement-communications.

Colin Ens Funk—Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, June 11, 2017.

Sarah Driediger, Eugenia Kabungulu, Julian Straub, Maariya Toman—Ottawa Mennonite, June 4, 2017.

Blair Bender, Kodie Gerber, David Kuepfer, Reegan Jantzi, Will Weber, Abigail Wolf, Valerie Wolf—Wellesley Mennonite, Ont., June 11, 2017.

Marriages

Dyck/Klassen—David Dyck and Liza Klassen, at Community Mennonite, Drayton, Ont., June 10, 2017.

Gaudet/Hooge—Ivan Gaudet and Erika Hooge, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, June 3, 2017.

Nowak/Roth—Kory Nowak and Chantel Roth, at Crosshill Mennonite, Ont., June 3, 2017.

Deaths

Banmann—Kathe (nee Klassen), 92 (b. March 14, 1925; d. May 24, 2017), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Bartsch—Helmut, 96 (b. April 28, 1921; d. June 10, 2017), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Braun—Margarete (nee Janzen), 93 (b. Nov. 2, 1923; d. May 2, 2017), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Burkhardt—Alice (nee Bauman), 77 (b. July 28, 1939; d. April 22, 2017), Community Mennonite, Drayton, Ont.

Carey—Margaret (nee Swan), 89 (b. Oct. 12, 1927; d. June 16, 2017), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Entz—Hans Reinhard, 91 (b. March 30, 1926; d. Feb. 1, 2017), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Froese—Tina (nee Falk), 92 (b. Aug. 10, 1924; d. Feb. 15, 2017), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Gardner—Oliver, 90 (b. Jan. 13, 1927; d. April 13, 2017), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Goosen—John, 83 (b. March 22, 1933; d. March 3, 2017), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Goosen—Tina (nee Bergen), 89 (b. Jan. 1, 1928; d. Jan. 24, 2017), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Goosen Bestvater—Mary (nee Peters), 85 (b. March 4, 1931; d. Feb. 27, 2017), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Harder—Helen, 89 (b. Oct. 11, 1927; d. June 12, 2017), Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.

Harder—Susanna, 91 (b. April 19, 1925; d. April 10, 2017), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Hiebert—Abram, 85 (b. Oct. 24, 1931; d. May 1, 2017), Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Hildebrandt—Anna, 98 (b. Feb. 17, 1919; d. Feb. 18, 2017), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Huebert—Gloria, 95 (b. Jan. 29, 1922; d. May 23, 2017), Zoar Mennonite, Langham, Sask.

Klassen—Elisabeth, 93 (b. Aug. 26, 1923; d. Feb. 4, 2017), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Lage—Leonard, 88 (b. Oct. 28, 1928; d. Jan. 14, 2017), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Löwen—Luise, 100 (b. May 1, 1916; d. Jan. 16, 2017), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Martens—Ken, 73 (b. April 22, 1943; d. March 13, 2017), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Martin—Alice (nee Drudge), 100 (b. June 15, 1916; d. June 12, 2017), St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

Reimer—Paul, 66 (b. Jan. 26, 1951; d. April 9, 2017), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Schellenberg—Tina (nee Brown), 93 (b. Jan. 30, 1924; d. June 19, 2017), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Thiessen—Else, age 84 (d. June 22, 2017), Faith Mennonite Church, Leamington, Ont.

Thiessen—Richard, 90 (b. Sept. 24, 1926; d. Feb. 23, 2017), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Wiebe—Eve Jacqueline, 72 (b. June 28, 1944; d. April 15, 2017), Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Wieler—Menno, 82 (b. Aug. 7, 1934; d. June 13, 2017), Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Winter—John, 93 (b. Sept. 17, 1923; d. April 11, 2017), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

A moment from yesterday



Edward Beatty, front row right, and John Dennis, behind him, speak with Mennonite girls. Dennis was a young man in 1874 who witnessed the Mennonite immigration to Manitoba. Over the next decades, he observed that the Mennonites were honest, hardworking and trustworthy farmers. By 1922, he was a commissioner of the Canadian Pacific Railway. He convinced Beatty, his boss, to extend credit of \$400,000 to bring Mennonites from Russia to Canada based on a handshake with Bishop David Toews and the Mennonites' good name. The amount grew to \$1.7 million. At a service in Coaldale, Alta., in 1938, B.B. Janz, a Mennonite leader, said, "Not just one generation was saved, but also their children and the generations to come. In the midst of a world full of suspicion and ill will, . . . Colonel Dennis, you have continued with trust and confidence. . . . We thank you for this confidence and faith." Dennis struggled to keep his composure as a group of teenaged girls laid bouquets of flowers at his feet, saying, "You saved our lives. Thank you."

Text: Conrad Stoesz / Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies

Photo: C.F. Klassen / Centre for Mennonite Brethren Studies



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LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Wisdom, where art thou? (Pt. 10)

TROY WATSON

Someone once said to me, “The problem with Christians is they are all mental!”

As I reflected on his disparaging comment, I realized he had a point. Not the point he was trying to make, implying all Christians suffer from “a psychiatric disorder,” which is the second definition of the word “mental.” My epiphany came to me when I considered his statement in light of the first definition of “mental,” which means “of, or related to, the mind.”

When our approach to God and faith is primarily mental—“of, or related to, the mind”—our Christianity is indeed problematic. For starters, it isn’t Christian.

One of the many lessons I’ve gleaned from the “mindfulness movement” is how identification with the mind is one of the greatest obstacles to authentic connection with others, my true self and God. The mind is an incredibly valuable and useful tool when used appropriately. However, most of us don’t use our minds. Our minds use us.

Whether you are aware of this or not, you probably believe your mind is who you are. Most of the time you assume you’re the “thinker of thoughts in your head.” The reality is, this “thinker of thoughts in your head” is not you, but has taken over—or “possessed”—you. The real you is not in control; your mind is.

If you don’t believe me, try to stop your mind from thinking thoughts in your head. Your mind will not obey. You will quickly see your mind is not under your control. In fact, for most of your life your uncontrollable mind is in control of you!

This is why meditation is so important. Becoming aware of the mind as an unruly



tool—not who I am—is an essential step in differentiation from the mind. Why is this important?

When we identify with our minds—the “thinker of thoughts inside our heads”—we cut ourselves off from our deeper and truer identity,

namely, Christ. Or, as Paul puts it, “*Christ in you.*” Paul reminds us how universal this mysterious identity is when he says, “*Christ is all and in all*” (Colossians 3:11).

This is deep and complex stuff that would require more than an article to unpack. The point I’m driving at here is

The point I’m driving at here is that your faith and relationship with God must integrate more than your mind to be genuinely Christian.

that your faith and relationship with God must integrate more than your mind to be genuinely Christian.

Consider the Hebrew *Shema* (which means “listen” in English). The *Shema* is the central prayer, confession and command of Judaism and Christianity. It comes from Deuteronomy 6:4-5: “*The Lord is our God, the Lord is One. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might.*”

Notice that the mind is not included in the *Shema*.

Interestingly, Jesus adds the word “mind” to his version of the *Shema* in Matthew 22:37 and Luke 10:27. However, he lists the heart first and the mind last. Coincidence?

Perhaps, but at the very least Jesus is telling us the most important and greatest thing we can do is to love God

holistically—with our whole being—including all our heart, soul, body and mind. This means we must align our hearts (emotions, desires, conscience), souls (imagination, intuition, innermost being), might (physical body, energy), and minds (perception, cognition, reason), into a harmonious and balanced state through the act of loving God.

When I elevate, or identify with, mind over heart, soul and body, especially in my faith and relationship with God, I’m neglecting the central and most important teaching in the Bible. When we elevate the role of the mind above the heart, soul and body in our faith, we naturally shift the focus from loving to understanding.

