

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

November 20, 2017

Volume 21 Number 22



MARTIN LUTHER:  
"HERE I STAND"

DAVID SCHMIDT  
Cory Schmitt

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## inside

Which Jesus are you waiting for? 4

Dick Benner obituary: A man who loved the church 14

Snapshots 32

## EDITORIAL

# Remembering the saints

GINNY A. HOSTETLER  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

**A**lmost 13 years ago my family said our final goodbye to my mother. Grace Magdalene Bender Schwartzenruber lived a full life on two continents, always actively participating in her extended family, church and larger community. I once observed that she and my dad “collected” friends everywhere they went. Our family’s dining room table always had room for guests, planned for or unexpected. That also meant that my parents, siblings and I could travel to many locations and enjoy meals with friends and hospitality for the night.

One of the last acts of saying goodbye to Mother were the funeral visitation times, held in the small town where she and Daddy retired. Exhausted from travel and grief, and being an introvert at heart, I dreaded those many hours of standing, shaking countless hands and making small talk. But life—and death—had a surprise for me.

Those long visitation times, and the funeral itself, brought a special kind of joy amidst the pain. As I stood in the greeting line at the funeral home, I looked into the eyes of people who had interacted with Mother in ways unknown to me. There were cousins, neighbours and bowling partners. People who served on church committees with her and who sang in ensembles with her. There were people who had appreciated her pastoral visits and had read the church newsletter

she edited. Some of them wept; many of them told stories both poignant and trivial. Some even told jokes—that my mother would have laughed at!

A reporter for our local paper writes a regular column called “Lifetimes,” each entry about a recently deceased person in our area. Expanding from the simple obituary, she teases out interesting facts and threads in each person’s life. She tells of their talents, passions and contributions to family and community. Photos, both old and recent, help tell the story.



*Canadian Mennonite’s* Milestones pages include short death notices of people from communities across the country. These local heroes are gone, and we acknowledge their lives and their passing. We also publish obituaries of people known for their contributions to the larger church. Neither the short notices nor the longer obituaries begin to tell the richness of each life. But these recognitions help us express gratitude for the people who have made a difference in our lives.

Today’s issue includes obituaries for Ralph Lebold and Dick Benner, both of whom played a part in my younger years and more recent years. (Yes, my parents knew them both!) These men lived out their faith with passion and dedication to Christ’s people and the world.

Each November the Christian church celebrates All Saints Day (Nov. 1) and

Eternity Sunday (the last Sunday before Advent). Both of these invite us to remember and celebrate the faithful “saints” who have gone before us. Their examples teach us and encourage us in our own faith journeys.

At my mother’s passing, I learned that customs at the time of death can bring special treasures to our lives. When grief is raw, tributes and rituals remind us to be grateful for the part our loved ones played in the world. In recounting their lives, we celebrate that each of them was God’s gift to us, even in their imperfections. Their lives mattered. Their lives still matter. Their legacy lives on.

So we read the obituaries and profiles in the local paper and we stand in the visitation lines. When we show up at the funeral home, when we weep with the grieving ones, when we take part in the storytelling, we are joining in the legacy of the departed one. We acknowledge the life of someone who was a beloved child of God.

Our presence at a time of grief sends a powerful message: In God’s eyes, in the larger scheme of things, your loved one mattered to the world. That life was precious. Your love for that person matters to me. You matter.

The Bible calls Christ’s followers—both the living and those who have gone before us—“saints.” “We feebly struggle, they in glory shine,” says the hymn. “Yet all are one in thee, for all are thine. Alleluia, Alleluia!”

## **Holiday publishing schedule**

Just a reminder that our next two issues will be published three weeks apart. Our Christmas issue will be dated Dec. 11 and our first issue of 2018 will be dated Jan. 1. After that, we will return to our regular two-week publishing schedule.

## **ABOUT THE COVER:**

**The Metzger Collection at Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford, B.C., hosted a party on Oct. 31 to mark the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther posting his 95 theses on the door of Germany’s Wittenberg Cathedral. Greg Thiessen, manager of the Metzger Collection, who dressed as Martin Luther for the event, narrates the Reformation timeline before a bust of Luther. For more information on the ‘Reformation or Reformations’ display, on until Feb. 10, 2018, visit [bit.ly/metzger-collection-luther](http://bit.ly/metzger-collection-luther).**

PHOTO: AMY DUECKMAN, CANADIAN MENNONITE

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# contents

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**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

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## Which Jesus are you looking for? 4

In our Advent feature, Saskatchewan correspondent **DONNA SCHULZ** reflects on how our expectations colour the way we perceive the Messiah.

## A leader of leaders 13

The late **RALPH LEBOLD** was 'passionate about pastoral ministry, pastoral leadership training, and marriage and family therapy,' and was 'instrumental in getting women pastors into leadership roles in Mennonite churches in Ontario.'

## Where do we go from here? 19

Alberta correspondent **DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD** discusses the future of the nationwide and regional churches with each of their executive ministers. Plus, reports on pages 20 to 24 from meetings in B.C., Manitoba and Eastern Canada, at which the laity heard how the restructured church will impact them directly, and then got to respond.



## Young Voices 27-29

In 'Winding down,' YV editor **AARON EPP** reports on the disbanding of the Emerging Voices Initiative following the results of decisions to restructure Mennonite Church Canada at Special Assembly 2017 last month. He also reflects on the lasting impact of *Far Beyond Inspired*, a

CD of music by Douglas Mennonite Church singers and musicians, in 'Fifteen years after inspiration struck.'

## Regular features:

For discussion **6** Readers write **7** Milestones **10**

A moment from yesterday **11** Online NOW! **25**

Yellow Page **26** Calendar **31** Classifieds **31**

## Remembering the saints 2

**VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER**

## Hermeneutic of hope 8

**MELISSA MILLER**

## Are you grateful today? 9

**MARLOW GINGERICH**



Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press



## ADVENT FEATURE

# Which Jesus are you waiting for?

*How our expectations colour the way we perceive the Messiah*

BY DONNA SCHULZ

SASKATCHEWAN CORRESPONDENT

THE 1683 GERO CROSS IN THE COLOGNE CATHEDRAL IN GERMANY



*'Humans want their heroes to conquer and to offer great things to the people, not to suffer and die.'*  
(Blogger John Oakes)

Advent, according to one definition, is “the arrival of a notable person, thing or event.” Yet along the way, we’ve come to associate Advent not with arrival, but with waiting.

In our homes, Advent is a time of preparation. We shop for presents, hang wreaths, display cherished nativity scenes and decorate trees. We bake cookies, buy turkeys, prepare stuffing and set the table. And we await the arrival of family and friends.

In our churches, choirs rehearse new anthems and beloved carols, children don bathrobes and memorize lines, pastors search for innovative ways to tell the familiar story. And we light candles as we count the weeks until that special day that marks the arrival of that “notable person.”

For whom are we waiting? The obvious answer is Jesus. Or is it?

It wasn’t obvious to the Jews during the Roman occupation of Palestine. For centuries they’d been waiting for the promised Messiah. But when Jesus came along, it wasn’t at all clear that this carpenter from Nazareth was, in fact, the one they were waiting for. From our post-resurrection perspective of faith in Jesus, it’s hard to understand how they missed it.

Lest we be too critical, even John the Baptist had doubts about Jesus’ claim to the Messiah title. Matthew 11:2-11 records that after Herod had John imprisoned, John sent his disciples to ask Jesus: “*Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?*”

How could this be? John the Baptist fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecy: “*Prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.*” He was baptizing and preaching repentance because he knew the Messiah’s arrival was imminent.

When Jesus came to John for baptism, John seemed to have it figured out. In fact, he tried to deter Jesus. “*I need to be baptized by you,*” John told Jesus, “*and do you come*



*In our homes, Advent is a time of preparation. We shop for presents, hang wreaths, display cherished nativity scenes and decorate trees.*

to me?” But Jesus insisted that it was the right thing to do. So John baptized him and presumably witnessed God’s Spirit descending on Jesus and heard God’s voice saying, *“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”*

What happened, then, between Matthew 3, when John baptized Jesus, and Matthew 11, when John sent his disciples to ask whether Jesus was the Messiah or not? What happened that shook John’s confidence in Jesus? I wonder if John’s uncertainty had something to do with his messianic expectations.

*[W]hen Jesus came along, it wasn’t at all clear that this carpenter from Nazareth was, in fact, the one they were waiting for. From our post-resurrection perspective of faith in Jesus, it’s hard to understand how they missed it.*

People flocked to see John. It was like an old-fashioned revival meeting without the tent, and people answered the altar call even without the choir singing “Just As I Am.” But when the Pharisees and Sadducees decided to check out this desert evangelist, things got really interesting. *“You brood of vipers!”* John challenged them. *“Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?”* Aside from the obvious fact that John didn’t think highly of these religious leaders, the last part of his question—*“the coming wrath”*—reveals something about John’s

expectations of the Messiah.

John dared them to *“produce fruit in keeping with repentance,”* and warned them that being children of Abraham wouldn’t be enough to save them. He said, *“The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”*

And then he spoke of the one whose way he was preparing: *“He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering the*

*wheat into his barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”*

Again, from our post-resurrection, post-Pentecost perspective, it may seem clear to us that John was talking about Jesus. Indeed, John was talking about the Messiah, but what kind of Messiah was he expecting? It sounds like John’s Messiah was someone who would upset the existing order, quite possibly with violence, and root out what was evil or unproductive.

John’s expectations of the Messiah weren’t all that different from those of the Pharisees and Sadducees he rebuked. The

Jews—John included—were waiting for a political leader who would overthrow their oppressors and restore the free nation of Israel to the glory it knew under King David.

From everything John could see, Jesus wasn’t on that trajectory. The InterVarsity Press (IVP) New Testament Commentary Series states: “Jesus’ ministry had so far fulfilled none of John’s eschatological promises. . . . It is no wonder that John doubted, and that John’s questions arose when he heard of Jesus’ deeds, not in spite of them.”

John Oakes, a Christian apologist and blogger at a site called Evidence for Christianity, says it’s not surprising that the Jews were waiting for a conquering Messiah. Many prophetic passages speak of the emergence of this kind of leader. However, passages such as Isaiah 53 describe a very different Messiah: a suffering servant. Oakes writes: “It seems the Jews did not tend to pay nearly as much attention to this role of the Messiah. This . . . is human nature. Humans want their heroes to conquer and to offer great things to the people, not to suffer and die.”

Jesus was not the kind of Messiah whom John the Baptist was expecting. But Oakes suggests that he may not be the kind of Messiah we’re waiting for either. “Many make him into a cosmic bellhop—delivering blessings and solving all problems,” writes Oakes. “Theirs is the Jesus of name-it-and-claim-it:

the prosperity gospel. Others who have strong convictions about social justice make a Jesus to their liking. Still others, premillennialists, have him coming back to be the head of a revived Jewish kingdom at the end of time. The lesson for us is that we, too, are tempted to form the Messiah in our own image.”

Perhaps we'd do well to examine our own expectations. Our world is filled with fear and uncertainty, characterized by the politics of division and ever-greater economic disparities. It's tempting to look for a “Super Jesus” who will overthrow the Donald Trumps and the Kim Jong-uns of this world, and usher in an era of justice and peace.

But Jesus wasn't that kind of Messiah. When John's disciples asked, “*Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?*” Jesus' answer was a gentle reminder that John's image of the Messiah was incomplete. “*Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.*”

Here Jesus alludes to both Isaiah 35:5-6 and Isaiah 61:1. The IVP New Testament Commentary Series says that, in alluding to these passages, Jesus “reminded John's disciples that the works he was performing might be less dramatic than a fire baptism, but Isaiah had already offered them as signs of the messianic era.”

We don't know whether John found comfort in Jesus' answer, but we know Jesus deeply respected John. In Matthew 11:9-10, he identifies John as a prophet and his own forerunner. In verse 11, he says, “*Among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*” This surprising statement isn't meant to lower John's status, but rather to elevate the lowly among Jesus' followers. It is completely consistent with Jesus' messianic mission.

