

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

October 22, 2018  
Volume 22 Number 20

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## EDITORIAL

# Singing a new song

VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

**W**hat will the Mennonite church in North America look like in the next 30 years? No one has a crystal ball, but one group of forward-thinking people is helping us imagine how we might be doing congregational worship in the next generation.

Last weekend, I attended a one-day resourcing event on *Voices Together*, the new song collection that is currently in development to serve congregations in Mennonite Church Canada and Mennonite Church U.S.A. Currently into its third year of development, *Voices Together* is a project of MennoMedia, involving music and worship experts from both countries. They expect to release the final product in 2020. (You can learn more at [voicestogetherhymnal.org](http://voicestogetherhymnal.org).)

The current *Hymnal: A Worship Book*, published in 1992, and its companions, *Sing the Journey* (2005) and *Sing the Story* (2007) have served our congregations well. While there are some of us who still mourn the loss of songs that didn't transfer over from the 1969 *The Mennonite Hymnal*, many of us have found "heart songs" in the current trilogy of books. Others have abandoned a physical book altogether, worshipping instead with songs projected on screens or learned by heart.

Part of our reality is that—in Canada and the U.S.—Mennonites worship in at least 26 languages. We are urban and rural, newcomers and long-time residents.

Congregations differ from each other in terms of theological emphases. In Sunday morning worship, we span the generations, from babes in snugglies to elders with walkers. Some of us love the sound of electric instruments; others prefer the harmonies of a cappella singing.



I have yet to visit a Mennonite church that does not love to sing. Bringing together notes, words and breath, we embody our faith.

Through hymns and worship songs, we praise and thank our Creator. Our music points us to Scripture and helps us express—and teach—our theology. Singing enables us to pray corporately, and it calls us to actions of justice and peace.

Those core functions of congregational music likely will not change in the next 30 years. But they will look different.

The *Voices Together* team members are taking into account current technologies for teaching and transmitting congregational songs (not only hymnbooks but also YouTube, tablets, apps and projectors). They are asking what themes and topics might be especially relevant to our mid-century faith. They are wrestling with hymn texts and inviting us to consider how the language we use for worship might exclude those on the margins. They are imagining how to incorporate visual art and gestures into our traditionally word-based worship.

This is a labour of love, starting with the many hours volunteers have already put into envisioning, planning, researching,

creating and testing the songs and other worship resources that will be a part of the collection. Estimates are that the project will cost about \$900,000 in Canadian funds, and much of that will need to come from donations. In the U.S., two Mennonite organizations have made commitments to match donations. In Canada, a family foundation will match donations to *Voices Together*, up to \$15,000. Consider how you might contribute, so our Mennonite voices can sing together a new song.

To download a *Voices Together* Advent and Christmas worship sampler and to see videos of sample songs, visit [voicestogetherhymnal.org/downloads](http://voicestogetherhymnal.org/downloads).

## Seeking Eastern Canada reporters

Change is in the air. In August, *Canadian Mennonite* bid farewell to Dave Rogalsky, who served faithfully for 12 years as correspondent for all of eastern Canada. We are seeking a replacement for him, to report mainly on events and people in the larger Kitchener-Waterloo area. Because Mennonites in Eastern Canada are numerous and spread over a large area, we are also securing local reporters to contribute to *CM's* content. Joelle Kidd is reporting from the Greater Toronto area and Maria Klassen is reporting from the Niagara area. We welcome them and look forward to reading their stories as much as we hope you will. We are also still looking for local reporters to cover the areas of Leamington, and Ottawa eastward.

## ABOUT THE COVER:

'Bees for Burkina' honey bees hard at work. Read 'Friendship that sticks,' a story of a Canadian church helping out a sister congregation in Africa, on page 14.

PHOTO: DOUG KLASSEN, FOOTHILLS MENNONITE CHURCH

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

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

• Covenantal relationships and mutual accountability

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Award-winning member of the Canadian Church Press



## BOOKS & RESOURCES FEATURE

# Biblical characters as spiritual companions

GARETH BRANDT



GOOGLE ART PROJECT

*'David and Jonathan' by Harmensz van Rijn Rembrandt.*

*Too often preachers have tried to extract propositional truths from a story, when a better idea might be to see how we can gain a friend through encountering the text—someone who has already been down the road we are now travelling.*

**T**he Bible is full of stories about people, real people with bodies and minds, and with an array of experiences, relationships and emotions. How odd, then, that we so often turn to the Bible as little more than an instruction manual for communal and personal life. What would happen if we expanded our reliance on the Bible to include seeing the people in its pages as companions in our life with God?

In a cursory survey of our Columbia Bible College library I found few resources to assist us in this quest—apart from historical novels based on biblical characters and a few old “dictionaries” of biblical persons.

The Bible is a major source in the work of Christian spiritual formation. Such formation takes place primarily in the context of relationships: we grow in faith in community. In a culture characterized by alienation and fragmentation, more than ever we need companions to walk with us in our lives as Jesus’ followers. No doubt the brothers and sisters we share life with in our churches are most significant for our formation, but the men and women of the Bible can also accompany us on the journey of following Jesus.

How can these biblical believers become our spiritual companions? In order for that to happen, we’ll need to shift our perspective in two ways. First, we must see the Bible as a story of real people, a collection of human narratives rather than a series of divine propositions. Second, we must embrace the women and men of the Bible as fellow travellers on the journey rather than as models of morality or objects of study.

### **A collection of stories about people**

The Bible is a dynamic, living story of faith, not a static propositional statement of faith. From Genesis to Revelation the story unfolds. It is the story of the interaction between people and their Creator. Many people are part of this drama, from Abraham and Sarah and their growing family, to Ruth and Boaz, to kings and prophets, to Jesus and his disciples and followers. Even the people listed in genealogies and those who remain nameless are part of the story. Hebrews 11 invites us to an awareness of the “cloud of witnesses” cheering us on from the stands (Hebrews 12:1), who can also become our running partners in the race of life.

The climax of the salvation drama is a person, Jesus Christ, who





GOOGLE ART PROJECT

*'Potiphar's wife displays Joseph's garment,' by Lucas van Leyden (circa 1512). Notice in the window in the top left corner Joseph can be seen being taken to prison.*

*Like Joseph in his encounter with Potiphar's wife, I, too, struggle and vacillate in temptation: Will I be true to myself and God, maintaining my integrity, or will I yield to the momentary pleasure that boosts my ego in the present moment?*

brings together the divine and the human. Truth is a person, not a doctrine or statement. Jesus says, "I am . . . the truth." God's primary and ultimate revelation of what divinity is like is not a book but a person. The four gospels tell the story of this person, but the entire Bible includes the stories of the people who were the precursors to and the followers of Jesus.

The Bible is a story of people and their relationships with God. "The Bible is not concerned with right morality, right piety or right doctrine. Rather, it is concerned with right relationships between God and God's people, between all the sisters and brothers in this community, and between God's people and the created world," writes Walter Brueggemann, in *The Bible Makes Sense*. The Bible is an ordinary book we can study and dissect, analyze and criticize, but we must remember that it is a living book. Its authors and characters are in conversation with us.

Maybe it would help if we gave up thinking of the Bible as a completed book and thought of it instead as an unfolding script in which we have been invited to play a role, following the lead of the

main actors whose names and lines are recorded in it.

### **Spiritual companions**

When we see the Bible as story, we begin to embrace its characters as companions who are like us. If I read the stories of people in the Bible propositionally, in order to extract lessons from them on how to live, I may end up feeling like a failure or perceiving them as failures.

Too often preachers have tried to extract three propositional truths from a story, when a better idea might be to see how we can gain a friend through encountering the text—someone who has already been down the road we are now travelling. In the midst of a difficult experience, I'd rather have an experienced friend walk with me than any number of people handing out advice.

One rejoinder might be that this approach will merely reinforce our bad habits and make us feel good, but it will not lead to transformation. I would counter that spiritual change rarely happens because we receive moral instruction on what we should or should not do.

Consider the example of Jesus, who most of the time taught by telling stories that people could enter into. His listeners did not necessarily feel good as a result; the stories didn't reinforce their bad habits. Instead, his hearers were invited to identify with the characters and events of his stories, and thus they were challenged to see themselves differently. They gained a new perspective and, unless they were self-righteous and stuck in their ways and just got angry, they were transformed.

Something similar can happen to us when we identify with the stories of people in the Bible. "As we put ourselves into the situations of these men and women of God—not idealized out of all resemblance to truth, but in the real-life situation as the Bible presents them—we find something happening to us," writes William Sanford LaSor in *Great Personalities of the Bible*. The God who met them, meets us.

### **A case study: Joseph**

In the research and group work leading to the writing of my book *Under Construction: Reframing Men's*

*Spirituality*, I asked men, “Who’s your favourite Bible man?” Almost as many men in the Bible were mentioned as there were men responding! I concluded that no one man in the Bible can provide a complete model of male spirituality; different men identify with different men in the Bible.

The men I asked didn’t give a lot of votes to David and Moses and the Apostle Paul. Those they mentioned repeatedly included Jacob, because he struggled, and Thomas, because he had doubts. Neither struggles nor doubts make the front page news—not like David committing adultery or Moses committing murder—but struggles and doubts are the stuff of ordinary human life. I would guess that more women might identify with Ruth and her rather ordinary life, than with Esther, who won a beauty contest and became queen.

For the book, I chose Joseph as a spiritual companion. I could identify with Joseph’s internal struggles of pride, temptation and revenge. I have also experienced woundedness, alienation, reconciliation and vocational success, as he did. He is someone with whom I and other “ordinary” men might be able to identify.

All of Genesis 37-50 is one story, so one should really consider the entire narrative as one unit. But for our purposes here, a smaller, more manageable unit from the larger narrative can illustrate the two ways of reading a story.