This is not the mind’s fault. Under-

standing is what the mind is designed to do. However, Jesus commands us to focus on loving God first and foremost, and the only way we can do this is to keep our minds equally “yoked” with our hearts, souls and bodies.

The modern age has advanced the supremacy of the mind. Unfortunately, many western Christians have adopted this supremacy of mind in our approach to God, Scripture and faith. This has resulted in many forms of Christianity that are completely un-Christlike.

What does all this have to do with pursuing wisdom? The pursuit of wisdom must follow the *Shema* path. It must move us towards greater love of God, and integrate our hearts, souls, bodies and minds equally and harmoniously. ❧

Troy Watson is pastor of Avon Mennonite Church in Stratford, Ont.

VIEWPOINT

Constants in the context of change

JOHN H. NEUFELD

If I were to give a 14-minute TED Talk in our church context before the restructuring assembly for Mennonite Church Canada and its area churches in October, this is the gist of what I would want to communicate. I would like to ask and give an answer to an important question: What is it that is more important for all of us than our current and necessary restructuring? Or, to put it another way, what is the core vision for the church that undergirds whatever structures we create and is foundational for the life of every congregation?

Consider that restructuring is a secondary concern. Our primary concern should be to wrestle and reflect on what it is that we are aiming for in our congregations, and in and through our denomination. I am suggesting that we should consider the following five goals for being church:

1. **GROWTH IN** Christian identity.
2. **GROWTH IN** a sense of vocation.
3. **GROWTH IN** the ability to cope with crises and challenges.
4. **GROWTH IN** awareness of issues needing attention.
5. **GROWTH IN** biblical knowledge.

These five goals constitute our basic vision for the church. They are understandable and accessible to everyone; and they are embryonic and expandable, depending on specific needs and particular circumstances.

By giving everyone a shared foundational understanding of what being the church means, they provide a strong motivational basis for doing God's work in our local communities and around the world.



These five goals serve as the dynamic constants in our contexts of change (structures, leadership, budgets, demographics, congregational size and cultural variations).

This handful of goals is useable and relevant in all conceivable situations and is applicable to everyone across the age span.

I believe these five criteria are helpful

I believe these five criteria are helpful in evaluating our efforts in preaching, worship services, pastoral care, Christian education and music.

in evaluating our efforts in preaching, worship services, pastoral care, Christian education and music. By using them, we are able to assess how faithfully the work of the church is being done. They are also descriptive outcomes used by church leaders at all levels to provide focus and balance for lifelong learning and development.

The content and potential in these five goals

The goal of growth in a sense of Christian identity is concerned with a growing awareness of who I am before God, in relation to myself, in relation to others in closer circles of association and to others we might encounter.

The goal of growth in a sense of vocation is concerned with knowing that we have been called by the Lord to serve others in all of the various contexts of our lives: our families, churches, the world of work, the communities we live in, and others in world nearby and far away.

The goal of growth in the ability to cope with crises and challenges includes developmental crises that are common to the life cycle and to circumstantial crises

related to the unexpected issues that arise. Many of life's crises and challenges are dealt with successfully, but there are also special situations in which we may need to have someone to lean on for support and insight. This goal overlaps with many of the concerns associated with pastoral care and supportive relationships with others in the community.

The goal of growth in awareness of issues needing attention includes issues that individuals need to attend to as well as issues that the church or the denomination have to address. Issues needing attention are constantly changing, and we need the help of the community to both discern what seems to be relevant and what needs to be getting priority attention.

The goal of growth in biblical knowl-

edge focusses on the need for updating our understanding and interpretation of Scripture. Thematic preaching and teaching, as well as reading and study groups, provide the opportunities for lifelong learning and development in this area.

In conclusion

By giving attention to these basic goals of being church we have the basis for a lifetime of dynamic and invigorating growth in faith and discipleship, and our pastoral and denominational leaders will have the criteria and the outcomes needed for shaping and discerning fruitful ministry.

This is the gist of my answer to the question, "What is the core vision for the church which undergirds whatever structures we create and is foundational for the life of every congregation?" I invite you to consider it and improve on it. What would you want to say to the church before it restructures this fall? ☞

John H. Neufeld was president of Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now Canadian Mennonite University) from 1984-97 and before that was pastor for 15 years of First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

COVER STORY

Immersive experience

Tavistock Mennonite celebrates 75 years of being 'rooted in the past, grounded in faith, growing in discipleship' with food, stories, song . . . and a dunk tank

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
TAVISTOCK, ONT.

On June 25, Tavistock Mennonite Church's intentional interim pastor, Jim Brown, got his feet—and more—wet, as the congregation acknowledged three-quarters-of-a-century of worship and mission in the village, and had fun dunking him in the process.

The congregation also offered a free chicken dinner to the first 400 who signed up. While some of those were former members and from neighbouring churches, the hope was to open the doors to the community at large. A service filled with music and trivia helped celebrate what God has done over the years.

Begun in 1942 as an “in town” branch of East Zorra Mennonite Church, Tavistock Mennonite has its roots in the 1830's immigration of European Amish to Ontario. The hope was that both older people living in town and young families who had moved off the farm would find the congregation a home, and that the mix of Mennonites and others would result in the good news of Jesus being spread beyond just Mennonite families.

The congregation rented space at first, but has since twice built larger sanctuaries, using the first as a fellowship hall now.

Through a visioning process, the

congregation has developed five goals as it moves forward:

1. **LETTING GO** of things that hold it back from its mission.
2. **EQUIPPING ITSELF** to better connect with its community.
3. **ENCOURAGING** intergenerational conversations.
4. **DEEPENING SPIRITUAL** lives of individuals and groups.
5. **BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS** with other faith communities.

Brown was hired to help congregants put these goals into action. Together with congregational leader Diane Lichti, and Deb Kaster, chair of both the elders board and the visioning team, the three believe the congregation is in a good place now.

While membership and attendance are down, and there is a skewing toward those over 50, the feeling is that the church is moving forward in a united way, with all generations taking part in the process. The visioning process was a lot of work, but now the church is attempting a cultural shift so necessary to survive in this post-Christendom time.

Lichti says she sees the “cup as half full” as “we look at where we are in the community and honour those who take God out into the community” rather than just thinking about God in the church.

Brown adds, “We are equipping ourselves to go out there.”

Kaster believes the process has “awakened” the congregation and that new things, like the free dinner, are part of the church's future. Even the church slate of volunteers is going to be evaluated in order to free people to be out in the community, instead of in a committee room. More “one off” projects are anticipated, she says, and if a project has no ready support from the congregation, it will end rather than having leaders beating the bushes for volunteers. ☸

For more photos, visit
canadianmennonite.org.
tavistock-175.



Mardi Lichti, Bethany Aster and Nichole Seyler enjoy a laugh over cake and ice cream at Tavistock Mennonite Church's 75th-anniversary celebration on June 25.

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Creating a we-centred world

RJC opens door to experiential learning

BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
ROSTHERN, SASK.

As far as David Epp is concerned, the 2016-17 school year was “a real success.” His first year of teaching at Rosthern Junior College (RJC) was also the first year of the school’s Imagine program for Grade 10 students.

A social-justice initiative offering integrated learning in English, history, Spanish and Christian ethics, Imagine also provides experiential-learning opportunities both in and outside the classroom.

Imagine began as an experiment, according to principal Jim Epp: “We wanted to turn our younger teachers loose, to give them opportunity to use new teaching approaches, to make their classrooms come alive [and] to make learning relevant.”