It wasn't that John got it wrong. Jesus' followers were baptized with the Holy Spirit and with fire on the day of Pentecost. And that Holy-Spirit baptism empowered them to carry out the work Jesus called them to do—that of making

*It's tempting to look for a 'Super Jesus' who will overthrow the Donald Trumps and the Kim Jong-uns of this world, and usher in an era of justice and peace. . . . But Jesus wasn't that kind of Messiah.*

disciples of all nations. The Book of Acts is filled with stories of Jesus' followers healing the sick, raising the dead, and preaching the good news to the poor, the rich and anyone else who would listen.

Jesus' followers also formed communities that worshipped together and cared for each other. They did this because Jesus had told them, “*By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*” Because of their love for each other, and their willingness to include everyone, regardless of race, class or gender, they started to be known by a new name: Christians.

According to *Relevant*, a Christian magazine and website, the -ian suffix meant “belonging to a party.” A Christian, then, was someone who belonged to Christ's party. Perhaps because Jesus'

followers wanted to be like Christ, they eventually embraced the new name.

Sadly, those who call themselves Christian haven't always lived up to the name. Christians have excluded people because of race, class and gender. Christians have ignored the needs of the hungry and the hurting. Christians have waged war in the name of Christ.

Again, according to *Relevant*, “the ‘Christian’ label is ever-redefining based on the reputation we give it.” The world has expectations of us. Are we up to the challenge of giving the name “Christian” the reputation it deserves? When we love each other, when we welcome our neighbours, introduce them to Jesus and make disciples of them—then we are the embodiment of Christ. Then we are Christian. ✎

### /// For discussion

1. What are the rituals or preparations at your house as you get ready for the Advent/Christmas season? Which rituals or preparations are most time-consuming? Which are most tedious? Which are your favourites? Which are the most important?
2. Donna Schulz writes that, “when Jesus came along, it wasn't at all clear that this carpenter from Nazareth was, in fact, the one they were waiting for.” What kind of Messiah were the Jewish leaders expecting? Do you think John the Baptist was disappointed in Jesus?
3. Schulz quotes John Oakes, who writes, “Humans want their heroes to conquer and to offer great things to the people, not to suffer and die.” Do you agree? What does it mean to “form the Messiah in our own image”? Do we expect Jesus to deliver blessings and solve all our problems?
4. If we are followers of Jesus, the suffering servant, does that mean the church needs to see suffering as part of its mission? Is the church in Canada suffering today? Is suffering included in the Christmas message?

—BY BARB DRAPER

See related resources at  
[www.commonword.ca/go/1406](http://www.commonword.ca/go/1406)

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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. All letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines. Send them to [letters@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:letters@canadianmennonite.org) and include the author's contact information and mailing address. Preference is given to letters from MC Canada congregants.

### ✉ More responses to Maple View's paid supplement on sexuality

**RE: "HONOUR GOD with Your Bodies"** insert, Sept. 25.

I find myself in the awkward position of defending my theological adversaries. I think the publication of the Maple View statement was appropriate. The authors of the statement have communicated their sincere concern to sister congregations in MC Canada through a rigorous and theologically articulate document. This represents an invitation to actual debate.

Regrettably, the statement probably comes 10 years too late. It should have been argued—for and against—within the Being a Faithful Church framework.

I also think *Canadian Mennonite's* decision to allow the publication was the correct decision. I would discourage too many expressions of regret on that front, though. Otherwise, it may be too hard to do the correct thing next time around. My one suggestion is that the statement really ought to have been made available online as well.

Speaking of doing the correct thing, Matthew Froese, in his letter to the editor (Oct. 23, page 11) has the right idea. He engages with the Maple View statement and advances an alternate position.

I am quite convinced the authors of this statement have taken liberties with Scripture. However, my personal commitment is to read through, and think hard about, each of the many Scripture references in the document, when I have time. Not that it is likely to change my mind. Does anyone ever change their mind? But you never know.

**RUSSEL SNYDER-PENNER,  
WATERLOO, ONT.**

**I APPLAUD AND** support Maple View Mennonite Church for its insert and completely support its point

of view. I believe the church stood up for what the Bible says and for its convictions.

The sexuality issue portion of the Being a Faithful Church process is, to me, quite ironic considering the title: We are not being "faithful" to the Word. Is the issue attendance, finances, or being seen by the community as accepting of all and inclusive?

We will succeed and grow as a church community if we are faithful, if we are truly being a faithful church.

Others have cancelled their subscriptions, and I'm borderline, no longer associating with the Mennonite church, much like others have done.

**JAMES FRIESEN**

*James Friesen attends Danforth Mennonite Church in Toronto.*

**I AM A** transplant into the Mennonite family. When we began this journey I was asked to accept the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, which I was comfortable doing. I was informed that not all Mennonites were happy with the *Confession*, but that it was the document we were working with.

Over these last 13 years I estimate that 90 percent of *Canadian Mennonite* issues contain articles suggesting change or of individuals sharing how they contradicted our *Confession*. We were encouraged to be tolerant, loving, peaceable and accepting, and to listen to other points of view.

I am asking what happened to that tolerant, loving attitude, when not an individual—but an entire congregation—expressed its understanding of Scripture and how to live it out?

I applaud the courage of Maple View and the courage of *CM* to circulate its point of view. I am embarrassed that some of my church family is ostracizing, rather than listening, loving and accepting those we disagree with.

**CHARLES BYER, PORT ROWAN, ONT.**

**WHILE I DISAGREE** with the position of Maple View Mennonite Church, that is not the focus of my concern here. My real concern is why *Canadian Mennonite* would accept it as a paid supplement and give it centre-fold status and glossy paper. I understand that, in the name of "fostering objectivity and dialogue," the magazine feels a certain obligation to print hurtful letters condemning our LBGQTQ community, but accepting money to do so is simply wrong. As a church-supported publication, it takes an implied position and negates the apology given by Mennonite Church Canada's General Board.

**RON HARDER, KITCHENER, ONT.**

**WE ALL INTERPRET** information through our past

experiences and unconscious biases. This becomes problematic when we are emotionally attached to a particular point of view. Depending on the bias we begin with, similar comments may be understood differently. The Sept. 25, Oct. 9 and Oct. 23 issues of *Canadian Mennonite* demonstrate this.

The seven-year Being a Faithful Church process was a major effort in helping us to listen carefully to each

other. Sadly, it and the final resolution at Assembly 2016 in Saskatoon are being understood differently.

I believe that the “Honour God with Your Bodies” insert in the Sept. 25 issue respectfully expressed the opinions of Maple View Mennonite Church. In contrast, the responding critical letters sounded disrespectful. They suggested a misunderstanding of Maple View’s perspective. We need to respect other people’s

## FAMILY TIES

# Hermeneutic of hope

MELISSA MILLER

Last weekend, I attended a wedding. The bride and groom asked their guests to register by highlighting their favourite verse in a Bible that they will carry into their new, shared life. A few days later, I sat beside my mother’s hospital bed and read to her from Psalm 121. Her long life has been lived in the shadow of mountains, and her faith has been shaped by the God who is more steadfast and enduring than mountains. At the wedding and the hospital, I marvelled at the power of Scripture to inspire, strengthen and guide. I give thanks for the Bible.

In a previous column (Oct. 23, page 8), I wrote about the “respectful critique” or “hermeneutic of suspicion” that I bring to the sacred Scriptures. I am grateful for readers who have responded, adding to what is a rich conversation. In this column, I offer a balancing principle, for I also come to Scripture with a hermeneutic of hope.

First, though, I need to reiterate that my primary hermeneutic is that of

Jesus. When I look at a scripture, when I discuss it with others, when I prepare to preach, I ask, “How does this scripture look through ‘the lens of Jesus?’” I was encouraged by the thoughtful guidance on biblical interpretation provided by our national church. Specifically I am referring to Being a Faithful Church 4

(available online at [commonword.ca](http://commonword.ca)). Under a title of “Using the Bible in helpful and unhelpful ways,” one principle declares: “The life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus are central, and serve as the critical lens of interpretation that helps us understand all of Scripture.” Amen!

In the same document, we are cautioned to avoid “generalizations without having immersed ourselves in particular texts.” Similarly, “We should not assume that our own context is either static or normative when interpreting the Bible . . . we live in a changing context, and our understandings are partial.” Truly my context is not static. Certainly the norms for a 21st-century Canadian woman are different from the norms of biblical times, and my understandings are partial.

These reflections grew from questions about the Bible’s helpfulness in ethical

*With the model of the Jesus—known in the gospels and living among us today—we can approach Scripture hopefully.*

decisions today. These are not abstract questions. For example, some 2,000 Canadians have elected for medically assisted death in the last two years. Did any of them seek and find support for their actions in the Bible, as they endured such suffering? When family members are faced with complex decisions about

medical procedures to prolong the life—or end the misery—of their loved one, can they find direction in the Bible?

Does the Bible have anything to say about the conditions under which a person might seek to end a pregnancy? Or which infertility treatments to seek? Do we find guidance when selecting which methods of birth control we are to use, if any? Which would we avoid for religious reasons? In short, as robust, precious and sacred as we find the Bible to be, we encounter limitations in using it as the sole resource for some ethical decisions.

Nevertheless, we have hope. With the model of the Jesus—known in the gospels and living among us today—we can approach Scripture hopefully. Surely hope was operating as the wedding guests lined up and carefully selected a Bible verse. Surely hope was operating as I saw my ailing mother soothed by the words of Scripture that testify to a faithful God. I pray that we may continue to wrestle with the Bible, to listen for God’s voice in

the voice of the other, and to be open to the treasures found in the Bible’s rich and varied textures.

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





right to their opinion, just as we want our opinion respected.

The “General Board confession to the LGBTQ community” (Oct. 9, page 9), while appropriate, neglected to recognize how often the “straight” majority felt afraid to openly express our support for the official position of our denomination, a fact that I am sure is difficult for many of the LGBTQ community to comprehend.

If both sides of this conversation had been listening empathetically, neither would have felt threatened.

I believe that “*Canadian Mennonite* responds” (Oct. 23, page 12) was appropriate. It recognized that within our church community we must respectfully listen to each other’s opinions, even if we initially disagree.

IVAN UNGER, CAMBRIDGE, ONT.

(Continued on page 10)

## GOD, MONEY AND ME

# Are you grateful today?

MARLOW GINGERICH

Although it is only November, my community is starting to put up festive decorations and the blank spaces on my calendar are filling up quickly. A list of gifts for family and friends will soon land me in check-out lines where I will almost certainly be asked perfunctorily, “How are you today?” Most customers will respond innocuously and some will be too preoccupied to respond at all. However, I was recently challenged during a sermon by my local pastor, to reframe these interactions with a novel response: “I’m grateful.”

His sermon focussed on the passage from Luke where Jesus encounters 10 lepers on the road to Jerusalem. They plead for his mercy, and he miraculously heals them, instructing them to go and show themselves to the priests. But only one of the lepers turns back to give thanks for his healing. Jesus tells him, “*Your faith has made you well.*”

It is a faith rooted in a heart of gratitude to a God of abundance. Is ours? We don’t know for certain why the other nine men kept walking. Perhaps they felt entitled to healing after such suffering, or perhaps they were afraid that their healing wasn’t real or wouldn’t last.

When we survey our circumstances, do we see the provision of God in our world? Or do we have a sense of entitlement? Are we letting fear stop us from

practising gratitude? But that is not what God wants of us nor for us. He wants us to be like the one who turned back and worshipped with a grateful heart.

In my role at Abundance Canada, I am grateful to work with so many people who are like “the one.” They understand that all they have is from God, are truly grateful for it, and want to turn back and say thanks through generous giving.

I was inspired recently by working with Susan (a pseudonym), a woman putting her gratitude into action. With real estate prices in her area soaring, her property sale left her with more cashflow than she’d ever had before. She was grateful for this financial blessing and wanted to do something meaningful with the proceeds.



*We all have so much to be grateful for each day, so it should be our greatest joy to give our thanks to God.*

After hearing about Abundance Canada’s Flexible Gifting Accounts, she made an appointment. We worked together, planning and organizing her way of giving back.

