

CANADIAN MENNONITE

June 18, 2018

Volume 22 Number 13

Picture
perfect
(Story and more
photos on pg. 34)



PM40063104 R09613

inside

'God just isn't finished with me yet' 4

A deep awareness 12

Good neighbours, good food 28

EDITORIAL

Green bench wisdom

VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

The concept is simple. In a public place, an older adult sits on a green bench that is marked with the hashtag #ElderWisdom. Community members are invited to sit and engage in conversation about the senior's life, experiences and insights. Afterwards, community members can share about their experience on social media, using the hashtag. The seniors take stories of the encounter back to their own circle of friends.

Schlegel Villages, a chain of long-term-care and retirement communities based in Ontario, is championing the #ElderWisdom Green Bench effort as a way to combat negative stereotypes about seniors and to help older people engage with the wider community.

"The greatest untapped resource in Canada, if not the world, is the collective wisdom of our elders," asserts Ron Schlegel, a Mennonite and founder of Schlegel Villages. Encounters like this help pass on that wisdom and provide meaning for all the generations involved.

Older adults play an important role in society and within the church. As part of a food bank effort in Rosthern, Sask., experienced gardeners partner with children to grow food for sharing in the community (see page 28). Residents of a retirement community in Winnipeg work with Grade 4 students to bake chocolate chip cookies, with fun and friendship emerging (see page 14). In our feature article that begins on page 4, Jane Kuepfer points to the insight that elders

offer to younger people in the congregation, as "mentors in life and faith."

A mentor could be defined as an experienced and trusted adviser, a guide or even a coach. Mentorship involves two people building a relationship that grows in depth and feeds on trust and communication. Both partners are enriched.



In the book *Spiritual Literacy: Reading the Sacred in Everyday Life*, Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat highlight "the diligent practice of kindness, listening and nurturing" that is essential to being this kind of spiritual friend. "These special individuals draw out the best that is in us. They are witnesses to our self-discoveries and spiritual unfolding," the authors point out.

I can think of several mentors in the Bible. Mother-in-law Naomi teaches her daughter-in-law Ruth how to get along in an unfamiliar culture. The priest Eli mentors the boy Samuel in how to listen and respond to God. Older relative Elizabeth spends time with young Mary as they experience their unexpected pregnancies together. The Apostle Paul writes letters to young Timothy with advice on how to live as a Christ-follower.

In recent times, we have recognized the value of good mentors as part of the church's faith formation. Sometimes congregations establish official mentoring programs, matching each youth with an older member and encouraging the pairs to develop a friendship through activities and conversation. (See "Helping the youth of today," *Canadian Mennonite*, June 27, 2011, page 22.)

Sometimes the mentoring happens informally and almost imperceptibly, as we live in relationship with others who have "gone before." A recent widow watches and learns from older widows in the congregation about how to live in her new reality. A retired school teacher offers encouragement and advice to a young adult dealing with the complexities of the educational system.

CM told the story of Lee Hiebert and how elders in his life helped bring him back to faith and eventually into the role of a pastor. (See "Prodigal pastor," Oct. 9, 2017, page 4.)

Recently, a pastor who works with young adults in settings outside the traditional church told me that the young people she knows express interest in connecting with older mentors. This is a reminder to seniors in our midst that they have a role to play in the sharing of "elder wisdom." It's an invitation to pay attention, learn to know each other and build relationships of trust. Mentorship could happen at the church potluck or at a local coffee shop. Maybe it could even flourish on a green park bench.

Introducing Dave Rogalsky, Eastern Canada Correspondent

Dave lives in Waterloo, Ont., with his partner Annemarie. Their two adult children, partners and two grandchildren live in the Waterloo Region. Over the past 35 years, Dave has pastored one Mennonite congregation in Manitoba and five in Ontario. He is currently the intentional interim pastor at Church of the Good Shepherd, Swedenborgian, in Kitchener. He and Annemarie are members of First Mennonite, Kitchener. He has written for *Canadian Mennonite* for 12 years.



ABOUT THE COVER:

Photographer Jay Siemens, who counts the Seeds Church in Altona, Man., as his spiritual home, has raised nearly \$45,000 for charity through sales of calendars that feature his wildlife photography. See story and more photos beginning on page 34.

Funded by the
Government
of Canada

Canada

CANADIAN MENNONITE

contents

MONTH 18, 2018 / VOL. 22, NO. 13

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40063104 REGISTRATION NO. 09613

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE ITEMS TO:

CANADIAN MENNONITE,
490 DUTTON DRIVE, UNIT C5,
WATERLOO, ON, N2L 6H7

Phone: 519-884-3810 Toll-free: 1-800-378-2524 Fax: 519-884-3331

Web site: canadianmennonite.org

Facebook.com/Canadian.Mennonite @CanMenno

Please send all material to be considered for publication to:

General submission address: submit@canadianmennonite.org

Readers Write: letters@canadianmennonite.org

Milestones announcements: milestones@canadianmennonite.org

Paid obituaries: obituaries@canadianmennonite.org

Calendar announcements: calendar@canadianmennonite.org

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

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

Reprint requests: reprints@canadianmennonite.org

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

Guiding values:

Hebrews 10:23-25 • Accuracy, fairness, balance • Editorial freedom •

Seeking and speaking the truth in love • Open hearts and minds in discerning God's will

• Covenantal relationships and mutual accountability

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

Board of Directors (by appointing body):

MC Canada: **Doreen Martens, Henry Krause, Rod Wiens, Elmer Hildebrand;**

MC B.C.: **Annika Krause;** MC Alberta: **Arthur Koop;**

MC Saskatchewan: **Larry Epp;** MC Manitoba: **Ken Reddig;**

MC Eastern Canada: **vacant;** CMPS: **Lois Epp, Ally Siebert, Bryce Miller**

Board Chair: **Henry Krause,** hakrause@telus.net, 604-888-3192

Head Office Staff:

Tobi Thiessen, Publisher, publisher@canadianmennonite.org

Virginia A. Hostetler, Executive Editor, editor@canadianmennonite.org

Ross W. Muir, Managing Editor, managinged@canadianmennonite.org

Barb Draper, Editorial Assistant, edassist@canadianmennonite.org

Betty Avery, Graphic Designer, designer@canadianmennonite.org

Lisa Jacky, Circulation/Finance, office@canadianmennonite.org

Aaron Epp, Young Voices Editor, youngvoices@canadianmennonite.org

Advertising Manager: D. Michael Hostetler, advert@canadianmennonite.org,

toll-free voice mail: 1-800-378-2524 ext. 224

Correspondents:

Will Braun, Senior Writer, seniorwriter@canadianmennonite.org

Amy Dueckman, B.C. Correspondent, bc@canadianmennonite.org

Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, Alberta Correspondent, ab@canadianmennonite.org

Donna Schulz, Saskatchewan Correspondent, sk@canadianmennonite.org

Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe, Manitoba Correspondent, mb@canadianmennonite.org

Dave Rogalsky, Eastern Canada Correspondent, ec@canadianmennonite.org

One-Year Subscription Rates

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

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

Subscriptions/address changes:

(e-mail) office@canadianmennonite.org

(web) canadianmennonite.org

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



'God just isn't finished with me yet' 4

'The church is a community of profound meaning for seniors because it has the capacity to speak to their deep spiritual needs, offering belonging, care and inspiration,' according to **JANE KUEPFER**, the Schlegel specialist in spirituality and aging for the Schlegel/University of Waterloo Institute for Aging.

Focus on Seniors 13-14

Read stories about the Mennonite Nursing Home near Rosthern, Sask, and Lindenwood Manor in Winnipeg.

A supportive space 23

Mennonite World Conference leaders met in Kenya to foster global relationships but struggled to come up with a way for national churches to respond to controversial issues that divide them.

Faith and fixing at the Repair Café 27

SANDY YUEN reflects on Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church's reaching out to the community on Earth Day, as 10 fixers repaired 95 items, keeping them out of the local landfill.

Influential writer also a flawed earthen vessel 30

URIE A. BENDER is remembered as one of 'the young enthusiastic leaders of the 1950s who moved beyond the Mennonite farm tradition,' but who also faced complaints from four women for crossing sexual boundaries. MC Eastern Canada also responds to his death.

Young Voices 34-36

'Picture perfect' profiles the continuing visual career of **JAY SIEMENS**.

'Taking charge' introduces **KATY STECKLY** and **KATIE BENTZ**, the *Bossy Women* podcasters. Both by Young Voices editor **AARON EPP**.

Regular features:

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

A moment from yesterday **10** ServiceLinks **37**

Calendar **37** Online NOW! **38** Classifieds **39**

Green bench wisdom 2

VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER

CommonWord connections 7

ARLYN FRIESEN EPP

Is flirting necessarily a bad thing? 8

MELISSA MILLER

A plan worth making 9

PETER DRYDEN



Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press



FOCUS ON SENIORS FEATURE

'God just isn't finished with me yet'

Meaning, memory and mystery are part of the aging process

BY JANE KUEFFER

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE



PHOTO © ISTOCK.COM/MYRRHA

Many Mennonites have memories of grandmas who, at difficult times, would say, 'I don't know how anyone can get through life without faith.'

I was raised in a family with Scottish Presbyterian roots, where no one talked about faith for fear of being “too religious.” We trusted that seniors had it all figured out and their faith carried them, although we would be stretched to say we understood how. I wonder sometimes about their experience with God and meaning in later life, and how my grandparents would have talked about their faith if they had felt free to put it into words.

My husband's grandparents, Amish Mennonites, were more vocal about what sustained them. Relationship with God provided companionship through lonely times, Scripture and prayer brought comfort, and an understanding of something waiting beyond death was a source of enduring hope. They took seriously the responsibility of transmitting that faith to younger generations, and showed their love through prayer.

Many Mennonites have memories of grandmas who, at difficult times, would say, “I don't know how anyone can get through life without faith.” But spirituality is not only for those blessed with a heritage of comfortable faith conversations.

While, for some elders, a simply articulated faith has profound depth, others cringe at simple words in the face of a complex array of life experiences and a relationship with God or religion characterized by struggle and challenge.

As a spiritual-care provider in long-term care I am finding that generations aging now are more inquisitive, less likely to lean on assumptions, and that their honest questions help us all to think about what we mean when we say a spiritual life helps with aging.

Many seniors have not been part of a church for some time. They are not interested in saccharine definitions of spirituality. And some would not call themselves “people of faith” at all.

Yet we all have spiritual needs right to the end of life. We are sustained by whatever resources are available to offer us hope, love, peace and joy in our circumstances. For example, we might find hope in children, in the cycle of nature regenerating, in conviction that problems are not permanent. We receive and give love in networks of family and friends, old and new. Peace comes with reconciliation in relationships, quiet space, unhurried



PHOTO BY D. MICHAEL HOSTETLER

The church is a community of profound meaning for seniors because it has the capacity to speak to their deep spiritual needs, offering belonging, care and inspiration.

time. And joy is often in the little things: beauty, surprise, music, humour.

Spiritual resources found within and without

Recently, I conducted research with baby boomers who are nearing or past 65. I learned that these boomers find spiritual resources within, and in the space and people around them, as well as in their faith, for those who profess it. They all grew up going to church and Sunday school weekly. But their relationship to traditional spiritual resources, such as Scripture, prayer, music and their church community, has evolved in different ways for each of them. They continue to be open to exploration and learning, anticipating that their spirituality will continue to grow and change as they age. Which makes sense, since aging is all about change.

If we live long enough, we inevitably experience change in health and independence, roles and identity, energy and activity, relationships, community and home, to say nothing of all the changes we experience in society, technology and the world. Many elders report change in perspective, a shift in values with a different stage of life, and change in where they find meaning. It would not be surprising for elders to find new spiritual life as well.

Meaning, memory and mystery

I like to think about our spirituality as we

age as being about meaning, memory and mystery.

If we are to aspire to live long lives, it is vital that these lives have meaning. Do we understand ourselves to be part of a bigger picture or a bigger story? When life is difficult, what meaning do we make of it? What has been, and is now, our purpose or calling in life? What do we imagine when we envision dying and death?

For elders, another important aspect of spirituality is memory. Throughout life, memories of sacred moments accumulate, and familiar practices, including prayers and rituals, come to hold deeply rooted meaning. Memories interrupted by dementia can often be accessed through these familiar practices, especially those involving music.

Mystery is another increasingly friendly aspect of spirituality for elders. Many attest to a greater level of comfort with the unknown as they grow older, and the freedom to let go of the need for control.

We live out our spirituality through our connections to self, others, nature and the divine. We express our spirituality in relationships, traditions and practices, and through stories, beliefs and values. Our spirituality sustains vitality and enables people to cope with crisis, transition and circumstance. As we understand better what contributes to meaningful aging, we will be better able to support one another in our families, churches and communities.

What seniors offer congregations, and need from them

Congregations can gain a lot from the gifts of seniors. Older members carry the story of church's past along with a lifetime of experience. They are likely to have insight that younger members do not, and contribute to the next generation as mentors in faith and life.

But seniors are not just at church for the benefit of younger members. The church is a community of profound meaning for seniors because it has the capacity to speak to their deep spiritual needs, offering belonging, care and inspiration. Hope is fuelled watching the children parade with palm branches, or participating in an engaging Christian education discussion. Love is nurtured through smiles and hugs, and opportunities to support others near and far away through faithful prayer and giving. Peace comes in quiet music during worship or healing prayer at the close of a visit from the care team. Joy erupts in the hallelujahs of Easter morning gathering with friends.

New questions emerge with this new life stage. What is the purpose of life after working years are done? How do I connect with the world when most of those with whom I shared life and memories have died? Where is God in suffering and illness? What is my role as a grandparent? How do I faithfully manage my finances and legacy? How do I support and sustain friendship with my peers who

are experiencing dementia? Who am I now in the eyes of God? There is much to learn in the process of growing old. These are spiritual questions, and our church communities are good places to ask them together.

Growing spirituality in today's seniors

When something is growing, we can't know what it will look like tomorrow.

A research participant explained her growing spirituality: "I learned when Mom was sick [with dementia] that life is okay if my ducks aren't all in a row sometimes. God walks with us no matter what. I learned that in new ways. . . . I know there's lots more that's going to happen that I wouldn't choose, and times I will say life's not fair, but I have incredible peace. I know God will be with me."

Another reflected on how important his questions have been: "I think my faith today is stronger than it would have been any time throughout my life but . . . I question more things than I would ever have questioned. I doubt more. I've changed my mind. When I was 25 years old, my faith would have been very black and white. Today I'm not as sure about many things. Most people would look at that as saying my faith is weakened, but I think my faith is stronger because I know who I am, I know what I believe. Those things aren't shaken. Yet my world has become much more inclusive than it was 40 years ago. . . . The most inspiring and important things in my faith journey have been hearing other peoples' opinions and perspectives, and not being afraid of those. . . . My faith has grown because I've had those conversations, and keep having them."

Sometimes challenges present opportunities, and growth comes through difficulties. A spouse whose partner recently died shared how much she had changed through the experience of loving and caring for him, saying, "I'm a better person now because of it all."

The losses of age can strip away many of the blessings of life: cherished relationships, health and strength, meaningful work. While we experience God through these blessings in our youth, for some the empty spaces they leave make room for

/// Suggested reading

- **JOAN CHITTISTER:** *The Gift of Years: Growing Older Gracefully.*
 - **RICHARD ROHR:** *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life.*
 - **ROBERT WEBER** and **CAROL ORSBORN:** *The Spirituality of Age: A Seeker's Guide to Growing Older.*
 - **JANE THIBAUT:** *A Deepening Love Affair: The Gift of God in Later Life.*
- COMPILED BY JANE KUEPFER

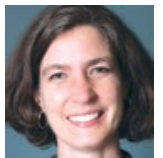
a deeper relationship with God, and for growing spiritual maturity, intimacy and freedom.

Words like generativity, integrity, universalizing faith, and gerotranscendence (a theory that explains aging from a psychosocial perspective) have been used to describe spiritual development in later life. The spiritual transformation only possible in the "second half of life" is of increasing interest among contemplative writers.

Ron Schlegel, founder of Schlegel Villages long-term care and retirement communities, is fond of saying, "There is much we lose as we get older, but our spirituality can continue to grow and thrive."