Genesis 39:2-23 tells the story of Joseph and Potiphar’s wife. It is a powerful story, and not only because Joseph as a young man resists his boss’s wife’s sexual advances. That obvious exterior story has given rise to any number of moralizing sermons about the three R’s of purity: resist, respond, run (or whatever other clever alliterative scheme the preacher can muster). If, instead, we consider the primary theme of the entire narrative—Yahweh’s protection of Joseph in order to save Joseph’s family—we might see a deeper message, one we can identify with as real human beings who face similar struggles and temptations. I, too, am tempted. I, too, struggle and vacillate in temptation: Will I be true to myself and

God, maintaining my integrity, or will I yield to the momentary pleasure that boosts my ego in the present moment?

The former way of looking at the story may produce a clear message about proper moral behaviour, but the latter elicits our deeper reflection on spirituality and identity.

Seeing people in the Bible as companions rather than models leads, in the long run, to deeper transformation. The former approach is more like the parent who runs through a list of dos and don’ts for the teenager leaving the house; the latter is more like a call to remember who you are. Our identification with people in biblical stories helps form an intrinsic morality coming from within rather than being imposed from outside.

In the former approach, negative stories provide models of what not to do, and from positive stories we derive models of what to do. But when we see people in the Bible as companions on the journey, the most important thing is not identifying a moral of the story tacked on at the end; the most important thing is the story

itself.

We usually reject or ignore the advice of “friends” who tell us just what we should do. Real friends walk with us and help us discern our path by sharing out of their own experiences. When we see the journey of a friend, we see our own course more clearly. The stories of people in the Bible can function similarly. Women and men of the Bible become our friends, and then in their stories we see our own more clearly and we begin to be transformed by the grand story of the gospel.

Seeing the women and men of the Bible as a “*cloud of witnesses*” is not a new idea, but one to which we do well to give renewed emphasis in these times when people crave companions on the way. ❧



Gareth Brandt is professor of spiritual formation at Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford, B.C. Reprinted with permission from *Vision*, Fall 2010, Vol 11 No. 2 ([bit.ly/teaching-bible](http://bit.ly/teaching-bible)).



### /// For discussion

1. Who is your favourite character in the Bible? Which character would you most like as a friend or a spiritual companion? What makes that person appealing? Are there people in the Bible you would not like to meet?
2. Gareth Brandt says that we “often turn to the Bible as little more than an instruction manual.” Do you agree? How effective is moral instruction in bringing spiritual change? Are Jesus’ sermons or stories more compelling for us today? If so, why?
3. Brandt writes, “Truth is a person, not a doctrine or statement.” What are the implications of thinking about truth as a person? Brandt argues that right relationships are more important than right morality or doctrine. Can you think of examples in your life when you found this to be true?
4. Is morality taught or caught? Brandt writes that when we identify with people in the stories of the Bible, it “helps form an intrinsic morality coming from within rather than being imposed from outside.” Do you agree? What are the implications of thinking of the Bible as an unfolding script?

—BY BARB DRAPER

See related resources at [www.commonword.ca/go/1624](http://www.commonword.ca/go/1624) and [www.commonword.ca/go/1628](http://www.commonword.ca/go/1628)

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## VIEWPOINTS

## /// Readers write

*We welcome your comments and publish most letters from subscribers. Letters, to be kept to 300 words or less, are the opinion of the writer only and are not to be taken as endorsed by this magazine or the church. Please address issues rather than individuals; personal attacks will not appear in print or online. All letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines. Send them to [letters@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:letters@canadianmennonite.org) and include the author's contact information and mailing address. Preference is given to letters from MC Canada congregants.*

## ✉ Differing responses to Steve Heinrich's 'green gospel' column

RE: "PETER'S LETTER to Canadian Christians," Sept. 24, page 7.

I don't object to anyone taking a passionate stance regarding environmental issues, but please don't misapply Scripture to support those views.

Let's look at the questions columnist Steve Heinrich poses: "Is there hope? Can God move us out of climate darkness and into a measure of light? (I Peter 2:9) Will a remnant of the church join the bruised and battered who are standing up for Sister Earth?"

First of all, the darkness spoken of in I Peter 2:9 refers to spiritual darkness, not "climate darkness."

*(Continued on page 8)*

## FROM OUR LEADERS

## Living the 'prairie experience'

KEN WARKENTIN

Aug. 15 marked the end of my three-month sabbatical and my return to the office at Mennonite Church Manitoba. Time took on a special meaning during this leave as I took the opportunity to live into the prairie experience afforded to me by our little farm: raising chickens, gardening, repairing dilapidated buildings and building new ones, caring for grandchildren and golfing. It was also a time marked by reconnections with family, friends and neighbours.



The prairie around me allowed for blissful hours observing birds, deer, small rodents and the life cycle of plants. A frequent tune running through my soul was "This is my Father's World," and I was blessed by the "music of the spheres."

I had long, uninterrupted conversations and thoughts about faith, growth and change, and about the role of the church

today. It became clear to me that the church would do well to adopt a posture of confession and humility. The frequent news briefs regarding abuse from various faith-based organizations underscores our need not only to be vigilant against abuse of all kinds but also to become more open and more transparent whenever they arise in our midst.

Left un-dealt-with, abuse undermines the church's credibility and creates mistrust. We dare not defend or explain away why we have behaved in ways that contradict Christ's teachings and example. In humility we need to accurately name our transgressions, seek for paths of healing, and vow together to strive for the integrity and trust that reflects the deep love from the Creator in whom we live and move and have our being.

It became clear to me that we need to work creatively at language depicting our spirituality as Mennonites. Our spiritual connection to God and to each other

needs a language that has relevance in our world today. Over the centuries, we have developed a robust and intricate language through which we communicate our profound pursuit of peace, social action and justice. In addition to this we need to be working at developing a lexicon that accurately describes our daily interactions and spiritual awareness in 2018. New words will shape our thinking and our worship, and will reflect the transformation we are experiencing.

It also became clear to me that we need to become more curious about the natural ways that people today are gathering into meaningful communities. The church does not have a monopoly on community and growth. People continue to desire communities of influence in their lives. The church will do well to look at how and why these communities are forming and ask how we can participate in, and learn from, these communities, with respect and dignity for all.

The vision of the local congregation as the seat of mission and ministry has taken on a new vibrancy for me during my time away from the office, and I returned to work with new insights and renewed energy to serve the body of Christ.

*Ken Warkentin is executive minister of MC Manitoba. His farm is near the little town of Komarno, which means "mosquito" in Ukrainian.*



(Continued from page 7)

It's a spiritual darkness for which the only solution is the light of Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save those who are lost.

I'd like to ask, "Where in Scripture do we find a mandate for a remnant of the church to join 'the bruised and battered' who are standing up for 'Sister Earth,' an earth that, according to God's plan, will be

burned up one day and replaced with a new earth (II Peter 3:10-13 and Revelation 21:1)?"

God's mandate for the church is to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16). I find that this message gets lost when churchgoers become involved in environmental affairs.

## FAMILY TIES

# Choose life

MELISSA MILLER

"Choose life so that you and your descendants may live." These Old Testament words resonated with me this past summer as part of my extended family gathered at our church camp. We did the typical things like catching up on each other's lives, playing games and debating if the mountain spring-fed lake was warm enough for swimming. Unique this summer was a passing of the torch as my mother released old roles and others stepped in to pick them up.

In this case, the focus was on blankets. In her day, my mother was a prodigious seamstress. Countless projects flew from her skilled hands and Necchi sewing machine. Now with her limited vision, such creations are not possible. Yet her beloved family continues to grow and reach milestones, like high school graduation. And my mother's urge to love and to give is as strong as ever.

My sister Beckie stepped in to bridge the past and the future. Knowing my mother could not make



blankets for the new grads, as she had done in the past, Beckie arranged to go to the fabric store with our mother on two occasions, with the grandson and granddaughter. The young people selected the fabrics and Grandma paid the bill. Beckie then carried the materials home and, with the help of others, cut patches and sewed comforter tops.

When the family gathered at the camp, Beckie brought the patch tops, the batting, backing and thread. Most people took a turn at helping, knotting together the layers or stitching the hem of the backing. Most heart-warming was the presence of our mother, sitting with the others at the table, tying knots on the blankets, happy as could be, relishing one more chance to contribute with her hands. It's hard to imagine blankets that could be sewn with more love or more intergenerational heart.

I am writing this on Thanksgiving weekend. The food we prepare reminds me of generations past and the life they chose and passed on. When I purchase a locally grown turkey, I recall my grandparents, who supplemented their income by raising and dressing turkeys for others' holiday dinners. Earlier today, my husband and son made fresh cranberry

*It's hard to imagine blankets that could be sewn with more love or more intergenerational heart.*

sauce by grinding together the berries with apples and oranges, a longstanding tradition of my in-laws.

They also made my mother-in-law's melt-in-your-mouth dinner rolls. Daniel, our son, had asked this year to be included because he wanted to learn the craft. As father and son worked together, I remembered a two-year-old Daniel

helping his grandmother knead the dough. Later, he affectionately hugged Grandma, burying his face in her ample bosom. "Grandma," he exclaimed, "You feel just like bread dough!"

We will carry these foods to our friends' house for a shared feast. Three family units will gather around the table, unrelated by blood but linked by warm friendship, delicious food and gratitude. Each one has a part to play in choosing life, and their own line of ancestors who have done so before them.

The passage cited at the beginning urges people to choose life on behalf of themselves and their descendants. Moses spoke these words to the Israelites shortly before the end of his life. He described choosing life as "loving God, obeying and holding fast to God" (Deuteronomy 30:19-20). This is the life my ancestors chose and the one I inherited. This is the life I hope and pray those who follow after me will embrace with unwavering commitment. We may see threads of it in blan-

kets, taste it in favourite foods or glimpse it when we take stock of the Creator's providence in generations past. May we choose life.