Of course, she had to balance the tension between giving freely and determining how much to keep for her own needs, but gratitude empowered her to overcome the fear of not having enough. Funds were transferred to Abundance Canada, timed so that the resulting charitable donation receipt was most relevant

to her income-tax situation.

Susan blessed more than a dozen charities with generous donations. As she gave in this way, her trust in God increased, and her gratitude with it. She went on to replicate those initial donations twice more, saying it is very fulfilling.

We aren’t all in the financial position Susan is, but gratitude is not a trait that some have and others don’t. Gratitude is a choice, one that becomes easier the more we practise it. We all have so much to be grateful for each day, so it should be our greatest joy to give our thanks to God.

But we must start by intentionally cultivating a heart of gratitude. I challenge you to begin by simply answering the upcoming season’s many “How are you?” questions with a quick reflection on your blessings and a heartfelt “I’m grateful.”

Imagine the conversation you’ll start! It might be one you’ll both be grateful you had.

*Marlow Gingerich is a gift-planning consultant at Abundance Canada. For more than 40 years Abundance Canada has effectively helped Canadians with their charitable giving in their lifetime and through their estate. To learn more, visit [abundance.ca](http://abundance.ca) or call 1-800-772-3257 to arrange a free, no-obligation consultation.*

(Continued from page 9)

I HAVE BEEN reading *Canadian Mennonite* for several years, and have had real concerns about the LGBTQ issue and the first Mennonite Church Canada-affiliated same-sex wedding and the church ministers who served at the wedding (“It felt like a big deal . . . it was so powerful” (Jan. 19, 2015, page 13).

For several issues of *CM*, people have asked what the teaching of the magazine is on this matter, but nothing was said by the leadership. Answers came from the public and nothing from Scripture. Then came “Honour God with Your Bodies,” a very refreshing paid supplement in the Sept. 25 issue, with many scriptural references explaining biblical teaching on LGBTQ issues.

On page 9 of the next issue (Oct. 9) MC Canada’s General Board offered its “confession to the LGBTQ community.” I read the entire piece and not one Bible verse was mentioned.

No wonder the membership is confused. I would have the General Board ask Maple View Mennonite Church to set up guidelines for MC Canada on this matter. We need to get back to the Word.

MENNO UNGER, KELOWNA, B.C.

## ✉ Another negative response to *Chosen Nation* book

**BENJAMIN GOOSSEN’S INTERPRETATION** of the Mennonite experience, especially during the time of the Second World War and the following years, has

struck many of us who are survivors of that time, and descendants of those, as well off the mark.

His characterization of our people in *Chosen Nation* seems to me to be intentionally antagonistic and apart from the experience of our people.

The suggestion of “nationhood” for the Mennonites of Ukraine during these years seems a stretch. We were people who had been deliberately starved, exiled, shot, dispossessed of our lands; we were people whose churches had been closed for decades and whose leaders had been dragged off and killed.

The occupying German army was seen as saving our people from Stalin. It was as if a huge threat had been lifted. Churches were opened. Our people were generally treated well by the Wehrmacht; a shared language encouraged that. General anti-Semitism and the killing of Jews, however, was not part of our experience.

Timothy Snyder in *Bloodlands* suggests that between the horrors perpetrated by the forces of Stalin and Hitler in the killing fields of Ukraine and Poland, 14 million non-combatants were killed. It is in this vortex that this little group of Mennonites made its perilous way. To suggest that Mennonites could develop and compete for a nuanced “national identity” in this context is laughable. They were trying to survive.

Goossen’s cynical use of I Corinthians 3 suggests that the church’s foundation rests on shifting sands of national identity. But those of us who count ourselves as part of the kingdom of God also look to find the movement of God in every time and place. Those who lived through those horrific times could say that, too.

VICTOR WINTER, LEAMINGTON, ONT.

## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Dyck**—Jones Sullivan James (b. Aug. 13, 2017), to Kelly and Jenna Dyck, Carman Mennonite, Man.

**Eby**—Blake Violet (b. June 10, 2017), to Rachel and Colin Eby, St. Agatha Mennonite, Ont.

**Friesen**—Braxton Kamhelo Ndwandwe (b. Sept. 30, 2015), adopted by Mike and Misty Friesen, June 15, 2017.

**Guenther**—Benjamin Peter (b. Sept. 20, 2017), to Brent and Marie Guenther, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

**Jantzi**—Hannah Joy (b. May 15, 2017), to Ryan and Brittany Jantzi, Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite, Zurich, Ont.

**Luzny**—Alisha Anne Helen (b. June 22, 2017), to Brian and Dinah Luzny, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Petkau**—Marlo Joanna (b. Sept. 23, 2017), to Justin and Sylwia Petkau, Carman Mennonite, Man.

**Snyder**—River Julien (b. Oct. 7, 2017), to Daniel Snyder and Monique Lahey, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

**Sobie**—Emelia Wynn Susanne (b. Oct. 9, 2017), to Alan and

Alaina Sobie, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Zubrickas**—Evelyn Louise (b. Oct. 6, 2017), to Josh and Kaitlin (Sauder) Zubrickas, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

### Baptisms

**Kimberley Friesen, Abigail Schellenberg, Nolan Hildebrand, Damon Thiessen**—Bergthaler Mennonite, Altona, Man., Oct. 15, 2017

**Wayne Martens**—Fiske Mennonite, Sask., Oct. 1, 2017.

**Caleb Jutzi, Anna Janssen, Robert Janssen, Jacob Gingerich, Josiah Steckle, Gracie Watson, Fatima Palacios, Harmony Palacios, Blake Oesch**—Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite, Zurich, Ont., Aug. 20, 2017.

### Marriages

**Charles/Schwartzentruber**—Alvin Charles and Susan Schwartzentruber, Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.,

Oct. 14, 2017.

**Clampitt/Turner**—Nikki Clampitt and Jim Turner (Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite, Zurich, Ont.), in Weyburn Sask., Aug. 12, 2017.

**Dyck/Hamilton**—Ceone Dyck and Patrick Hamilton, Carman Mennonite, Man., Aug. 12, 2017.

**Freeman/Martin**—Julia Freeman (Floradale Mennonite, Ont.) and Nathan Martin, at The Gathering, Kitchener, Ont., Oct. 14, 2017.

**Froese/Langlois**—Candice Froese and Justin Langlois, Carman Mennonite, Man., Sept. 30, 2017.

**Gagne/Hamilton**—Perry Gagne and Andrea Hamilton (Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite, Zurich, Ont.), in Stratford, Ont., Aug. 20, 2017.

**Langelotz/Nickel**—Jonah Langelotz (Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg) and Raven Nickel (Seeds of Life Community, Altona, Man.), Sept. 30, 2017.

**Martens/Yiu**—Luke Martens (Fiske Mennonite, Sask.) and Sindy Yiu, at Fiske, June 28, 2017.

**Mungar/Steckle**—Angie Mungar and Trevor Steckle (both of Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite, Zurich, Ont.), at Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite, Aug. 19, 2017.

**Schultz/Zehr**—Danielle Schultz (Poole Mennonite, Ont.) and Samuel Zehr Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite, Zurich, Ont.), at Poole Mennonite, June 24, 2017.

## Deaths

**Boehr**—Doris Adeline (nee Mierau), 90 (b. Oct. 3, 1927; d. Oct. 11, 2017), Lethbridge Mennonite, Alta.

**Dueck**—Luana, 72 (b. Oct. 22, 1944; d. Sept. 21, 2017), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

**Epp**—Elisabeth (nee Kraus), 85 (b. Feb. 19, 1932; d. Oct. 24, 2017), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

**Friesen**—Charlotte (nee Kogan), 74 (b. April 25, 1943; d. July 14, 2017), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Jantzi**—Lucille (nee Jutzi), 74 (b. Aug. 4, 1943; d. Sept. 24, 2017), St. Agatha Mennonite, Ont.

**Joss**—Lilly (nee Heyder), 70 (b. June 29, 1947; d. Sept. 18, 2017), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

**Klassen**—Helen, 88 (b. July 15, 1929; d. Oct. 7, 2017), Bergthaler Mennonite, Altona, Man.

**Loewen**—Mary (nee Guenther), 97 (b. Dec. 10, 1919; d. Sept. 27, 2017), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

**Ramer**—Sidney, 97 (b. Dec. 28, 1920; d. Sept. 11, 2017), Kingsfield-Zurich Mennonite, Zurich, Ont.

**Rempel**—John, 90 (b. Feb. 16, 1927; d. Oct. 12, 2017), Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.

**Rose**—Harry, 89 (b. March 10, 1928; d. Sept. 25, 2017), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Wall**—Heidi (nee Dyck), 73 (b. Dec. 12, 1943; d. July 25, 2017), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

**Zacharias**—Werner Isaak, 93 (b. Oct. 12, 1924; d. Oct. 20, 2017), Fiske Mennonite, Sask.

**Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones announcements within four months of the event. Please send Milestones announcements by email to [milestones@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:milestones@canadianmennonite.org), including the congregation name and location. When sending death notices, please also include birth date and last name at birth if available.**

## A moment from yesterday



Pondering on the dock at Camp Moose Lake. After years of soul searching, Mennonite Church Manitoba has sold its Camp Moose Lake property located in the southeastern corner of the province. Since 1957, the camp has been an integral part of the regional (formerly area) church, congregations, young people and children. For decades, the camp enjoyed vigorous support from many rural congregations. This special place that has nurtured thousands of campers will be sorely missed.

Text: Conrad Stoesz

Photo: Rudy Regehr / Mennonite Heritage Archives



[archives.mhsc.ca](http://archives.mhsc.ca)

## LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

## A memorable remembrance

TROY WATSON



It took me a while to find my poppy and peace button this year. I couldn't remember where I'd stored them last November. "I guess I don't have very good 'remembrance,'" I joked to myself.

"Remembrance" is an unusual word. There are only two occasions I hear it used. The first involves two minutes of silence on Nov. 11. The second is during communion (also called the Lord's Supper or eucharist). When you think about it, these two events have more in common than the utilization of the word "remembrance":

- **ONE SIMILARITY** is the somber atmosphere. We may not have a bugle playing the "Last Post," but the music and overall tone of many communion services is downright gloomy. They feel like memorial services at which we gather to grieve our fallen Saviour killed in action long ago.

- **ANOTHER COMMONALITY** is how we respond to both events. "To remember is to work for peace." There is peace and justice work to be done! Let's get at it!

- **A THIRD SIMILARITY** is the conflicting emotions both ceremonies evoke in many of us. For example, our gratitude for the freedom provided to us by the sacrifice of others can be accompanied by grief, "survivor's guilt" or unworthiness.

For others, communion and Remembrance Day cause us to feel self-righteous and superior. We condemn the unnecessary horrors of war or the atrocity of a particular atonement theory we've come to despise, and discreetly judge those around us who celebrate such

madness.

Then there are those who approach Remembrance Day with fear as they relive memories or anticipate the worst, given the turbulent state of affairs in the world today.

Communion can also cause us to experience fear and trembling in light of

Paul's command to examine ourselves before partaking in the Lord's Supper. If we don't, he warns, there could be severe consequences. Even death.

It's enough to make one wonder, "What's the point of the Lord's Supper?" I believe the point of communion is, well, communion. Profound right? Let me explain.

The first post-resurrection "communion service" is the last story in the last chapter (24) of the Gospel of Luke.

Two disciples were travelling to the village of Emmaus about 11 kilometres outside Jerusalem. They were discussing a rumour that Jesus had risen from the dead. Along the way, a stranger joined them and their conversation. He opened their minds to the Scriptures in exhilarating new ways. When they arrived at Emmaus, the two disciples asked him to continue the conversation over supper. He agreed. They all sat down, and the stranger assumed the role of dinner host. He took the bread, blessed it and gave it to them. Immediately their eyes were

opened. They recognized the stranger was Jesus. They realized Christ was present with them.

This communion service caused them to be full of joy, hope and excitement. They described the whole experience as having their "hearts set ablaze within them." Sounds like the kind of communion service I'd like to be part of.

With great enthusiasm, the two disciples rushed back to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples. Luke reports: "While they were describing these events, Jesus himself stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.'" Immediately, the other disciples' eyes were opened. They all became aware of the presence of Christ in their midst.