As my older friends living long lives say, "It might be that God just isn't finished with me yet." ❧

Jane Kuepfer is the Schlegel specialist in spirituality and aging for the Schlegel/University of Waterloo Research Institute for Aging. She is a spiritual director and has been a pastor in congregations and a spiritual care provider in long-term care for more than 20 years.



/// For discussion

1. How do the seniors in your family or your congregation express their faith? Do they ever admit that they have questions or express uncertainty? Do you think they feel spiritually cared for or do they long for deeper spiritual sustenance? What role have you played in nurturing the spiritual needs of seniors?
2. Jane Kuepfer says that she likes to think of spirituality in older people as "being about meaning, memory and mystery." What might be examples of each of these aspects of spirituality? Can you think of any other dimensions of spirituality? Do questions about the meaning of life become more important as we age?
3. Kuepfer quotes a research participant as saying, "When I was 25 years old, my faith would have been very black and white. Today, I'm not as sure about many things." Do you think this is a common experience? Why might older people be less sure about things?
4. How do older seniors contribute in your congregation? How accommodating is your congregation when mobility issues arise? What concerns will you have when you begin to lose your independence?

— BY BARB DRAPER

See related resources at www.commonword.ca/go/1493

CommonWord
Bookstore and Resource Centre

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 and include the author's contact information and mailing address. Preference is given to letters from MC Canada congregants.

✉ Unity starts with the fruit of the Spirit

RE: "ETHICS NOT the basis for Christian unity" letter, April 23, page 10.

Walter Klassen states in his letter, "No matter how uncompromisingly we disagree on ethical issues, could we, as Christian believers, use that creedal confession ['I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth'] as the baseline upon which our unity could grow and expand?"

In our historical and current theological discussions, creeds haven't always done us very well, even in trying to understand who God is and who Jesus is. Various interpretations abound today.

I would like to suggest a third perspective that can

(Continued on page 8)

FROM OUR LEADERS

CommonWord connections

ARLYN FRIESEN EPP

Here are five ways to remain connected with CommonWord in our new regional church model:

1. Keep reading

Many of us love a leisurely read on a summer beach blanket or in a hammock. Our 10th annual summer reading list (commonword.ca/go/1554) might help you locate that perfect warm weather read.

Or if summer is your chance to think ahead to congregational responsibilities in the fall, CommonWord is glad to assist in directing you to appropriate materials. Worship planners will have special interest in our new Lectionary and Special Occasions Worship Calendars (commonword.ca/go/1515). Adult study leaders may peruse our new Adult Curriculum Guide for biblical or thematic ideas (commonword.ca/go/1520). Mennonite Church Canada's *Unsettling the Word: Biblical Experiments in Decolonization* (commonword.ca



[/go/1505](http://go/1505)), would make for an important fall conversation.

In all cases, our loan books ship free, both ways, anywhere in Canada. Sale items are at competitive prices. Digital resources are downloadable at no cost.

2. Share your recommendations

CommonWord's mandate is to carefully select materials through an Anabaptist lens. We like to say that "Google can help you find a million books; CommonWord can help you find the right one." For such curation to work, we depend on your recommendations. Please pass along your favourite books, blogs, videos, websites or podcasts. We'll review and profile many of them.

3. Visit

Many of us find ourselves on the road during summer. If you're in Winnipeg, please come by! You may be surprised to learn what we offer in-store: a wider selection of retail books, Ten Thousand Villages products, frozen specialty foods and much more. We enjoy meeting folks from across Canada, and you'll enjoy

Folio Café's coffee or gelato!

Of course, you may visit us online, at any time (commonword.ca) to access thousands of resources. Also follow us on Facebook to stay abreast of new and seasonal materials.

4. Share your original creations

Did you know that CommonWord is a repository for your congregational resources? If your church has something creative and original to share, including worship, study or leadership resources, please pass that along and we'll post it for further distribution.

5. Host us locally

Many congregations have appreciated our Cheaper by the Dozen program, and have received, on an extended loan period, 12 different titles on a specific topic, to complement a worship or study series, or have chosen to regularly receive a dozen titles on a standing order (to augment their library offerings. It's a simple and free way to host CommonWord in your congregation.

There are many other creative ways to remain connected. One individual chose to gift his spouse with a monthly book and package of coffee.

Arlyn Friesen Epp is director of CommonWord.

(Continued from page 7)

draw us closer together and unite us, in addition to wrestling with our ethics, creeds and dogma. It has to do with our value system.

Paul, in his writing to the Galatians, says, “*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such there is no law*” (5:22).

Drawing on that observation and acting on it is

always a good starting point.

WALTER PAETKAU, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

The author attends Langley Mennonite Fellowship.

FAMILY TIES

Is flirting necessarily a bad thing?

MELISSA MILLER

What is flirting anyway? When is it a problem? When is it a delightful social interaction? I've been pondering these questions for years since a friend surprised me with the words, “You are such a flirt.”

Even though he spoke affectionately, I was taken aback, uncertain if such a label was accurate or wanted. At the time, I was standing beside and joking with a favourite brother-in-law with whom I enjoy a warm, teasing relationship. I would not have described my actions as flirtatious, so my friend's critique gave me pause.

More recently, I encountered a prohibition against “indiscreet flirting” in a safe church policy. The intent of the policy is to promote healthy boundaries within the church, especially to safeguard against unwanted, abusive sexual attention, a goal I firmly support. To identify flirting as problematic, with its qualifier of indiscreet, is helpful. Such language encourages all of us to be more conscious of appropriate and inappropriate sexual behaviour. The more awareness we bring to our behaviour, the greater chance of avoiding harm.

Flirting is not sexual behaviour per se. Definitions help us uncover its meanings,

uses and risks. Flirting carries negative connotations, such as to make insincere advances or to trifle in love. Synonyms for “flirt” include “coquette” (from the French meaning “one who struts like a little cock”), and even “wanton.” Historically, the term was usually applied to women. Now why would that be? Based on such definitions, I reject my friend's assessment. I am not insincere nor do I trifle in love.

Another definition is “to play at love.” Now I hone in on flirting's positive potential, for I see it as a form of play. We are social beings. We yearn to connect, to see and be seen. We are attracted to each other, and in that attraction we play. We smile, joke and tease. We touch and express affection. We flirt. Electric

When done honorably, in a spirit of playfulness, we affirm life and our social connections.

sparks pass between us, enlivening and enriching our interactions. As I write, I recall my mother's sassiness, a quality she shared with her father and passed on to at least some of her children. I credit it to the bit of Irish that's in the family tree.

I venture that there's a fair bit of flirting in our communities. When done honourably, in a spirit of playfulness, we affirm

life and our social connections.

Harm comes when flirting is done to puff up one's ego, without regard for the feelings of others. Flirting is indiscreet and inappropriate when done deceitfully, toying with another's affections.

I wonder about some of the biblical stories of Jesus and women. I imagine the human Jesus as an attractive, intriguing person, with his piercing wit, legendary wisdom and deep-hearted compassion.

Take note of how he parries with the Samaritan woman, as recounted in John 4. (As an aside, scholars note the similarities between this male-female meeting at the well with other biblical stories, like that of Jacob and Rachel.) Jesus and the woman seem to enjoy their question-and-answer word plays, and each other, in the interaction. Is it possible there is a hint of flirting in the air? It is not difficult for me to guess at their flashing eyes, facial expressions and gestures conveying playfulness, mutual respect and attraction.

Perhaps I am way off base. Perhaps there is no way to redeem the concept of flirting. If its only definition is a trifling of affection with negative consequences, I

reject the label for myself. But if one can flirt in a spirit of delightful play, perhaps there's a way to wear the label with integrity.

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



✉ The decline and fall of Ukraine

GREETINGS FROM DNIPROPETROVSK, the second largest city in Ukraine.

The billboard in the photo says it all: The borscht is good; everything else sucks.

Anybody with any brains left here a long time ago. It doesn't matter that they left the lights on because the



switch stopped working a long time ago.

It's really quite depressing to see people struggling for the slightest bit of dignity, something long gone from their daily life but something their grandmother talked about, and

(Continued on page 10)

GOD, MONEY AND ME

A plan worth making

PETER DRYDEN

Like more than 51 percent of all Canadian adults, Roger (a pseudonym) did not have a will. As a child, he had been adopted into a wealthy family and, although he loved them deeply, he struggled to form a strong relationship with his siblings. They never became close.

In adulthood, their connection faded even more, and they lost touch after their mother passed away. When their father also died, Roger and his siblings each inherited a significant fortune.

Roger was dismayed to discover that his siblings squandered their shares of the inheritance, which he felt was shameful and did not honour their father's hard work. One afternoon, as he was discussing the situation with a friend, he mentioned that he had not yet drafted a will of his own. He had never married, had no children, and had just never gotten around to it. His friend warned him that unless he put a will together, he might be shocked at how his estate would be managed.

When a person dies without a will in place, provincial governments are saddled with the responsibility of providing guidance and direction for the legal distribution of assets from the person's estate. Rules have been established by each province, but these are often based on assumptions of familial bonds and,



therefore, dictate that a person's property be given to family members. While that might work for most, there are situations like Roger's where distribution to family members might not be a desired solution at all.

Since Roger was not married and did not have any children, if he died without a will, his estate would default to using the legislation set out in his province. A general guiding principle is, "If a person does not formally indicate how he/she wants his/her property distributed upon death, it is presumed that the person wants it to go to family members."

Roger was quite disturbed to realize that the fortune he had received from his father would be given to his siblings, who

Although focussed on the future, estate planning is a good starting point to establish strategic giving today.

had misspent what they had already inherited. Not only was the matter of inheritance a concern to him, he also realized that not having a will prevented him from optimizing his estate's tax efficiency. Even more alarming, he discovered that there would be absolutely no plan for donating anything from his estate to the charities that were near and dear to his heart.

He made up his mind to do something about it and sought the guidance of Abundance Canada.

Like Roger, many people only create

their will when a crisis or life event grabs their attention and motivates them to put a plan together. However, a proactive and enthusiastic approach to estate planning is far more rewarding. At its core, estate planning is an act of stewardship over all that you have been blessed with. It can be a delightful experience to take the time to reflect and carefully consider who will be blessed by the assets you have accumulated over years of hard work. Will and estate planning also provides an opportunity to share your values and help determine what impact your wealth will have in the world. After all, the greatest financial gift many of us will ever make is through our estate.

Although focussed on the future, estate planning is a good starting point to establish strategic giving today. With a carefully thought-out plan in place, you can give during your lifetime while creating a legacy that is in line with your values. A donor-advised, charitable foundation like Abundance Canada can help you think

strategically about giving, setting in motion a ripple effect of generosity that will continue to impact the world for many years to come.

Peter Dryden 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 or call 1-800-772-3257 to arrange a free, no-obligation consultation.

(Continued from page 9)

it's in their DNA, so they can't ignore it.

Ukraine has been pulled between East and West for a long time. We Mennonites can remember our grandparents talking about how good the life was here if you just allow the good mother earth to act naturally. Catherine the Great had just won this land from the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) and needed western expertise and drive to make nature work.

It worked too well. The human ego took over, and it didn't take long for all to be lost. Now we see the debris left behind.

The political pulling continues, now between Russian President Vladimir Putin and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

RICHARD PENNER, CALGARY

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Enns—Anya Katharina (b. April 8, 2018), to Randy and Noelle Enns, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Ewert—Winifred Ruth (b. April 4, 2018), to Nicholas and Naomi Ewert, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Harder—Leo Sebastian (b. Feb. 23, 2018), to Shaun and Alisa Harder, Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man.

Martin—Rory Seth (b. April, 20, 2018), to Tony and Char Martin, Floradale Mennonite, Ont.

Thiessen—Dax Samson (b. April 11, 2018), to Trenton and Jessica Thiessen, Ross Road Community, Abbotsford, B.C.

Warkentin—Rylee Eleanor (b. May 17, 2018), to Jason and Caroline Warkentin, Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Marriages

Bender/Koehler—Will Bender (Crosshill Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.) and Melissa Koehler (St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.), at St. Jacobs Mennonite, May 19, 2018.

Deaths

Baerg—Art, 96 (b. May 31, 1921; d. April 17, 2018), Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man.

Epp—Jack, 84 (b. March 9, 1934; d. April 2, 2018), Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man.

Fittler—Helen (Schartner), 86 (b. July 18, 1931; d. May 21, 2018), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Fretz—Betty (nee Stobbe), 68 (b. Dec. 11, 1949; d. March 26, 2018), Listowel Mennonite, Ont.

Metzger—Alice (nee Heintz), 84 (b. Nov. 12, 1934; d. April 2, 2018), Hawkesville Mennonite, Ont.

Rempel—Henry, 90 (b. Oct. 29, 1927; d. April 16, 2018), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Travers—Daniel, 64 (d. April 14, 2018), Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man.

Weise—Gerhard, 91 (b. July 8, 1926; d. March 29, 2018), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

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

A moment from yesterday



The Epp Garage in Fiske, Sask., suffered a devastating fire. When material, like this photograph, comes to the archives with little or no information, we can often learn about it from its context—the other “stuff” that comes with it. But in this case there was no contextual information. We don't know the family, owner, photographer or date, to help us fully identify this photo. Can you help?

Text: Conrad Stoesz

Der Bote Photograph Collection / Mennonite Heritage Archives



archives.mhsc.ca

LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Activate your core

TROY WATSON

It seems the majority of political, social and religious discourse today consists of knee-jerk reactions to the perceived agendas, biases, foolishness and dangerous “isms” of the “other.” This rampant reactivity makes constructive dialogue impossible. To make things worse, we all assume the log is in everybody else’s eye and the tiny speck is in our own. I’m no exception.



Last year, God enabled me to see how often and how much I react. So much so, that I’ve made my personal growth focus for 2018 the quest to find freedom from the reactive patterns in my life. My goal is to learn to respond instead of react. What’s the difference? I’m not sure how technically correct my distinction is, but it’s been helpful for me.

A response comes from within. It’s a free choice. This ability to choose freely is like a muscle we must develop. It’s what ultimately makes us responsible. “Response-ability” is the ability to respond in appropriate and constructive ways in any situation.

Reactions are externally triggered. To react means to “act again,” to instinctively re-enact the past. Like a chemical reaction, certain ingredients come together under certain conditions and “blammo”: a pre-programmed reaction occurs. Reactions are not choices, they are automatic processes that occur in us, often feeling out of our control.

Our reactive patterns bring harm to ourselves, to others and to our witness as people of faith. Even when we’re aware of this, reactivity is a hard habit to break. Thankfully, I’ve recently come across a helpful technique I call “activating my core.”

My exercise coach repeatedly stresses how important it is to “activate my core” while exercising and doing resistance training. If you don’t activate your core,

you’re vulnerable to injury. The same applies to spiritual training (discipleship).

When I don’t activate my spiritual core (my connection with Divine Spirit), I’m prone to hurting myself or others by reacting. What I’ve recently discovered is my physical core and spiritual core are inter-connected. I must activate them both to fully develop my “response-ability” muscle.

A few months ago, I met with someone who was pushing all my reactivity

I responded with silence—not in a dismissive or passive-aggressive way—but from a place grounded in God’s love.

buttons. I felt my fight-or-flight instinct kicking in, which typically leans towards the fight end of the spectrum. Instead of reacting, I paused and prayed. As I turned my attention to God’s presence, I remembered to activate my core. I contracted my core muscles, breathed deeply and shifted my consciousness away from my thoughts, and focussed on my body’s awareness of Divine Spirit’s presence within me. The impact was nothing short of miraculous.

I instantly felt God’s love for this man. I smiled from a place of genuine compassion and . . . I said nothing. Not one word. I didn’t defend, debate or engage. None of his inflammatory comments hooked me, nor did I deflect his statements with half-hearted comments to placate him. I responded with silence—not in a dismissive or passive-aggressive way—but from a place grounded in God’s love.

It was more powerful than I could have imagined. It felt like holy ground as I observed the energy of his rant run out of steam because my response was not providing any fuel to keep the fire burning.

Eventually, he mentioned an offhand comment about an interesting experience he’d had a few weeks ago. I discerned the experience was a “God moment,” and knew it was time for me to speak. I simply asked him to say more about it, and his entire countenance, posture and energy transformed as he began sharing.