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



I am also bothered by the suggestion that enduring suffering as a result of challenging the “forces of the fossil economy” will bring us “the approval of the One who raised Christ from the dead.” According to the gospel of Jesus Christ, only a saving faith in our Lord Jesus Christ that endures to the end will meet with God’s approval on Judgment Day.

ELAINE FEHR (ONLINE COMMENT)

I WANT TO thank Steve Heinrichs for his creative re-imagination of what Peter might have to say to us today in our context of climate change and other compounding ecological crises. It is an important message to the church in a time when our desire for unlimited consumption fuelled by cheap oil threatens to spin God’s beloved creation out of the balance that enables

(Continued on page 12)

## GOD, MONEY AND ME

# Building a foundation in financial literacy

BY DARREN PRIES-KLASSEN

**D**o you understand how money is made, spent and saved? It sounds simple, but it’s no secret that the need for financial literacy is as high as ever. The federal government has implemented a national strategy for financial literacy, and provincial governments are increasing financial literacy lessons in school curriculums.

Over the course of my career, I have seen firsthand the positive impact that developing financial literacy can have on every aspect of people’s lives. Building this foundational skill begins with four practical lessons.

### Budget

Budgeting doesn’t begin with planning where you will spend your money. It starts with tracking where you are spending your money. Unless you know exactly where each penny is going, a budget will be little more than guess work. Track your spending for at least a month. Write it all down. This sounds easy, but it takes a lot of courage to honestly look at your spending and do something about it. Once you’ve figured out where your money is going, you can begin to adjust where the dollars are allocated. Perhaps you need to cut back in some areas to free up funds for other things that are a higher priority. Small



changes can yield big results, so ensure your budget is one you’ll actually stick to. Then, put it into practice.

### Don’t forget to give

Everyone can afford to be generous. As part of your budgeting, take time to decide what causes or charities you want to support, how much you want to give and how often. Giving is like a muscle, the more you exercise it, the stronger it gets. If you plan your donations in advance, giving will fit comfortably into your lifestyle.

*If you plan your donations in advance, giving will fit comfortably into your lifestyle.*

### Control debt

Not all debts are created equal. A mortgage or a student loan will likely prove to be an investment, whereas running up a credit card for consumption items like restaurants or the latest electronics will land you in financial trouble. One effective way of getting your debt under control is to “snowball” your debt payments. Line up all your debts and make minimum payments on each one. Then, prioritize the debt with the highest interest rate and use any extra funds to pay that down. Once it is paid

off, re-evaluate which debt has the highest interest, and concentrate your extra funds on that one. Eventually, all the debts will be paid off, perhaps except for a mortgage. Being debt-free is incredibly liberating, but it does take discipline to stay that way.

### Save

Saving money is important, and it is a good idea to set aside two separate funds. The first is for emergencies. How much you choose to put into this fund will depend on your situation. To determine the amount of emergency savings you need, consider a likely scenario, such as a car that needs replacing or a trip to see an ailing relative. Price out how much it would actually cost, and keep that amount in the emergency account at all times. The second savings fund is for the future, when you are no longer working. There are many options for retirement savings, ranging from mutual funds and RRSPs to self-directed investments. Your unique savings goals will be based on

your specific situation.

Whether you’re an old pro or just starting out, practising budgeting, giving, debt payment and savings will sharpen your financial literacy skills and open the door to a brighter future.

*Darren Pries-Klassen is the CEO of Abundance Canada. He has been involved with several boards and currently serves as a board member with the Canadian Association of Gift Planners Foundation. To learn more, visit [abundance.ca](http://abundance.ca).*

## LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

# Why do I need to be part of a church?

TROY WATSON

**“W**hy should I participate in church? What does the church offer that I can't find elsewhere?”

Before I could respond, my friend proceeded to explain how he has experienced God, Jesus, Spirit, worship, purpose, spiritual growth, healing, community and opportunities to serve others in meaningful ways outside of the church. By the end of our conversation I was wondering if it really was important for people to be part of a local body of Christ.

Last week, a Scripture passage turned a light bulb on for me regarding this matter. In Matthew 5 Jesus calls his followers the light of the world: *“You are a lamp placed high on its stand to provide light to those around you. Let your light shine so others will glorify God”* (my paraphrase).

What became clear to me was that Jesus wasn't telling his disciples to let their light shine as individuals, he was telling them to be the light of the world—together—as a group. This is why he called them a *“city on a hill”* in the same passage.

When individuals let their light shine by being generous or loving, people around them don't typically respond by glorifying God. They respond by thinking, *“Wow! What an awesome person!”* Meeting someone who shines with goodness isn't a *“God moment”* for most people, even if the *“shiny”* person gives God the glory for whatever great thing he/she has done. Lovely people aren't that rare and they don't always believe in God, let alone give God the glory.

On the other hand, a group that is full of diverse people who have genuine relationships with one another—and together they shine with light, love,



peace and unity—that is a miracle in this day and age. For instance, if I stumbled upon a faith community in the United States where Democrats who champion Bernie Sanders and Trump-supporting Republicans not only tolerate each other, but

sincerely love and support one another, well, that would come closer to proving the existence of God than any apologetic argument I've ever heard.

Everywhere I look, I see division. I see *“groupthink”* tribes at war with other *“groupthink”* tribes. But in Christ we see our unity with everyone and everything,

*My participation in a local church is choosing to share life with people I did not—and would not—choose if it were up to me. This is important. Church resembles family more than friendships or social networks.*

including our enemies. That includes those *“awful”* people who belong to that *“godless”* tribe we abhor. Yet in Christ we see unity is the truth, and all the divisions between us are illusions and lies.

Paul says in Ephesians 2 that *“Christ is our peace, he has made us one, and broken down the dividing wall of hostility between our groups . . . he created in himself one new humanity in place of our divided humanity”* (my paraphrase).

A church is the body of Christ when congregants embody this new united humanity. When a church manifests this miraculous oneness in Christ, its light shines in a way that glorifies or magnifies God. To magnify God is to make God's presence more visible to the world around us. That's what magnify means.

A magnifying glass, for example, makes things that are hard to see more visible.

So why do I need to be part of a church community? In part, I would answer this way: My participation in a local church is choosing to share life with people I did not—and would not—choose if it were up to me. This is important. Church resembles family more than friendships or social networks. God brings groups of people together from *“warring”* tribes and groups we find annoying or offensive, to create micro-cities where *“enemies”* do life together in a way that reveals this new united humanity in Christ. This radical way of *“being human together”* results in God's presence being made more visible to the world around us. Our love for one another seems supernatural.

Churches that don't embody this miraculous united humanity in Christ don't magnify God. When a church doesn't provide light to the world around it, eventually Christ removes its lampstand (Revelation 2:5).

However, churches in which everyone

looks, thinks, believes, worships and votes the same don't magnify God either. Uniformity is not unity. Homogenous churches are just another *“echo chamber,”* intensifying the segmentation of our fragmented world.

In the body of Christ we don't find our unity in our commonalities and affinities with similar kinds of people. Our unity arises through mutual submission and interconnectedness to the same divine Spirit. It is this miraculous unity in diversity—in Christ—that magnifies God's presence and makes the genuine body of Christ unique and important for us to participate in. ☞

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



## PERSONAL REFLECTION

## Let God do the sorting

J. NELSON KRAYBILL

**F**rom a boat on the Sea of Galilee a fisherman demonstrates the ancient art of casting a circular net. Weights along the outer edge sink rapidly, pulling the web around any living thing below.

Waters next to Jesus' ministry base at Capernaum teemed with tilapia, carp and sardines when his first disciples plied their trade.

Fishing was a significant part of the regional economy in the first century, evidenced by names of nearby towns: Bethsaida ("house of fishing") was hometown to Peter, Andrew and Philip; and Taricheae ("pickled fish town," called

Magdala in Hebrew) probably was home to Mary Magdalene. Disciples of Jesus appear in the gospels variously mending nets, fishing all night, counting fish, extracting a coin from the mouth of a fish, and eating a seafood breakfast on the beach with the risen Christ.

*"The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind,"* Jesus told his followers. *"When it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire"*

(Matthew 13:47–50).

At a time when some Christian denominations excommunicate or divide over contested matters, Jesus' fishing parable is instructive. Galilean fishermen typically used nets, not hooks, to harvest their catch. Evangelism and church discipline, according to this imagery, are broad and inclusive. Nobody gets hooked individually by ruse or violence. Rather, the wide embrace of a net draws in a motley and diverse catch. At the end of the age, these get sorted—not by you and me, but by angels.

How tempted I am to start sorting now!

Toss out fish whose politics irritate me. Discard those not to my taste.

Get rid of any whose views don't seem biblical according to how I interpret the Bible.

But instead of putting you and me into the sorting business, Jesus implies that we are to cast a wide net. *"Follow me, and I will make you [net] fish for people,"* he said (Matthew 4:19).

Other biblical images likewise suggest that Jesus advocated an inclusive people-gathering. The kingdom of heaven is like a farmer's field with both wheat and weeds, he taught. These grow side by side until harvest, then reapers (angels?) sort them and destroy the worthless plants (Matthew 13:24–30).

In John's Apocalypse, it is Christ who can remove lampstands (congregations), not the churches themselves (Revelation 2:5).

Our Lord did not suggest that belief and behaviour are irrelevant to salvation. There are consequences for those who do not measure up. When God brings harvest at the end of the age, weeds will go up in smoke and bad fish end up in the furnace, *"where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."* We do well to learn, practise and teach what God requires for holy living.