This is the point of the Lord's Supper: to become aware of Christ's presence with us. Our remembrance is not fixated on something that happened 2,000 years ago, but on the reality that he is with us right here, right now. We remember that Christ is still Emmanuel, he is still "God with us." We recall Jesus' last words to us in the Gospel of Matthew: "Remember, I am with you always."

Communion is an aptly named invitation to commune with the Spirit of Christ, who is always with us, yet so often ignored. Communion is the practice of us becoming present with Christ, who is

*Communion is an aptly named invitation to commune with the Spirit of Christ, who is always with us, yet so often ignored.*

already present with us.

In my opinion, this is where Catholics got it right and we Protestants got it wrong. Not the details of transubstantiation, but their belief in the "real" presence of Christ at the Lord's Supper. He is here!

The Lord's Supper should be a memorable remembrance. It should result in our hearts being set ablaze within us. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we should be overjoyed and excited to tell others about our amazing encounter with Christ. ☿

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

GOD AT WORK IN US

## OBITUARY

# A leader of leaders

*Ralph Lebold**May 12, 1934 – Oct. 31, 2017*

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

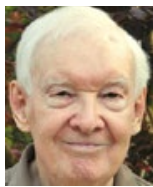
Eastern Canada Correspondent

**B**orn into a Western Ontario Mennonite Conference (WOM)—formerly the Amish Mennonite Conference of Ontario—family, Ralph Lebold grew up with strong leaders in a congregational polity. Each congregation had a bishop, minister and deacon working together, although with separate roles. While ordained, these leaders were unpaid and often untrained, although many Amish Mennonites attended the Ontario Mennonite Bible School and Institute held in Kitchener, Ont., for many years, with sponsorship from the Mennonite Conference of Ontario.

Lebold showed his wisdom by bettering his Grade 8 education by earning a bachelor of arts degree from Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Va., in 1958, and a bachelor of divinity degree from Goshen (Ind.) College Biblical Seminary in 1961 before he took on his first pastorate. He would later also earn a master of theology degree from Crozer Theological Seminary in Upland, Pa., in 1968, and a doctorate of ministry degree from St. Michael's College at the University of Toronto in 1980.

In 1955, he and Eileen Erb were married, and in 1961 they moved to London, Ont., where he served as pastor of Valleyview Mennonite Church for 13 years; he was ordained in 1962.

It was during these years that he began to influence the course of pastoral training, which continues to this day. While at Valleyview, he initiated the Congregational Supervised Pastoral Education Program for students who were looking to enter pastoral ministry after their seminary or undergraduate studies. Along with many others, he also encouraged students to get



Ralph Lebold

clinical pastoral training in order to shape themselves into strongly centred leaders to care for their churches pastorally.

Lebold was part of a movement into higher education among many southern Ontario pastors. This was the era of the pastor-as-counsellor, and the time of the

Concern Movement in the Mennonite church that was spearheaded by John Howard Yoder, which involved pastors sharing authority with lay leaders.

From Valleyview, Lebold was called to

*In later years, Ralph and Eileen lent their name to the Lebold Endowment Fund at Grebel that was established in 1997 by MC Eastern Canada and the College.*

be conference minister of both WOM and the Mennonite Conference of Ontario and Quebec, two of the three pre-cursor conferences of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, from 1974 to 1979. He was involved in the discussions that eventually invited the United Mennonite Conference of Ontario into the new entity.

Lebold's focus on pastoral leadership continued when, as president of what is now Conrad Grebel University College from 1979 to 1989, the College instituted a master of theological studies program that includes a practical stream for students feeling a call to ministry.

In later years, Ralph and Eileen lent their name to the Lebold Endowment Fund at Grebel that was established in 1997 by MC Eastern Canada and the College. Reaching its goal of \$1 million in 2015, its proceeds have been used to fund the ministry-training component of the theological

studies program. After he completed his years at Grebel, he became director of theological education with what is now Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary from 1989 to 1997.

Eileen and their family remember that their husband and father “was passionate about pastoral ministry, pastoral leadership training, and marriage and family therapy. Ralph was instrumental in getting women pastors into leadership roles in Mennonite churches in Ontario. Ralph was a founder of Hidden Acres Camp [in New Hamburg, Ont.] and Shalom Counselling [in Waterloo, Ont.]. He was a charter member of Waterloo North Mennonite Church.”

In 1991, Lebold was diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukemia. He came near to death and, although he recovered, his health and strength remained more fragile for the rest of his life. After growing up on a farm, he purchased a “hobby” farm outside Hanover, Ont., in 1970 with his wife, where he was able to continue his passion for farming until 2000.

He is remembered by Eileen, his wife of 62 years; children Connie Bender

(Tony), Marvin Lebold, and Cindy Lebold (Scott Beech); eight grandchildren; and many sisters, brothers, sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law, nephews and nieces. ❧

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## OBITUARY

# A man who loved the church

Richard (Dick) L. Benner  
April 13, 1939 – Nov. 4, 2017

BY BARB DRAPER  
Editorial Assistant

Richard (Dick) Benner, the recent editor/publisher of *Canadian Mennonite*, passed away on Nov. 4, 2017, at his home in Ruckersville, Va. Upon his retirement in March 2017, he moved from Ontario to his Virginia home near Charlottesville, where his wife Marlene was in long-term care. He began his final journey with cancer not long after that move and was undergoing cancer treatment when Marlene passed away on July 13, 2017.

He was born in Souderton, Pa., on April 13, 1939, the third of six children born to Paul and Margaret (Longacre) Benner. He always remembered with fondness his growing-up years on the farm, and his family's concern for Christian mission.

His passion for the church was long and deep. Not long after his marriage to Marlene Keller on June 9, 1962, he began working as an editor for the Mennonite Board of Missions in Elkhart, Ind. He then moved on to work for other newspapers in



Dick Benner

Pennsylvania before completing his bachelor's degree at Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisonburg, Va., in 1969.

For 13 years Dick and Marlene owned and operated a chain of weekly community newspapers, headquartered in Everett, Pa.

He often talked about those years with satisfaction, as the business prospered and grew under his leadership. The family then moved to Phoenix, Ariz., where he earned his master's degree in mass communication at Arizona State University in 1988.

The following year, the Benners moved to Charlottesville, where Dick and Marlene began a printing company that is now managed by their daughter Lisa and her husband, Tim Kaczmarek. For 11 years, Benner served as executive director of Shalom Foundation, a non-profit organization that published church print materials.

He also served for eight years (1999-2008) as assistant professor of communications

at Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg. During these years he also wrote regular columns for *Mennonite Weekly Review*. While they lived in Virginia, they attended Park View Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg.

Although past the usual age of retirement, he was hired as editor/publisher of *Canadian Mennonite* in March 2009. As an editor, he was occasionally criticized for being outspoken and political, but he also received much encouragement to speak out about the issues facing the church. He believed that the magazine was important for the church, comparing it to a village square where the people can come to find out what is happening in the church, as well as to discuss and debate issues and questions.

During their years in Waterloo, Ont., Marlene and Dick missed being near their family, but they enjoyed the challenge of getting settled in a new Mennonite community and came to love their congregation at Waterloo North Mennonite Church. The time came when they needed all the friends and support they could get, as Marlene's health declined due to dementia. He will be remembered for his honest sharing about this struggle in his editorial, "A living death," published May 23, 2016.

As part of its 100th anniversary celebrations in October 2017, EMU launched a new book, *Making a Difference in the Journey: The Geography of our Faith*. Although Benner had written one of the chapters and the introduction, his declining health meant he was not able to be at the celebration.

He will be remembered for his delight in a good story and his high standards for writing. He took risks in hiring new writers, encouraging and mentoring them in their role as journalists.

He is survived by two daughters, Joy and son-in-law Dwight Foster of Waynesboro, Va., and Lisa and son-in-law Timothy Kaczmarek of Ruckersville, Va.; two granddaughters, Madison Grace McKinsey and Mary Gray Ter Louw; three siblings, Beatrice Benner of Vanderhoof, B.C., Florence Witmer of Va., and Louise Baerg of Ore.; and sister-in-law Margaret Benner of Toronto. He was predeceased by his wife Marlene and brothers Ernest and Stanley. ❧

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Fall 2017  
VOLUME 28 ISSUE 1

- 2 Student ambassadors  
AMBS Snapshot  
Your gifts at work
- 3 Teaching and learning  
from global perspectives  
Alumni Voices
- 4 AMBS Panorama

# AMBS window

## Crossing borders

### Q&A with Shabnam and Pratik Bagh of Chhattisgarh, India

**Pratik Bagh** started at AMBS in August 2015 and is pursuing a Master of Arts: Theological Studies (Theology and Ethics concentration). **Shabnam Pratik Bagh**, his wife, began her studies in August 2017 in the Master of Arts: Theology and Peace Studies program.

#### Could you tell us about your call to ministry and/or to seminary?

**Pratik:** My grandfather, Reverend J.S. Bagh, was a Hindu priest and converted to Christianity in the 1940s in Girola, India. Mennonite missionaries sent him to Janjgir Bible School, and he got trained and became a pastor. He had five sons and one daughter; all are serving the Lord in different capacities, including my father, who is a conference minister for Bhartiya General Conference Mennonite Church (BGCNC).

From early childhood I had the desire to serve the Lord. I was inspired by my grandfather's life, observing his ministry, his thoughts and his behavior. That led me to see that I'm also called to ministry.

When I finished school at age 16, I had to choose whether to go to seminary or to college for secular studies. I prayed about it. At a three-day seminar, I accepted the Lord's calling to go to Allahabad Bible Seminary in Uttar Pradesh, India (Evangelical Church of India).

After finishing my studies, I was a Mennonite pastor in the BGCNC for four and a half years. I was feeling a need in my heart to learn more about Mennonite history and theology, like who we are, what we believe and why. That curiosity led me to look for a seminary with a Mennonite focus. I talked with my uncle and a few other people who had come here for studies, and they strongly recommended AMBS as a place to learn Mennonite history and theology.

**Shabnam:** I'm professionally a nursing lecturer and see my call differently compared to those who are preparing themselves to become pastors. The church for me is not limited to the church building but is beyond that, and so is the ministry. Whatever we do to bless others in the world is an expression of pastoral

ministry. When I saw Pratik studying here, I got encouraged and thought of incorporating this learning into my own field to practice my nursing as well as my discipleship to Christ together.

I was also really encouraged by an AMBS webinar I listened to called "Exploring Your Call to Ministry." From my childhood I was willing to do theological studies but never got the opportunity because I chose nursing as my career. The webinar gave me some insights, and as we talked about it, I thought that being here would be a good opportunity for me to learn about theology.

#### What kind of ministry are you sensing a call to? How do you hope seminary will prepare you for it?

**Pratik:** I think it is a call from the Lord to come here and study, and get myself well trained, so that when I go back to India I may serve my conference — as a pastor or leader or in another capacity. I think as Mennonites, we have a unique witness in the midst of global Christianity. **(continued on page 2)**

There are very few well-trained pastors in my conference. This learning is equipping me to become a good leader with a knowledge of theology and history, and the language to translate and incorporate those core teachings into the present context.

My dream is to do a DMin/PhD and to serve in the seminary setting and also in the ministry setting, training good leaders so that we may bring a big impact on the society. Another thing that is in my heart is to open a Bible school in India for those who cannot afford to study at a larger seminary. I thank God for this great opportunity to get my training from a place like this, where the Word of God is taken seriously, and doing theology and discipleship to Christ are the utmost focus.

**Shabnam:** The missionaries who came to India to share the good news — including the Mennonites — their first concern was to care for the people. They opened hospitals and nursing homes, and these places became doors for the gospel to enter into the lives of local people.

As a nurse, I have observed how God works in the hospital setting, where people are not only physically sick but often emotionally and spiritually sick, too. I see myself doing a ministry where I may bring the love and presence of God to the hospital beds or to the classrooms, among those who have not received Christ yet. I am preparing myself by doing this theological training to answer their questions and guide them well.

Also, in India, women are very educated, but not generally in theology. They are not given equal position in the church as men. I would have never done theological studies in India. I would definitely like to work for the ordination of women in my conference.