The meeting ended as positively as it could have, with me praying for his well-being and him letting me do that. I can’t say what happened to him as a result, but something powerful shifted within me. I now realized silence—grounded in God’s loving presence—was a response I could freely choose by activating my physical

and spiritual core. This was a significant breakthrough in my quest to be liberated from reactivity.

One final thought on “activating my core.” The original meaning of “respond” is “to pledge again.” Every time reactivity awakens in me, I try “to pledge again” my allegiance to the Spirit of Christ. I don’t mean pledging allegiance to a doctrine or belief system about Jesus, but to a living presence I can sense with my physical body. In my core. This physical awareness is key to activating my core.

For anyone looking to become less reactive, I’d encourage you to give it a try.

Troy Watson (troydw@gmail.com) is developing his spiritual response-ability muscle.

CANADIAN MENNONITE

Have an employment ad?

For print and online ads, contact:
advert@canadianmennonite.org

PERSONAL REFLECTION

A deep awareness

DIANE SIMS



I whispered, "Please listen. Please come." He did. I dropped the rope, and arms of golden strength whisked me away from the dark into the light. So it was there I heard a bit of "yes," not "no," and learned more of "good" from

"bad."

Looking for good sometimes stretches my spirit. I hate being cranky with my husband, who of course bears the brunt of spousal frustration. I am reprimanded to "*count it all joy when you meet trials*" (James 1:2).

Sometimes the tiniest good happens. Holding a hand can tether another to hope. Smiling eyes and arms open a door to a coffee shop.

Our loving Divine pleads with us to just hang on. "*In spite of severe suffering welcome the joy of the Holy Spirit*" (I Thessalonians 1:6). And "*a joyful heart is good medicine*" (Proverbs 17:22).

Then before me is that tantalizing stack of shimmering books. Gently untying that perfect purple ribbon I gasp. The multi-coloured presents slide aside, a slight breeze wafting by, and there in the living light is the splendid presence of the Great I Am.

With shaking hands I open *Gratitude* and *Joy*. They are two of the wondrous gifts our loving Lord offers us. As Paul wrote in Galatians 5:22, joy overflows as a gift of the Spirit.

And these gifts do not have a best-before date.

I feel the Divine romancing me into a deeper relationship of gratitude and joy. He beckons me into a dance of discovery. It is with a joy that is "inexpressible" (I Peter 1:8).

I am no Pollyanna. The infections and the comas continue. Fear happens. But I've also been blessed with a loving, kind "fella." I was a joyous 58-year-old bride marrying Dennis Thomas in 2016. He

checks that I'm breathing or that I've taken my meds. Yeah, sometimes I welcome being "babied!" But 911 is on speed-dial.

In these tumultuous times my Lord stoops down and scoops me back into his world.

Whether in my wheelchair, my lift chair or bed, I try to keep my arms open with joy, thanksgiving, welcome. Indeed, I am vulnerable for more pain, but I express my faith with outstretched arms.

Scant but splendid times it feels like my fingertips tingle with cosmic stardust and fireflies all around. Jesus says, "*I am the light that shines through the cosmos*" (John 8:12).

Although the Canadian Gage Dictionary notes the word "gratitude," is a noun, I try to live it as an "accompanying" verb. You have to work gratitude. As Paul wrote to the Colossians, "cultivate thankfulness."

Affirming even the simplest of words or actions is practising thankfulness. "Train yourself to never put off the word or action for the expression of gratitude," noted Albert Schweitzer, the renowned doctor, theologian and humanitarian who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1952.

Practising gratitude with joy continues to teach me to live in the moment. Sometimes it's tough when I have to be cleaned while hanging from a ceiling lift. It's a humbling journey. That said, I am so blessed. I have a husband who loves me. I am thankful for the plethora of people who clean me, transfer me, and transport me hither and yon.

To loosely paraphrase David Steindl-Rast, the Benedictine brother: As I express with words or actions of my gratitude and joy, the deeper I am aware of it. And the greater I am aware of it, the greater my desire and need to express it.

May Joy and Gratitude guide me to open more rainbow-wrapped books. ☯

Diane Sims is a member of Avon Mennonite Church in Stratford, Ont. She is the author of Gardens of Our Souls: A Correspondence of Friendship and Healing (MacMillan Canada, 1998); An Ovarian Cancer Companion (General Store Publishing House, 2003); and Solace (Novalis, 2005).

Imagine a dazzling stack of books each wrapped in rainbow-coloured tissue paper. All tied with royal purple ribbon with sprinkles of pearls twinkling throughout. An aqua-turquoise one named *Gratitude* and a tangerine-honey-coated one named *Joy* are so appealing. A gift tag reads "For you."

I itch to open them, but new life-sucking experiences leave me tottering on a cliff of a darker-than-dark abyss.

I've experienced serious medical problems with "drop-dead deadlines" with multiple sclerosis, horrific ovarian cancer and increasingly deadly blood infections, and I and my loved ones now struggle through ever-increasing crippling effects.

And it's scary, scary stuff.

But I hold tight to the promise that "weeping may endure through the night, but joy will come in the morning" (Psalm 30:5).

But those nights can be very long.

Utter angst gripped me when I awoke from the third coma. My heart felt frozen in fear. I listened but did not hear that my "*sorrow shall be turned into joy*" (John 16:20).

Then I met Amy Kuepfer, now pastor of congregational care at Avon Mennonite Church in Stratford, Ont., and an abiding friendship of trust developed. Over coffee one summer morning, after another terrifying hospital stint, Amy asked if I could ask Jesus to step into that abyss while we waited in prayer. Could I let his hands warm my heart? Or would I stumble and be sucked into the darkness?

Hurt, pain, anger, guilt are all ragged knots I had made along an old, twisted, fraying rope that I sadly feared would tumble into that pit. I realized that the bottomless black abyss is the absence of the light of my world (John 8:12).

With Amy's hands encircling mine,

FOCUS ON SENIORS

Still the same inside

Nursing home resident looks for opportunities to help others

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
ROSTHERN, SASK.

For Anita Lehmann, home is the dementia unit at the Mennonite Nursing Home. But unlike most of the unit's 29 other residents, Lehmann doesn't suffer from dementia.

When it became evident she needed care, Lehmann took the only room available in the 68-bed facility, which happened to be in what staff refer to as the secure wing.

Situated just east of the town of Rosthern and 69 kilometres north of Saskatoon, the nursing home is part of a larger complex that provides housing and care for seniors at various levels of care. The west wing is home to residents who require care but are in no danger of wandering.

The secure east wing is a safe place for those suffering with dementia or the effects of brain injuries. Residents' rooms are laid out in a loop around a central nursing station and common living area. Residents are free to wander the loop but are prevented from straying beyond.

Since moving to the nursing home in February 2017, Lehmann has been offered a room in the unsecured west wing, but has chosen to stay where she is. "It's a little community," she says. And while she appreciates the sense of community in the secure wing, she also works to foster it.

Although she herself is wheelchair-bound, Lehmann looks for opportunities to help others. At meal times she sometimes helps her cousin. "I know she appreciates it so much when I come to her and talk to her and help to undo her bib and clean her up," she says. But when the home's administrator, Joan Lemauiel, commends and thanks her for doing this, Lehmann is quick to respond, "Oh no, I don't need any thanks, that's for sure not!"

"Each one is different," she says of her fellow residents. "And I try to go to them and talk to them. There's at least two that I know of that don't talk—no, even more than that—but I can kind of get it out of them, you know, what they're feeling like."

"Anita's always a very positive person," says Lemauiel, who appreciates the gentle way in which Lehmann approaches other residents and encourages them. And Lehmann concurs: "You kind of have to know how to approach them, and then they'll open up to you."

She tells of one interaction with a non-verbal resident whose name is Donna. "I went to [her] and I said, 'Hi Donna, how are you doing today?' And I got a smile out of her, but she went like this [Lehmann shakes her head] and [I knew] she wasn't feeling up to par."

Karen Chaskavich, the home's director of care, recalls seeing Lehmann interacting with the home's youngest resident, a 25-year-old man with a developmental disability that prevents him from walking or speaking. "He had a teddy bear," says Chaskavich, "and she was using the bear to try and communicate with him." In her gentle way, Lehmann was able to touch something within the young man and get him to giggle, says Chaskavich.

It takes a bit of skill to communicate with her fellow residents. "They say you have to have the—well, I don't want to say the know-how—but you know, it kind of is that way," Lehmann says, adding modestly, "It's sort of my nature."

Living in the secure unit hasn't always been smiles and giggles. Those suffering with dementia may behave inappropriately at times. "There is a side to coping with them, because some of them can get quite aggressive," she says.

Amos Fehr, the home's chaplain, remembers that there were some residents who made life rather stressful for Lehmann when she first arrived.

In spite of this, she chooses to remain in the secure wing. She has made friends there, and feels she has something to contribute. "When you're a Christian, I feel that you should be able to do that, and that you should do that," she says of caring for those whose needs are greater than her own.

It bothers her when she sees people ignoring her friends. "[These people] just kind of act like they're not there, and I don't like that, because they're still the same—inside they're still the same human being," she insists. ❧



Anita Lehmann, left, a resident in the Mennonite Nursing Home's secure unit, talks with administrator Joan Lemauiel about her ministry to her fellow residents.

FOCUS ON SENIORS

VIEWPOINT

A soon-to-be favourite recipe

LOIS LITZ
LINDENWOOD MANOR

We all have our favourite recipes. There is the tried and true. Or there's the newly created ones that are fun to test and then turn into classics.

One tried and true combination in life is older adults and children, yet it is a combination that may not be as common as either group would like to see. There can be new ways to bring these groups together and have them benefit from learning and creating together.

At Lindenwood Manor in Winnipeg, we are in our fifth week of testing what is a new recipe for us, and one that we think is worth sharing.

• **STEP 1:** Take a Grade 4 class from the Katherine Friesen Campus of the

Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary and Middle Schools close by. Divide the class in half, making sure to get a class with an innovative teacher who includes home economics in the classroom.

• **STEP 2:** Add several lifelong cooks living at Lindenwood who are open to trying a new adventure.

• **STEP 3:** Mix the two in a private dining room that can accommodate four table groups. Then combine the groups once a week for three weeks to participate together in home economics classes.

• **STEP 4:** After the third class, share fresh chocolate chip cookies with others who live in the building.

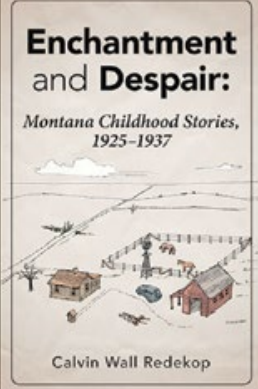
• **STEP 5:** Repeat the first four steps with the second part of the class.

The result of this is you will hear laughter and encouragement from both generations. You may hear conversations that include an unapologetic "I really can't see, so you will have to help me," to, "That dough looks about right. Good job."

Students will enjoy talking about their 97-year-old table partner with their friends at school, or a table partner will enjoy praying with her friends for the students to "feel loved and grow into godly men and women."

A parent shared that his son really loved home economics classes at Lindenwood, saying he "loved interacting with the seniors, because they had a lot to teach, and he thought they enjoyed the class as well."

As with any new recipe, this one needs some tweaking, but the basics are there. Observing each age group enhance the life and learning of the other is even better than the cookies they bake. It is a recipe to mark as a favourite and reuse in the future. ☘




Enchantment and Despair:
Montana Childhood Stories, 1925-1937
Calvin Wall Redekop

Deadly drought, near fatal accidents, blizzards, grasshopper plagues, choking dust storms, endless days of relentless toil for measly crop yields...

... enchanting big skies, an endless undulating prairie, the spine-tingling cry of midnight coyotes, the self-satisfaction of scratching sustenance from the earth ...

This is the Montana of Calvin Wall Redekop's childhood, a place the neighbors labeled "the most awful forsaken place God had ever created" and a magical world for a wide-eyed boy. These background forces of hardship and wonder constituted memories where he finds the subtle basis for his subsequent personal development. The interdependence in the homesteading community helped Redekop see the power of cooperative human ventures, and recognize the importance of the environment in human survival: awareness the author has acted upon throughout his life.

"What a totally mischievous and daring and often foolish young boy you were. It's the greatest wonder you survived!"
Nancy Lively




Calvin W. Redekop

Book Details:
180 pages
5.5 x 8.5 inches


Available Formats:
eBook (epub, mobi, pdf)
Paperback
Hardcover

Available at FriesenPress

Paperback \$13.49
Hardcover \$23.49



Lindenwood
Retirement Living



NOT FOR
PROFIT
ASSISTED
LIVING FOR
SENIORS

*A continuum of care in a
Christian community*

Lindenwood Manor 475 Lindenwood Dr. E
Lindenwood Terrace 490 Lindenwood Dr. E

- 1 & 2 bedroom suites
- Weekly housekeeping
- 2 meals per day
- Recreation Programs
- On-site Certified Health Workers
- Spiritual Care Services

To schedule a tour or for more information please call
Maureen at 204-594-2289 or email murbanovich@lindenwood.ca.

www.lindenwood.ca



SUMMER 2018
VOLUME 28 ISSUE 3

- 2 2018 Commencement
- 6 AMBS board appoints academic dean, Bible faculty
Vision now available online
- 7 Faculty and staff transitions at AMBS
- 8 AMBS Snapshots

AMBS window

Grads encouraged to fulfill “other half” of Jesus’ mandate

Palmer Becker, D.Min., told graduates at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary’s (AMBS) 72nd commencement service that as followers of Jesus, they have not only been given a mandate to teach, but also to cast out broken and evil spirits.

“We might define these spirits in different ways and have different methods for casting them out, but the mandate stands,” said Becker — a church leader, pastor, missionary, author and educator from Kitchener, Ontario — during the May 6 service at College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana.

Becker, a 1965 AMBS graduate and recipient of the seminary’s 2018 Alumni Ministry and Service Recognition, spoke on the stories of Jesus freeing a man from an unclean spirit (Mark 1:21-28) and sending his disciples out to teach and to cast out evil spirits (Mark 3:13-15). He noted that exorcisms played a major role in Jesus’ ministry.

“Jesus didn’t go around looking for people who were demon-possessed,” he said, adding that Jesus consistently responded to people according to their needs.

Becker pointed out that while people in many parts of the world still assume the presence of spirits, Western cultures tend to seek solutions to problems through education, research and technology — often neglecting the spiritual aspects of life.

“However, many people, both secular and religious, are realizing that not everything can be explained in natural and materialistic terms,” he observed. “It really comes down to the question, ‘Do we believe in spiritual reality?’”

He noted that the 16th-century Anabaptist movement emphasized the essential role of the Holy Spirit in empowering followers of Jesus to live faithfully.

Becker said he believes in the Holy Spirit and the existence of evil spirits but acknowledged “the great distance that exists in time, culture and context between the ways in which spirits were experienced in New Testament times and how they are experienced today.” He explored ways of understanding the word “spirit,” proposing that an evil or negative spirit is “any settled thought or attitude (continued on p. 2)



Above: Palmer Becker, D.Min., gives the 2018 commencement address. **Top:** The graduates ring small replicas of the bell that is on the seminary campus, which originally hung at the Wadsworth (Ohio) Institute, the first Mennonite institution of higher learning in North America. **Credit:** Jason Bryant

STAY IN TOUCH

- facebook.com/followAMBS
- twitter.com/ambs_seminary
- ambs.edu/news-events

that is contrary to the spirit of God.”

How then does one cast out evil or unclean spirits? Becker named three methods — therapy and counseling by trained professionals; exorcism; and an approach that “emphasizes listening and the caring presence of compassionate people.” He shared three examples from his ministry.

He also shared that the Anabaptist tradition offers an infrastructure for fulfilling Jesus’ mandate through three core values: “Jesus is the center of our

faith; community is the center of our life; and reconciliation is the center of our work.”

Following the conferring of degrees, **Rachel Miller Jacobs**, D.Min., Associate Professor of Congregational Formation, presented the charge to the graduates, first drawing on Becker’s message to bind any powers contrary to God — “the spirits that impair hearing, constrict imagining, shrivel trusting, wilt believing” — and then encouraging the graduates to “inhale God’s own Holy

Spirit” and let it power their ministry. The class responded with a litany that included the refrain, “We breathe in,” and sang together, “I bind my heart this tide.”