But, thank God, we can focus on net-casting and let God do the sorting. ❧

*J. Nelson Kraybill is president of Mennonite World Conference. Adapted from "Holy Land pilgrim" (peace-pilgrim.com, May 5, 2018).*



PHOTO BY J. NELSON KRAYBILL

*A fisherman on the Sea of Galilee.*

(Continued from page 9)

us to live in our common home.

There is much to say here, but I would just refer to the reformed theologian Steven Bouma-Prediger, who says, “Creation care is not the whole gospel, but without it the gospel is not whole.” That, in essence, is what it boils down to, to say that we believe in God the Creator who created this world very good.

The other issue at stake is a question of genre. Clearly, this is a creative and contextual reimagination to help us read an old and maybe too seemingly familiar text in a new light given a new context. Heinrichs correctly highlights the many political themes in Peter’s letter and translates them into the current context. It is not a claim to definitely determine the meaning of First Peter once and for all, but rather a specific interpretation in time, just like any good sermon is.

I wonder if those who paint Heinrichs as a “heterodox” preacher of a “green gospel” might benefit from an actual conversation with him, whom I know to be a dedicated follower of Jesus who understands the cost of discipleship.

**BENJAMIN ISAAK-KRAUSS**  
(ONLINE COMMENT)

## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Jantzi**—Beckham Anthony (b. Sept. 20, 2018), to David and Blair Jantzi, Crosshill Mennonite, Ont.

**Klassen**—James Peter (b. Sept. 17, 2018), to Ryan and Julia Klassen, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Unrau**—Eli Frederick (b. July 25, 2018), to Erin and Dustin

Unrau, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

### Baptisms

**Kira Peters**—Wanner Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont., June 10, 2018.

### Marriages

**Barkway/Neufeld**—Garrison Barkway and Lindsay Neufeld (Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.), at Niagara United Mennonite, Sept. 22, 2018.

**Neufeld/Peters**—Linda Neufeld (First Mennonite, Edmonton) and Hugo Peters (Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg), at First Mennonite, Edmonton, July 28, 2018.

### Deaths

**Campbell**—Robert William (Bill), 90 (b. Jan. 22, 1928; d. Sept. 27, 2018), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

**Dick**—William, 92 (b. Feb. 26, 1926; d. Sept. 23, 2018), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

**Friesen**—Jacob, 93 (b. March 23, 1925; d. Sept. 17, 2018), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

**Janzen**—Erna, 93 (d. July 25, 2018), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Kroeger**—Selma (nee Epp), 80 (b. July 2, 1938; d. Sept. 25, 2018), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Murdoch**—Dean, 86 (b. Nov. 22, 1931; d. May 14, 2018), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Neufeld**—Marlene (nee Martens), 75 (b. June 18, 1943; d. Aug. 23, 2018), First Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Pauls**—Daniel (Dan), 89 (b. Dec. 6, 1928; d. Sept. 16, 2018), Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

## A moment from yesterday



Malcom and Esther Wenger moved to the town of Selkirk, Man., in 1979. Malcolm worked for the Conference of Mennonites in Canada’s Native Ministries program and pastored the small Selkirk Christian Fellowship. Pictured, Malcolm baptizes Gillian Thororanson at Patricia Beach, Man., on July 22, 1979. There have been fierce debates in Mennonite circles about the correct form of baptism over the centuries. Malcolm uses the method of pouring while standing in a lake. Gillian will have been wet from head to toe after his baptism without being immersed.

*Text: Conrad Stoesz*

*Photo: Selkirk Christian Fellowship Photo Collection*



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## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

# New identity for Vancouver church

*'Peace' replaces 'Mennonite' in name for outreach, inclusiveness reasons*

BY AMY DUECKMAN  
B.C. Correspondent

A revitalized sense of mission has led to a change of name for an 81-year-old Vancouver Mennonite congregation. The church formerly known as First United Mennonite Church (often shortened simply to FUMC or 52nd because of its address at 659 E. 52nd Avenue) is now Peace Church on 52nd.

Once a large congregation that numbered more than 500 in the 1960s and early '70s, it had shrunk to between 70 to 80 active attendees, with an aging demographic, by 2016. Members began to have difficult conversations about whether to even remain open. Eventually it decided to try to revitalize itself and reach out to its now diverse neighbourhood in south-east Vancouver.

"As part of these efforts, we realized that our name . . . was not helping in our outreach efforts," says Lydia Crutwell, the church's lead pastor, explaining that the original name was confusing in a number of ways. "We often had people thinking we were part of the United Church; the word 'Mennonite' caused a lot of confusion for our non-European neighbours; and referring to organizations by their acronyms can often be alienating to newcomers who don't know what the acronym stands for."

The congregation processed the name issue through many meetings and discussions at various levels. During the process of name proposals, it became clear that the greatest point of discussion was around the use of "Mennonite" in the name.

"While some of our members surprised us by being strongly in favour of Peace Church on 52nd or South Vancouver

Peace Church, for others the idea of no longer having 'Mennonite' in our church name felt like a loss of their identity," says Crutwell.

The church's Vision Committee eventually decided that Peace Church on 52nd was the best choice. Including the reference to 52nd Street shows the importance of relating to the neighbourhood while connecting to the history of Mennonite Church B.C.

"For years already, people within our



PEACE  
CHURCH  
ON 52<sup>ND</sup>

A MENNONITE COMMUNITY

church and within Mennonite Church British Columbia, have referred to us not as FUMC, but as 52nd Church, and we liked a name that preserved that nickname for us," says Crutwell.

Some in the congregation with strong Mennonite roots expressed a sense of loss at no longer being known as a Mennonite church. Nonetheless, leadership affirmed that dropping the denominational reference was the best way forward. Those in the immediate neighbourhood and outside of Mennonite circles often confused Mennonite with Mormon or Amish, or thought they would have to learn German or be of European heritage to be part of the church.

A vote in June on the proposed name change garnered an 80 percent mandate to move forward as Peace Church on 52nd.

The proposal put forward at that time said in part: "We are not trying to hide who we are, but to show more faithfully just who we are and who we desire to be. We believe 'Peace' is a word that invites people in much more effectively."

"Peace" was considered to be important because it expresses the essence of Anabaptist-Mennonite theology and is a word everyone knows.

"All people long for peace—inner peace, world peace, peaceful relationships, whether or not they've ever heard the words 'Anabaptist,' 'Mennonite,' or even 'theology' before!" Crutwell says.

Because two other MC B.C. congregations—Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond and Chinatown Peace Church in Vancouver—already have the word 'Peace' in their names, some have wondered if there would be confusion around a similar name. Reading from an email from Peace Mennonite's pastor, Winston Pratt, Crutwell reports that, after discussion among members of Peace Mennonite, that congregation "overwhelmingly blessed FUMC's initiative in its revitalization to change its name to 'Peace Church on 52nd.'" All three congregations affirm that they are members of the same denomination and are working to bring peace to their respective neighbourhoods.

To avoid confusion, the newly named Peace Church on 52nd encourages people of MC Canada and MC B.C. to continue referring to the Richmond congregation in shortened form as "Peace Church" while using the nickname "52nd Church" for itself.

The Vancouver congregation has already begun using the new name in its bulletins, on the phone and in worship services, although the name as registered with the government will continue to be First United Mennonite Church until the name can be officially changed. ☺

## COVER STORY

# Friendship that sticks

*The story of 'Bees for Burkina'*

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent

The hard work of some Alberta bees creates a sweet deal for two very different churches. The "Bees for Burkina" project gives people of Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary a chance to buy local honey, while the profits provide Mennonites in Burkina Faso with financial assistance to build their church. The faith friendship between the two churches is deep, and this initiative helps to ensure their relationship "sticks."

The story of "Bees for Burkina" is a legacy of legacies involving international faith friendship and honouring the memories of two Albertans who have died in recent years.

The story began in 2014, when Foothills welcomed Josue Coulibaly into the congregation as part of Mennonite Central Committee's International Volunteer Exchange Program. Coulibaly, a young man from the village of Orodara in Burkina Faso, took on the role of pastoral assistant.

"He just naturally had a way of challenging our ethnocentric tendencies, not in a way that was looking for pity, but by showing us how exciting it is to realize we have Mennonite sisters and brothers around the world," says Doug Klassen, Foothills' pastor. "Our faith has been broadened. The global church is a beautiful church."

Coulibaly returned to Burkina Faso in 2015 with the friendship between the churches off to a good start. Coulibaly and his family invited Klassen to Burkina Faso to preach at Coulibaly's wedding in January 2017. The Foothills congregation encouraged Klassen to accept the invitation, and donations covered his costs.

In Coulibaly's village, Klassen observed that the church had a good concrete floor, but no windows, doors or roof. The congregation had run out of funds and could not complete the building, so the wedding had to be held in a rented tent to

accommodate the 500 guests.

While in Burkina Faso, Klassen also spent time with several church leaders. At one meeting, he was asked two pointed questions: "Do you allow women on your church boards . . . and . . . why is the amount of money coming to support International Witness work decreasing?" Klassen explained that women are on church boards, and that the North American church is in decline and that some Mennonites are questioning the "colonial" influences that were part of traditional missionary work.

Bewildered at this answer, one elder replied: "Before the Mennonites came along, we were sacrificing chickens on dirt mounds [a practice in the animist religion in the area]. We are extremely grateful for everything that the Witness workers brought when they came here."

Before going to Burkina Faso, Klassen had mentioned in a sermon a concern for the plight of bees as reported on mainstream news. Joyce and Jim Harder, part of the Foothills congregation, offered to include him in their new beekeeping venture. Upon his return to Calgary, Klassen told his congregation about the unfinished building and his experiences with the Burkinabé people. He talked about it when out for supper with the Harders, and the

pieces for the honey project began to come together. Joyce asked Klassen about using a hive to support Coulibaly's church.