When RJC launched the program in the fall of 2016, it hoped for 20 students. Response was enthusiastic, and by the time school began in September, it had drawn the line at 26. With transportation being limited to the school’s two 15-passenger



Cassie Bobbitt and Kaitlyn Janzen, foreground, prepare apples for dehydration at Okanagan Gleaners in Oliver, B.C.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROSTHERN JUNIOR COLLEGE

Cassie Bobbitt, Richella Li, Olivia Atherton-Reimer and Kate Boyer bag dehydrated vegetables at Okanagan Gleaners in Oliver, B.C.

vans, 26 students and four staff members would fill every available spot.

In November, students spent a week in Winnipeg, “to explore the concept of insiders and outsiders by utilizing the Museum of Human Rights, the Assiniboine Zoo and the downtown city core as textbooks,” David says. RJC partnered with several organizations, including Initiatives for Just Communities, Canadian Mennonite University and Mennonite Central

Committee, to help students learn about poverty, racism and homelessness.

Not all learning experiences took place outside the classroom, however. Throughout the school year, 45 individuals and community organizations from the Rosthern area met with students at the school. On one such visit, two Syrian families who had come to Rosthern as refugees talked with students about life in Syria, their experience of being refugees and their Muslim faith.

David says the people RJC partnered

with are “pursuing some of those same goals we share here.” This is important, he notes, because “when we’re out there it’s a different learning environment,” and the teacher may not have as much control. “I have goals for what we could be doing there, and some of the learning is structured, but the goal isn’t that you’ll learn the lesson but that you can do it your own way.”

For many students, the most memorable

experience was volunteering with Okanagan Gleaners in Oliver, B.C., as part of RJC's Alternative Learning and Service Opportunities program. There, they worked alongside other volunteers packaging bags of dehydrated soup mix intended for distribution in areas affected by drought and food shortages.

"In three days, students contributed to packaging nearly one million bags of soup," David says. "After a quick turnaround day of cleaning, students successfully prepared 12,000 pounds of apples for future packaging."

Learning about hunger, both locally and globally, and then working to feed hungry people, made a strong impression on students, he says. "Many remarked that the one million bags of soup was an impressive number that not only demonstrated the results of their hard work but also highlighted the scope of global hunger," he says. "Students recently learned that the soup they packaged was immediately sent to northern communities in Nunavut and the Guatemalan highlands."

Jim says the response to Imagine exceeded expectations: "We were blown away by the response. And that's really why we have moved a bit more quickly than we had intended with Grade 11, Grade 12 and also a focus on the learning that happens in our school community."

Thrive, a program for Grade 11 students, will focus on healthy relationships with



Adam Boldt and Tess Johnson spread chopped apples on trays in preparation for dehydration at Okanagan Gleaners in Oliver B.C.

God, self, others and with the environment.

The Grade 12 program, Explore, will focus on leadership, global citizenship and post-secondary opportunities.

Because students develop divergent interests and make career choices at this age, these two programs will be offered during either the first or second semester, but not for the full year.

A final initiative, Belong, will be for all students, and will focus on community building.

"It strikes me that we're becoming an increasingly I-centred world," says Jim. "But we're called to love our neighbour, which means that we're supposed to be a we-centred world, or maybe even sometimes a you-first-centred world. We want our students to learn those lessons. It's going to make them better neighbours. It's going to make them better parents. It's going to make them better bus drivers, teachers [and] farmers." ❧



Tess Johnson, right, part of the Grade 10 Imagine class at RJC, participates in a smudging ceremony during a week of learning about insiders and outsiders in Winnipeg.



MC SASKATCHEWAN PHOTO
Twenty-five people from Mennonite Church Saskatchewan congregations celebrated Canada Day by attending the 25th annual powwow at Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, 111 kilometres north of Saskatoon, at the invitation of Harry Lafond, Office of the Treaty Commissioner. There were dances and songs of prayer and honour, and a special tribute to a young man who had passed away, his family giving a blanket to the dancer they deemed best honoured their son. Everyone danced together, then in individual styles and age groups, giving everyone a turn. 'We are strong when we are together,' echoed throughout the powwow.



Muslim students from the University of Waterloo sit with Conrad Grebel University College students as they participate in an interfaith fast-a-thon, ending in an iftar dinner.

‘Your joy becomes my joy’

Interfaith iftar dinner celebrates end of Ramadan and raises funds for Somali famine relief

STORY AND PHOTO BY JENNIFER KONKLE

Conrad Grebel University College
WATERLOO, ONT.

For Muslim students at the University of Waterloo, long spans of fasting during the longest days of the year are over and may already feel like a distant memory. However, it was just a few weeks ago that students were stretching the limits of their bodies as they refrained from eating or drinking each day while the sun was up. This religious practice during Ramadan becomes even more difficult for university students living away from the support of their families for the first time.

The University of Waterloo Muslim Students’ Association (MSA) served more than 1,500 meals over the course of eight regular community dinners (*iftars*) after sunset. Conrad Grebel University College students were involved in one of those dinners that took the form of an interfaith fast-a-thon, raising \$502 for Somali famine relief.

Grebel students listened, shared and ate with Muslim students. Over the course of the evening, speakers were invited to deconstruct the idea of hunger and what it entails: How does hunger differ in Waterloo versus Somalia, or for students versus the homeless? What does being hungry mean?

Grebel student Matthew Chase was invited to speak about his understanding

of fasting from a Christian Orthodox perspective. “If you can’t control what goes into your mouth, how can you control what comes out of it?” he asked.

Reflecting back on the event, Chase said he appreciated the acceptance and hospitality of the evening, likening it to a family reunion. Watching others break their fast, he described the almost-euphoric joint experience of salivating, waiting and then the reward of food. “It excites my faith!” he said. “Your joy becomes my joy.”

Chelsea Campbell said she enjoyed the community meal, noting the mix of Muslim sects represented. Listening to the stories of other students, Campbell felt encouraged to be more intentional in her faith. “I appreciated the idea of feeling closer to God when fasting,” she said. “I want that!”

“This is the second year we’ve hosted an *iftar* dinner with the MSA, and we want to continue this as a tradition into the future,” said Ed Janzen, Grebel’s chaplain. “Interfaith dialogue is a learning opportunity for our students, and it gives them a comfortable space to share and ask questions openly.”

The Grebel dining room was indeed buzzing with conversation, as more than a hundred Grebel, UWaterloo, Wilfrid

Laurier University and Conestoga College students shared in the meal.

Feeding an *iftar* dinner to others is a rewarding, charitable act in the Muslim faith, emulating the Prophet Mohammed. Likewise, Christianity teaches followers to love their neighbour. “Therefore, it is our responsibility and our opportunity to host people from the university campus,” Janzen said.

Iftar dinners are also an important way to help students manage the loneliness of Ramadan, especially when they are not in their family context. “This is one more piece in building a healthy community,” Janzen added. “It’s a significant investment in the life of Grebel and UWaterloo.”

Echoing the importance of marking Ramadan in community, MSA leader Suleman Azam reflected that the *iftar* meal at Grebel “felt like a cozy dinner. And as an international student away from family, I can tell you it felt like home.” ☞



CANADIAN MENNONITE

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

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

World Refugee Day celebrated in B.C.

Event recognizes the resettled and their sponsors

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

“We are here to celebrate with you,” said Melissa Giles, director of programs for Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) B.C., as she praised the strength, courage and perseverance of millions of refugees around the world at a World Refugee Day event held in Abbotsford’s Mill Lake Park on June 24 that included speakers, song and dance.

“At MCC, refugee sponsorship is so important to our work,” she added, lauding newcomers to Canada and those who have welcomed them.

Since autumn 2015, MCC has helped resettle 68 refugees in B.C., said Wayne Bremner, executive director of MCC B.C., noting that there are still 60 million refugees in the world today, and every minute 20 more people are displaced from their homes.

“Thank you for doing what you do,” said Bremner to the many sponsors who have welcomed refugees into their homes, churches and communities. “It makes a real difference.” He added that MCC’s very existence has its roots in helping refugees.