The commencement service also included commendations for **Lois Y. Barrett**, Ph.D., Professor of Theology and Anabaptist Studies; and **Rebecca Slough**, Ph.D., Vice President and Academic Dean. They are retiring on June 30. • — *Annette Brill Bergstresser*

2018 COMMENCEMENT

Twenty-one graduates honored

The 2018 AMBS commencement service took place on May 6 at College Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana. Each graduate received one of the following degrees and certificates.

MDiv	Master of Divinity
MACF	Master of Arts in Christian Formation
MAPS	Master of Arts: Peace Studies
Certificate	Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies

* Candidates who have six or fewer credits left to complete toward their degree

† Candidates who completed a portion of their degree at a distance through the MDiv Connect program

***Jeff Boehr** (Bluffton, Ohio). MACF: *Christian Spirituality*. Jeff is seeking an assignment in retirement community pastoral care or chaplaincy or in congregational pastoral work. He is a member of First Mennonite Church in Bluffton

and has been attending Southside Fellowship in Elkhart. He and his wife, Beth, have two children.

Matthew Cordella-Bontrager (Goshen, Indiana). MDiv: *Theological Studies: History, Theology and Ethics*. Matthew and his wife, Rachel, are expecting a baby in July and plan to serve in Kosovo as missionaries with Virginia Mennonite Missions. He is a member of Yellow Creek Mennonite Church in Goshen.



From left: Jeff Boehr, Matthew Cordella-Bontrager, Michelle Curtis, Ruby N. Fair-Miller, Janette Joy Lyndaker Gallagher, Beth Gerig. Not pictured: Stanley Paul Epp.

2018 COMMENCEMENT

***Michelle Curtis** (Lansdale, Pennsylvania). *MDiv: Pastoral Ministry.* Michelle plans to marry Jacob Liechty on June 16. She anticipates remaining in the AMBS community for a year while Jacob finishes his Master of Divinity; they then intend to pursue a co-pastoring assignment. Michelle is a member of Souderton (Pennsylvania) Mennonite Church and has been attending Belmont Mennonite Church in Elkhart.

Stanley Paul Epp (Newton, Kansas). *Certificate.* Stanley's future plans are to follow wherever Jesus leads. He is a member of First Mennonite Church of Newton and attends Hillsboro (Kansas) Mennonite Brethren Church. Stanley is married to Esther Mae Epp and has four children.

***Ruby N. Fair-Miller** (South Bend, Indiana). *MACF: Public Ministries.* Sister Ruby plans to pursue certification in healthcare chaplaincy to provide pastoral/spiritual care and minister God's grace to the caregivers of people diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and dementia. She is a member of New Life Fellowship Ministry in South Bend.

* **Janette Joy Lyndaker Gallagher** (Corning, New York). *MDiv: Pastoral Ministry.* Janette is pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. She is a member of Community Mennonite Fellowship in Corning. She is married to Dan Gallagher and has one daughter and two stepsons, one of whom is deceased.

***Beth Gerig** (Mishawaka, Indiana). *MDiv: Pastoral Care and Counseling.* Beth plans to continue in her part-time staff position at Kern Road Mennonite Church in South Bend, Indiana, and to pursue chaplaincy work in various healthcare settings. She and her husband, Kevin, have four children.

Sophia Marie Lapp Jost (Goshen, Indiana). *MDiv: Pastoral Ministry.* Sophie and her husband, David, plan to serve overseas. She is a member of College Mennonite Church in Goshen.

* **Rachelle Luitjens** (Olds, Iowa). *MDiv: Pastoral Care and Counseling.* Rachelle will continue to serve as a pastor at Sugar Creek Mennonite Church in Wayland, Iowa. She and her husband, Nathan, have three sons.

Mariah Kate Martin (Glenwood Springs, Colorado). *MDiv: Pastoral Ministry.* Mariah will marry Nick Bouwman in July and is pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. She is a member of Defiance Church in Glenwood Springs and attends Faith Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana.

Karen Diane Fagan Mascho (Gladewater, Texas). *Certificate.* Karen is pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment and/or options for church planting. She is a member of Joy Mennonite Church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Karen is recently widowed; she was married to Steve Mascho, Sr., for 34 years and has four children.

† **Ronald Lizwe Moyo** (Hesston, Kansas). *MDiv: Pastoral Ministry.* Ron anticipates continuing to serve Whitestone Mennonite Church in Hesston as Outreach Pastor. He and his wife, Sue, have two children.

* **Sarah A. Schlegel** (Kokomo, Indiana). *MDiv: Pastoral Ministry.* Sarah will continue as a pastor at Howard-Miami Mennonite Church in Kokomo. She and her husband, Ben, have two sons.



From left: Sophia Marie Lapp Jost, Rachelle Luitjens, Mariah Kate Martin, Karen Diane Fagan Mascho, Ronald Lizwe Moyo, Julia Schmidt. Not pictured: Sarah A. Schlegel.

2018 COMMENCEMENT

Julia Schmidt (Goshen, Indiana). *MDiv: Theological Studies: Peace Studies.* Julia is pursuing work in faith-based community organizing with a focus on immigrant justice in Elkhart County, Indiana, and is also engaged to be married to Jon Shetler. She is a member of Southside Fellowship in Elkhart.

Kay J. Schroeder (Newton, Kansas). *MACF: Worship.* Kay anticipates continuing in her current position as Pastor of Worship and Visitation at First Mennonite Church in Newton. She and her husband, Joel R. Schroeder, have two sons.

***Dylan David Stillman** (Winona Lake, Indiana). *MDiv: Pastoral Care and Counseling.* Dylan plans to pursue education with the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, seeking placement as a residency candidate, and to continue ministering within the Brethren in Christ Church. He is a member of Nappanee (Indiana) Brethren in Christ Church and is married to Megan Stillman.

Jonah Yang (Cottage Grove, Minnesota). *MACF: Public Ministries.* Jonah would like to write Anabaptist Christian historical and theological educational materials for Hmong Mennonites and other people. He anticipates continuing his mission to Thailand, Laos and Vietnam to share more about the Mennonite Confession of Faith and Anabaptist history and practice. Jonah is a member of Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He is married to Memee Yang, and they have seven children.

Daniel L. Yoder (Goshen, Indiana). *Certificate.* Daniel plans to continue as Pastor of Christian Formation for Youth at College Mennonite Church in Goshen. He and his wife, Talashia Keim Yoder, have two sons.

***Sharon Witmer Yoder** (Elkhart, Indiana). *MDiv: Pastoral Ministry.* Sharon plans to continue as Co-pastor at Olive Mennonite Church in Elkhart through December 2018; she has served there with her husband, Kevin,

since 2007. Her plans after December are unknown. She and Kevin have three married daughters and one granddaughter.

***Rebekah York** (Bucharest, Romania). *MAPS.* Rebekah plans to explore possible work positions for next year and — after completing a couple of fellowships this summer — to move to Goshen, Indiana. There she plans to continue to reflect on concepts she has learned at seminary and to work with a local organization. Rebekah is a member of Belmont Mennonite Church in Elkhart.

***Miriam Zehr** (Orrville, Ohio). *MACF: Christian Spirituality.* Miriam plans to continue working as Associate Pastor of Worship and Education at Oak Grove Mennonite Church in Smithville, Ohio. She is married to Douglas Zehr, and they have three children. ●



From left: Kay J. Schroeder, Jonah Yang, Sharon Witmer Yoder, Rebekah York, Miriam Zehr. Not pictured: Dylan David Stillman, Daniel L. Yoder. Graduate photos credit: Steve Echols



Profile of the 2018 graduates

This year's graduates are from Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and Romania. Two graduates originally came to the U.S. as refugees, fleeing war in their home countries of Laos and Zimbabwe.

Eighteen of the graduates are affiliated with Mennonite Church USA; one with the Evana Network; one with the Brethren in Christ U.S.; and one with the U.S. Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches. One is nondenominational.

This year's graduating class was the first to include students who did all the

work toward their Master of Divinity at a distance — coming to campus twice a year for intensive classes and doing the rest of their coursework online through the seminary's MDiv Connect program, which began in 2013.

Four graduates are the daughters of AMBS alumni: **Janette Lyndaker Gallagher's** late father, **Norman J. Lyndaker**, earned an MDiv in 1971; **Sophie Lapp Jost's** father, **John F. Lapp**, earned a Master of Arts: Theological Studies (MATS) in 1988; **Mariah Martin's** father, **Lauren Martin**, earned an MDiv in 1990; and **Julia Schmidt's** father, **Dennis Schmidt**, earned an MDiv in 1994. **Julia Schmidt's** mother, **Dianne Schmidt**, is a current AMBS student. **Sophie Lapp Jost's** grandparents are also graduates: **Lois Shenk Zehr** received an MDiv in 1994, and **Michael Zehr** received a MATS in 1994.

As a gift to the seminary — an annual tradition — this year's class commissioned **Sophie Lapp Jost** (MDiv 2018) to create a Fraktur (traditional folk artwork) of Ephesians 3:16-21, and **Steve Thomas** (MDiv 1988) and his son **Matt Thomas** (a former AMBS maintenance assistant) to create a wooden cross and base for use in worship services at the seminary. ●

GRADUATES BY DEGREE

- 12 Master of Divinity
- 5 Master of Arts in Christian Formation
- 1 Master of Arts: Peace Studies
- 3 Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies (represents the equivalent of one year of study)

GRADUATES BY THE NUMBERS

- 14 women
- 7 men
- 15 serving as pastors or seeking a pastoral or chaplaincy assignment
- 4 pursuing mission or service work
- 1 seeking work in faith-based community organizing
- 11 served as paid pastors or congregational staff members while earning their degrees

Left: **Matthew Cordella-Bontrager** (MDiv 2018) receives his bell and degree from President **Sara Wenger Shenk** at commencement. Credit: **Jason Bryant**

Graduates receive awards

Each year, AMBS faculty members present awards to selected graduates at the Dean's Breakfast, which is held the day before commencement. This year's recipients are:

- **Matthew Cordella-Bontrager:** Cornelius J. Dyck Award for Excellence in Historical Studies
- **Michelle Curtis:** Millard Lind Award for Excellence in Biblical Interpretation
- **Janette Joy Lyndaker Gallagher:** Award for Excellence in Pastoral Ministry
- **Beth Gerig:** Award for Excellence in Pastoral Care and Counseling
- **Sophia Marie Lapp Jost:** Award for Excellence in Preaching
- **Rachelle Luitjens:** Marlin E. Miller Award for Excellence in Theological Studies

- **Sarah A. Schlegel:** Award for Excellence in Christian Formation
- **Julia Schmidt:** Award for Excellence in Peace Studies, Heart of the Community Award
- **Jonah Yang:** Award for Excellence in Missional Leadership
- **Rebekah York:** Award for Excellence in Missional Leadership

Graduates also received a one-year print subscription to *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology* from the Institute of Mennonite Studies and access to the ATLASerials for Alum database from the AMBS Library. The Admissions Team presented each graduate with a "golden ticket" — good for one waived application fee — to share with someone considering studying at AMBS. ●



Rachelle Luitjens (at right) receives an award from **Lois Y. Barrett, Ph.D.**, retiring Professor of Theology and Anabaptist Studies. Credit: **Jason Bryant**

AMBS board appoints academic dean, Bible faculty

The AMBS Board of Directors has appointed **Beverly Lapp**, Ed.D., of Goshen, Indiana, as the seminary's new Vice President and Academic Dean, and **Drew J. Strait**, Ph.D., of Washington, D.C., as Assistant Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins, beginning July 1, 2018. Both appointments took place during the board's April 19–21, 2018, meeting in Elkhart.

Lapp succeeds **Rebecca Slough**, Ph.D., who is retiring June 30 (see p. 7). She has an Ed.D. from Columbia University Teachers College in New York City; an M.M. in Piano Performance and Pedagogy from Westminster Choir College of Rider University in Princeton, New Jersey; and a B.A. in Music from Goshen College.



Beverly Lapp
Credit: Brian Yoder Schlabach (Goshen College)

An active church musician, Lapp has been on the Goshen College faculty for 23 years, serving as Professor of Music, Core Curriculum Director and Music Department Chair. Lapp developed a Music for Social Change concentration and helped develop a Musical Theater minor, and she designed and oversaw a recruitment plan that significantly increased new music student enrollment. As Core Curriculum Director, she gave leadership to the 38-credit-hour general education program that launched in 2012.

"Colleagues with whom Dr. Lapp has collaborated at Goshen College and other institutions of higher learning were unequivocally enthusiastic about her collaborative leadership style, proven administrative skills, interdisciplinary curricular work, intercultural competence, command of data to inform decisions, and passion for transformative educational processes," said **Sara Wenger Shenk**, Ed.D., AMBS President and search committee chair. "In a time of widespread longing for transformative spiritual connections, Dr. Lapp's vision for far-reaching theological education deeply rooted in the Christian gospel is compelling and timely. I am thrilled with her strong sense of rightness about stepping up to serve in academic leadership at AMBS."

Strait is taking on his position as other Bible Department faculty are retiring; **Mary Schertz**, Ph.D., Professor of New Testament, retired in June 2017; and **Ben Ollenburger**, Ph.D., Professor of Biblical Theology, will retire in December 2018.

"Dr. Strait will bring a passion for teaching, ministry and scholarship to his work at AMBS," said Slough, chair of the search committee. "His formation in the United Methodist Church, Mennonite Church USA and in evangelical communities provides an ecumenical grounding for his Anabaptist commitments. Drew's love for the Bible along with his personal mission to 'detrribalize' the church will further the mission of AMBS."

Strait earned a Ph.D. from the University of Pretoria, South Africa,

focusing on New Testament and Early Christian Literature; an A.M.R.S. in New Testament from the University of Chicago Divinity School; an M.A. in New Testament from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois; and a B.A. in Religion from Whitworth University in Spokane, Washington, with minors in Philosophy, Greek and Hebrew. He currently teaches New Testament at St. Mary's Ecumenical Institute in



Drew Strait
Photo provided

Baltimore, Maryland, and has also taught at St. Mary's Seminary and University in Baltimore; Northern Seminary in Lisle, Illinois; and North Park University and Theological Seminary in Chicago. His teaching interests include Luke–Acts, resistance literature in early Judaism/Christianity, political theology, racial justice and the mission of God, early Christian preaching, and early Christian negotiation of the religions of the Roman Empire. He has published *Hidden Criticism of the Angry Tyrant in Early Judaism and the Acts of the Apostles* (Fortress Academic, 2018).

Strait will also bring experiences of ministering in various multicultural contexts to his teaching at AMBS.

• — *Annette Brill Bergstresser*

AMBS Window Summer 2018 Volume 28 Issue 3

Distributed three times a year as a supplement to *Canadian Mennonite* and *The Mennonite*.

Editors: **Annette Brill Bergstresser**,
Melissa Troyer
Designer: **Nekeisha Alayna Alexis**

3003 Benham Avenue,
Elkhart, IN 46517, USA
marketing@ambs.edu



A seminary of
Mennonite Church USA and
Mennonite Church Canada

Vision now available online

Vision: *A Journal for Church and Theology* is now available online — for free! Beginning with the Spring 2018 issue on "The church and young adults," users can select individual articles or open the entire issue. Back issues can also be viewed as full issues.

Regarding the Spring 2018 issue, editors **Irma Fast Dueck**, Th.D., and **Peter J.H. Epp**, both of Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg, Manitoba, observe, "The church throughout history has wrestled with how it can remain relevant to young adults. As we shaped this issue, we assumed that the concerns young adults

raise about the church are not just issues related to the experience of this generation but connect to the whole church and what it means to be the body of Christ in our context. We are pleased to offer the insights of young adults, pastors and scholars as they reflect on Scripture, research and their experience — for our edification and the church's renewal."

Vision's purpose is to encourage theological reflection on the identity, mission and practices of the church from an Anabaptist-Mennonite perspective. It is published twice a year by AMBS's Institute of Mennonite Studies and CMU's Centre for Faith and Life. Plans

Faculty and staff transitions at AMBS

The AMBS learning community is saying farewell to several of its long-time members this summer.