Here at AMBS, I am learning to become a leader who is capable of serving in different settings. I love the atmosphere here and the professors; AMBS is making a great impact on me. •  
— *Annette Brill Bergstresser, AMBS*

**Front: Shabnam Pratik Bagh and Pratik Bagh (center) in a discussion circle at Pastors Week 2017. Credit: Jason Bryant**

## Student ambassador program



**Student ambassador Jacob Liechty (Master of Divinity) grew up in Northern Ireland. Credit: Peter Ringenberg**

**C**onsider inviting an AMBS student from an international context to share about his or her theological studies and faith journey with your congregation during worship or Sunday school! Our Student Ambassador Program helps strengthen connections between our international students and regional congregations. To line up a student ambassador to speak, contact Krysta Hartman: [kmhartman@ambs.edu](mailto:kmhartman@ambs.edu) or **800-964-2627 ext. 227**.

## AMBS SNAPSHOT

A look at our vibrant learning community by the numbers.

**103**

**Students enrolled in 2017–18 Semester One**

19 from countries outside the U.S., including Canada, Chile, Ethiopia, Germany, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, South Korea, Tanzania

**40**

**Number of countries where alumni live and serve**

Africa (9 countries) • Asia (9)  
Australia/Oceania (2)  
Europe (11) • North America (3)  
South America (6)

**795**

**Total participants in Church Leadership Center offerings in 2016–17**


Six countries represented from outside of North America

**AMBS Window**  
Fall 2017  
Volume 28 Issue 1

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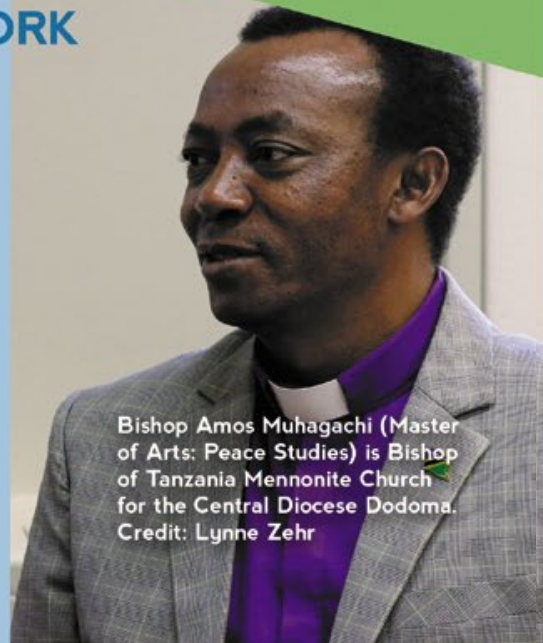
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## YOUR GIFTS AT WORK

**A**MBS awards international student scholarships annually to students who are members of Mennonite World Conference congregations or related Anabaptist groups, with the goal of encouraging and supporting them as they prepare to serve the global church. Currently, 11 international students are receiving scholarship aid from AMBS.

To donate, include “International student aid fund” in the memo line of your check to AMBS, or on the online giving form at [ambs.edu/giving](http://ambs.edu/giving). Your contributions make a tangible difference in the lives of these students — and those they encounter in their ministries. •



**Bishop Amos Muhagachi (Master of Arts: Peace Studies) is Bishop of Tanzania Mennonite Church for the Central Diocese Dodoma. Credit: Lynne Zehr**





AMBS faculty integrate diverse voices

## Teaching and learning from global perspectives



**Janna Hunter-Bowman, PhD,** assistant professor of peace studies and Christian social ethics

“As diverse, globally-connected classes, we discuss how particular theologies and frameworks strike students from different parts of the world. Through our discussions we discover assumptions that are embedded in different models, and we learn how to develop context-sensitive approaches to violence and processes for building peace. My students are also in conversation with the immigrant and African American communities in South Bend, as well as war-affected communities in Colombia.”

*Janna served for seven years in Bogotá, Colombia, in the areas of advocacy and education for justice, peace and nonviolent direct action.*



**Safwat Marzouk, PhD,** associate professor of Old Testament

“I am an ordained pastor with the Synod of the Nile in Egypt and carry with me the challenges and the joys of the Christian community in Egypt and in the Middle East. Students who take classes with me get to know about the hermeneutical and theological heritage of this community as well as some of the contemporary challenges that the church faces in Egypt and in the Middle East. I also have served as a pastor of an Egyptian church in Jersey City (New Jersey) and bring with me to the classroom migrant churches that are flourishing in North America.”

**Top photo: Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations course taught by Jacqueline Hoover, sessional faculty (on the right). Credit: Jason Bryant**



**Allan Rudy-Froese, PhD,** associate professor of Christian proclamation

“Throughout my doctorate and in my present research I enjoy reading and sometimes collaborating with preachers and scholars in the African American tradition. It is important for us at AMBS to reflect on and learn from these rich traditions of preaching and worship and to affirm that body and emotion are crucial in worship and preaching.”

*Allan is one of two AMBS professors who hail from Canada. He grew up in British Columbia and Saskatchewan, and is most recently from Ontario. •*

## ALUMNI VOICES

How did AMBS prepare you for ministry?



“**W**e appreciate the biblical and theological tools we learned to use while studying at AMBS. But what stands out for us is the way we learned and were taught — as part of a learning community. We did not just learn about an Anabaptist hermeneutic where we understand Scripture together as a worshipping community, but we experienced it.” — *Mark (MAPS 1987) and Mary (MACF 2008) Hurst are mission workers*

*with Mennonite Mission Network in Australia. They co-pastor Avalon Baptist Peace Memorial Church in Sydney and co-pastor the Anabaptist Association of Australia and New Zealand.*

“**H**aving committed to promote proactive, grassroots peace-building in Nigeria, I was impressed by Mennonites’ history of nonviolence. In my first AMBS class in 2002, I studied interrelation among religions, particularly Christianity and Islam. This course changed my perception entirely about Muslims, and I became convinced

I could pursue an interfaith peace ministry. Until I had taken courses at AMBS, I didn’t know what empathy truly means. AMBS taught me that *agape* love should be the focus and cornerstone for effective leadership.” — *Rev. Dr. Titus K. Oyeyemi (MAPS 2004) is the founding president/CEO of African Projects/Foundation for Peace and Love Initiatives, Egbeda, Akowonjo, Lagos State, Nigeria. •*



# AMBS PANORAMA



## PRESIDENT'S WINDOW

SARA WENGER SHENK

## Connecting with new heartlands of faith

The rapidly expanding communities of Jesus followers in non-European and North American countries is remaking the map of Christianity. At the AMBS and Goshen (Indiana) College Believers' Church Conference, held Sept. 14–16, Joel Carpenter spoke about how the revival of Christianity outside of Europe and North America is creating “new heartlands of faith.” This is the age of the Spirit, he said. The emerging character of Christian faith is non-western, often including visions, healings, exorcisms and wisdom about the role of spirits. This remaking of Christianity is also increasingly part of our local reality; many immigrant communities have brought an invigorated Christian faith to our doorsteps.

Carpenter emphasized how theology in North America, influenced heavily by the Enlightenment, should remake itself. We need to be more circumspect about how contextual our theological categories have been and break out of our methodological shackles to learn from world Christianity.

AMBS is a place of creative theological re-visioning. We have entered an age

of global interconnectivity that far expands our opportunities to learn from each other. AMBS has alumni in some 40 countries, many of whom are providing significant leadership in their communities, sending emerging leaders to AMBS and teaching us theological perspectives from their own contexts. We're receiving requests to make what we offer accessible to global leaders affiliated with Mennonite World Conference and have developed programming that provides a new 27-hour, fully online **Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies**. Also, our Church Leadership Center offers online **Anabaptist Short Courses**, and **Journey** (our undergraduate missional leadership development program) can be accessed worldwide.

Church leaders around the globe can now access educational resources from an accredited, academically strong, biblically and theologically grounded Anabaptist seminary from a distance. These learning opportunities open up new capacities for the exchange of theological wisdom and Spirit-guided witness across borders. •

## RESOURCES FOR THE GLOBAL CHURCH



### Master of Divinity Connect

Pursue in-depth biblical and theological study, spiritual formation and vocational internships — right where you live. This program combines online courses with some short-term on-campus sessions. Complete the 80-hour program in six years by taking 13–14 credit hours per year. [ambs.edu/mdivconnect](http://ambs.edu/mdivconnect)

### One-course options — online

Take up to two courses without being admitted to a degree or certificate program; your first class is 50 percent off. [ambs.edu/academics/one-course-options](http://ambs.edu/academics/one-course-options)

### Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies

Develop a plan of study that matches your interests in this fully online 27-credit-hour certificate program. Ideal for international church leaders, bivocational pastors or other professionals. [ambs.edu/graduatecertificate](http://ambs.edu/graduatecertificate)

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Deepen your faith and strengthen your leadership in this distance-friendly non-degree leadership development program that focuses on spiritual disciplines, theological and biblical studies, character development, mentoring and gifts development. Apply by Jan. 5 to start Feb. 2. [ambs.edu/journey](http://ambs.edu/journey)

### Anabaptist Short Courses

These non-credit, six-week courses provide an excellent introduction to Anabaptist theology and witness. Offered online and face-to-face. [ambs.edu/shortcourses](http://ambs.edu/shortcourses)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Pastors and Leaders 2018 (formerly Pastors Week) “For Such a Time as This”

Feb. 26 – March 1

Teachers and preachers from the AMBS community will explore how “fear of the Lord” uniquely prepares us to live confidently and to speak courageously in this moment in history.

[ambs.edu/pastorsandleaders](http://ambs.edu/pastorsandleaders)

### Leadership Clinics

Feb. 26, 2018

Daylong workshops on church leadership

- Improvisational Leadership for the 21st Century: An Anabaptist Approach
- The Church in the Age of Migration
- 7x7: Laments for an Age of Sexualized Power

[ambs.edu/leadershipclinics](http://ambs.edu/leadershipclinics) •

Photo: John Hegerly (MDiv 1990) and Amos Shakya (MDiv Connect student) at a Journey event. Credit: Jason Bryant

## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

# Where do we go from here?

*A follow-up to Special Assembly 2017*

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent

On Oct. 14, delegates at a special assembly in Winnipeg approved a restructuring plan to shift the centre of ministries from the nationwide church office to each of the five regional churches. A 94 percent vote gave a clear mandate for change, but how clear is the way forward for a new Mennonite Church Canada?

The General Board and its commissions have been replaced by a Joint Council, made up of a nationwide executive, and a moderator and representative from each regional church, to jointly determine nationwide priorities and oversee MC Canada ministries. An executive staff group, consisting of the MC Canada executive minister and the five regional executive ministers will coordinate the work of the nationwide body and regional churches. It will act in an advisory role to the Joint Council. A significant change is that delegates to MC Canada business sessions will now be sent from the regional church body instead of from individual congregations.

An immediate and painful effect of restructuring was the dismissal of eight MC Canada staff. Willard Metzger, MC Canada's executive minister, met with each staff person to discuss employment

changes. Employees having served at least four years were given one month of severance pay for each year of work, to a maximum of 13 months.

Another staffing concern is the fate of Witness workers. Metzger says the General Board, before its dissolution, had decided that Witness worker terms would be fully funded until the end of June 2018, at which time they will return to North America. Terms may continue, depending on the reorganization of support and funding. "[We are] transitioning toward some form of relational funding," Metzger says, noting that congregations and regional churches are encouraged to consider expanding or developing direct partnerships with workers.

One of the first priorities after the special assembly is communication. "Every regional church does communications already," Metzger says. "Now [they need to] begin to include reporting on nationwide agenda." Communication resources, including "Equipping" and "Prayer Net," will no longer be produced by the nationwide church.

Communication and budgeting are certainly top of mind for regional executive ministers and executive directors.

Asked what is the first thing for MC British Columbia's restructuring, Garry Janzen replies, "Communication—making sure people are on board with understanding, especially in donations and finance"

With the dissolution of MC Canada's Engagement Council, fundraising responsibility falls directly on each regional church, but regional church minister Ryan Siemens says, "Saskatchewan has never done this in the past—directly appealing to donors. An effort is being made to communicate what is being supported: China, Indigenous relations, the general budget. . . . Our relationship [to these ministries] is now built through the regional office."