As the plan unfolded, a second legacy fed into the budding project. Beekeeping supplies were needed, and Klassen remembered that Ingrid Janssen had kept bees near Camp Valaqua. Janssen, a beloved co-manager of the camp, passed away in May 2015, and her supplies were in storage. Jeff Schellenberg, Janssen's husband, gave Klassen use of the hives. The old boxes were cleaned and readied for bees, and wax from the old hives was melted and formed into candles.

The room where the honey extraction happens is a third legacy. A small kitchen, part of a suite in the Harders' barn, is the perfect size to keep at 33 degrees Celsius for the extraction process. The suite is where the Harders' late son, Tim, stayed when he was not working as a ski or white-water rafting instructor. Tim was killed in 2013 in a tragic accident between Golden and Revelstoke, Alta. The honey extractor fits in the middle of his former kitchen floor. "Tim would have laughed," she says. Using his room for a project that helps others is a way to honour his memory.

As the honey money was collected, a concern arose for Foothills. How were they going to get it to the Mennonite church in Burkina Faso? Tax regulations in Canada have strict rules that charities must follow to ensure money is used for its intended purpose. With the restructuring of Mennonite Church Canada and its International Witness program, work that had been in progress in Burkina Faso was ending and no new projects could immediately start. Since a roof for a building was

PHOTO BY JOSUE COULIBALY

*Each Sunday, more than 55 people meet for worship in the tiny church in the village of Fon, Burkina Faso. The Foothills church honey money from 2018 will go towards a necessary expansion of the church building since members have increased after some Christians were pushed off their nearby lands due to tensions in the country. Pictured, Josue Coulibaly's brother Emmanuel and his son are among the displaced.*







PHOTO BY DANIELLE KLASSEN

*'Bees for Burkina' honey sold at Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary.*

a new project, it could not be funnelled through MC Canada.

Eventually, arrangements were made to send the money through Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission. In 2017, the first year of operation, the sale of candles and honey raised approximately \$3,200 for the project that Joyce named "Bees for Burkina." Late this past summer, 228 more jars of honey were offered for sale to people at Foothills, raising approximately \$2,000 at the time of this writing.

The church building in Coulibaly's village is complete, so the 2018 profit will support a church in the village of Fon, as per the request of Burkinabé Mennonite church leaders. The Fon church has experienced a recent growth spurt, with the arrival of Christians who were pushed off their land in nearby villages because of religious and political tensions. Honey money will be used to expand the size of this building.

The partnership between the Foothills and Burkinabé churches is an example of how a mission work can grow naturally and be mutually beneficial. ☘

Read more about the state of MC Canada's International Witness program at [canadianmennonite.org/sticky-friendship](http://canadianmennonite.org/sticky-friendship).



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# Modern ghosts of a horse-drawn scandal

## Part II: Enlightenment

BY WILL BRAUN  
Senior Writer

*Eight men went to prison, the media gaze moved on, and colony life resumed. But the saga of mass rape in the Bolivian corner of our family of faith is far from over.*

According to the official version, seven Mennonite men drugged and raped more than 130 women and girls on the Manitoba Colony in Bolivia between 2005 and 2009. In 2011, they were sentenced to 25 years in prison. Another man was sentenced to 12 years for providing the anesthetic spray that rendered families unconscious, making way for the perpetrators.

The unofficial version is more complicated: an unreliable justice system, accounts of forced confessions, doubt about whether the right men are in prison, reports of ongoing assaults, and unanswered questions about the well-being of the victims.

Whatever the version of events, they evoke images from another time and place: women in kerchiefs, men in *schlaubbekjzen* (bib-overalls), and horse-drawn buggies plodding along dusty forest-lined roads. But how do our perceptions of

Bolivian colony Mennonites square with reality? And, just as importantly, what are their perceptions of us?

First, there are many differences between colonies in different places. Generalization is dangerous. That said, in the tangled path of Mennonite migrations, Bolivia is the final stop on the flight from “the world,” home to the most conservative of the most conservative. Most of the 80-plus colonies in Bolivia, which are home to roughly 80,000 Mennonites, are very traditional.

According to numerous people I spoke with, colonies such as the Manitoba Colony place immense value on resisting change. Formal education is de-emphasized, contact with the outside limited, and the *ordnunk* (set of rules) is dominant. If former generations did not need rubber tires on tractors, why, they ask, should the current generation try to one-up them?



Impressions of the colonies vary drastically. Some people see them as irredeemable cultural and spiritual black holes. Evangelistic groups working with people who have left the colonies tend toward this view.

### Distorted view

But Kennert Giesbrecht says that if you listen only to the stories of those who have left, you arrive at a distorted view. He estimates that about 5 percent of colony members leave.

Giesbrecht is the long-time editor of *Die Mennonitische Post*, a newspaper popular among colonies throughout Latin America. It falls under the auspices of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC). Arising from Giesbrecht's work and dozens of trips to colonies, his knowledge about them and his rapport among their members is unequalled.

Giesbrecht does not dismiss negative aspects of colony life nor does he downplay the horrific rape cases; he has spoken with the bishop and others from Manitoba Colony. He also cannot dismiss his own overwhelmingly positive experiences. He speaks with affection about staying in people's homes and talking late into the evening.

Giesbrecht grew up on the Menno Colony in Paraguay—quite different from Bolivian colonies—and now lives in Steinbach, Man. He says that, while he has not returned to colony life himself, he understands the appeal. A lot of people do like it, he says.



PHOTO BY NOAH FRIEDMAN-RUDOVSKY (NOAHFR.COM)

*Abram Wall Enns, left, was the civic leader of the Manitoba Colony when rape stories first emerged. He wishes the leaders would have acted sooner.*



PHOTO BY KENNERT GIESBRECHT

*The Manitoba Colony in eastern Bolivia.*

In a phone interview, American photographer Noah Friedman-Rudovsky described the people of Manitoba Colony as initially “suspicious,” but ultimately “humble” and “very welcoming in many ways.” In 2013, he and his journalist sister Jean stayed for several days in the home of Abram Wall Enns, who was the civic leader of the Manitoba Colony from 2003 to 2009. The duo were there working on an article and short documentary for Vice Media. Noah says that, while Enns was hesitant to talk at first, it soon became clear he was eager to share his story. In an earlier article for *Time* magazine, Jean reported that Enns had conceded that leaders had been slow to act on the rape accounts, adding through tears, “but we didn’t know who was doing it.”

The image of a colony leader welcoming outside journalists and speaking emotionally with them contradicts stereotypes of rigidity and contempt for the world, but it aligns with other accounts I heard.

Still, Giesbrecht notes that the colony is “not a system that is open.” To be part of the colony and have economic opportunity, you must be part of the colony church. As multiple sources noted, the teaching is that, if you leave the colony, you go to hell. If you leave, you will also not see your extended family again.

Jack Heppner lived in Bolivia in the mid-1970s and early ’90s. He returned in 2009, between the time of the arrests and trials of the accused men. During that two-month visit with his son and daughter-in-law, who were working with MCC in Bolivia at

the time, Heppner investigated the “ghost rape” case, in part at the urging of MCC personnel. He visited Bishop Neudorf of the Manitoba Colony and the men in prison, as well as many others with relevant knowledge.

Heppner is not among those who categorically dismiss colony ways or dwell on sordid accounts. But in an interview he expressed serious concern about control exerted by colony structures, effects of creating an insular realm, and disturbing sexual behaviour.

Heppner said alcohol abuse and sexual promiscuity are problems among youth on colonies, something he said the leaders he spoke with did not deny. He mentioned accounts of incest and of men frequenting prostitutes in the nearby city of Santa Cruz. “Everyone knows it,” he said, “but no one talks about it.” And most women cannot ask their husbands where they are going. It is just not done.

Other than court documents from the “ghost rape” case, there is no verifiable, broader-picture information about the extent of sexual misconduct in Bolivian colonies. The information is all anecdotal. And, as colony defenders are quick to note, sexual misconduct is hardly unique to colony Mennonites. Still, given the numbers of women and girls violated at the Manitoba Colony, it seems irresponsible to ignore accounts of grave problems.

**Logs and specks**

But Wilmar Harder—who was co-coordinator of the Low German Mennonite

Program of MCC Bolivia when the trial took place—raised a question that rings in my ears: “Who tells the story and why?”

This caution led me to reverse the gaze. How do colony Mennonites see us?

Quoting colony people, Giesbrecht used the term “*met aules metgonnen*.” That is, we North American Mennonites go along with everything, melding into an individualist, materialistic society, blindly accepting virtually any new technology.

They have a point. When it comes to environmental impact, simplicity and the haunting ubiquity of screen culture, they are the enlightened ones. By far. They might even say that we have been sucked into an irredeemable cultural and spiritual black hole.

Bolivian colony Mennonites view Canada as the worldly place that their faithful forebears left, while the assimilationists stayed behind.

Harder, who has witnessed many interactions between colony Mennonites and mainstream visitors, said, “Colony people can sense when they are being talked down to. . . . They make jokes about it.”

What interactions happened across this cultural divide at the time of the rapes, and since? That will be the focus of Part III in this series. Then, in the final article, I will circle back to Harder’s cautionary question about who tells the story and why, including discussion of Miriam Toews’s acclaimed new novel about the Bolivian rape case. ❧



# Bible trivia event generates spirited competition

Canadian Mennonite  
WATERLOO, ONT.

As people gathered for the Bible Quizzing for Grown-ups event on Sept. 30 at the Huether Hotel in Waterloo, the room buzzed with conversation, but when the quizmasters began reading questions from the Gospel of Luke, the room went quiet. The mood was light-hearted, but definitely competitive as eight teams listened intently and searched their memories for the right answers.

This Bible trivia fundraiser was organized by Jessica Reesor-Rempel and Tamara Shantz, who work with Pastors in Exile (PiE), an organization that strives to connect local young people with vibrant faith experiences, whether or not they are inside the walls of a church.