Rebecca Slough*, Ph.D., is retiring June 30 after 11 years as Vice President and Academic Dean and 20 years on the faculty, teaching in worship and the arts, Christian formation and field education. She is known throughout the church for her gifts in worship, music and the arts. In the classroom, she helps students discover new insights by testing artistic responses to biblical texts.

Slough is a member of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) Chief Academic Officers Advisory Committee and has co-led two Deans Colloquies for the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion. She has written for academic journals such as *Teaching Theology and Religion*, *Religious Studies Review* and *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, and for publications of AMBS's Institute of Mennonite Studies.

"Rebecca is, above all, a superb dean, dearly loved by students, faculty and colleagues alike," said **Sara Wenger Shenk**, President. "She is a master of the ebb and flow of AMBS's academic river of life, and we are going to miss her great sense of balance, good humor, practiced wisdom, broad networking with other deans and theological school leaders, and her ability to sound the theological depths that keep us wondrously afloat."

Slough will continue as Association of Theological Schools Self-Study Director through the ATS accreditation visit in February, and as Affiliate Faculty.

Lois Y. Barrett*, Ph.D., Professor of Theology and Anabaptist Studies, is retiring June 30. A resident of Wichita, Kansas, she has served as Director of the AMBS-Great Plains

Extension (2002–13) and as a professor (2002–18), teaching courses in Anabaptist history and theology; mission church theology;

Christian spirituality, history and theology; discerning and knowing; and Anabaptist understandings of the church. She also developed the *Seminario Bíblico Anabautista* (Anabaptist Biblical Seminary) program for Spanish-speaking pastors in Western District Conference with a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc.

"Lois' interests in theology, history and mission make her a natural interdisciplinary teacher and scholar," said Slough.

In April, the AMBS board expressed appreciation for Barrett's contributions, affirming her leadership, scholarship, love of teaching and love for the church.

She anticipates continuing her theological research on processes of knowing and discernment and will continue to serve as Affiliate Faculty.

Missy Kauffman Schrock, M.B.A., Director of Advancement, is concluding her time at AMBS in June after eight years. She has served as the primary leader for advancement strategy and has managed the Advancement Team. As part of her M.B.A. capstone project, she spearheaded the installation of a 60kW solar array on AMBS's campus in 2017.

Wenger Shenk said Kauffman Schrock has made "an invaluable and inspiring contribution to AMBS's mission" and praised her "fun-loving, can-do attitude" and ability to pick up the spirits



Rebecca Slough, Lois Y. Barrett, Missy Kauffman Schrock and Barb Nelson Gingerich

of her crew.

Paula Killough*, M.Div., former Senior Executive for Advancement for Mennonite Mission Network in Elkhart, took on the role of Interim Director of Advancement in mid-June.

Ken Hawkley*, M.Div., is ending his full-time role as Senior Associate Director of Advancement on June 30 and will serve quarter time as Advancement Associate for Canada.

Barb Nelson Gingerich*, A.M. in Divinity, Managing Editor for the Institute of Mennonite Studies (IMS), is retiring Aug. 30. Since beginning in her role in 1999, she has edited, formatted and/or overseen the production of 30 books; 36 issues of *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology*; and 15 selected volumes in various IMS series. She has also helped host conferences and other IMS-sponsored events.

"Barb does an administrative job with admirable efficiency and precision, yet brings to that job a warm personality, a droll sense of humor and broad theological and cultural understanding — and that's not even to mention her abilities as a liturgist, prayer leader and event host!" said **Jamie Pitts**, Ph.D., IMS Director. • —AMBS staff

* Denotes AMBS graduate

are to continue to offer print subscriptions for the time being. The theme for the Fall 2018 issue will be "Gifts of a global church," edited by **Jamie Pitts**, Ph.D.

Access the free issues, sign up to be notified when a new issue is available, or learn more: mennovision.org •

Photo: AMBS faculty and students celebrated the redesign of *Vision* at a special break in December: (l. to r.) **Scott Litwiller, Sungbin Kim, Janna Hunter-Bowman, Bekah York and Michelle Curtis.** **Credit:** Nekeisha Alayna Alexis



AMBS SNAPSHOTS

Graduates reflect on their seminary experiences

Janette Joy Lyndaker Gallagher

(MDiv Connect),
Corning, New York:

"In addition to the strong academic education I received in the MDiv Connect program, AMBS fostered an atmosphere that was rich in relationships. Professors and staff were consistently concerned with the whole person and created an atmosphere conducive to learning, growing spiritually and connecting with others."



Mariah Kate Martin

(MDiv Campus),
Glenwood Springs,
Colorado:

"Leaving AMBS, I will carry with me and treasure the opportunities the seminary gave me to find my voice. I was supported and encouraged to listen well, speak mindfully and to embrace the simple power of sitting with others in their joys and sorrows."



meaningful has been my interactions with professors. The probing questions they asked, their willingness to share openly from their own experiences, and their supportive affirmations all contributed to my learning and growth as a person and pastor."



Daniel L. Yoder

(Certificate), Goshen,
Indiana:

"AMBS has helped me appreciate how contextualized ministry is and how much joy and awe that can bring. All humans are created



in the image of God and bring their own experiences, theological history, physical abilities, ways of spiritual engagement, stage of faith formation, emotional health, phase of life ... and all of this is a unique reflection of one element of the vastness of God." •



Beth Gerig

(MDiv Campus),
Mishawaka, Indiana:

"The opportunities to study the extensive history of the biblical canon and to delve deeply into various areas of Scripture

have cultivated a profound respect for and engagement with the Bible in ways I could never have imagined."



Ronald Lizwe Moyo

(MDiv Connect),
Hesston, Kansas:

"The ability to be informed by my academic studies and by my classmates who are coming from different cultural backgrounds has been an amazing journey."

Kay J. Schroeder (MACF), Newton, Kansas: "The area of my seminary experience that has been particularly

LOOKING FORWARD

Journey: A Missional Leadership Development Program

Explore your call to ministry in this 2-1/2-year distance-friendly program that features a five-unit online curriculum, biweekly mentor-mentee meetings and one visit to the AMBS region per year. Register by Aug. 7.

• amsb.edu/journey

Spiritual Guidance Seminars

Prepare for a ministry of spiritual direction through this two-part supervised program, which will be offered on campus in 2018–19. Level 1 begins in September and Level 2 in October. Instructor: Dan Schrock, D. Min.

• amsb.edu/seminars

Online Anabaptist Short Courses (noncredit)

Exploring Anabaptist History and Theology, with Jamie Pitts, Ph.D.:
Sept. 12 – Oct. 23

Exploring Peace and Justice in the Bible, with Safwat Marzouk, Ph.D., and Drew Strait, Ph.D.: Oct. 23 – Dec. 11

• amsb.edu/shortcourses

Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies

Develop a plan of study that matches your interests in this 27-credit-hour program, which can be done fully online or with a combination of online, hybrid and on-campus courses. Ideal for international church leaders, bivocational pastors or other professionals.

• amsb.edu/graduatecertificate

David B. Miller available to teach

Invite David B. Miller, D.Min., an AMBS traveling teacher, to your area to preach or teach on topics such as holistic witness; Christian leadership; the missional church; healthy boundaries; and peace, justice and nonviolence. One-on-one pastoral consultations are also available.

• amsb.edu/workshops

Take a for-credit course this fall!

Hybrid courses (online but requiring one week on campus: Aug. 20–25) include Isaiah and Family Spirituality.

Fully online courses include Christian Attitudes Toward War, Peace and Revolution; Christian Theology 1; and Spiritual Practices: Prayer and Scripture. **On-campus courses** are also available. Nonadmitted students get 50 percent off their first course!

• amsb.edu/onecourse

Rooted and Grounded: A Conference on Land and Christian Discipleship: Sept. 27–29, 2018

Imagine and embody alternative ways of relating to the land that cultivate *shalom* among human beings, the rest of creation and God. This event will weave together worship, theology, biblical study and praxis. Keynote speakers: Valerie Bridgeman, Karenna Gore and Randy Woodley. Hosted at AMBS.

• amsb.edu/rootedandgrounded •

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

A supportive space

MWC General Council fosters relationships, struggles with response to controversial issues

Mennonite World Conference

The mission of Mennonite World Conference (MWC) is to create space for the global Anabaptist family to meet together. Much of the time, it is fulfilled virtually, on social media or through email connections across continents.

But once every three years, the General Council, MWC commissions, and the Global Mission Fellowship and Global Anabaptist Service Network gather in person. This year, representatives from up to 107 national churches from 58 countries gathered for triennial meetings for five days in late April in Limuru, Kenya, where they discerned decisions, learned from teaching, ate together and shared their hearts.

Gathered in a rainbow-striped tent that was both a metaphor for the diversity of the gathering and a real tabernacle for God's people, delegates approved strategic goals for the next three years:

- **LIVE OUT** Anabaptist identity.
- **INTERDEPENDENT** relationships.
- **RECONCILIATION** and hope.

"The unity of the Spirit is the reason we walk together, not the result of walking well together," said Canadian Bible scholar Thomas Yoder Neufeld, the new Faith and Life Commission chair, and speaker at three plenary teaching sessions. "God is to blame for the diversity in our unity," he said. "This is a permanent problem we do not want God to solve for us."

The imagery of breaking down boundaries show how costly peace is, he said. His teaching—that patience, suffering, forgiveness, seeing in each other the face of God, are the ways to walk in unity—was put to the test when delegates experienced pain when disagreement surfaced over the Faith and Life Commission's proposed guideline on responding to controversial issues.

The document was meant to provide a guideline for dialogue about subjects on which member churches disagree significantly, based on how they have discerned the Bible's teachings and their implications for Christian living. It declared: "MWC addresses specific topics when one of its member churches officially requests MWC to do so. . . . Unless the conversation calls for a change in the 'Shared Convictions,' MWC will not require churches to address topics that they do not wish to address."

The General Council did not reach consensus on accepting the document, which means that MWC continues without a clear process on how to discuss controversial issues.

Two other commission documents received delegate approval:

- **A STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY** with Indigenous peoples, presented by the Peace Commission. It states: "[MWC] desires to follow Jesus' example to respond to the cries of Indigenous peoples worldwide. This response is not concerned only with caring for people suffering within unjust structures. It also includes efforts to disarm the structures of oppression themselves (Colossians 2:15)."

It expresses sadness for oppression that makes a complete peace impossible. It confesses times when the church has been complicit with oppression, and it repents of participation in violence. It exhorts churches to reject interpretations of the Bible that justify mistreatment of Indigenous peoples.

The declaration cites the request to MWC for prayer and support from La Iglesia Evangélica Unida Hermanos Menonitas de Panamá, which is comprised almost entirely of Wounaan and Emberá indigenous people of Panama.



PHOTO BY LEN REMPEL

General Council delegates raise orange cards to show consensus.

- **A TEACHING RESOURCE**, "Identity and ecumenicity: A theology of inter-church hospitality and denominational identity," presented by the Faith and Life Commission.

This document cites I Corinthians 13-14 as the point of reference for dialogue with other Christians in a spirit of love. It recognizes the specific gifts and graces denominations carry and share for the benefit of others. It calls MWC member churches "to be ready to live in 'reconciled diversity,' being both brave in claiming our denominational heritage . . . , and humble in acknowledging our limited understanding," as they live out the ministry of reconciliation in the household of God (Ephesians 2:19).

The MWC General Council approved triennial financial projections that maintain the current level of revenue and expenses for core activities at US\$800,000 per year. Although "fair share" membership contributions from some Global North members are decreasing, it is hoped that contributions from congregations and individuals will keep core revenue steady. An additional US\$700,000 will be needed for Indonesia 2021, including the global assembly, the global youth summit and the

(Continued on page 24)

(Continued from page 23)

next General Council gathering.

Delegates ratified new national church



PHOTO BY WILHELM UNGER

Alexander Neufeld of Germany, left, and Joji Pantoja of the Philippines, chair of the MWC Peace Commission, right, lead in prayer for Alphonse Komuesa of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

members approved by the Executive Committee since the previous General Council meeting: Lancaster Mennonite Conference as a full member, and Iglesia Misionera Anabautista of Bolivia as associate members.

Henk Stenvers of the Netherlands was elected to assume the presidency of MWC at the next assembly in Indonesia in July 2021. Rebecca Osiro of Kenya, the current

vice-president, was affirmed to serve a six-year term.

Osiro described it as a great honour for Kenya Mennonite Church to host the gathering of Anabaptist leaders worldwide: “We feel encouraged and strengthened that we come to this reality. Where the roads are not defined clearly . . . you bear with us and forgive us. How nice, how pleasant and good that we stay together in unity.” ❧

Joy in the Spirit

Songs, testimonies and biblical reflection celebrate the Holy Spirit at Renewal 2027

Mennonite World Conference

/// New MWC officeholders

Executive Committee

Samson Omondi (Kenya)
Mohamad Ichsanudin (Indonesia)
Wieteke van der Molen (Netherlands)
Carlos Martínez García (Mexico)
Juan Silverio Verón Aquino (Paraguay)
Bill Braun (U.S.A.)

Faith & Life Commission

Thomas Yoder Neufeld, Chair (Canada)
Nzuzi Mukawa (Democratic Republic of Congo)
Lydia Adi Sidharta (Indonesia)
Rebecca Gonzales (Mexico)

Peace Commission

Neal Blough (France/U.S.A.)
Adriana B. Rodriguez (Honduras)
Wendy Kroeker (Canada)

Mission Commission

Nelson Okanya (U.S.A./Kenya)
Eladio Mondez (Philippines)
José Rutilio Rivas Dominguez (Colombia)

Deacons Commission

Angela Opimi (Bolivia)
Ephraim Disi (Malawi)
Vikal Pravin Rao (India)

As a local band played “You are the Most High God,” international guests from the global Anabaptist family swayed and sang at this year’s Renewal 2027 gathering, whose theme was “The Holy Spirit transforming us.” They met at Nyamasaria Primary School’s auditorium in Kisumu, Kenya, and headquarters of Kenya Mennonite Church (KMC). With this annual event Mennonite World Conference (MWC) commemorates the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

“The global Mennonite church is connected as the true vine to Jesus Christ and dependent on God the gardener,” said Gordon Obado, one of the masters of ceremony who welcomed the international guests to Kenya.

A church born of the Spirit

Strengthened by the East Africa revival, KMC exemplifies the event’s theme.

In the 1930s, two 12-year-olds from the Mennonite church in Shirati, Tanzania, and Rebeka (“Speedy”) Kizinza—a person of peace whose urgency to share the good news motivated her hospitality and fast walking—carried the gospel into regions where it was not known. They inspired others to do the same.

“Across Kenya, at cooking fires, people gathered around the Word of God and repented of their sins,” said David W. Shenk, a now-retired Eastern Mennonite Missions worker who was born in Tanzania. Shenk



PHOTO BY LEN REMPEL

Kenyan children perform a poem with song and dance at Renewal 2027 at Kisumu, Kenya. The Mennonite World Conference event focussed on the transforming power of the Holy Spirit.

distilled four revival principles: focus on Jesus while meeting regularly with Christians; confess sins; be dependent on Jesus; and be joyful.

The revival continued. “As the Spirit of the Lord works in the church, we become more and more like Jesus,” Francis Ojwang told the group.

“God is calling people from the Global South to bear witness to the gospel,” said Nelson Okanya, a native of Kenya, now president of Eastern Mennonite Missions, based in the U.S.

Addressing the assembly, MWC general secretary César García said that Renewal

2027 is calling Anabaptists to “a spirit of repentance and renewal, and a commitment to remembrance of the past, to renew our relationship here and now.”

A Spirit of power

“Why does it matter to us that the first Christians were filled with the Holy Spirit?” asked plenary speaker Elisabeth Kunjam of India, a member of the MWC Deacons Commission. Reflecting on Acts 2, she observed three reasons that Pentecost is significant today: the Holy Spirit continues to empower the church; the church is diverse and inclusive in nature; and the church displays a foretaste of the kingdom of God.

The problems facing the current generation call for the church’s active intervention, said Kunjam: “The Holy Spirit’s empowerment . . . within the global Anabaptist family is needed for the church

to raise up a standard that bears a witness to the world.”