Ken Warkentin, MC Manitoba's executive director, says, "The first thing is simply coming to a clearer understanding of the financial implications," while regional minister Tim Wiebe-Neufeld says that Alberta's first priority is "communication with congregations about what [restructuring] means, particularly with donations. MC Alberta is now the conduit through which everything happens."

Budgeting work is moving ahead, though. "We are still working on the fiscal year that ends Jan. 31," Metzger says, adding that discussions for the new budget, which begins Feb. 1, 2018, are ongoing.

Metzger, an MC Canada finance staff person, a contract accountant and executive staff will be involved in the process for the nationwide body. Regional church budgets will undergo changes to reflect increased meeting time for executive staff and moderators, increased direct funding to their chosen missions, and

*(Continued on page 20)*



MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA PHOTO BY DAN DYCK

*Mennonite Church Canada's General Board met for the final time just before the start of Special Assembly 2017 on Oct. 13 in Winnipeg. Now, the new regional churches are trying to understand the ramifications in the wake of decisions made there.*

## SPECIAL ASSEMBLY 2017 FOLLOW-UP

(Continued from page 19)

possible additional staff time to fill former national roles. MC Eastern Canada, for example, has hired Norm Dyck as mission engagement minister, and MC Alberta has hired June Miller for communications.

Each regional church faces unique challenges and opportunities.

MC B.C. remains uncertain about whether congregations unhappy with the “Being a Faithful Church” process on same-sex relations will remain with the regional church. This uncertainty makes budgeting and programming difficult to predict. “[We will] keep working at it and building healthy connections, and see where that takes us,” Janzen says. While there is uncertainty, he is hopeful for a simplified reality that puts “conversation partners closer to home . . . [and] the fullness of the church will come home in a whole new way.”

Alberta, the smallest regional church, has no physical office and a widely scattered part-time staff. The July death of moderator Dan Jack has presented extra challenges. “One of the questions is about our capacity. . . . Do we have both

the money and the people to provide the needed structure?” Wiebe-Neufeld wonders. On the positive side, he says, “If we are able to flesh out this structure, it will be good for us to have some local sense of presence in the larger church.”

In 2017, Saskatchewan has had its own visioning process called “Refresh, refocus, renew.” Siemens sees the nationwide restructuring as a good connection to this process, and he hopes for an increased engagement for those with limited participation in the past. “I am a strong believer in our polity. We make it happen,” he says.

Because MC Manitoba shares office space in Winnipeg with MC Canada, the emptiness of the building now is striking. “Just by proximity, we feel the weight of the layoffs more heavily,” says Warkentin. “Most of the employees are members of our congregations.” Pain is present, but so is hope. “The missional drive that is beginning to kindle the imagination of congregations will be served well in this new model,” he says.

MC Eastern Canada is the largest

regional church, and executive minister David Martin writes in an email: “MC Eastern Canada is also interested in connecting congregations to the larger MC Canada family. By raising the profile of MC Canada within MC Eastern Canada congregations, it is our hope that we will develop a more robust identity as a nationwide Mennonite family of faith, collaborating together as regions around a common mission and purpose.” He looks forward to the new structure encouraging regions to work together, share resources and to “follow God’s invitation to be agents of Christ’s healing and hope in our world.”

While “what next” is clearly a work in progress, leaders of the regional churches are hopeful that the new structure can help congregations engage and thrive in the larger church by more closely connecting people with its mission and work. In this process, Metzger appeals for “some grace and patience as bumps and gaps are attended to. There is enthusiasm across our constituency,” he says. ☼

# Focus groups hear of restructuring plans

*Area Church Only Member churches in B.C. will have to decide if they ‘want to participate in the new structure’*

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent  
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

**H**ow the new structure of Mennonite Church Canada will affect congregations in B.C. was the topic for focus groups in Richmond and Abbotsford late last month. Donors who have been supporting both MC Canada and MC B.C. were invited to attend the meetings with Willard Metzger, the nationwide church’s executive minister, along with the regional church’s leadership and financial personnel.

The goal was to encourage these individuals to continue their investment,

and to help them understand how the flow of funding for the ministries they care about will be changing. Forty-one people in total attended the two meetings.

Expressing “appreciation for your faithfulness” to those attending the Oct. 30 meeting at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Metzger said, “You are investors, you are supporters” of MC Canada’s ongoing ministry.

Metzger briefly summarized decisions made at the Special Assembly 2017 in Winnipeg in mid-October, that resulted



*Interested members of Mennonite Church B.C. listen as MC Canada executive minister Willard Metzger, left, explains how the new nationwide structure will affect giving and programs in the national church.*

in a restructured MC Canada as a result of changes in church life and participation. Priorities in giving have changed as a result.

Additionally, relational funding—or financially supporting mission workers directly, as opposed to general giving to a mission board to support all workers—is the norm for many mission organizations. Although MC Canada had resisted this approach, it is now also moving in that direction.

Mission workers will rely on a

“confirmation of call” to their ministry and will seek financial support from those who know them and choose to support them.

Questions included how, with the new regional emphasis, individuals and area churches can speak to the nationwide agenda.

“Actually [regional churches] will have more participation with the new structure,” said Metzger. “Regional churches will all determine what the nationwide agenda will be. We want you to be our advocates.”

Other questions included how those congregations designated as Area Church Only Members (ACOM)—unique to B.C.—will fit in, to which MC B.C. executive minister Garry Janzen responded: “We want to honour congregations who say they want no part of [the new structure]. ACOM is redundant now. We are having a conversation now with ACOM churches about whether they want to participate in the new structure, and, if so, how they would want to do so.”

Douglas Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, said that people are missing a collective narrative, and without a vision, they become divided and lost in the details. “I think people want to be excited,” he said. “We want to feel that we know why we’re spending money.” They’re just not quite sure how to get there.

Some voices, despite their uncertainty, said they trust their leadership to guide them through this journey. So how will MC Manitoba do this? Warkentin has already begun looking into creating a church engagement staff to help connect congregations with international and local mission options, and work at fundraising. His role will also evolve to take on more responsibility for the national agenda and communicating well with other regional churches.

MC Manitoba staff are planning gatherings for the near future, at which pastors and congregational representatives can better learn how these big changes will affect congregations and the regional church. Peter Rempel, MC Manitoba’s moderator, said that delegates will have to meet for longer times, and more frequently than the current twice-a-year structure, to cover the additional content. The regional church’s communications team is already meeting to figure out ways to communicate the national agenda to Manitobans during this time of transition and big decisions.

“I think we need new ways of inspiring our people and our congregations,” said Robinson. “It’s the vision and mission stuff that really unites us, and if we’re united enough in that, and excited, almost any structure will work.”

Warkentin agrees. “We need to have a collective narrative that inspires us to mission, inspires us to ministry, inspires us to give,” he said. “I heard that very clearly last night and really appreciate that voice.”

## In search of a collective narrative

*Budgets, Witness, communications top issues for Manitoba delegates following changes to nationwide, regional church bodies*

BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE

Manitoba Correspondent

In October, congregants from across Canada gathered for Mennonite Church Canada’s Special Assembly 2017 in Winnipeg, where they voted to implement a new structure, ushering in a new era for the new nationwide church and regional churches. Less than a month later, Manitobans met to discuss the implications of this change for them.

Those gathered at MC Manitoba’s fall delegate session on Nov. 2 at Elim Mennonite Church in Grunthal addressed the new church structure. Within this framework, individual congregations now connect with their regional church for everything, rather than with the nationwide church for some matters, as they used to do. And this brings many changes to MC Manitoba, like the responsibility for Witness work and a new budget.

Ken Warkentin, the regional church’s executive director, told *Canadian Mennonite* that the main purpose of the fall delegate meeting is to pass the annual budget, which is usually passed with minimal dispute. This year was quite the opposite. Many delegates expressed concern about the new budget, and it was

extensively discussed.

Trends show that people are giving less to churches, which had delegates expressing concern about how they will be able to make the regional church budget when they can’t even make their own church budgets.

Delegates ended up approving the current budget and authorizing the MC Manitoba board to prepare a final version. Many delegates abstained from voting, and a feeling of uncertainty was present in the room.

This feeling came not only from the budget, but from a larger issue: the turmoil of a shifting church structure. Warkentin said that many people are nervous, as they are with every big change, because everything is new and untested.

Adam Robinson, associate pastor of



*MC Manitoba delegates who met for their fall gathering in Grunthal earlier this month express concern, wondering how they will be able to make the regional church budget when they can’t even make their own church budgets.*

## SPECIAL ASSEMBLY 2017 FOLLOW-UP

# 'Strike while the iron is hot'

*Mennonite Church Eastern Canada begins describing MC Canada's new reality to congregations*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
KITCHENER, ONT.

**T**he ink on the new covenant document between the five regional (formerly area) churches was scarcely dry before Mennonite Church Eastern Canada began to describe to its congregations what this new reality means now and could mean in the future.

Before MC Canada's Special Assembly 2017 took place in Winnipeg in mid-October, MC Eastern Canada had arranged seven regional meetings to gather congregational representatives.

At the first meeting, held on Oct. 17 at Rockway Mennonite Church in Kitchener, executive minister David Martin described

what took place in Winnipeg and how MC Eastern Canada had been planning toward these eventualities, including hiring Norm Dyck to the new position of mission engagement minister. (See more about this and other hirings in the sidebar below.)

Of the more than 30 people at the Kitchener meeting, about half a dozen had been at the assembly in Winnipeg. The six were unanimous about the respectful nature of the conversations there, and the important place of worship in the proceedings.

Eleanor Epp-Stobbe, pastor of Breslau Mennonite Church, felt that the assembly had been "balanced," with "a spirit of



creativity, hopefulness, dreaming for the future," and room for "lament."

While Arli Klassen, an MC Eastern Canada delegate, noted that there were "not enough newcomer churches" present in Winnipeg, over a quarter of those present

## Staff changes at MC Eastern Canada

*Regional church appoints new mission engagement minister, regional ministry associates*

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada  
KITCHENER, ONT.

**N**orm Dyck, the newly appointed Mennonite Church Eastern Canada mission engagement minister, says, "The face of the church is rapidly changing! What appears to be emerging is the possibility of living into an intercultural witness as the church. In a time when racial tensions and violence often dominate the news, God has provided the church with an opportunity to model another way."

A key component of this newly formed position is assuming the existing ReLearning Community (RLC)



contract position. RLC is designed to help congregations deepen their experience of being disciple-making communities that are connected to their neighbours. Dyck has been involved with RLC as a participant, practitioner and, most recently, as one of the teachers.

Support of newcomer congregations that have been, or are becoming, a part of the MC Eastern Canada family of faith is also a part of this position.

Connecting new and established congregations with mission opportunities in the local, regional and nationwide church will become an increasing focus in the face of anticipated changes within MC Canada. This position will also concentrate on new and ongoing financial partnerships with MC Canada Witness workers.

Dyck is currently pastor of Listowel (Ont.) Mennonite Church; he will begin his new ministry with MC Eastern Canada this coming February.

Kevin Derksen, Cathrin van Sintern-Dick and Roberson Mbayamvula have been appointed as regional ministry associates to provide care and support for pastors in MC Eastern Canada. They will attend ministerial gatherings, providing a pastoral presence and closer connection with MC Eastern Canada in the regional clusters. They began their new ministry on Nov. 15.



*Ly Vang and Toua Vang, both of First Hmong Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., and David Martin, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's executive minister, discuss the results and plans coming out of Special Assembly 2017 at Rockway Mennonite Church in Kitchener on Oct. 17, the first of seven such regional meetings.*

on Oct. 17 were from new Canadian congregations.

Martin spoke of the Winnipeg assembly as “dry and technical,” with the passing of bylaws first so that other decisions could be made, but the group gathered in Kitchener

seemed to feel that it had been an inspiring time.

Martin carefully explained that the new structure is grounded in important vision and belief documents, like the 1995 Vision: Healing and Hope statement, and the seven “shared convictions” from Mennonite World Conference (MWC).