Many participants were familiar with church-organized Bible quizzing for

teenagers, but this format combined a pub trivia style with the more traditional Mennonite buzzer questions. Teams worked together in the first three rounds and wrote their answers to verbal questions.

The second round was an interesting interlude, as teams were given a list of imaginative Facebook posts; the teams needed to match the Facebook status updates with a character from Luke. A succession of people could be found at Kim Penner's table after each round, appealing to the judge, arguing that their answers should be deemed acceptable.

Points were tallied after the third round and the top two teams were called to the stage for a series of buzzer questions that only one person had the opportunity to

answer. The final round was 60 seconds of rapid-fire questions to individual members of the two top teams.

In the end, the Canadian Mennonite Scribes, which included publisher Tobi Thiessen, executive editor Ginny Hostetler, editorial assistant Barb Draper, and Jim Loepp Thiessen, lead pastor of Floradale Mennonite Church, tallied the most points. As well as individual certificates, the winning team received pies from Reesor's Market and Bakery. Second place went to Arli and Friends, a team that included Arli Klassen, Tom and Rebecca Yoder Neufeld and Tom Friesen. The Steinmann Quizzers came third; their prize was swag from Kindred Credit Union, one of the event sponsors.

When signing up to join the competition, each team was given the challenge of getting pledges, and by the end of the evening more than \$4,000 had been raised for PiE. Teams had only an extra week to compete for top fundraiser. The prize, a dessert soiree hosted by Gini Bechtel, went to the Possibly Notable Camels team. In the end, more than \$6,000 was raised for PiE.

Although the competitive spirit ran high, there was consensus that this definitely was an enjoyable event. ☘



PHOTO BY D. MICHAEL HOSTETLER

*Members of the first-place Bible Quizzing for Grown-ups team, the Canadian Mennonite Scribes, are pictured, from left to right: Jim Loepp Thiessen, pastor of Floradale Mennonite Church; Ginny Hostetler, CM's executive editor; Barb Draper, CM's editorial assistant; and Tobi Thiessen, CM's publisher.*

## Staff change

### Pastoral transition in Manitoba



• **DARYL CLIMENHAGA** began as a part-time associate pastor at Steinbach Mennonite Church on Sept. 1. He is also associate professor of global studies at Providence

(Man.) Theological Seminary, where he has taught since 1997. He graduated with a theological studies degree from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., in 1981, and a missiological studies degree from Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Ky., in 1993.

—BY GLADY TERICHOW



PHOTO BY JEFF SCHELLENBERG /

TEXT BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

*'Reading the Bible with Jesus' was the theme for Mennonite Church Alberta's annual pastors retreat from Sept. 17 to 19 at Camp Valaqua. Speaker and singer Bryan Moyer Suderman, standing fourth from left, led pastors on an in-depth journey through several gospel stories, paying careful attention to how Jesus used and interpreted Scripture. Asked what he thought Alberta congregants should know about their pastors, Moyer Suderman said, 'Their pastors are committed to the Jesus way, committed to the good of their congregations.' While attendance was good, the group was aware that the diversity of the regional church, which includes at least six different cultural/language groups, was not well represented. Regional minister Tim Wiebe-Neufeld, standing second from left, is working on the issue. 'Scheduling is a challenge when some of our pastors have other full-time jobs,' he said. 'It's a challenge we continue to grapple with.'*

## God at Work in the Church Snapshots

PHOTO BY JOELLE KIDD

*Dora, left, Maciel and Mina serve Nicaraguan specialties like steamed cassava, roast pork and fresh queso (cheese) to congregants from Toronto United Mennonite Church during the 'Taste of Nicaragua' fundraiser on Sept. 23. Proceeds from the fundraiser will go toward the congregational life of Toronto Mennonite New Life Church, which worships in the same building as Toronto United Mennonite.*





## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

# 'The more we get to know each other'

*Historical Mennonite experiences pave way for interfaith dialogue*

BY GLADYS TERICHOW

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
WINNIPEG

Historical experiences of ordinary people living out their faith were shared at a travelogue presentation of Russian Mennonite migrations in Europe and Central Asia.

The presentation, co-hosted by Mennonite Heritage Archives and TourMagination on Sept. 13, encouraged people to see travel as a tool to gain deeper understandings of how the unique historical experiences of Mennonites have shaped beliefs and values.

"Our tours help people of faith explore, experience and expand their worlds," said tour leader John Sharp, a recently retired history and Bible professor at Hesston (Kan.) College.

Sharp has led four tours to Uzbekistan that reflect on some of the experiences of 43 Mennonite families from South Russia, now Ukraine, who established the village

of Ak Metchet near the historic Silk Road city of Khiva in the 1880s.

These families have left a legacy of positive and cooperative interactions with their Muslim neighbours, said Sharp. Their friendships paved the way for new generations of Mennonites to continue developing and expanding interfaith dialogue.

"The more we get to know each other, the more likely we are to understand each other," he said, adding, "This was important in the 1880s and is important today."

Sharp enjoys visits to the village of Serabulak, where this group of Mennonite pilgrims were stranded during the winter of 1881-82. They had lived through many hardships on this journey, but in Serabulak they received a warm welcome and were given permission to use the Kyk-Ota Mosque for worship services, baptisms, weddings and funerals. Five Mennonites

are buried in the cemetery.

"This is amazing hospitality," said Sharp.

In the spring of 1882, the Mennonites hired camels to continue their journey to the walled city of Khiva. "This is the only Mennonite migration that I know of that hired camels to cross a desert," he says.

A merchant in Serabulak had given Mennonite pilgrims a farewell gift of money and other gifts. When Sharp met one of the merchant's descendants, Mr. Karimov, and asked him about this gesture of friendship, Mr. Karimov responded: "Because it's the teaching of the Prophet and the Qur'an to offer hospitality to strangers and immigrants."

The Mennonite pilgrims established a settlement near Khiva. Local people named the settlement Ak Metchet ("white mosque") because the Mennonite white-washed church was a sharp contrast to the impressive mosaics and architecture of Islamic mosques.

"There is still plenty of evidence that Mennonites once lived there," said Sharp. "German-Russian Mennonites seeking escape from the world became modernizing agents in Central Asia. They introduced new agricultural crops, methods, implements and new breeds of livestock."

Mennonites worked in the Khan's palace and helped build and decorate palaces that are still standing today. Mennonites lived in harmony with their Muslim neighbours for a half-century. In 1935, they were deported by Joseph Stalin.

Over the years, Muslim families have passed down this deportation story to their children. "They say when Mennonites were deported it was like our own children were torn away from us," said Sharp.

Sharp's travelogue also included stories and images of other tours that explore Anabaptist theological roots and Mennonite migrations. Following the presentation, Darrel Toews, pastor of Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, said that the travelogue reminded him of some of the memorable experiences he had during a heritage tour.

An unforgettable experience was standing on a fisherman's wharf on the Limmat River in Zurich, Switzerland, said Toews, adding, "It deepened our understanding of the strife and fervent of the Reformation."



TOURMAGINATION PHOTOS BY JOHN SHARP

*The Kyk-Ota Mosque in Serabulak, Uzbekistan, was used by Mennonites as a church during the winter of 1881-82.*





*Uzbekistan hosts Mr. and Mrs. Karimov, standing, share warm hospitality with a TourMagination group visiting Serabulak. Mr. Karimov is a descendant of a merchant who gave Mennonite pilgrims a farewell gift of money and other gifts.*

During the 16th century Reformation a bitterly divisive conflict between the state Reformed Church and the Anabaptist movement arose because Anabaptists rejected infant baptism as unbiblical. Felix Manz, an early Anabaptist leader, was re-baptized and was an advocate for believer's baptism.

In Zurich, a law had been passed that re-baptism was a crime punishable by drowning. On Jan. 5, 1527, Manz was drowned in the cold waters of the Limmat River. "They called it his third baptism," said Toews. "As

Mennonites, we practise adult baptism. It was a very powerful moment."

As part of the reconciliation efforts between the Reformed and Anabaptist churches, a memorial plaque has been placed on the fishermen's wharf to remember Manz and other Anabaptist martyrs.

Reflecting on the travelogue, Karl Koop, professor of history and theology at Canadian Mennonite University, said that travel tours generally focus on the positive aspects of Anabaptist faith and culture. While he encourages his

students to take pride in the positive stories of Mennonite faith and culture, he also urges them to look realistically at negative stories that could require their own repentance and reconciliation.

"It is important to be really cognizant of the positive and negative stories," he said. "Many Mennonite churches were formed out of conflict. Churches are still experiencing conflicts and divisions today. We need to look long and hard at the negative stories and learn from that as well." ❧

*Local people named the settlement Ak Metchet ('white mosque') because the Mennonite whitewashed church was a sharp contrast to the impressive mosaics and architecture of Islamic mosques.*

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## GOD AT WORK IN US

## PERSONAL REFLECTION

# On leaving home and coming home

CHRISTINA BARKMAN

**F**ive months ago, when we were packing up our lives in Manila, I wanted so badly to just stay. I didn't think I could handle any more tearful farewells and I felt horrible tearing our kids away from our Peace Church family who helped to raise our kids. I am still filled with tears when I think back on those painful goodbyes.

I knew that when the doors of the airplane closed, so would the entire life we had built and everything and everyone that was familiar to our kids. Everything that was "home" would be instantly gone, never to be rebuilt again. We were losing it all at once, and it hurt badly.

The emotions were intense; they still are. And while deeply grieving the farewells and painfully releasing the motherly roles I played in some of our Peace Church members' lives, I was also very much looking forward to being with our family in Canada again.