Some former refugees who have found a home in B.C. performed music and dance numbers, while sponsors and former refugees shared their stories.

Jennifer Mpungu of MCC’s newcomer and refugee assistance program said that a refugee is defined as someone who has fled his or her country, adding that many more people in the world are homeless within their own countries. She urged those present to continue praying for the many displaced persons around the world. “But for the mercy of God, it could be you or me,” she said.

This was the second year that MCC has celebrated World Refugee Day in Abbotsford, although celebrations have taken place in Vancouver and other larger cities for some years. ❧



Children of the Kabala and Djumaine families of Mission, B.C., perform a dance at the celebration of World Refugee Day in Abbotsford’s Mill Lake Park on June 24.

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ARTBEAT

THEATRICAL REVIEW

Audience finds CO play deeply moving

Yellow Bellies.

Theatre of the Beat production, June 17, 2017, at Floradale (Ont.) Mennonite Church.

REVIEWED BY **BARB DRAPER**
BOOKS & RESOURCES EDITOR

Glenn Martin's voice was deep with emotion as he expressed appreciation for *Yellow Bellies*, a drama that describes the experiences of Mennonite conscientious objectors (COs) during the Second World War.

During the talk-back time after the evening performance, Martin explained that his father had been a CO, serving at Montreal River Alternative Service

Camp in the 1940s, but he never told his family much about his experiences. One thing his father did say was that the only bathtub the men had was Lake Superior. Martin found the drama very powerful because he finally had a better insight into his father's life.

This and other responses showed that the audience had been deeply moved by the play, which not only illustrated the difficult working conditions, but also the anger and resentment of those who believed that COs were cowards, shirking their duty to their country. Especially at Montreal River, the work was tedious and seemed pointless, resulting in frustration. One of the characters, whose brother chose to serve in the air force, constantly asks himself if he made the right choice.

Playwrights Johnny Wideman and Rebecca Steiner did extensive research at the Mennonite Archives of Ontario in Waterloo and the Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives in Winnipeg. Significant parts of the dialogue were taken verbatim from interviews, letters, memoirs and newspaper articles of the day.

After the afternoon performance, 94-year-old Clarence Heintz, one of the few surviving COs, mentioned some of his experiences at Montreal River, affirming the stories told by the play.

The effectiveness of *Yellow Bellies* could be seen as people lingered in conversation afterward. And the buzz of conversation continued the next morning at Floradale Mennonite Church, as people reflected on what they had learned and as they talked about their fathers'



Although conscientious objectors were pacifists, they organized boxing matches at the alternative service camps. Pictured, Alvin Bender (played by Johnny Wideman) spars with Rudy Enms (played by Ben Wert).



PHOTOS BY BARB DRAPER

Alvin Bender (played by Johnny Wideman) is devastated to find that Mary Lichty (played by Kim Walker) is more interested in a man in a uniform than in a conscientious objector.

experiences during the war.

The audience also appreciated the live music provided by No Discernible Key. The songs provided transition from one scene to another and were carefully chosen to represent what COs would have been singing at the time. Band members also used their instruments to create interesting sound effects, including a train whistle, brakes, pattering rain and firebomb explosions.

Many thanks to Theatre of the Beat for providing this insight into the Mennonite life of a couple generations ago. As the play pointed out, the Mennonite church was forever changed, as so many young men spent time away from their sheltered world, meeting other types of Mennonites and seeing the complexity of the larger world. The audience was clearly left with the question of what would happen if Canada made military conscription compulsory again. ☸



PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Artist Meg Harder, left, and Laura Enns, one of the resident hosts at Brubacher House, look at Harder's fraktur 'From the Hands of the Earth and the Lap of the Sky' at the opening of Harder's retrospective and show at the museum on June 28. Often the purview of women, fraktur in its limited and bordered images and colours is 'fractured' by Harder in this exhibition to claim creativity for women. As the invitation to the opening noted, Harder has rearranged 'traditional motifs and symbols to offer cultural critique or create opportunities for new, hybrid mythologies and narratives.' The pictured work is clearly about feminine fertility/creativity, with female reproductive organs prominent. The title, borrowed from Jean Janzen's hymn (*Hymnal: A Worship Book, No. 97*), references creativity and care, both traditionally seen as 'womanly' pursuits.

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BOOK REVIEW

What does the past mean for the present?

European Mennonites and the Challenge of Modernity Over Five Centuries: Contributors, Detractors and Adapters.

Mark Jantzen, Mary S. Sprunger and John D. Thiesen, eds. Bethel College, Kan., 2016. *From Suffering to Solidarity: The Historical Seeds of Mennonite Interreligious, Interethnic and International Peacebuilding.*

Andrew P. Klager, ed. Pickwick Publications, Wipf and Stock, 2015, 428 pages.

REVIEW BY MAX KENNEL

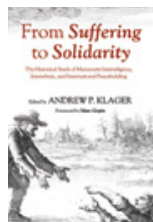
SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

The past two years have seen the publication of two interesting new collections of academic writing on Mennonite themes, one theological and the other historical. While other reviewers such as Jamie Pitts and Ben Goossen have reviewed these books in detail elsewhere, I would like to reflect on them in much broader terms and ask what they might mean for Mennonites today.

European Mennonites and the Challenge of Modernity Over Five Centuries is an essay collection that explores how Mennonites have had a broad impact on European culture and politics in the time since the 16th century into the modern era. Examining how Mennonites accepted, rejected and adapted to modernity, the book includes essays from a 2010 conference at Bethel College in North Newton, Kan., and features contributors from across Europe and North America. The essays cover topics such as Mennonites and church discipline in the Dutch Republic by Troy Osborne, Mennonites and modernity in Central Asia by Dilaram M. Inoyatova, and Mennonites and religious freedom in Prussia and Russia by Mark Jantzen and Johannes Dyck.

At the same time, *From Suffering to Solidarity* is an essay collection on how Mennonite peace theology has developed and changed since the 16 century.

Tracing the Mennonite desire to



alleviate the suffering of others, the book includes chapters on global Anabaptism by John D. Roth, human rights by Lowell Ewert, Mennonite women by Marlene Epp, and Palestine-Israel by

Alain Epp Weaver, to name just a few.

These two books are interesting because they both confront contemporary conversations that are occurring outside the walls of the church by engaging with scholars from religious and non-religious settings, and they both share a common concern for the future of Mennonite conversations about our shared history and theology.

One question that may be on our minds is: What does the Mennonite peace witness look like today in a world in which armed conflict and political violence have changed so drastically since the Mennonite peace movements of the 1970s? Another question on our minds might be: What does Mennonite history mean to us today after we have become less idealistic about the successes of the past and more aware of our many institutional failures?

These books show me that we are interested in finding answers to these questions that speak to our present realities. *From Suffering to Solidarity* suggests that Mennonite history can still inspire peace work, and *European Mennonites* shows us that Mennonite history may have had a deeper effect on the world

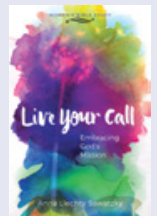
than we thought. One book is historical and continues the legacy of Mennonite reflection on the significance of the past for our present identity, and the other is about how our peace theology is moving in new and different directions while addressing the many incidents of violence in the world that call out for help from people with caring hearts and minds. ❧

Max Kennel is a doctoral student in religious studies at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ont.