With focussed attention on the Witness program, Mennonite unity and MWC, questions were asked about both ecumenical connections and the new Witness Canada focus on Indigenous issues in this country. Martin spoke about amendments to documents in Winnipeg that will strengthen MC Canada's commitment to relationships with both the Canadian Council of Churches and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. In regard to Indigenous issues, he noted that in Eastern Canada this has been largely Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)

Ontario's job, with the regional church giving \$25,000 to support its work. He noted, though, that with an increased focus on missions “here” rather than “out there,” MC Eastern Canada might need to think more about engagement on Indigenous issues, perhaps with MCC Ontario.

With all the pre-assembly work already done in MC Eastern Canada before the Winnipeg assembly, Martin answered the question on many people's minds: “What would you have done if the plan was rejected?” He responded: “If the proposal would have been rejected in Winnipeg, the existing structure would have remained in place. My sense is that the regional churches would still have tried to work in a more collaborative way than before, but it would have been more challenging and less comprehensive without the support of a new structure.” ❧

“Regional ministry has been a way for us to build connections with chaplains, pastors and congregations to bring encouragement and support,” says regional minister Al Rempel. “The appointment of these three individuals will serve to continue that ministry.”

The three, introduced below, will intentionally collaborate as a team with Rempel and Henry Paetkau, the regional church minister, to resource leadership needs.

• **KEVIN DERKSEN** is on the pastoral team of St. Jacobs Mennonite Church. He attended Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg and McMaster University in Hamilton, Ont., before coming to St. Jacobs. He has also served in volunteer roles with MC Eastern Canada's congregational ministries and leadership councils. “As a pastor, I know how important it is for pastors and congregational leaders to feel supported, resourced and cared for as they engage their ministries,” Derksen says. “I hope to listen carefully and cultivate bridges of support and vitality that connect pastors to each other and to the resources of the broader church.”



• **CATHRIN VAN SINTERN-DICK** works as chaplain

at the Leamington (Ont.) Mennonite Home and Apartments, and engages in speaking assignments and workshops. She previously served as pastor of North Leamington United Mennonite Church and as interim pastor at Faith Mennonite Church, also in Leamington. She has been on MC Eastern Canada's mission council since 2007. “I pray that I will be able to engage with pastors, encourage them in their spiritual journey, seeing Christ at work through them, affirming gifts, and giving opportunities of healing and hope through extending the peace of Christ,” she says.



• **ROBERSON MBAYAMVULA** is pastor of Hagerman Mennonite Church in Markham, Ont., and has served on the board of the now-defunct MC Canada Witness Council. He was a pastor and coordinator of evangelism, mission and development in the Mennonite Brethren Church in the Democratic Republic of Congo. “I see these newly created positions as a bold and new model of ministry that we need right now,” he says. “I believe this to be a call to strengthen relationships and proactively provide spiritual support for pastors and families.”



## /// Briefly noted

### Fort Garry Mennonite's first five decades

WINNIPEG—On Oct. 15, more than 300 excited and exuberant members and guests gathered at Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship to celebrate the congregation's 50th anniversary. Many had already enjoyed a delightful coffee house and artisan display the night before, celebrating the artistic gifts within the community. During the five Sundays leading up to the celebration, the worship services focussed on the congregation's foundational themes: community, love, grace, peace and discipleship. As part of the celebration, a commemorative quilt was unveiled and a video based on interviews with church members was produced. Gerald Gerbrandt, president emeritus of Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, was the guest speaker; he addressed the theme of the anniversary: "We as living stones being built on a firm foundation: Jesus Christ." The Fellowship was founded in the spring of 1967 in south Winnipeg by Mennonites who sought to have a place of worship closer to their homes. The congregation, with five commissioned lay ministers, has inter-generational participatory worship services, is a welcoming community, has an extensive refugee program, and a multiple team ministry chosen by discerning gifts and collectively calling individuals to roles of service and leadership.

—BY JOHN AND DOROTHY FRIESEN



FORT GARRY MENNONITE PHOTO

*Children enjoy their story at Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship's 50th-anniversary service on Oct. 15.*

LEAMINGTON MENNONITE HOME

PHOTO

**Four-hundred-and-fifty guests enjoyed the Oh Canada! Gala on Oct. 21, making it the largest gala sponsored by Leamington (Ont.) Mennonite Home.**

**Proceeds also topped all other galas, with more than \$83,000**

**raised for the Robert W. Schmidt: Long Term Care Home Renewal Project, to help refurbish resident dining rooms and serveries, creating more accessible and pleasurable dining for the residents. Pictured, Herb Enns, second from left, is the \$3,000 grand-prize winner. Also pictured, from left to right: Henry Hildebrandt, chair of the Leamington Mennonite Home board; Evelyn Greenwood, co-chair of the gala committee; and Linda Tiessen, co-chair of the gala committee and administrator of Leamington Mennonite Home.**



## /// Staff changes

### Camps with Meaning hires new associate program director

• **JANET PETERS** has been hired as the new associate program director of Camps with Meaning (CwM), a ministry of Mennonite Church Manitoba that includes Camp Assiniboia near Headingley and Camp Koinonia near Boissevain. Peters, who attends Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church in Winnipeg with her family, has a long history with CwM; as a young adult, she worked as a counsellor and in leadership during the years 1990-97. She moved on to other jobs for a while, but then returned to school, graduating in 2015 with a master's degree in Christian ministry from Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg. She was the Day Camp Bible instructor in 2016 and the integration coordinator in 2017. In between the summers, she cooked, hosted and led activities for rental groups at camp. "I remembered again how much I love camp—the space, but also the people and what we do there," she says.

—BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE



### Pastoral transition in Ontario

• **DOUG AMSTUTZ** began as the pastor of Poole Mennonite Church in Milverton on Oct. 1. Previously, he was an intentional interim minister at Riverdale Mennonite Church in Millbank, Ont.; an interim supply pastor at Rainham Mennonite Church in Selkirk, Ont.; an interim pastor for one year at Crosshill Mennonite Church, Ont. He has co-pastored congregations in Scottdale, Pa., and St. Catharines, Ont., with his wife Wanda.

In addition, the couple were co-country representatives for Mennonite Central Committee in Ethiopia for four years. His education includes a bachelor's degree in liberal arts from Hesston (Kan.) College, a bachelor's degree in history and education from Goshen (Ind.) College, and a master of divinity degree in pastoral ministry from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind.

—BY DAVE ROGALSKY







**ONLINE NOW!**

at [canadianmennonite.org](http://canadianmennonite.org)

### Mennonites in Montreal aid refugees

Rallied by co-pastor Michel Monette, the Hochma congregation has joined others in the city to open its doors to a flood of refugees.

[canadianmennonite.org/hochma-refugees](http://canadianmennonite.org/hochma-refugees)



### Putting goals into practice

MC Saskatchewan's Equipping Day workshops offered insights on spirituality, Anabaptist heroes and "culture monkeys."

[canadianmennonite.org/equipping-goals](http://canadianmennonite.org/equipping-goals)



### Ethiopian Meserete Kristos Church continues to grow

The Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia has a vision for education and Christian witness.

[canadianmennonite.org/meserete-witness](http://canadianmennonite.org/meserete-witness)



### New 'Mennonite Game' card game creates connections

A Goshen College graduate tries his hand in translating a real-life experience into a card game.

[canadianmennonite.org/mennonite-card-game](http://canadianmennonite.org/mennonite-card-game)



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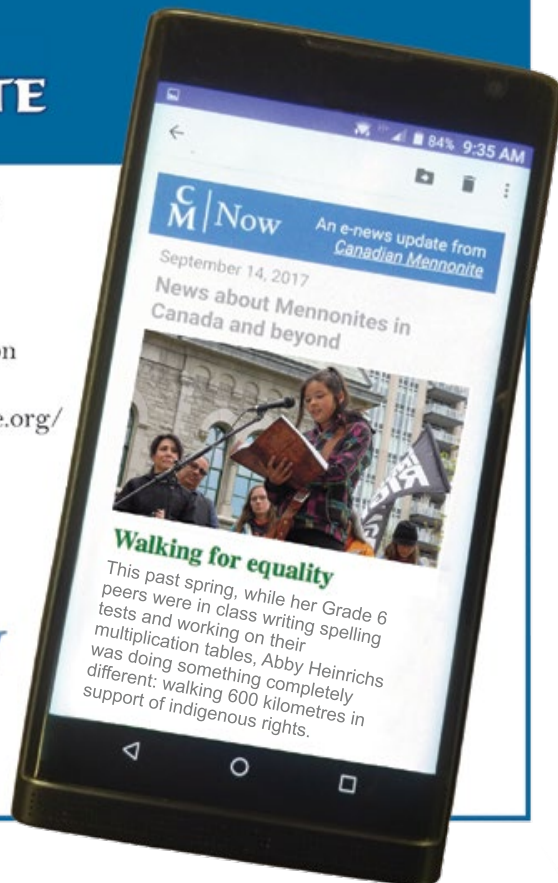
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## CM | Now



CM | Now An e-news update from *Canadian Mennonite*

September 14, 2017  
News about Mennonites in Canada and beyond



### Walking for equality

This past spring, while her Grade 6 peers were in class writing spelling tests and working on their multiplication tables, Abby Heinrichs was doing something completely different: walking 600 kilometres in support of indigenous rights.

Pastors & Leaders 2018  
(formerly "Pastors Week")  
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# Winding down

*Emerging Voices Initiative decides to discontinue in the wake of MC Canada restructuring*

By AARON EPP  
Young Voices Editor

A group of young adults who formed in response to proposed changes to Mennonite Church Canada (now dubbed the nationwide church) has disbanded.

The Emerging Voices Initiative (EVI) announced its closing in a statement posted to its website on Oct. 31, two-and-a-half weeks after MC Canada's Special Assembly 2017 in Winnipeg.

"As [MC] Canada delegates have affirmed a new church structure, we have decided to formally discontinue Emerging Voices Initiative," the group wrote. "When we began, we focussed on the Future Directions Task Force's final report, asking questions about the changing structure, and providing a forum for others to do so. We tried to listen closely and respond faithfully. With the new structure affirmed, our chosen task has reached a fitting end."

For Laura Carr-Pries, an EVI member since its inception in late 2015, one of the best parts of participating in the group was seeing the progress it made in less than two years of existence. The 22-year-old told *Canadian Mennonite* she remembers a meeting early on with MC Canada executive director Willard Metzger (now executive minister), during which she felt as though the group was meeting some resistance.

In the months that followed, EVI members found ways to make their voices heard, whether it was on EVI's website and through social media, at the special assembly, at the delegate assembly in Saskatoon in July 2016, or during the workshop tour the group organized in conjunction with MC Canada.

"When we began, it was almost like

we were fighting for this space to get our voices heard," Carr-Pries said. "Just realizing how far we've come is a highlight."

Although not exclusively a group for young adults, EVI was made up primarily of students in their 20s from Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg. The group formed after an initial meeting towards the end of 2015, during which students and university administration discussed some of the challenges facing MC Canada, including the recommendations of the Task Force. More than 40 students participated in that first meeting, with between 15 and 20 going on to form EVI.

One of the biggest highlights of the experience for EVI member Stephanie Wenger was the group's weekly meetings, which usually involved a potluck. "It was refreshing to see there were other people like me who care about the church, because sometimes it feels like there isn't at all," said Wenger, 25. "You go to a congregation, and there's only one or two other young adults, and they're not necessarily invested."

Another EVI member, Anika Reynar, said that one of the biggest things she learned from being part of the group is that the church is big. This became especially clear to her when she travelled to Alberta and B.C. as part of EVI's tour.

"I really needed that tour to help me understand what the church was," said the 23-year-old. "I wish that other young adults had that opportunity to visit churches across Canada. Not all these churches have the same understanding of what it means to be the church, but we

*(Continued on page 28)*



CANADIAN MENNONITE PHOTO BY AARON EPP

*'Realizing how far we've come is a highlight,' Laura Carr-Pries, second from right, says of her involvement with EVI, a group that also included Alex Tiessen, Anneli Loepp Thiessen, Jonas Cornelsen and Tim Wenger.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF EVI

*Katrina Woelk prepares for a stop on the EVI workshop tour, which took place in October and November of last year.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF EVI

*The nationwide church may be diverse, Anika Reynar says, but 'we all share a faith in Jesus Christ and we all share a history that connects us.'*

*(Continued from page 27)*

all share a faith in Jesus Christ, and we all share a history that connects us into what it means to be Anabaptist and what it means to be Mennonite. . . . Those [two things] connect us in a way that is greater than what pulls us apart.”