On our last day in Manila, I snuck out of our very full house for a quiet moment on our front veranda. I sat down to read two special messages: one from my sister, so full of excitement to have us home again soon, and one from a best friend in Manila, so sad to say her final goodbyes. I sat there and just bawled. I had never felt such pain and such joy all at once; it was incredibly overwhelming.

The tears flowed during our final farewells, and when I saw my parents at the Vancouver airport, my tears flowed again, this time with joy, as I hugged my mom and dad and finally introduced them to my baby Jericho. We had left our home in Manila, but we were also home again.

What I didn't realize five months ago,

when I was so hesitant to leave Manila, was that God had a perfect plan for us. This little town of Yarrow, B.C., that we now call home was exactly what we needed.

It wasn't until a few days after we landed in Vancouver that our plans all fell into place. Darnell was asked to pastor Yarrow United Mennonite Church, and we could live in the house owned by the church. We'd be just 20 minutes from family and friends in Abbotsford, where we own a house that is now rented out, but we'd get to live in this gorgeous little town between the mountains and the river.

Coming from the cement jungle of Manila, filled with 12 million people, I saw Yarrow, a farming town of about 3,000, as entirely different! Instead of frequenting Manila's huge busy malls, we filled our summer with quiet walks to the river; swimming in the fresh, cold water; and picking wild blackberries. Instead of a stressful drive to school along six lanes of jeepney-filled traffic, our school commute is a walk through fields that are surrounded by river and mountains and

farm animals. I don't think it could be more different. We welcome the calm of this life; it is rest for our souls.

Cody was given a Canada T-shirt for his birthday that says "Canada: where I call home." I asked him if he agreed, if he felt Canada was home. I expected him to say yes. After all, it's been four months since we left Manila, and he seems so well adjusted and happy here. But he told me, with a sheepish smile, "No, Mom. It's not home for me. But maybe after I'm here a little longer it will feel like home."

I understand completely. It takes time, my boy. Despite loving where we are now, feeling totally welcomed by a wonderful community and enjoying our little town, "home" doesn't quite describe it yet. But we're building it, every day. And someday, when Cody says it is home, I'm sure I will shed a tear for Manila again.

It hurts a lot to lose a home, to lose a life. But the pain also means there was much love to lose, and for that I am so deeply grateful. That life—the one where we laughed and struggled with our Peace Church community; the one where we brought two more babies home; the one where we disciplined and were disciplined; the one that gave us so much life and energy, passion and purpose—is all over. We mourn it, yet we rejoice in the full life it was. We thank God for the friendships that will last a lifetime and know that our work and connection to the Philippines will continue forever. ☺

*Darnell and Christina Barkman were MC Canada Witness workers in the Philippines for six years. Their family includes Cody, Makai, Teyah and Jericho.*

PHOTO COURTESY OF  
THE BARKMAN FAMILY

*The Barkmans say their final goodbyes to their Peace Church friends in Manilla this past spring.*





## FOCUS ON BOOKS &amp; RESOURCES

## BOOK REVIEW

# A challenge to give loving attention to life

*The Middle of Things.*

Meghan Florian. Cascade Books, 2017, 110 pages.

REVIEWED BY DAVID DRIEDGER

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE



Meghan Florian's name surfaced in the small circle of Mennonite pastors and friends I know in the United States. Because this is how I found this book, I assumed it would be a "churchy" (or religious, or theological, or spiritual) collection of essays. What I found was a case for better writing in the church.

*The Middle of Things* is Florian's first published collection of essays that are short autobiographical reflections, save for the more substantive opening chapter. She guides the reader through the joys of intellectual discovery, the challenges of gender in the academy, the realities of dating and singleness in a culture that still rewards the "traditional" family, and the maturing awareness of how desire and love shape a life. Florian offers these reflections through the prism of dense philosophical texts, the ethos of Ikea and an extended meditation on hair.

What is most impressive is the manner in which faith is neither explicitly centred nor discarded, but simply surfaces "in the middle of things." Had I not known Florian's connection to a Mennonite congregation, I would not necessarily have thought of her writing in relation to the church, but now I can't see it otherwise.

Her work is a gift to the church because it does not readily fit the scripts of the church. Singleness seems to remain a "dark continent" for Mennonite reflection, never mind paying attention to the various desires our culture demands in how we present our bodies and interact with other bodies.

Perhaps the most surprising essay in this collection is about her relationship with her hair. During her teen years, her hair was the vehicle for aspiring to the ideals of femininity. When she was a young adult, hatred of her hair mirrored the culture's relentless and impossible expectations. Finally, with sustained attention, she grew into a place of peace with her hair, so that her intimate relationship with it became almost sacred. She learned to honour it in the midst of shifting desires.

Perhaps this is the gift. Faithfulness involves faithful attention to the life we are in the midst of. We do not always, or immediately, need to import grand visions of the kingdom of God or impose ready-made ethical prescriptions; rather, we need to see what emerges when we give loving attention to life. Florian's essay honouring her sister's love of *Breakfast at Tiffany's* allows a movie to bear fruit as she comments on the inevitable binds of desiring both love and freedom. And Kierkegaard plays a feature role in these

essays. Perhaps in the end her writing is a "work of love" (to riff off the title of a Kierkegaard book).

In matters of love and faithfulness, the church may need to scale back its frame of reference. By providing loving attention, very little needs to be written off as unworthy of reflection and even less needs to be accepted uncritically. There are many writers who can help the Mennonite church chart new paths.

The Mennonite church has a history of writers offering pious self-congratulation and vitriolic condemnation, but we need to explore more forms of writing to create space that resists the dominant narratives. Such writing provides relief, protection and even grace to those who have been unduly dismissed or disregarded. Florian's essays challenge us to give loving attention to life and in this way perhaps articulate a gospel we have not yet heard. ☿

*David Driedger is associate minister at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.*

## Along the Road to Freedom

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## FOCUS ON BOOKS &amp; RESOURCES

# Reading together in an uncertain world

*Long-running book club explores literature and theology*

BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE

Manitoba Correspondent  
WINNIPEG

A widely published poet, a retired professor, a farmer, a recent graduate and an engineer regularly discuss literature and theology together. Hard to imagine? The sight is more likely than you might think.

Take and Read is a theological book discussion group run annually by Paul Doerksen, associate professor of theology and Anabaptist studies at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU). From September to March, 30 people read four books together and meet four times, once for each book, in the boardroom on CMU's second floor.

The program was started in 1993 by Gordon Matties, professor emeritus at CMU, when he learned of a similar initiative at the University of Alberta. The program, then titled InterChange, ran for 10 years before Matties ended it in 2003 to pursue another project in film. Doerksen quickly picked it up and dubbed it Take and Read, after a famous scene in St. Augustine's *Confessions*.

Doerksen begins each meeting by providing context, connections to other works and critical analysis of the book. This is followed by group conversation and smaller table discussions, prompted, but not limited, by questions he provides. The evening

includes coffee and desserts created by local pastry chef Rachel Isaak.

Each year has its own theme that connects the selection of books. This year's is "Faith, fear and freedom: Christian theology and practice in troubled times." It reflects the tension experienced between chaos and hope in today's world and how it can be navigated.

The variety of authors in this year's volumes is intriguing. They range widely from a historian from Duke University who writes about her terminal cancer and a

farmer from Beausejour who writes about us versus them, to a biblical scholar who presents a beautiful meditation on death and a humanities professor who explores the process of thinking itself.

"All of them are trying to make sense of the world in which we find ourselves, whether that be as personal as, 'I have a terminal diagnosis,' or as broad as, 'How should all of us think together, and in so doing reduce the chaos among us?'" says



PHOTO COURTESY OF CMU

*Paul Doerksen coordinates the Take & Read program, which gathers 30 people together four times a year to read and discuss books and theology.*

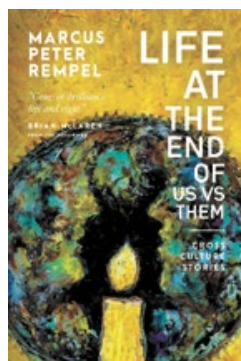
Doerksen.

Perhaps unconventionally, though, it's the books that determine the theme rather than the other way around. "I'm always on the lookout for good books that will fit this setting, . . . then once I've got four books I make something up to connect them,"

*The group read a book one year by a doctoral-level philosopher who works as a motorcycle mechanic. Another time they read The Confessions of St. Augustine.*

Doerksen says with a laugh. It's the books themselves that are the main focus. He selects works published in the last year or two and tries to avoid material that is too dense or requires a lot of expertise, but still has depth and challenge. It can sometimes be hard to find the right balance.

Denny Smith, a retired professor of dentistry at the University of Manitoba, has been attending the Take and Read program for about a decade. He first joined



*This year's Take and Read book list.*

because of his friendship with Doerksen but stayed because of what Doerksen brings to the group in his lectures.

“Paul Doerksen can read a novel by almost anyone and then draw widely on the Scriptures . . . writing of scholars, movies and so forth. . . . Then he can grasp that material and hold it in a way that I think is relatively rare,” says Smith. Doerksen’s ability to pull apart that material, analyze it and then synthesize it into something understandable is a gift that he brings to the group, Smith adds.

Doerksen’s fascinating selection of books is also a draw of the program, says Smith. The group read a book one year by a doctoral-level philosopher who works as a motorcycle mechanic. Another time they read *The Confessions of St. Augustine*.

In 2016, Doerksen published a compilation of his opening presentations on many of these diverse books as a collection of essays. *Take and Read: Reflecting Theologically on Books* includes 29 lectures and five sermons, and has a foreword written by Smith.

The people who dive into these books are as diverse as the authors themselves. They come from a wide range of schooling, life experience, professions and even religion, and vary in age from their early 20s to late 80s. Smith says he’s not the longest-attending member by a long shot. Some dedicated readers attend every year and others come and go. But they are often drawn back in, which says something about the quality of the program, Smith says.