“Where does the Holy Spirit go? The Holy Spirit goes where people are waiting,” said plenary speaker Alfred Neufeld of Paraguay, a member of the MWC Faith and Life Commission. He presented an overview of understandings of the Spirit in the early church, among the first Anabaptists and today. “God has not given us a spirit of weakness, but *dunamis*, a powerful spirit,” he said. “Dear friends, let’s enjoy this [agape—costly love/love of enemies] spirit of the Lord.”

A Spirit of transformation

“In the Book of Revelation, testimonies defeat the enemies,” said Barbara Nkala, a regional MWC representative from Zimbabwe.

Nkala; Jürg Bräker of Switzerland, a

member of the Deacons Commission; and Oscar Suárez of Colombia, a member of the Young Anabaptists Committee, shared testimonies of the Holy Spirit working in local churches. They spoke of the Spirit bringing unity despite diverse opinions in Switzerland, of re-uniting a broken family and supporting conscientious objection in Colombia, and of bringing physical healing and mission inspiration to women in Zimbabwe.

Leaders with strong spirits

Bishop Philip Okeyo, KMC’s moderator, led a ceremony to honour retired leaders of KMC, whose bodies may be weak but whose spirits are strong.

MWC president J. Nelson Kraybill, echoing Galatians 3:28, declared, “We are no longer Greek, nor Jew, Kenyan nor American; we truly are one in Christ.” ☞

#ChurchToo conference tackles painful subject

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Many troubling issues and questions arise when a Christian leader engages in professional sexual misconduct.

At the #ChurchToo conference at Columbia Bible College over two days in late May, pastors, church leaders, abuse survivors and other interested individuals came together to learn how to deal with sin and forgiveness while confronting offenders and promoting healing for victims.

Bryan Born, Columbia’s president, began the weekend by relating the college’s own experience with sexual abuse beginning in the 1980s. A respected faculty member had preyed upon several women, causing pain to the women and forcing the college to deal with difficult issues. Born said he is still dealing with the aftermath decades later.

Carol Penner, assistant professor of theological studies at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., spoke at the opening plenary session on “Abuse in the

church: Sin, accountability and forgiveness.” She noted that pastoral abuse is often hard to identify because people view it as sexual sin—such as an affair, adultery or an indiscretion—when it is really abuse. Pastoral abuse is often not recognized as abuse until years later, she said.

She also talked about the importance of accountability for the offender, and how forgiveness and accountability should go hand in hand. Forgiveness for the offence should come from the one hurt, not from the community of bystanders, and it should not be forced, Penner said.

She pointed out that the recent #MeToo movement encourages people to just tell their stories, but there is always a cost in doing so. “It’s hard to tell your story,” she said. “There are always ramifications.”

The session conducted by David Martin, executive minister of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, was entitled “What they never taught me in seminary.” He began



A broken cup, symbolizing a life shattered by professional sexual misconduct surrounds a whole cup, symbolizing survival from traumatic experience. #ChurchToo resource person David Martin, who has dealt with several cases of clergy sexual abuse as executive minister of MC Eastern Canada, said he has been ‘deeply pained but still profoundly hopeful’ in the process.

his presentation by smashing a cup, saying that those broken pieces represent the lives of the shattered women that cannot be put back together again. He gave several suggestions for helpfulness in such a situation, including treating victims with respect, recognizing that the person in power is always responsible for boundaries, and recognizing that emotional pain does not have an expiry date.

Often, Martin said, abuse is kept under wraps because of the pain it would cause to the abuser's family, but he pointed out that the victim has already experienced pain. "To whose pain do we give preference?" he asked. "We need to remember we cannot own the perpetrator's decisions."

Elsie Goertzen, abuse prevention coordinator with Mennonite Central Committee B.C., spoke on "The right use of power, dealing with shame." She talked about the difference between guilt and shame, and the potential effects of shame, including isolation and loss of resources.

In addition, two panel discussions dealt with the topics "How to respond to victims and survivors," and "Reflections from experienced leaders," and participants were able to choose from several individual

workshops.

Throughout the weekend, efforts were made to provide a safe space for everyone present. A counselling and quiet room was provided for anyone who may have felt "triggered." Participants were asked to respect privacy by not photographing others. And during question and answer time, instead of publicly asking questions on potentially sensitive topics, the audience submitted questions anonymously by texting.

#ChurchToo organizers hope participants gained a deeper understanding of the central dynamics of professional sexual misconduct within the church, and that they left better equipped to prevent and respond to painful situations that may arise within their own communities. ❧

A Bible comes home

VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER

Executive Editor

On May 12, some 125 people gathered at Conrad Grebel University College for an unusual homecoming celebration—for a Bible. This large, centuries-old book is a part of Ontario Amish Mennonite history.

The Bender Bible arrived in the wilderness of Upper Canada in 1832 with the Amish Mennonite immigrant family of Jacob and Magdalena Bender, who brought it from their home in central Germany. They and their children settled near what is today New Hamburg, Ont.

Published in Strasbourg, Alsace, in 1744, it is called a Froschauer Bible, named after Christoph Froschauer, the Swiss printer who produced the first complete edition of this translation in 1529. This translation was favoured by reformer Ulrich Zwingli in Zurich and by the early Anabaptists of Switzerland and southern Germany.

The Bender Bible is one of only seven known copies of the Froschauer Bible brought to Upper Canada by Amish Mennonites. It is unique in that it includes extensive, hand-written inscriptions that tell how Jacob Bender came to possess this Bible, where the Benders originated, when



PHOTO BY D. MICHAEL HOSTETLER

A unique feature of the 274-year-old Bender family Bible are the hand-written inscriptions with family names and birth-dates. In 1831, the Bible travelled from southern Germany to Upper Canada with Amish Mennonite immigrants Jacob and Magdalena Bender.

the family immigrated to North America, and marriage and birth information about those first generations. As a testament to his faith, Jacob also included a prayer of blessing for each child.

Jacob and Magdalena had eight surviving children, and the Bible was eventually passed on through the generations as a family heirloom and reminder of their faith.

The Bible remained with Jacob's descendants until 1928, when Harold S.

Bender, a prominent Mennonite historian and professor at Goshen (Ind.) College, received it from Noah J. Bender and took it to the Mennonite historical library there. There was no written documentation at the time of its transfer, and the question as to whether the transfer was a loan or a permanent donation to that library arose from the start. The oral tradition of the Ontario Benders through the generations has maintained that it was loaned.

In 2017, conversations began between Mennonites in Ontario and the Mennonite Historical Library in Goshen to bring the Bible back to its first North American home. Thanks to the collaboration and co-operation of Lauren Harder-Gissing, archivist of the Mennonite Archives of Ontario, and John D. Roth, director of the Mennonite Historical Library (jointly owned by Goshen College and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary), an agreement was reached to return the Bender Bible to Ontario in May 2018 for an initial 10-year period.

At the homecoming event, Harder-Gissing and Catherine Schlegel gave historical background on the Bible and the Bender family. Schlegel traced the family back to its early Anabaptist origins. Harder-Gissing evoked the sights, smells and sounds of the Bible's origins and its trip across the sea to a new land. "So, this book is not just an object, it vibrates with layers of history and meaning and possibility," said Harder-Gissing. "How will you, this Bible's community, contribute to this ongoing story?"

Representatives of Ivan and Beatrice Bender's family expressed their thanks, and guests sang a hymn of gratitude and were led in a prayer of thanksgiving for the faith heritage of this unique book.

After the official program, guests examined the Bible and Jacob's passport. They browsed through genealogy books and made connections with each other, identifying how they were related to their common ancestors, "Jecky and Lena."

The Bender Bible is available for viewing at the Mennonite Archives of Ontario at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont. ❧

—With files from Fred Lichti.

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Faith and fixing at the Repair Café

SANDY YUEN

TORONTO CHINESE MENNONITE CHURCH

Four years ago, my father Albert Kiang passed away. He was the ultimate Mr. Fix It, whether it was cars, computers or electronics. He was always tinkering away.

When he died, the grief I felt spurred a deepened faith in God. So as I reflect on the recent Repair Café event that was held at my church, I realized the space where our event was held was called Albert Hall, coincidentally the same name as my dad's. I felt God's hand working in my life.

Environmental stewardship, serving others, building community: these were some of the things that came out of the Repair café on April 21 at Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church.

The Repair Café is a grassroots organization co-founded by Wai Chu Cheng, Fern Mosoff and Paul Magder back in

2013. What began with 10 fixers, quickly blossomed into monthly repair cafés at the city's various public libraries and mini repair cafés at local community spaces.

To celebrate Earth Day, people from all over the city came together at the church for a common cause: to learn how to fix items that otherwise would have been sent to the landfill, and to build community. Over the course of the four-hour event, there were 85 visitors and 95 items were fixed. These items ranged from coffee makers, small electronics such as laptops, and books, to jewelry, clothing and bicycles. All free of cost to the visitors.

There was such a positive vibe at the Repair Café. Everytime something got fixed, a bell would ring, followed by applause. There was a genuine feeling of people helping people and people helping the environment.

God has asked us to be good stewards and to take care of the resources he has blessed us with. And he asked us to walk with our neighbours and to help one another. This was a beautiful testimony to that fact. ☺



PHOTO BY JULIE TRINH

Five-year-old Summer watches volunteer fixer Bennett McCardle fix the broken clasp on her purse that her grandma gave her.



PHOTO BY SANDY YUEN

Jason Yuen watches as volunteer fixer Kenny Fong examines a broken bathroom scale.



PHOTO BY FRANK MCKINNEY

Dan and Erin paint the Repair Café trailer outside the church.



PHOTO BY FRANK MCKINNEY

Pastor Brian Quan leads by example as he repairs a bicycle.

Good neighbours, good food

Retired pastors put faith into action at local food bank

BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
ROSTHERN, SASK.

“In my walk with the food bank,” says Wilmer Froese, “I feel like I am putting my faith into action, and doing so in a more deliberate way than I ever have before.”

He and his wife Barb spent many years co-pastoring a number of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan congregations. Now retired from both farming and pastoral work, they have found a new calling—feeding the hungry.

In 2010, the Rosthern ministerial asked Wilmer to look into the feasibility of establishing a food bank. He called a meeting

of community leaders. Most agreed there was a need, but some worried the presence of a food bank might give the town a bad reputation.

Wilmer disagreed. “This community is good at developing lifestyle-related activities,” he said, “but not at meeting the needs of the marginalized.” He felt that the way a community cares for its poor says more about it than anything else.

His viewpoint won the day, and in 2011 the Rosthern and District Food Bank began operations out of the basement of the seniors centre. Later, it rented a vacant commercial space for \$200 a month.

Arlene Heppner and Valerie White worked alongside Wilmer and asked him to chair their loosely knit committee. Eventually, the food bank incorporated, and the small group grew into a nine-member board of directors. Wilmer still serves as its chair.

The number of people using the food bank gradually increased until the rented space became too crowded. When the local *Saskatchewan Valley News* closed in January 2017, the Froeses decided to purchase both the building they were renting and the newspaper office next door.

“I always dreamed of a place where teaching and education could take place—not just for food bank users but for others as well—to integrate the marginalized with the rest of the community,” says Wilmer. The former newspaper office would provide such a place.

Following extensive renovations, the food bank moved into its new facility on April 20. The new space boasts a central kitchen and spacious multi-purpose room, in addition to the food hamper assembly and distribution area.

And the education Wilmer dreamed of



PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Lawrence Schmidt bags loaves of bread at the Good Neighbours Food Centre in Rosthern, Sask.



PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Wilmer Froese hopes the Good Neighbours Food Centre will become a place where marginalized people are incorporated into the community.

is already happening. Nadine Ens, the food bank’s community catalyst, developed a program called Planting, Picking and Preserving with Students and Seniors, P3/S2 for short. Experienced gardeners partner with Grade 3 students from Rosthern Elementary School to learn about food production and to grow a garden for the food bank.

Detractors argue that food banks don’t eliminate poverty but rather perpetuate dependence. Wilmer acknowledges that food banks don’t eliminate poverty, but says, “I’m motivated by the story of the Good Samaritan. [The parable] is about helping someone in need. Our moral responsibility is to help. We’re not solving anything, but walking alongside people.”

Barb points out that hunger is only part

of the picture, suggesting that inequality in opportunity, education and transportation is a bigger issue. "You can't [tell people], 'Just go get a job,'" she says. "A lot of these people are elderly or young moms with children. They are often unemployable and lack education."

As for perpetuating dependence, the Froeses say this simply doesn't happen. "Many people come when they need it," says Wilmer. "They don't become dependent but come because they have no other resource." They cite examples of former clients who now serve as volunteers.

"The food bank has opened our eyes to a 'hidden part' of our community," says Barb, "a part we don't necessarily want to acknowledge or deal with." But she suggests that when people face that hidden part, they face themselves. "We all could be, and maybe have been, in a position of want or need," she says, adding, "We have so much in common with the rest of humanity."

Now known as the Good Neighbours Food Centre, the food bank remains a faith-based organization. Volunteers come from all denominations or from

no denomination, and this has stretched Wilmer's faith. "I have learned that other people may have different understandings of God that may not necessarily be wrong," he says, and admits to being less rigid and dogmatic than he once was. "People who don't believe as I do have found their way to God as well," he adds.

Building relationships with clients is an ongoing challenge. "We're in a position of power, we're giving out food," he says. "We don't recognize our own white privilege. There needs to be more give and take."

But give and take requires trust, and trust takes time to build. The end goal is empowerment. "Unless they are empowered in some way, I feel like I haven't succeeded," he concludes. ☘



PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Volunteers Sheila Harder, left, Eileen Flath and Hariette Melin sort through donated produce at the Good Neighbours Food Centre. Whatever isn't good enough to go into a food hamper will be placed in the food bank's vermicomposting tower. Nothing is wasted.



PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Volunteers Elaine Janzen, left, and Sheila Harder arrange groceries in preparation for assembling food hampers at the Good Neighbours Food Centre.



ROSTHERN AND DISTRICT FOOD BANK PHOTO

Eric Yoder and a Grade 3 student from Rosthern Elementary School plant onions at the Good Neighbours Food Centre garden as part of the P3/S2 program.



ROSTHERN AND DISTRICT FOOD BANK PHOTO

Larry Epp talks with Grade 3 students at Rosthern Elementary School as part of Planting, Picking and Preserving for Students and Seniors (P3/S2), a program of the Good Neighbours Food Centre in which experienced gardeners partner-teach students about growing food.

Celebrating 35 years of Shalom Counselling Services

Celebrate Shalom's 35 year commitment to affordable and accessible counselling by supporting Shalom's

Counselling Care Fund: Shalom Partners for Mental Health



In recognition of Shalom's 35th anniversary, a lead donor has generously committed \$35,000, and is encouraging supporters to match this gift!

To support visit: www.shalomcounselling.org

GOD AT WORK IN US

OBITUARY

Influential writer also a flawed earthen vessel

Urie A. Bender

Jan. 2, 1925 – May 18, 2018

BY BARB DRAPER
Editorial Assistant



For his funeral text, Urie Bender chose the passage from II Corinthians 4:7: “We have this treasure in earthen vessels” (KJV).

In his meditation at the funeral, Scott Brubaker-Zehr, pastor of Rockway Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., said that Bender understood himself to be an “earthen vessel,” imperfect and susceptible to cracking. But in spite of human imperfections, the gift of God’s goodness can still shine through, said Brubaker-Zehr.

It was in the early 1990s that four women brought complaints against Bender for crossing sexual boundaries, accusations that were deemed credible by the Mennonite Conference of Eastern Canada, and his ministerial credentials were suspended for two years. At that point, Bender chose to relinquish his pastoral credentials rather than submit to an accountability process, leaving much unresolved pain.

Although Bender was a flawed earthen vessel, his contributions to the church were

significant. He was among the young enthusiastic leaders of the 1950s who moved beyond the Mennonite farm tradition, pursued higher education and built institutions to serve the church.

Bender was born and raised in Baden, Ont., and, with his wife Dorothy, lived in many locations as he worked for several Mennonite organizations, including the Mennonite Bible School and Institute, Mennonite Publishing House, Mennonite Board of Missions and the Ontario Mennonite Mission Board. He also served as pastor of Baden Mennonite Church for five years, as well as at Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart, Ind.