Metzger said he has been grateful for EVI’s work. “They provided a platform for conversation not only among fellow young adults, but I think [they] also created a platform that engaged many other people across demographics and across our nation,” he said. “[Their] enthusiasm welcomed other people into the conversation.”

“I hope that the example of EVI will prove to be invitational for other students—young adults, high school students—to also lend their voice [and] to become engaged,” he added.

EVI members hope for the same thing, saying in their statement, “Instead of

continuing as a group, we want our story to encourage young people to be heard in their own church settings. We hope the church will create and maintain space for young voices without the container of Emerging Voices Initiative.”

Carr-Pries, Wenger and Reynar are looking forward to continued involvement in both the local and nationwide churches. “I’m excited that EVI is officially not a group anymore, but we’re still around and all doing the same things,” Wenger said.

Reynar recalled being at Special Assembly 2017 and observing delegates her parents’ age who have a long history with one another, greeting each other and talking together between sessions. “I said to Laura, we’re going to be those people when we’re 50,” Reynar said. “We’re not all best friends, but it’s this sense [that] we’re working at being the church together in a way that feels like it’s going to continue on past what EVI was. . . . That’s pretty cool.” ❧



PHOTO COURTESY OF AARON EPP

*Willi Penner, left, and Aaron Epp, pictured in 2003, were two of the driving forces behind Far Beyond Inspired.*

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

# Fifteen years after inspiration struck

*You’ve never heard of it, but Far Beyond Inspired is a great album. Trust me.*

AARON EPP

YOUNG VOICES EDITOR



PHOTO BY AARON EPP

*Darryl Neustaedter Barg donated his time and talents to serve as the recording engineer for Far Beyond Inspired.*

**A**ttention, music fans: Next month marks the 15th anniversary of the release of an album you’ve likely never heard of. Let me tell you about it.

On Dec. 8, 2002, at Douglas Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, we began selling copies of *Far Beyond Inspired*, a CD featuring original compositions by nine musical acts from the congregation. The 16 songs on the CD encompassed an eclectic range of genres, including rock, folk, praise and worship, rap, children’s, pop and punk music.

You might even know a few of the musicians involved.

Bryan Moyer Suderman, youth pastor of Douglas at the time, contributed “God’s Love is for Everybody,” the title track off his just-released first album, to the compilation. He also served as co-executive producer of the CD, along with my friend Willi Penner and me.

Backroads Band, a group that included Dan Dyck, former director of church engagement-communications at Mennonite Church Canada, as well as Alfred and Vernelle Enns Penner, who

helped lead worship at MC Canada's Special Assembly 2017 last month, also contributed a song.

Serving as the project's recording engineer was Darryl Neustaedter Barg, associate director of communications at MC Manitoba and a member of the committee that is putting together the new Mennonite song collection set for release in 2020.

With private donors covering the cost of making *Far Beyond Inspired*, 100 percent of the sales went to the church's Christian Education and Service Fund, a program meant to encourage young people from Douglas to consider Christian post-secondary education and service options.

I was 17 when Willi, who was 25 at the time, emailed me in early February 2002 telling me about his idea for a CD featuring music by Douglas acts. We began exchanging excited emails about the possibilities, and soon I sent Bryan an email outlining the concept. He jumped on board immediately. "In the making and sharing of music, we are participating in God's mission in the world!" Bryan wrote to me. "Exciting stuff!"

In the months that followed, I learned a lot about project management, including writing a proposal to present to the church that outlined the purpose and goals of making the CD, finding musicians who were interested in contributing their time and talents, and helping to raise the funds needed to cover the costs.

I helped organize a two-day recording session, during which three groups each recorded two songs in the church's sanctuary. I took some of the photos that appeared on the CD jacket, helped figure out the running order of the songs, designed the cover art and wrote the liner notes. When the CD came out, I helped promote and sell it to the congregation.

Although I was in all likelihood the least musically talented person involved with the project, I even managed to contribute two songs to the recording. One of them, "Straight Outta North Kildonan," is a rap song about being Mennonite that contains a lyric that remains one of my favourite things I have ever written: "Word to

your Oma, I like to speak German / I've got more rhymes than your pastor's got sermons." I performed it with four of my best friends. We called ourselves Aaron and the Apostles!

Ten months passed between when Willi had the idea for the CD to the day we started selling copies—much longer than I thought it would take. At times, it was frustrating dealing with the nitty-gritty details of making the album.

But as Bryan said in his email, it was exciting stuff. It was exciting for the church as a whole because it allowed us to showcase the diversity of music that members of the congregation were producing for the glory of God. These were not throwaway songs with cheap lyrics. This was a quality collection of music. Fifteen years later, these songs still move me when I listen to them.

Co-producing *Far Beyond Inspired* was also exciting for me on a personal level. As a huge music fan with not a lot of musical talent, aiding the album's creation allowed me to make a contribution to music, if only a small one. Instead of being a passive consumer of music, I was, for once, an active participant, helping to create something that could hopefully encourage and inspire others.

Exciting stuff, indeed. ☺

Two songs from *Far Beyond Inspired* are available online. To hear "Be Still" by George Harold Epp, visit [soundcloud.com/george-harold-epp/be-still](https://soundcloud.com/george-harold-epp/be-still); to hear "Straight Outta North Kildonan" by Aaron and the Apostles, visit [farbeyondinspired.bandcamp.com](https://farbeyondinspired.bandcamp.com).



PHOTO BY WILLI PENNER

*This collage features many of the musicians who performed on Far Beyond Inspired and was included with the CD's liner notes.*



PHOTO BY WILLI PENNER

*Aaron and the Apostles were one of nine musical acts included on the CD. Pictured from left to right: Thomas Epp, Luke Enns, Aaron Epp, Ryan Klassen and Joey Penner.*



PHOTO BY AARON EPP  
*Willi Penner does his best 'Edge' imitation during a recording session in the church sanctuary.*

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## Calendar

### British Columbia

**Dec. 9,10:** Advent Vespers with Abendmusik Choir: (9) at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford; (10) at St. Philip's Anglican Church, Vancouver. Both services at 7:30 p.m. In support of the Menno Simons Centre.

### Manitoba

**Until Jan. 20, 2018:** Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery in Winnipeg presents two exhibitions: "Work as Prayer/Prayer as Work" by Carolyn Mount, and "Sacred DNA: Family and Icons."

**Dec. 2:** "Ready my heart: Preparing for Advent" retreat, in Winnipeg, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Learn focal practices to use in the season of Advent and make Advent wreaths. For more information, or to register, visit [butterflyjourneys.webs.com](http://butterflyjourneys.webs.com).

**Dec. 3:** First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, presents an Advent concert featuring Vivaldi's "Gloria," at the church, at 7 p.m.

**Dec. 4:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Christmas concert, at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

**Dec. 16,17:** Faith and Life Women's Chorus and Male Choir present their Christmas concert "The Glory of the Lord": (16) at Springfield Heights Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.; (17) at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m.

**Dec. 17:** Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church Adult Choir presents "Historia van der Geburt Jesu Christi" ("The Christmas Story"), with soloists and instruments, at the church in Winnipeg, at 11 a.m.

### Ontario

**Nov. 25:** The Balinese Gamelan Ensemble offers a taste of Balinese music and culture, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, at 7:30 p.m.

**Nov. 25:** MennoHomes annual general meeting and Inshallah ensemble concert, at Rockway Mennonite Church, Kitchener, at 7 p.m. For more information, visit [mennohomes.com](http://mennohomes.com).

**Nov. 26:** Fifth annual "Welcoming Advent" event at Detweiler Meeting-house, Roseville, at 2:30 p.m. Featuring

Lifted Voices. For more information, call Sam Steiner at 519-884-1040.

**Nov. 26:** Fundraiser for Theatre of the Beat, at the Jazz Room in Uptown Waterloo, at 6 p.m. Featuring Dan Root and No Discernable Key. Tickets available online at [bit.ly/totb-fundraiser](http://bit.ly/totb-fundraiser).

**Dec. 1:** Conrad Grebel University College Chamber Choir performs its term-end concert, "Rejoice in the Lamb," at Knox Presbyterian Church, Waterloo, at 7:30 p.m.

**Dec. 2:** Pax Christi Chorale presents "Children's Messiah," at Church of the Redeemer, Toronto, at 4 p.m. For more information, visit [paxchristichorale.org](http://paxchristichorale.org).

**Dec. 2:** Conrad Grebel University College's Peace Society presents its "Make-a-Difference Market," featuring local and fair-trade vendors, food and music, in benefit of Direct Relief; at Grebel beginning at 10 a.m.

**Dec. 3:** Menno Singers presents "Come Emmanuel" with Menno Youth Singers and Inter-Mennonite Children's Choir, at St. John's Lutheran Church, Waterloo, at 3 p.m. For more information, visit [mennosingers.com](http://mennosingers.com).

**Dec. 7:** Institute of Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies hosts a double book launch at Conrad Grebel University College, at 7 p.m., featuring new works by Hildi Froese Tiessen and Connie T. Braun.

**Dec. 15-17:** Listowel Mennonite Church presents "An Advent Journey Marketplace": (15 and 16) from 7 to 9 p.m.; (17) from 2 to 4 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. For more information, call 519-291-2350.

**Dec. 16,17:** Pax Christi Chorale presents "Gloria" by Poulenc, and other works, including French carols, at Grace Church on-the-Hill, Toronto: (16) at 7:30 p.m.; (17) at 3 p.m.


**Dec. 17:** Menno Singers presents "Singalong Messiah," at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m. For more information, visit [mennosingers.com](http://mennosingers.com).

**To ensure timely publication of upcoming events, please send Calendar announcements eight weeks in advance of the event date by email to [calendar@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:calendar@canadianmennonite.org). For more Calendar listings online, visit [canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar](http://canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar).**



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### Employment Opportunities



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Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana, is hiring a full-time Vice President and Academic Dean to start July 1, 2018. Qualifications: Ph.D. or equivalent; commitment to Anabaptist Christian faith and practice; ability to inspire faculty, students and constituents; knowledge of administrative, scholarly and pedagogical best practices in graduate theological education; and post-secondary teaching, supervisory and administrative experience.

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Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana, is hiring a full-time professor of Biblical Studies to start July 1, 2018. Preferred qualifications:

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TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY PHOTO

*Trinity Western University (TWU) president Bob Kuhn, and Bob Nice, the university's senior vice-president of business affairs and chief financial officer, are joined by members of the Skidmore family to celebrate the opening of Skidmore Hall, the first new student residence to be built on the TWU campus in Langley, B.C., in 25 years. The three-storey Skidmore Hall accommodates 130 students, and most of the rooms are semi-apartment style (two students per bedroom with a kitchenette for every four bedrooms). The \$8-million modular building was built by Atco Structures and Logistics.*

PHOTO BY KAY MUAS / TEXT BY AMY DUECKMAN

*With a theme of 'Courage to boldly go,' Mennonite Church B.C. women gathered at Camp Squeah in mid-October for their annual retreat. Speaker Margo Hoffman shared of her experiences in living in community with people of other faiths and cultures. Other highlights of the weekend included a 'superheroes' meal and photo booth, a workshop with Mennonite Girls Can Cook authors, silent auction and basket raffle, art workshop, night hike and Zumba dance class. Pictured, participants take part in a game searching for books of the Bible.*



# God at Work in Western Canada Snapshots



PHOTO BY ANGELA BENNETT

*In the summer of 1989, George Brown restored the family's old threshing machine. Since then, George's son Lyle and his wife Betty (who are members of Bergthal Mennonite Church in Didsbury, Alta.) and their family have been raising money for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank for more years than they can count. More than 50 people attended the pictured event on Sept 9, which included two threshing machines, three tractors, four teams of horses and lots of willing hands. More than \$2,000 was raised this year.*