/// Briefly noted

'Live Your Call' latest in annual Bible study series

What part do we play in God's plan for our lives? Getting caught up in day-to-day routines, many may miss out on opportunities to use their gifts to further God's kingdom. MennoMedia's



new Bible study guide, "Live your call," encourages women to look for these promptings in their lives. It is the latest in the Mennonite Women's Bible Study series produced annually in conjunction with Mennonite Women Canada and Mennonite Women U.S.A. Author Anna Liechty Sawatzky draws from the gospel stories to inspire women to share the gospel and follow God's leading for their lives. Noting Jesus' personal interactions, such as with the Samaritan woman at the well, and the large-scale miracles, such as the feeding of the five thousand, the sessions are designed to challenge and inspire. The study includes opportunities for reflection and response, and the sessions aim to give a balanced picture of the complexity and vitality of following God's call. "Live your call" can be used for individual study and for group settings such as Sunday school, Bible studies and retreats. The 12-session study also includes a full worship service, in keeping with previous studies in this series.

—MennoMedia

CM honoured by national church press association

By ROSS W. MUIR
Managing Editor

Canadian Mennonite executive editor Virginia A. Hostetler attended the Canadian Church Press (CCP) awards banquet, held in Quebec City on June 22, at which she received writing and layout/design certificates for work published in 2016. CCP, an association of 62 publications, exists to “encourage higher standards of religious journalism and a more positive and constructive Christian influence on contemporary civilization.” CM’s seven awards of merit are:

- **“A WALK in the dark,”** by Carol Penner (Theological Reflection, second place).
Judge’s comment: “This is a magnificent-ly sombre Advent reflection. It illuminates both the biblical conception and birth narratives. It captivates because it deals with a range of common raw emotions which are generally overlooked or downplayed in the familiar telling of these Advent and Christmas stories.”
- **YOUNG VOICES,** by Aaron Epp and Andrew Brown (Department, second place).
Judge’s comment: “Many good reasons as to why this works: There is a nice balance of reporting and opinion, with profiles and researched editorial writing included. . . . Most importantly, the choice of topics are socially relevant . . . theologically relevant . . . and well suited to the targeted audience.”
- **“THE ANIMALS of MCC,”** compiled by

- Emily Loewen (Photo Essay, second place).
Judge’s comment: “This was a wonderful submission, interesting and well done. . . . I found it inviting me to read more and to seek out more information [online]. The photographs were pleasant, warm and touching.”
- **“INSTALLING FAITH at home,”** by Carmen Brubacher and Paul Heidebrecht (Biblical Interpretation, third place).

VIEWPOINT Becoming Aryan

When Susanna Torres arrived in Litzmannstadt, Poland, in 1944, she was already a member of the Nazi resistance. Her mother, a lefty in Ukraine had come under German occupation in 1941 with Adolf Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union. During the intervening two-and-a-half years, the young Mennonite woman became a beneficiary of social wariness.

While Germans focus deliberately on Jewish resistance and Ukrainian operations, she slipped into the South for forced labor in a so-called "Ghetto" for Jews and her family recruited German soldiers. In the same months that SS death squads murdered nearly 4 of Ukraine's 1.1 million Jews, Nazi "volunteer" companies killed the 95-ethnicized and local Mennonites.

What can explain the general amnesty of Jews during the Holocaust? Not only did the Eastern European Mennonite community have a reputation for being non-violent, but also Mennonites—unlike Ukrainians, Russians, Poles and certainly Jews—were

to think of themselves as Aryans. But tens of thousands of Jews in and around the settlements in different ways. Torres recalled with horror in her post-war memoir how one SS officer shot a Jewish girl about her age on the village road. Every village tended to Jews and Slavs was extended to Mennonites, some of whom escaped deaths and housing taken from Holocaust victims.

From 1942, in Hitler's soldiers' self-issued orders on the Eastern Front, German's retreating forces continued to arrest Ukrainian Mennonites. Nearly all, in fact, chose to accompany the Wehrmacht on its trek back to occupied Poland. There, in large processing centers like Litzmannstadt, extensive operations took place of racial sorting.

"In order to become German (Germans, we were interested many times)," Torres later recounted. "Samples of blood were taken from us. . . . Twice we were raped. There we were given our German citizenship papers with all German rights."

The process of becoming Aryan, as described by Torres, tracks with the experience of tens of thousands of Mennonites in Nazi-occupied Europe. Today, a majority of Mennonites in Europe and the Americas—including many direct relatives of those who perished from Nazism—



Advent is the time of year, Christians to celebrate and celebrate on the happiest time of the year, and for some it is just that. But for others, Christmas is indeed the darkest of times, when loneliness seems to loom, when separation feels more separate, and despair calls our names. For many people it is not the most wonderful time of the year!

I remember one particularly bleak season for us, when a member of our family was dying during Advent, when we went to visit and then stayed for the funeral. We had no work the week before Christmas. There was not one diversion up to our house. I had no time for Christmas shopping or baking. I had no energy to do anything. My heart just felt cold and heavy when I listened to the church Christmas music playing all around me. I'd thought of what the person who was going, and the suffering that we had watched. Christmas arrived all day, and the suffering that we had watched. Christmas arrived all day, and the suffering that we had watched. I still remember being so much on that fourth Sunday of Advent. I had no time to sing, but I heard my community sing all around me. Christmas, O come, Emmanuel, and rejoice, rejoice Israel, who rejoices in lovely ends here. These were words I could hang on to. "Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight." The people of Israel were a people in chains, under the heavy hand of a brutal occupying army. Many were looking for God, but the prophets had gone silent. "Where was God in the darkness?"

Dreams deluged
In the Christmas stories, Mary and Joseph both receive visions, but that doesn't mean they knew everything. There were still things in the dark.

I can still imagine Mary the night after the angel had left. Shek lying in bed, thinking about everything that had just happened to her. Suddenly she was back upright. "I want to walk the night, when the angel will be here!" Maybe she heard Gabriel call and push and laugh at the same time. I can imagine Mary looking at Joseph the next day, wondering if she was going to announce the angel's visit. Day by day, she waited.

I wonder if Mary imagined, "Should I knit or sew?" I wonder if her prayers were, "Lord, you have to tell Joseph that! Please!"

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young voices

Voices singing 'Let's be jolly' . . .
Musician Nolan Kohler talks about the music that gets him into the Christmas spirit

By Aaron Epp
Young Voices Editor

Nolan Kohler knows a thing or two about music. In addition to studying vocal performance at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, the 22-year-old works part-time as an A&M radio DJ and also as a producer for CBC Manitoba. Kohler has played drums for a number of Winnipeg musical acts, including Pucker Church, Kevine Ross, and Blue Star and the Bullies. If that weren't enough musical involvement, he is also the founder and editor of a blog that is posting reviews of all shows on Radio One's popular list of 100 greatest albums of all time.

With the holidays upon us, Canadian Mennonite asked Kohler, a member of South of Lake Community Church in Abbotsford, B.C., to talk about some of his favorite Christmas music.

"Silent" by Joel Mithell
From the album *Red* (A&M Records/Universal, 2015)
"I wish I had a voice that was more Canadian singer songwriter Joel Mithell sings on this classic folk song. It's a melodic, folk song that Kohler views as ultimately positive. "Christmas is largely a season where we put aside a lot of our day-to-day wear and tear, and reflect on hope," he says. "I think that Joel Mithell has recognized the sadness of our day but still has that hope. . . . I don't think of it as a negative that we don't fall asleep."

"Sammy" by Henry Cavill
By *Justifying* Lester Burdette
from *When a Knight A Christmas Album* (Capitol/Columbia, 2006)
(Continued on page 36)



Judge's comment: "The church, it's been said, is always only ever a generation away from extinction. This article offers practical insight into ensuring that the faith of the parents lives on through the children"

- **“COVENANT FAITHFULNESS** (Assembly 2016),” by a multitude of scribes (In-depth Treatment of a News Event-Magazine, third place).

Judge's comment: "This is a very well-rounded in-depth report. Well written and edited articles on the opening presentation and that of the keynote speaker afforded genuine depth and insight into the state of the church right now. . . . This is what good journalism should do: reflect the facts and prevailing sentiment."