Bender came from the Amish Mennonite tradition in Ontario, and one of his important achievements was writing the 1972 historical pageant *This Land is Ours*, performed at the Avon Theatre in Stratford, Ont. Celebrating 150 years since the Amish first arrived in Ontario, the pageant involved a large cast, and the six performances brought excitement and awareness of local Amish history.

Also important to the Ontario Mennonite community was his book *Four Earthen Vessels*, commissioned by the Mennonite Conference of Ontario and published in 1982. The book gives biographical profiles of four pastors—Oscar Burkholder, Samuel F. Coffman, Clayton F. Derstine and Jesse B. Martin—who taught at the Ontario Mennonite Bible School and who were influential in shaping the church in the first half of the 20th century.

Through the 1960s and ’70s, Bender wrote several other books and historical plays. In 1974, he was writer-in-residence at Conrad Grebel College, and the following year his play *In Search of a Country*, that told the story of the original Conrad Grebel, was performed at the University of Waterloo.

Bender believed in the importance of the church and its supporting institutions, and he worked as a communications consultant, helping many of them identify their values and write vision and mission statements. He served as a resource person for many writers conferences and also helped businesses with marketing plans and policy manuals.

“The love and goodness of God shone

MCEC Responds to the Death of Urie Bender

Kitchener, ON - Urie Bender was a former pastor in Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, credentialed by MCEC until 1992. He died May 18, 2018. As the wider community of faith, we extend our condolences to all who grieve his passing. Our prayer is that God’s presence will comfort them in their grieving.

As the wider church, we are grateful to God for the positive contributions that Urie made during his time of ministry. His pastorates at Baden Mennonite Church and Prairie St. Mennonite Church (Elkhart, Indiana), his teaching at Ontario Mennonite Bible School and Institute, his work on the Ontario Mission Board and the books that he authored, represent some of the contributions that he made to the church. We are grateful to God for these gifts.

As a wider church, we are also compelled to name the conviction that all of us fall short of the best that God intends for us. Urie was no exception to this fundamental human reality. In 1992, an investigation into allegations of inappropriate boundary crossings resulted in a finding of professional sexual misconduct. Urie’s ministerial credential was suspended for a period of two years, which included a protocol for accountability. Urie withdrew from that accountability protocol, at which point MCEC terminated his credential. MCEC laments that Urie chose not to complete the requirements of his suspension. This created difficulty for those who were victims of his actions to find closure or resolution. Our prayers are with survivors as they continue their journey of healing. Persons who may have been hurt by Urie’s actions are welcome to speak with Marilyn Rudy-Froese, MCEC Church Leadership Minister (mrudyfroese@mcec.ca). MCEC also has a compassionate fund to support counselling for victims of ministerial sexual misconduct.

As the church, we invite your prayers for God’s healing presence to be in this circumstance to bind up our wounds and sorrow.



through his life in many ways,” said Brubaker-Zehr in his funeral meditation, “and yet he caused pain and was not able to fully face it.” He encouraged mourners to recognize that everyone is flawed and in need of the grace of God.

Urie Bender was predeceased by his wife Dorothy in 2004 and is survived by one daughter, two sons-in-law and four grandchildren. He was a member of Rockway Mennonite Church, and was buried in the cemetery at Wilmot Mennonite Church near Baden. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Hesston scholarship set up in memory of Canadian citizen



HESSTON, KAN. —A new scholarship has been added to Hesston College’s more than 100 available endowed scholarships, and honours the legacy of Russ Neufeld, who was born in Killarney, Man., in 1977, and passed

away from a rare form of non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma a year ago after battling the disease for about a year-and-a-half. The Russ Neufeld Memorial Scholarship was created to honour Neufeld, a 1997 Hesston graduate who had worked in the college’s information technology department since 2010 and as its director since 2014. Both he and his younger sister, Rachel, attended and graduated from Hesston College, but may not have had the opportunity to come from the west coast of British Columbia, where their father was pastor of Cedar Hills Mennonite Church, to the plains of south central Kansas without the assistance of institutional scholarships. For this reason, recipients of the Russ Neufeld Memorial Scholarship will be those with high financial need. Those wishing to give to the Russ Neufeld Memorial Scholarship can contribute online at hesston.edu/give, noting the gift’s intention in the memo field. —Hesston College

/// Briefly noted

AMBS recognizes alumnus Palmer Becker for ministry and service



ELKHART, IND.—Palmer Becker of Kitchener, Ont., a long-time church leader, pastor, missionary, church planter, author and educator, has been named the recipient of the 2018 Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) Alumni Ministry and Service Recognition Award. Becker, who earned a master of religious education degree from Mennonite Biblical Seminary (MBS, now AMBS) in 1965, received the award on April 29 at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, his home congregation in Waterloo. “Much of Palmer’s recent work has been in interpreting Anabaptism, both in North America and around the world,” says Janeen Bertsche Johnson, alumni director and campus pastor. “This was a key contribution that led us to select him.” Becker is the author of 15 books, including the widely used booklet, *Missio Dei* No. 18: “What is an Anabaptist Christian?” and an expansion of that resource called *Anabaptist Essentials: Ten Signs of a Unique Christian Faith*. Becker is currently introducing a 16-session discipleship and renewal resource, “Begin Anew,” to regional conferences and local congregations. “It’s an honour to be recognized for living out core values that were, in a major way, instilled in me at MBS,” he says. “I hope this recognition will be a witness to prospective church workers who are looking for a training program that has a passion for biblical studies, Anabaptist theology and peacemaking.”

—Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

START YOUR TOMORROW TODAY

Leave a legacy of hope!

Whether it is a simple or more complex gift, such as stocks or mutual funds, gifts of insurance, gifts in a will or setting up a family foundation, you can entrust Abundance Canada to help make your giving effective and easy to the causes you care about. We can also facilitate anonymous donations.

Personal consultation is free, confidential and with no obligation.
To learn more, call 1.800.772.3257 or visit abundance.ca TODAY.

Abundance Canada is a non-profit, public foundation assisting Canadians with their charitable giving for more than 40 years.



Abundance
CANADA

Because generosity changes everything

1.800.772.3257 | abundance.ca

Promotional Supplement

FOSTERING *Peace-focused* Social Ventures

Kindred Credit Union (Kindred) is excited to sponsor this four-part series featuring the Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement at Conrad Grebel University College. This second segment highlights the Epp Peace Incubator, one of the Centre's core programs that collaboratively and creatively advances peace, involving community members in a unique approach to peacebuilding. The next two segments will showcase peacemaking in the arts and research.

In this large, bright room filled with six workstations, you might see people working on their laptops or sketching plans on a whiteboard. Others might be gathered at a table, notebooks

and coffee mugs in hand.

Welcome to the Epp Peace Incubator—a place where passionate, talented people are working to grow their peace-related start-ups from seedling ideas to sustainable social enterprises.

"I knew that it was a place that was going to help me grow an idea and dream...about what

peace education could look like in Waterloo Region," says Katie Gingerich, Director of The

Ripple Effect Education (TREE) and a participant in the Incubator program.

Katie and others in the Incubator program benefit from access to seed funding, mentorship, peer collaboration, and a connection to the local social innovation ecosystem, in addition to office space within the Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement. It's designed to help participants scale their initiatives to touch lives in ways that advance peace, justice, and inclusion.

"These are people with their feet on the ground, doing real things that really matter, and making an impact in our community and in communities around the world," says Paul Heidebrecht, Director of the Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement. "This is about how values can be lived out and expressed in different contexts."



Katie Gingerich, pictured left, with other TREE participants in the Epp Peace Incubator.

Forging Peace

Richard Yim, a member of the Epp Peace Incubator program, is developing a new technology with incredible potential to save lives and relieve suffering.

The small robot he and his team are building will be able to excavate and defuse unexploded landmines that remain as hidden death traps in many countries around the world.

That's "PeaceTech" in action—using technology to forge peace and improve lives. In the context of the Incubator program, it's also a new way to express deeply held Anabaptist peacebuilding values.

Richard first launched the project under the name Landmine Boys, and it is now known as Demine Robotics. He and his team were in their final year of engineering studies at the University of Waterloo when they brought their proposal to the Incubator program. They needed help to connect with the right people and organizations

to get their product off the ground.

The Incubator program helped Richard engage with government officials in Ottawa and Cambodia who manage and fund landmine issues, as well as with civil society networks focused on eliminating this scourge.

In 2016, Richard met then-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stéphane Dion, and urged him to reclaim Canada's leadership role in ridding the world of landmines.

This summer, Richard and his team are in Cambodia testing the latest model of their robot. Momentum is strong for this promising PeaceTech initiative, thanks in part to the support of the Epp Peace Incubator.



Richard Yim, Demine Robotics, attends a meeting on Parliament Hill.

Promotional Supplement

EPP PEACE INCUBATOR

Sixteen projects have benefited from the Incubator program. The following six are current participants.

- **EPOCH** is creating an app to facilitate workplace volunteerism by matching employees' interests with community causes they find meaningful. epochapp.com
- **Demine Robotics** aims to accelerate efforts to rid the world of landmines. deminerobotics.com
- **Growing Hope Farm** is an urban farm with a social purpose. growinghopefarm.ca
- **Marlena Books** publishes books for dementia-afflicted readers, affirming their dignity and offering a much-needed option for leisure activity and cognitive stimulation. marlenabooks.com
- **The Ripple Effect Education (TREE)** develops and facilitates skill-based programs and workshops to equip elementary students with conflict resolution tools. uwaterloo.ca/centre-peace-advancement/ripple-effect-education
- **WorldVuze**, a map-based online platform, promotes cross-cultural learning by allowing students from around the world to connect, inquire, and share. worldvuze.com

To view all Incubator participants, please visit uwaterloo.ca/centre-peace-advancement/epp-peace-incubator/participants.

Growing Hope

On a beautiful spring day at Growing Hope Farm, a group of teenagers is helping farm owner Sarah Martin-Mills fix fences, collect and wash eggs, and care for the goat herd.

This five-acre urban farm in Cambridge, Ontario, is part of the Epp Peace Incubator program. The farm produces fresh meat, eggs, fruit, and vegetables, and even offers trendy "goat yoga" sessions. However, its main purpose is to create hope for vulnerable people.

Sarah launched Growing Hope Farm two years ago as an outreach for at-risk youth—a place where teens could volunteer and build skills in a therapeutic, outdoor environment. "Some of their jobs include setting out fresh bedding, cleaning the chicken coop, and cleaning the goat barn," Sarah says. "Later in the season, we pick berries to sell at the stand at the end of the driveway." Sarah says that when the teens open up, they tell her that being at the farm lifts their spirits. All farm volunteers have the satisfaction of knowing their efforts will help families in need, because Growing Hope Farm donates its proceeds to Mennonite Central Committee.

As a creative enterprise striving to help others both locally and globally, the farm is a natural fit for the Epp Peace Incubator. Sarah appreciates the encouragement she receives from the program's Mentorship Circle, the promotion for farm events, and access to grants through the Peace Incubator Fund, which has helped her venture get off the ground. Working onsite at the Incubator, Sarah

was able to take advantage of the expertise around her to complete registration as a non-profit so the farm can apply for community grants.

Growing Hope Farm has come a long way since Sarah launched her social-impact venture. Sarah encourages others to take inspiration from her experience. "If there's something God is putting in your heart to do, it's amazing what happens when you step out and start."



Sarah Martin-Mills of Growing Hope Farm with Paul Heidebrecht, Director, Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement

GET INVOLVED

If you would like to show your support for talented peace entrepreneurs, you can donate on the Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement's online giving page. Thanks to the Bauman Family Challenge Gift, your contribution will be matched dollar for dollar and it will have double the impact towards a more just and peaceful world.

If you're looking for other ways to provide support or get involved with the Kindred Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement, call 519-885-0220 or visit uwaterloo.ca/centre-peace-advancement.

young voices




PHOTOS BY JAY SIEMENS

Documenting his fishing experiences piqued Jay Siemens' interest in photography.



Jay Siemens spent 250 days on the road last year working.

COVER STORY

Picture perfect

Hard work and perseverance have paid off for self-taught photographer Jay Siemens

BY AARON EPP
Young Voices Editor

Jay Siemens was set to begin photography school in Winnipeg when, three days before classes started, his friend called him with a compelling proposition.

"He said, 'You've got to drop out of school and film a fishing show with me,'" Siemens recalls.

So he did.

That was in 2010. Siemens and his friend Aaron Wiebe created *Uncut Angling*, a fishing show on YouTube that has gone on to amass a following of more than 130,000 subscribers. It even aired on television in Canada and the U.S. for a year.

Along the way, he created Jay Siemens Media Productions, a business that has allowed him to hone his photography skills by doing commercial photo shoots and wedding photography, as well as freelance video and editing work.

"School's great for some people, but for me to go out and film fishing and do exactly what I wanted to do, and do it every day, it's hard to beat that experience," says the 26-year-old, who lives 90 minutes south of Winnipeg in Gretna, Man.

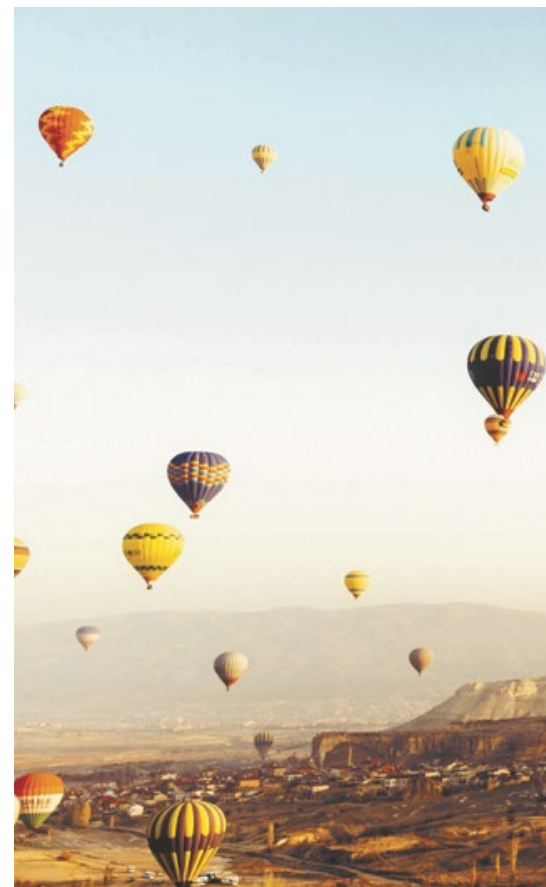
In the first six years of his career, assignments took him to northern Manitoba and remote parts of Saskatchewan, and overseas destinations like Turkey, Greece and South Africa. The past two years have included trips to Burkina Faso and Guatemala for work, and a personal trip to New Zealand.

"2017 was the year of saying yes to everything and pushing my limits," he says. "I was probably on the road 250 days in 2017 ... just kind of [shooting] nonstop, trying to grow the business and build my portfolio."

More work for Jay Siemens Media Productions over the past year-and-a-half has meant that he has stepped away from *Uncut Angling* and that he has had to seek assistance with his projects.

This past May, he ended Jay Siemens Media Productions and formed Thrive Visuals along with three partners: videographers Kevin Dalke and Marcel Laferriere, and editor Nik Enns. (He talks about this transition online at bit.ly/jay-siemens.)

By starting Thrive, Siemens will be able to create the quality of media that he has



dreamt of over the past few years. Working together means the four partners can take on bigger projects while allowing each individual to concentrate on the aspect of media production he is most skilled at.

Thrive will focus on outdoor content related to fishing and hunting, which has made up the majority of Siemens' work over the past few years.

Born and raised in Altona, Man., Siemens grew up fishing and enjoying the outdoors at his family's cabin on Lake of the Woods in northwestern Ontario. He spent seven years working as a fishing guide in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and documenting those experiences is what got him into photography.

His summer will include doing work for one of his biggest clients, Travel Manitoba, which involves travelling to different destinations in Manitoba and filming six- to seven-minute videos that highlight those locations.

"[I] get to see these super cool locations that I'd never be able to afford to go to, document them and even do a little bit of fishing myself," he says.

In addition to using his skills as a photographer and videographer to make a living,

He uses them to help others. Over the past three years he has raised nearly \$45,000 through the sale of calendars that feature his landscape and wildlife photography. He donated the money to the Canadian Mental Health Association and Build a Village, a charity supported by Seeds Church in Altona, Man., his home congregation.