- **“BECOMING ARYAN,”** by Ben Goosen (Opinion Piece, third place).

Judge's comment: "Very strong writing filled with detail makes a strong case, and the challenge it presents to readers is, by the time it is laid down, impossible to ignore."

- **DEC. 12, 2016** issue, designed by Ross W. Muir and Dan Johnson (Edition Layout and Design-Magazine-Circulation Above 10,000, honourable mention).

Judge's comment: "This magazine has such a well-designed typographic structure: other magazines could learn from this design. It's truly typography as a well-woven cloth. Photos are appropriate and (wonderfully) not stock. . . . Your magazine is a lovely work of craft, and a pleasure to look at and to read." ☘

PHOTO ESSAY
The animals of MCC
Compiled by Emily Loewen
Mennonite Central Committee

Around the world, MCC supports projects that help families make a better living, helping them pay for food or school for their children. Sometimes those projects involve animals—getting loans to buy them or training and new techniques to raise them. Here's a glimpse of some of the MCC animals and how they are at work across the globe. For more photos, visit canadianmennonite.org/mcc-animals.

NETHERLANDS This cow belongs to Phleg the Frenck, who cares for her disabled son, Freek. Freek, who has suffered severe disabilities since birth due to his family's exposure to dioxin contamination during Agent Orange. The family received the care from MCC partner Veterans Association for Victims of Agent Orange/Disaster, to help boost income and financial security.

INDONESIA This goat belongs to Denny, who was treated with solar energy of her village to raise her children. Children and adults in MCC partner Bantuk, Indonesia, are learning to use solar energy to help people in the village maintain healthy living conditions. Bantuk is a village where many people have died from malaria.

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Instilling faith at home

Raising Anabaptist Mennonite children in the 21st century
By CARMEN BEHRACHER AND PAUL HEIMBROCH
SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE



You shall put these words of mine in your heart and soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and fix them as an emblem on your forehead. Teach your children, talking about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise' (Deuteronomy 11:18-19)



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MWC says farewell to a faithful servant

Glenn Fretz is the man behind the visual identity of Mennonite World Conference.

canadianmennonite.org/glenn-fretz-mwc



MC U.S.A. acknowledges 'suffering' of Jews, Palestinians

The American Mennonite church chooses divestment 'from companies that are profiting from the occupation,' a year after MC Canada.

canadianmennonite.org/mcusa-divestment



Walking together for peace in Colombia

Mennonite Central Committee partners in Colombia are walking with people affected by more than 50 years of violence.

canadianmennonite.org/Colombia-peace-partners



A man worthy of his calling

A tribute to Darrell W. Fast, 'one of the innovators and architects who helped to reshape and transform the church.'

canadianmennonite.org/darrell-fast-obituary



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/// Briefly noted

New adult colouring book of prayers from Herald Press

Herald Press's latest step into the world of adult devotional colouring books is *Amish Prayers*, offering fraktur drawings and thoughtful, contemplative prayers from Anabaptist history. The 43 prayers are translated and adapted from *Dieernsthafte Christenpflicht (Prayer Book for Earnest Christians)*, a traditional Amish prayer

book used by Anabaptists in the 16th and 17th centuries and still used by Amish people today. Each prayer is presented on the left side of each spread along with a related Bible verse and room for journaling.



On the facing page is an illustration to colour, incorporating a key phrase from the accompanying prayer using fraktur, a type of Pennsylvania Dutch folk art. Lynn Sommers, an artist and member of Community Mennonite Church in Lancaster, Pa., created each colouring page. She says that the process of creating the illustrations was "an artistic and spiritual discipline intertwined."

—MennoMedia/MC Canada

Yellow Page Directory

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Breaking the silence

Abuse response and prevention a personal calling for coordinator

BY RACHEL BERGEN

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

For Jaymie Friesen, responding to abuse and preventing it in communities of faith is a personal calling. As the abuse response and prevention coordinator at Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Manitoba, Friesen supports churches and individuals, and works to raise awareness of abuse and trauma.

Prior to beginning her position with MCC, Friesen worked with survivors of abuse in Southeast Asia through an organization called Daughters of Cambodia, where she coordinated a therapeutic photography course for women exiting the sex trade.

the abuse that occurred in her extended Mennonite family.

“A lot of my relatives are survivors of abuse,” she says. “This was something that came into my awareness in my early 20s. I’ve always known that, but it was never said to me that it was what had happened.”

From her personal experience, many abuse survivors suffer in silence, or with very little support. Without the support of the church and faith-based organizations like MCC, survivors and their families in Anabaptist circles can sometimes face more harm.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MCC

Jaymie Friesen

*‘... I witnessed survivors of serious trauma and abuse healing and reclaiming their life. It inspired a lot of hope in me.’
(Jaymie Friesen)*

“The experience was eye opening, because I witnessed survivors of serious trauma and abuse healing and reclaiming their life. It inspired a lot of hope in me,” Friesen explains. “This work was exposure to the reality that we’re innately resilient people and we can move through these things, albeit tumultuously, but we can heal as people.”

Working with Daughters of Cambodia also made her realize that abuse occurs all over the world—even in her own backyard. She returned to Manitoba to work in youth abuse education and prevention with Survivor’s Hope Crisis Centre, where she continues to work part time.

But Friesen has another, more personal motivation behind her work with MCC:

“I witnessed the effects of abuse that went unhealed and unacknowledged for so many years and I could see how the abuse had created a lot of brokenness within my extended family,” she says.

She wants to engage with Mennonite groups about these topics that are sometimes portrayed as an external problem, rather than one that also occurs within the church. “Sometimes within the Mennonite community there’s denial or a lack of awareness that abuse happens there, too,” she says. “I think it’s important that we create space to talk about that.”

But she has also seen tremendous strength and courage in her family members and those who have shared their abuse

(Continued on page 28)

(Continued from page 27)
stories with her. “Whether someone reaches out for help or doesn’t, in either case, that person is resilient simply by the fact that they have learned to live life despite



PHOTO COURTESY OF JAYMIE FRIESEN

While living in Cambodia, Jaymie Friesen, centre, coordinated a therapeutic photography course for women exiting the sex trade.

the trauma,” she says. “And in this work I get to witness that.”

Friesen offers workshops for various age groups and demographics in areas such as boundary setting, healthy sexuality, gendered violence and power dynamics in relationships. Workshops can be created or modified to meet a group’s needs.

MCC also provides support groups for survivors of abuse, worship resources, referrals to affiliated agencies, and practical tools that include promotion of healthy relationships and safety in homes and churches.

“MCC is about embodying what it means to live out the way of Jesus in relationships,” she says, “and so we need to ask ourselves what it means to walk in the way of Jesus in the aftermath of abuse. Through this program, we want to support individuals, families and churches as they go through something really traumatic.” ❧

For more resources and information about MCC Manitoba’s work in this area, visit abuseresponseandprevention.ca/.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JONAS CORNELSEN

Jonas Cornelsen, left, and Erwin Cornelsen, pictured in 2013.

The odd couple

A 23-year-old reflects on a year spent living with his 98-year-old grandfather

BY AARON EPP
Young Voices Editor

When Jonas Cornelsen tells people he spent the last year living with, and caring for, his grandfather in Vancouver, they often praise him.

While Jonas appreciated his time with his grandfather, the praise makes him uncomfortable.

“The set-up sounds pretty [idyllic], like a good family movie,” says the 23-year-old, who returned to his home city of Winnipeg last month. “You know, the grandson spends time listening to his wise old grandfather, and they go to church together and do all these wholesome things. But internally I was struggling with anxiety and loneliness.”

Although he is as healthy as a 98-

year-old can be, Erwin and his family decided it would be beneficial having Jonas live with him and help him with his daily routine around the house he has lived in since 1957, one year after emigrating from Germany. Jonas was happy to seize the opportunity, seeing it as a way of exploring an alternative way of living.