He also recently filmed a 20-minute documentary telling the story of his alma mater, Mennonite Collegiate Institute (MCI), and the challenges the high school is facing due to low enrolment numbers.

"I hope it helps MCI in the future, with enrolment and with people who are interested in helping the school," says Siemens, who lives one block away from MCI in Gretna. "It was fun to do something that was close to my heart."

After eight years of taking photos and shooting videos, he feels as though he still has a lot to learn.

He advises aspiring photographers to photograph subjects they're passionate about, to experiment, to seek advice from photographers they admire and to persevere. "Stay focussed and don't get discouraged," he says. "You've gotta keep your head up and keep snapping the shutter." ❧



'Stay focussed and don't get discouraged . . . keep snapping the shutter,' Jay Siemens tells aspiring photographers.



Taking charge

Katie Steckly and Katie Bentz are reclaiming the word 'bossy' on their business podcast

BY AARON EPP
Young Voices Editor



TOP TWO PHOTOS BY MICHELLE REINER

Katie Bentz and Katie Steckly host Bossy Women, a podcast about entrepreneurship.

Two young women from Mennonite Church Canada congregations are the creators of a new podcast about entrepreneurship.

Katie Steckly from Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., and Katie Bentz from Hillcrest Mennonite Church in nearby New Hamburg host *Bossy Women* (bossywomen.ca), a podcast that spotlights female business owners in Kitchener-Waterloo.

"As we've become more involved in the entrepreneurial community in Kitchener-Waterloo, we realized how many amazing

university.

They chose the name *Bossy Women* because both were labelled bossy when they were growing up.

"We wanted to reclaim this term that's often seen as negative when it's applied to women," Steckly says. "By being what was considered bossy when we were younger, we've become driven, independent women who want to take charge in our own lives."

"It's important to stick up for yourself and do what's best for you," Bentz adds. "I think a lot of the women we've interviewed have had similar experiences, where, if

'It's important to stick up for yourself and do what's best for you.'
(Katie Bentz)



'There's been a lot of experience and wisdom we've been able to tap into,' Katie Steckly says of the podcast.

women business owners there are," says Steckly, 21, a recent University of Waterloo graduate who operates a freelance videography company. "We thought it was important to support them but also to show other aspiring women entrepreneurs that they could follow the same path."

"We just really hope that we can learn from the women we interview, and that our listeners can, too," adds Bentz, 20, who studies at the University of Waterloo and runs a health and wellness business.

Steckly and Bentz met while living in residence at Conrad Grebel University College. They launched the podcast this past March.

Guests have included Jacquie Reimer, founder of the Oak+Olive photography collective, and Katie Gingerich, director of The Ripple Effect Education, an initiative that teaches elementary school students conflict resolution and social justice concepts.

In one episode, Steckly shared how she started her business, and in another, she and Bentz discussed whether or not it's valuable for entrepreneurs to go to

they wanted something, they went after it."

Steckly and Bentz are enjoying the work that goes into producing the podcast.

"It's been really fun," Steckly says. "There's been a lot of experience and wisdom we've been able to tap into."

One of the things that Bentz has learned is the importance of taking action. "Something that stuck out in a lot of the interviews is to not let yourself overthink things and wait for the right time, because there's never going to be a right time," she says. "If you're interested in pursuing something, just go for it and work hard, and don't let yourself get in the way of that."

Steckly has been struck by how important it is to look to other people for support. "The overall takeaway has just been the huge benefits and positive impacts of being in a community with other business owners," she says. "Again and again what the women we've interviewed have expressed is how much they've gained from working with their peers and taking a mindset of being in community rather than competing with other entrepreneurs." ❧



PHOTO BY JENNIFER LYON

Katie Steckly and Katie Bentz met while living in residence at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont.

Calendar

Alberta

June 30-July 1: Springridge Mennonite Church, Pincher Creek, is celebrating its 90th anniversary. All past and present congregants are invited. RSVP to delwillms@gmail.com. For more information, visit springridgemennonitechurch.ab.ca.

Saskatchewan

July 26: Way Back: Relearning Ways of Peace event, at

Wanuskewin Heritage Park, featuring a performance of "Discovery: A Comic Lament" by Ted & Co.

Aug. 11: Ninth annual Spruce River Folk Festival at Spruce River Farm, north of Prince Albert.

Oct. 12-13: Women's retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

Oct. 27: MC Saskatchewan Equipping Day.

Manitoba

July 9-13: Pioneer Day Camp at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, for ages 5 to 7. For more information, visit education@mhv.ca.

July 14: Heritage Classic car show at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Features muffler rapping contest and pedal-powered kart derby.

July 25: Heritage Classic golf tournament for Mennonite Heritage Village, at Quarry Oaks, Ste. Anne; shotgun start at 11 a.m., dinner to follow. To register, call 204-326-9661.

Aug. 13-17: Pioneer Day Camp at Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach, for ages 8 to 10. For more information, visit education@mvh.ca.

Aug. 21: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate annual

(Continued on page 38)

ServiceLinks

Advertisers on this page may designate a 1/6 page ad to a charity of their choice. To learn more, email: advert@canadianmennonite.org

sutherlandmark
LAWYERS

Russel Snyder-Penner, LL.B., M.A., Trade-mark Agent
Business Law, Charities Law,
Wills and Estate Planning

519.725.2500 russ@sutherlandmark.com



Mennonite
Disaster
Service

HOW YOU CAN VOLUNTEER WITH MDS:

- Short-term (1—3 weeks): 800-241-8111
- Long-term (1 month+): 866-261-1274
- RV Program volunteers
- Youth volunteers

Volunteers needed for summer 2018:

- Williams Lake, B.C.
- Pine Ridge, South Dakota
- Puerto Rico

HELP RESTORE HOPE!
mds.mennonite.net

Honesty, Integrity and Good Judgement

Dennis Roth, Ed Nowak and their experienced team are committed to providing you with the personalized, quality service that you need and deserve.

Roth Nowak

INSURANCE BROKERS

AUTO | PROPERTY | BUSINESS

novex

Contact us for a quote:

519-746-1151

service@rothnowak.com
rothnowak.com

119 University Ave. E., Waterloo, ON N2J 2W1

SERVING ONTARIO SINCE 1983

You Value Options in All
Other Aspects of Your Life.



EBY
FINANCIAL
GROUP

CONTACT US FOR A FREE SECOND OPINION

519.725.2006

contact@ebyfinancial.com

www.ebyfinancial.com

Serving Communities Across Canada for 35 Years

WHY NOT WHEN IT COMES TO
YOUR FINANCIAL
FUTURE?

INVESTMENTS | INSURANCE | ESTATE
TAX | RETIREMENT | PHILANTHROPIC

Student residence

Montréal



Summer guest rooms
May-Aug

maisondelamitie.ca
experience@maisondelamitie.ca



Russ brings experience and expertise to the legal needs of owner-managed businesses, individuals engaged in will and succession planning, and charitable organizations.

russ@sutherlandmark.com
sutherlandmark
LAWYERS

**ONLINE NOW!**at canadianmennonite.org

Building peace through teaching English

Teachers of English as a second language have a new book that offers ways to transform their teaching and the lives of their students.

canadianmennonite.org/-teaching-english-peace



Venezuela Mennonites share faith through food and shampoo

In desperate times, Anabaptist communities find innovative ways to be the church by offering practical help and teaching the way of peace.

canadianmennonite.org/venezuela-faith-food



Mennonite pastors and scholars involved in ecumenical gathering

Participants of this event heeded an invitation to focus on what unites rather than divides them, to see that everyone brings something valuable to God's kingdom.

canadianmennonite.org/winnipeg-ecumenical-gathering



Travel company and MCC collaborate for mutual benefit

TourMagination and Mennonite Central Committee recognize the unique ways in which their activities complement each other.

canadianmennonite.org/travel-collaboration



(Continued from page 37)

fundraising golf tournament, at Bridges Golf Course, Starbuck. For more information, visit westgatemenonite.ca.

Sept. 7-9: The Mennonite Church Manitoba Working Group on Palestine-Israel presents a law symposium in downtown Winnipeg to explore the rights and obligations of Palestinians; the status of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza under international law; and Canada's obligations under the UN Charter and the fourth Geneva Convention. For more information, visit israelpalestinelawsymposium.ca; only registrants will be given the meeting location.

Ontario

June 23: New Hamburg Nithview annual community strawberry social, from 2 to 4 p.m., and from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

June 23: MennoHomes' Out-spok'n for Affordable Housing bike-a-thon, beginning at Elmira Mennonite Church. Options for hikers, cyclists and motorcyclists. For more information, call Dan Driedger at 226-476-2535.

June 24: Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, hosts the Fair Wind, who will perform traditional music of the British Isles, at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call Laurence Martin at 519-208-4591.

June 25: Launch of the Mennonite Church Canada book, "Unsettling the Word: Biblical Experiments in Decolonization," edited by Steve Heinrichs. Event features four of the contributors. At Church of St. Stephen-in-the-Fields, Toronto.

June 30-July 1: 70th anniversary celebration of Nairn Mennonite Church, Ailsa Craig. Weekend activities culminate with a worship service of praise and thanksgiving on July 1 at 10:45 a.m. Those planning to attend are asked to let the church know at 519-232-4425.

July 21: Willowgrove 50th anniversary open house, in Stouffville, beginning at 11 a.m. Willowgrove's former staff, school families, volunteers, campers and church constituency are invited. Events include the final public performance of the Rouge River Connection. For more information, email info@willowgrove.ca.

July 22: Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, hosts "Folk and gospel songs," led by Mike and Diana Erb (Twas Now), at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call Laurence Martin at 519-208-4591.

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



CM | Now

A free, bi-weekly preview of stories, viewpoints and news from your community and around the world.

Subscribe online!
canadianmennonite.org/subscribe/cmnow

CANADIAN MENNONITE

Classifieds

Employment Opportunities



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY HALF-TIME PASTOR Saskatchewan

Aberdeen Mennonite Church invites applications for a half-time pastor for a small rural church of approximately 50. We are an inclusive, affirming, Christian community guided by Anabaptist theology and principle. Preaching, pastoral care and evangelism through community engagement are our priorities.

We are a farming community located 20 minutes northeast of the cities of Saskatoon and east of Warman, Sask. Housing can be provided if desired.

Applications resumes and inquiries may be sent to dmartensfarm@sasktel.net or call 306 253 4500.



Mennonite Church Canada Our nationwide community of faith

Employment opportunity

We invite all congregations and members of Mennonite Church Canada to join with us in prayer as we seek an **EXECUTIVE MINISTER**. We invite applications and nominations for an individual who will work cooperatively with the Executive Staff Group to nurture, represent and inspire a unified vision of MC Canada.

This full-time chief executive officer is accountable to the Joint Council, and responsible for working with the Executive Staff Group for the nationwide program of Mennonite Church Canada.

This position requires considerable travel within Canada and occasional travel outside of Canada. Living in the Winnipeg area is required. Assistance will be provided to cover relocation expenses.

Start date to be negotiated.

Inquiries, resumes and letters of interest may be directed to: searchcommittee@mennonitechurch.ca

Review of applications will begin on July 31, 2018, and continue until a suitable applicant is found.

Completion or updating of the Ministerial Leadership Information forms will be required as part of the process.

To view a full job description for the Executive Minister role, visit:

www.commonword.ca/go/1551
or
home.mennonitechurch.ca



Mennonite Central Committee Relief, development and peace in the name of Christ

British Columbia

Director of Development and Advancement

This full-time position will provide leadership in developing and implementing strategies that generate awareness, relationships, engagement, support from the MCC BC constituency and the broader public.

Qualifications: 3 years senior management, 5 years fundraising or related experience; excellent communication and interpersonal skills; effective strategic planner & entrepreneurial attitude; servant leader, strong networking ability and familiarity with MCC constituency.

All MCC workers are expected to exhibit a commitment to personal Christian faith, active church affiliation and non-violent peacemaking.

Anticipated start date: September 1, 2018

For full job description and to apply visit: mccbc.ca/openings. For more information, contact Sophie Tiessen-Eigbike, MCC BC HR Manager at 604-850-6639, Ext 1129.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Kindred Credit Union is cooperative banking that connects values and faith with finances, inspiring peaceful, just, and prosperous communities.

As CEO, you will lead the next phase of Kindred's growth journey and will:

- ▶ Embody Kindred's core values of compassion, integrity, and stewardship
- ▶ Showcase Kindred's unique approach to finances
- ▶ Collaborate with credit unions across Canada and global financial institutions
- ▶ Ensure good governance of our members' resources and compliance with Ontario credit union regulations
- ▶ Work to achieve Kindred's existing strategic objectives and shape a compelling vision and strategy

You are a passionate, consensus-building executive who engages as a relationship builder, advisor, and advocate within a multi-stakeholder environment. You bring a minimum 10 years of executive and strategic experience across a broad range of business functions, ideally within a credit union or cooperative context. Your analytical expertise, decisive leadership skills, and strong understanding of the management of a financial institution are complemented by a graduate level business degree or equivalent experience.

If this opportunity resonates with you, **please send your resume by July 16, 2018**. Only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

Apply in confidence to:
H2R Business Solutions
Attention: Jill Zappitelli
Admin@YourH2R.com

To read the full posting visit kindredcu.com/Careers



BANKING
WITH
PURPOSE

True connections

Children bridge differences to learn together

BY RACHEL BERGEN
Mennonite Central Committee

Walk into Hagar Association, a school in Be'er-Sheva, Israel, and it looks like almost any other school. But if you listen closely, you'll hear children speaking both Hebrew and Arabic, and see them playing together—uncommon sounds and sights in the region.

Hagar is a bilingual school for 330 children of Jewish-Israelis and Palestinian citizens of Israel. The children, from a year old to Grade 6, come from homes in which Islam, Judaism or Christianity are practised. The school is the only one of its kind in the Negev region of southern Israel.

According to Karen Abu Adra, the director of partnerships and development at Hagar, Palestinian citizens of Israel make up 30 percent of the population in the Negev, but they and Jewish-Israelis have few opportunities to interact because most schools in Israel are segregated.

"Everywhere in Be'er-Sheva where you go, you'll see both peoples, but you can live your whole life without having a meaningful conversation with the other," she explains. "[The parents who founded Hagar] wanted to give their children the opportunity to have true connections."

At Hagar, children through Grade 3 have one Arabic-speaking and one Hebrew-speaking teacher. From Grade 4 on, the students learn in both languages and, in addition to learning from the core curriculum, they also are taught about the common values in Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

Four-year-old Adam Mahajni has been attending Hagar since he was 2. Prior to that, he was the only Palestinian child in his kindergarten class.

His father Mostafa Mahajni says, "My wife and I enrolled him in Hagar's Kindergarten because it was important for us to put him



PHOTOS COURTESY OF
THE HAGAR ASSOCIATION

Tal Dayan, above, and Lev Zemer Gilboa-Oppenheim, below, attends Hagar Association, a bilingual MCC-supported school in Be'er-Sheva, Israel.



in an educational framework that reflects the diversity of our society, to teach him to accept and respect the other, all in addition to preserving his cultural identity as an Arab." He says Adam loves attending Kindergarten and even comes home singing Arabic songs that Mostafa sang as a child.

Einat Gilboa-Oppenheim is the mother of students Naomi and Lev Zemer. She is raising her children in the Jewish religious tradition but says she enrolled them in the school so they could see diversity reflected in their class.

"In Hagar, both our children meet children of different colours and different cultures, and they learn that the variety is natural and it enriches their world," she explains.

She says her children's experiences at Hagar help the whole family. "When we are in Arabic-speaking surroundings, the children understand some of what is being said and can translate it for us. This empowers them, and enables us to interact better," she says.

Mennonite Central Committee contributes financially to Hagar, helping to pay teachers' salaries and support field trips and events reflecting both cultures. Abu Adra says Hagar is hoping to expand the elementary school and eventually open a junior high and high school.

According to Mahajni, Hagar is a model for how schools in Palestine and Israel should function. "We live in a small country that includes Arabs and Jews, so it's only natural for us that our kids should be able to play, learn and grow with each other in order to make a better society in the future," he says. "I believe that a big part of the problems in this country is that we don't know each other as well as we should, and we treat each other with suspicion." ❧