“I’ll have what I need, I’ll even earn a modest wage and all that,” Jonas told *Canadian Mennonite* last summer, shortly before moving to Vancouver, “but for me, the importance of doing it is a lot more in trying to walk the talk of caring for each other and expressing alternative ways of living to what we often consider success or a career track.”

Jonas's anxiety this past year stemmed from the realities of living with his grandfather not always matching his expectations. "Even though he's a close family member and I love him very much, it was harder to have just typical day-to-day conversations with him," Jonas says. "It's harder to connect with someone that old. He recognized that too. . . . At times, I really, genuinely enjoyed his company. I just needed it in smaller doses than it sometimes was given to me."

Jonas's responsibilities included preparing meals and doing housework. "To keep [my grandfather] living well at home, for as long as it made sense and as long as he was enjoying it, that was my [goal]," he says.

Formerly a pastor, Erwin always starts and ends his days with Scripture reading and prayer. Sometimes Jonas joined his grandfather for those times, and sometimes he did not.

"Early on, I followed his routine pretty rigorously, but then found I needed space from that regimented routine," Jonas says. "I had to acknowledge that it wasn't as life-giving for me as it is for him."

It was hard for Jonas to talk with Erwin explicitly about the difference in their devotional lives, but later in the year Erwin told Jonas he never saw it as a problem.

"One of the things he said he learned from me was to give young people the freedom to live their lives and express their faith in their own ways, and not to impose his own ways of doing things," Jonas says.

He adds that one of the best parts of living with his grandfather was seeing how curious Erwin still is about the world after almost a century of living. Experiencing life with his grandfather also made Jonas see the world in a new light.

"The world the way it makes sense to me looks strange from his perspective, and it was fun to discover those things that look different to us," Jonas says. "Things are changing faster than he can keep up with, but he's okay with that. He's let go of his need to control things. . . . He's more curious than fearful about the way things are happening and what might be coming next."

Living with his grandfather was harder than Jonas imagined it would be. Accepting that fact was even more difficult. "It was

sad how much I didn't like it sometimes, or didn't want to be there," Jonas says. "It was hard . . . to acknowledge that I wasn't always enjoying it, even though I was doing something I valued. [I learned that] just because we value something, it can't always sustain our energy for the task."

As Jonas returned to Winnipeg, Erwin was preparing to sell his house and move into a residence for seniors in Abbotsford, B.C. That meant letting go of the idea that he would die in his home.

"It was kind of fun to help him navigate those [decisions] and be one of his primary conversation partners and all that in figuring this out," Jonas says. "I was proud of my ability to not only be a grandchild and servant to him, but also a friend and someone to figure things out with."

Ultimately, Jonas is thankful that he got to spend the past year with his grandfather. "If I dwell on what was hard, it's emotionally difficult," Jonas says, "but even while I was there, the good that I could see that I was doing, or kind of the reward of knowing that you really changed someone's life, was valuable. And Opa never let me forget that I was doing good stuff." ❧

'Things are changing faster than he can keep up with, but he's okay with that.'
(Jonas Cornelsen)



Formerly a pastor, Erwin Cornelsen always starts and ends his days with Scripture reading and prayer.



PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE BY JONAS CORNELSEN

Mike Wiebe, Raya Cornelsen, Rebecca Klassen-Wiebe and Lauren Harms visit with Erwin Cornelsen in his kitchen.

Calendar

Manitoba

Oct. 13-15: MC Canada special delegate assembly to discuss and vote on the future direction the national and area churches will take.

Registration is open; see more at news.mennonitechurch.ca/.

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



Classifieds

For Sale

For sale: complete equipment for sock making. Includes 15 one-hundred-plus-year-old commercial sock knitting machines (Komet Knitter and Scott and Williams model B5, Google these models to see

photos online) recently in full operation in Barrys Bay, Ont. Original manual and a 20-foot container full of yarn. \$10,000 or best offer. Contact Theo: **613 756 2212** or email **theo28lange@outlook.com**.

Employment Opportunities



Employment opportunity
Choral Music Teacher

Anchored in the Anabaptist tradition, UMEI Christian High School exists to educate the whole person, cultivating full academic, spiritual and individual potential.

UMEI Christian high school is seeking a dynamic and engaging individual to join the school family as Choral Music Teacher. The Choral Music Teacher must be committed to providing an education that graduates students who are spiritually fulfilled, academically excellent, and empowered to make a difference.

Qualifications/responsibilities:

- Have a Bachelor of Education and hold a valid Teaching Certificate
- Must have music major or extensive teaching experience in music programs.
- Ability to build a program with an Anabaptist/Mennonite perspective.
- Ability to lead student body in weekly music chapels; accompaniment through piano/guitar highly recommended.
- Instrumental music and other teachables an asset.
- Seeking highly qualified dynamic teacher.
- A high energy level and commitment to establishing and maintaining an excellent music program.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.
- Ability to work as part of a team that is committed to whole-person education.

For further information visit our website umei.ca/careers/ or contact Sonya Bedal, Principal, at (519)326-7448. Applications will be received until a suitable candidate is found.

Please send cover letter and resume to the attention of: Sonya Bedal at principal@umei.ca.



Employment opportunity
Lead Pastor

Niagara United Mennonite Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario is inviting applications for a FULL-TIME LEAD PASTOR. Start time is early 2018.

We are a congregation with approximately 200 in attendance for worship and seek a pastor to lead in growing people as intentional followers of Jesus and missional servants to our community. The pastor we seek will be committed to Anabaptist theology with strengths in leadership, evangelism through community engagement, preaching, teaching and pastoral care.

Inquires, resumes and letters of interest will be received until the end of September 2017, and may be directed to: **pastoraltransitions@mcec.ca**

To view the Pastoral Profile, visit **<https://mcec.ca/jobs/lead-minister>**.

Healthcare Recruitment

Employment opportunity



Company Overview

Fairview Mennonite Home and Parkwood Mennonite Home are now seeking a CEO to work with our senior leadership team to maintain our leading-edge position in providing elder care programs as well as maintaining our uniqueness within the communities we serve.

Position Priorities

We provide compassionate care to 180 long-term care residents; independent, supportive and assisted living across 364 suites and condominiums as well as community health and wellness centres which provide programs, services and activities for adults 55+.

We're seeking a passionate leader with excellent leadership, communication, and customer service skills. As the CEO, you must have a strong knowledge base of long-term care operations as well as strong relationship-building skills to ensure excellent relationships with staff, residents, families and the broader community.

Background Qualifications & Attributes

- Graduate degree in health care administration, business administration or related discipline
- Expertise in personnel and organizational leadership, business administration, gerontology and health care
- A minimum of 5 years' experience in a senior leadership role in health care, long-term care, or related field

Compensation

A competitive, comprehensive compensation package including an excellent pension plan has been designed to attract star performers.

Please apply in confidence to

Sue Farren, Talent Acquisition Manager
Maxwell Management Group Ltd.
sfarren@maxwellmanagementgroup.com
1-855-305-4078 #208



Employment opportunity
Lead Pastor

Are you excited to help a church a vision and deeply consider what it means to be Christ's example of love?

The Bergthaler Mennonite Church of Altona, located in southern Manitoba, is looking for a pastor to engage and serve their congregation.

We are looking for a Lead Pastor to join our team as we continue to strengthen our relationships with Christ, each other and the community.

Ideal candidates would have the following:

- Capacity to relate to various age groups
- Experience working in a church setting – in the areas of worship, pastoral care, and nurturing gifts
- Commitment to Anabaptist theology and practice, biblical preaching and teaching

We are looking for someone who is deeply rooted in faith and can relate to a variety of people. Someone who has a missional outlook and a servant's heart.

Please submit letters of interest and résumés to Stephanie Friesen, Pastor Search Committee Chair, via email: marsteph@mts.net or call (204) 324-1555 with questions. We will begin looking at resumes on July, 31, 2017.



Employment opportunity
Executive Director

Parkview Services for Seniors is a not-for-profit community providing independent living for seniors in housing and life-lease and long-term care in the beautiful community of Stouffville, Ontario. Parkview is proud of its Mennonite heritage. Our focus on innovative practices and values derived from our Christian perspective create an excellent basis for the compassionate care we deliver.

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director is responsible for the overall operation and performance of the three facilities on the Parkview Services for Seniors campus, in compliance with pertinent regulations and standards governing each entity.

Qualifications:

- Bachelors' degree and/or equivalent level training in Health Sciences or a related field
- Minimum of five years progressively responsible experience in a health care environment, providing leadership and a proven track record of innovation and change management
- Experience working with and reporting to a Board of Directors and knowledge of not-for-profit and charitable status organizations
- Knowledge of all relevant legislation and regulations (e.g., Long-Term Care Homes Act and Housing Regulation, Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulation), accreditation standards, and the ability to interpret and administer collective agreements in the Ontario setting

Competitive salary and benefit package, commensurate with education and experience. Please submit resume to staylor@parkviewhome.ca.



Employment opportunity

Mennonite Church Manitoba

Mennonite Church Manitoba is accepting applications for the position of Associate Program Director of Camping Ministries

(APD). The APD oversees all aspects of our summer and winter programs including their design, promotion, implementation and evaluation. The APD also provides on-going support and training to all summer program staff and volunteers. This is a 1.0 fte position.

The application deadline is September 21, 2017. For more information please visit our "News" page at <http://www.campswithmeaning.org>.

Employment opportunity

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC) is seeking a Mission Engagement Minister. This new position can begin as soon as September 2017 but will remain vacant until an ideal candidate is selected. There will be an initial three-year term at 1 FTE.

Responsibilities

The person will be responsible for the overall management of the following:

Promote and support ReLearning Community initiatives for congregations by

- developing ReLearning Community as a core congregational resource within MCEC
- leading the ReLearning Community Team
- supporting congregational teams on the Relearning Community journey

Foster intercultural connections and competency within MCEC, including but not limited to, teaching Anabaptist principles to newcomer congregational leaders via preaching and relationship-building.

Engage congregations with international Witness and MCEC mission initiatives, promoting awareness and financial support.

Qualifications

- Be a self starter as well as a team player
- Proven cross-cultural ability
- Knowledge and experience with disciple-making or coaching principles
- Demonstrated spiritual and emotional maturity
- A passion and commitment to faith, Anabaptist theology, the Church and its ministry

Resumes are due by Friday, August 18, 2017

Please forward to:

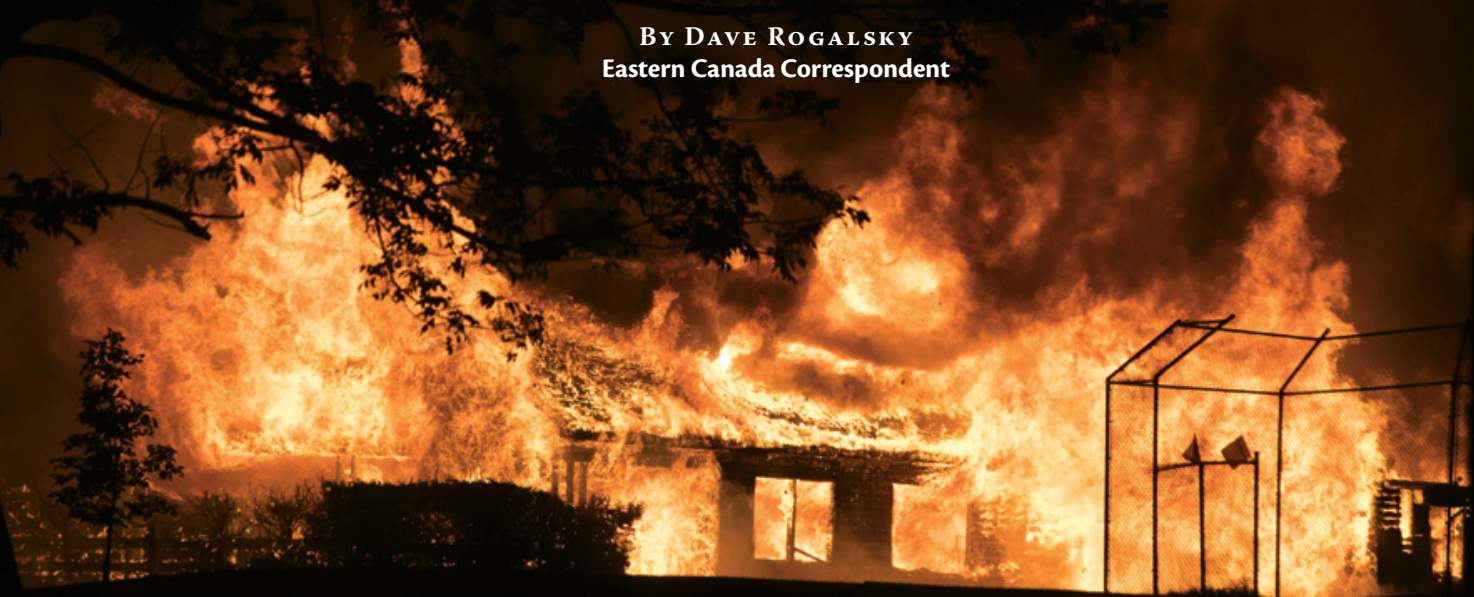
Brent Charette, Operations and Church Engagement Minister
Phone: 226-476-2500 or 855-476-2500 Ext. 709
bcharette@mcec.ca,
www.mcec.ca



Summer memories go up in smoke

Canada Day fire claims Chesley Lake Camp main building

BY DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent



Chesley Lake Camp, located west of Owen Sound, Ont., lost its main building to fire on Canada Day. The building housed offices, a restaurant, tuck shop and many memories.

The fire has been classified as accidental and no further investigation is being carried out. Fireworks had been displayed near the building on the evening of July 1 and the fire began several hours later.

While waiting for firefighters to come, campers carried water from the nearby lake to the building in an attempt to control the fire but were soon called off as a large propane tank was in danger of becoming engulfed. Hot spots continued to smoulder for several days, and the building has been declared a total loss.

The camp opened in 1948. Owned by an association of Mennonites, it served Mennonites from the three founding churches now in Mennonite Church Eastern Canada from the beginning. While the camp originally ran programs for children and youth, these ended as church-run camps at Hidden Acres, Silver Lake and Fraser Lake opened. The camp has cabins, a trailer park, two golf courses and other amenities, including the Hallman Chapel, where Vacation Bible School (VBS) is held every summer.

Sheryl Plouffe, a friend of the camp and a designated spokesperson, said that plans are to rebuild, but that for this summer the tuck shop is being moved and trailers are being moved in to replace the offices and restaurant.

Neil Snyder, a regular at the camp, said that, in order for VBS to run, all the materials that had been stored in the building needed to be recreated by the camp staff. A large tent has been set up to run the VBS this year. ☘

PHOTOS BY NEIL SNYDER

PHOTO ABOVE: The Chesley Lake Camp main building, that housed a restaurant, tuck shop and offices, burned to the ground on Canada Day.

PHOTO RIGHT: Chesley Lake can be seen through the charred remains of the camp's main building.



If anyone has photos of the building, or of camp staff and activities in years past, the camp staff would much appreciate it if these could be digitized and sent by email to clc@gbtl.ca, as the building contained many photos that were not stored elsewhere.