## /// Briefly noted

### Randy Klaassen: pastor turned publisher

Chances are you have read a memoir about someone you know or someone you want to get to know. Randy Klaassen, associate pastor at St. Catharines (Ont.) United Mennonite Church, not only writes about people and events, he also publishes their stories. He got started in this venture in 2012, when he was taking a business course at Niagara College and one of his first assignments was to write a memoir. This led to establishing People’s History Publications, his publishing company that he operates out of his home. His mission statement is “Ordinary people; extraordinary events,” and this has led him to meet and write about Dorothy, who sang and played guitar for cash to get her through tough times; Jack, a serviceman in the South Pacific; Blanche, who served in the armed forces in the Second World War, to name just a few. Klaassen has also written about his mother Sara, and members of other families. He has published memoirs for which he interviewed, wrote and edited the story, and he also edits and publishes the work of those who have done their own writing. The books are printed locally.

—STORY AND PHOTO BY MARIA KLASSEN



*Randy Klaassen with some of the books he has published through his People’s History Publications company.*

“I just find the whole thing really encouraging that there’s interested, interesting people asking and pursuing questions of faith and life,” says Doerksen. “This kind of a setting brings a bunch of those kinds of people together.”

“I guess what I’d like to say is that . . .

reading can be pursued as a Christian spiritual discipline,” he says. “I guess that would be a hope, that in some way at its best this provides an opportunity for [that].” ///



PHOTO BY JOHN DAWSON / TEXT BY AMY DUECKMAN

**Author and pastor April Yamasaki** officially launched her new book, *Four Gifts: Seeking Self-Care for Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength*, on Sept. 8 at the House of James bookstore in Abbotsford, B.C. In commenting on the importance of self-care, Yamasaki said she has had to learn to ‘cast all my cares on God who cares for me and cares for all of us. Self-care must also leave room for self-surrender.’ The evening included music, a sample reading from the book, a Q&A with the author, a book signing, and door prizes symbolizing the four themes of the book.





# 2018 Fall list of Books & Resources

## Theology, Spirituality

*The Bible Unwrapped: Making Sense of Scripture Today.* Meghan Larissa Good. Herald Press, 2018, 312 pages.

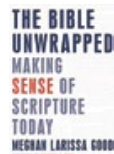
This book is for readers with lots of questions about the Bible, especially young people. Good writes in a very down-to-earth and non-academic style, using lots of present-day images, and tackles tough questions with honesty. She gives brief descriptions of the origins of the Bible, the types of literature it contains and how to apply it to today. The author is pastor of Trinity Mennonite Church in Arizona.

*The Challenge is in the Naming: A Theological Journey.* Lydia Neufeld Harder. CMU Press, Winnipeg, 2018, 372 pages.

Lydia Harder intersperses the essays in this collection with personal reflections and anecdotes. In this way she ponders the changes in language and perspective in Mennonite theology over the years. She believes it is important to find new ways to express religious ideas.

*Four Gifts: Seeking Self-Care for the Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength.* April Yamasaki. Herald Press, 2018, 212 pages.

Using examples from her own life, this Mennonite pastor from British Columbia gives specific ideas on how to work on self-care for better spiritual and physical health. She brings together biblical insights and questions for reflection as well as practical ideas. She previously wrote the book *Sacred Pauses*, also dealing with spiritual growth.

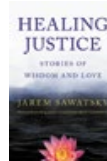


*God's People in Mission: An Anabaptist Perspective.* Stanley W. Green and Rafael Zaracho, eds. Mennonite World Conference, 2018, 161 pages.

The 10 essays in this collection, written by Anabaptist theologians from around the world, correspond with the 10 points of the missional statement of the Mission Commission of Mennonite World Conference. It is part of the Global Anabaptist Mennonite Shelf of Literature series.

*Healing Justice: Stories of Wisdom and Love.* Jarem Sawatsky. Privately published with Red Canoe Press, 2018, 199 pages.

After studying healing justice, Jarem Sawatsky set off to find concrete examples of healing justice in living communities. Among the places he researched were a Buddhist monastery in France, an Indigenous community in Canada and the Iona community in Scotland. These stories explore the healing that can come from brokenness.



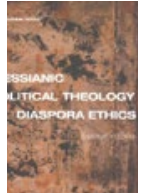
*Lessons Learned on the Seat of my Truck.* Paul Wagler. Privately published, 2017, 142 pages.

This is the third volume in a series of books by Wagler, using practical examples in life to illustrate lessons for the spiritual journey. This book is about his life as a driver for Erb Transport; the previous books are about lessons learned on the seat of his bus and the seat of his bike. For more information about Wagler's ministry, visit [arisenow.ca](http://arisenow.ca).

*Messianic Political Theology and Diaspora Ethics:*

*Essays in Exile.* P. Travis Kroeker. Cascade Books, 2017, 280 pages.

Kroeker explores the complex ideas of some political theologians, including John Howard Yoder. In the later chapters he writes in a less academic style, reflecting on his own Mennonite past and the Mennonite church's relationship with the Metis as well as other ethical challenges.



*Post-Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World, Second Edition.* Stuart Murray. Cascade Books, 2018, 253 pages.

This is a revised and updated version of the first edition, published in 2003. Murray describes how the Christian church became a powerful political force, especially in Europe, and how the church's influence in society has declined. He explores what a post-Christendom church that is true to Jesus' teaching might look like.

*The Scandal of Evangelism: A Biblical Study of the Ethics of Evangelism.* Elmer John Thiessen. Cascade Books, 2018, 265 pages.

After reviewing the principles of evangelism as found in the New Testament, Thiessen goes on to consider the ethics of other topics, including evangelism of children, and evangelism and humanitarian aid. His target audience is the church.

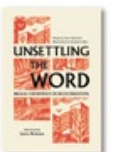


*Soul Force: Seven Pivots toward Courage, Community and Change.* Reesheda Graham-Washington and Shawn Casselberry. Herald Press, 2018, 192 pages.

With the aim of building communities and churches that reflect love and justice, this book provides how-to suggestions for harnessing positive spiritual energy. The illustrating stories are mostly from U.S. cities.

*Unsettling the Word: Biblical Experiments in Decolonization.* Steve Heinrichs, ed. Mennonite Church Canada, 2018, 320 pages.

The 60 contributors in this collection examine Scripture to find new interpretations of the text as a response to the way the Bible was sometimes used by settler societies to dispossess Indigenous peoples. This hardcover book is illustrated by Jonathan Dyck.





## FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

### History

*The Ältester: Herman D.W. Friesen, A Mennonite Leader in Changing Times.* Bruce L. Guenther. University of Regina Press, 2018, 308 pages.

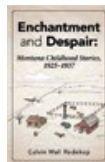


While this book centres around the life of Herman Friesen, it also gives good insight into the Old Colony Mennonite community in the Hague-Osler part of Saskatchewan from its beginning to the time of Friesen's death in 1969. A significant part of the book includes English translations of sermons written by this Old Colony leader.

*Canadian Prairie Mennonite Ministers' Use of Scripture: 1874-1977.* Donald Stoesz, ed. Self-published with FriesenPress, 2018, 307 pages.

Donald Stoesz closely studied the Scripture texts used by unpaid Mennonite ministers on the Canadian Prairies for more than a century, and concludes that some of their texts followed an old Lutheran lectionary. This study provides new insight into sermons and worship patterns of Mennonites who once lived on the West Reserve in Manitoba.

*Enchantment and Despair: Montana Childhood Stories 1925-1937.* Calvin Wall Redekop. Self-published with FriesenPress, 2018, 180 pages.



Calvin Redekop was a mischievous lad when he was growing up in a small Mennonite community in rural Montana. He gives a vivid account of the challenges and joys involved in making a living on a remote homestead on the Prairies.

*Flight: Mennonites Facing the Soviet Union 1929-1930, From the Pages of the Mennonitsche Rundschau.* Harold Jantz, ed. Eden Echoes Publishing, 2018, 735 pages.



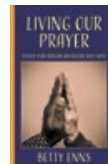
*The Mennonitsche Rundschau*, a German-language newspaper printed in Winnipeg, carried many writings from Mennonites in Russia. This book provides summaries and translations from some of these articles, providing first-hand accounts from these difficult years.

*Journeys to Justice: Reflections on Canadian Christian Activism.* Joe Gunn. Novalis Publishing

2018, 175 pages.

Among the church leaders interviewed for this collection is Bill Janzen for the chapter "Canadian churches negotiate the private sponsorship of refugees." Other interviews explore how churches in Canada have worked together on peace and justice issues.

*Living our Prayer: A Four-Year African Adventure into Faith.* Betty Enns. Privately published with Tellwell, 2018, 443 pages.

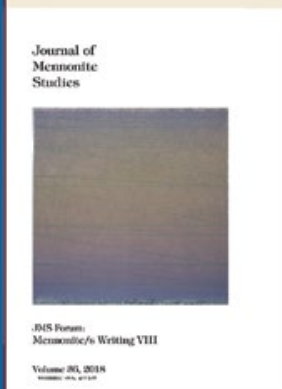


In the mid 1990s, Bill and Betty Enns served with Mennonite Central Committee during some turbulent years in Lesotho. She describes their constant need for prayer as they dealt with frequent break-ins, car-jackings and other dangerous experiences. Although they struggled to know how to respond to all the violence, they felt God led them to be there. Proceeds from book sales will go to support projects in Lesotho.

*The Orie O. Miller Diary: 1920-21.* Orie O. Miller. Institute of Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies and Pandora Press, 2018, 130 pages.

When Orie Miller sailed from New York in

## Journal of Mennonite Studies



Journal of Mennonite Studies  
Volume 20, 2018


Published once a year, the Journal (ca. 300 pages) presents scholarly articles in the area of history, sociology, literature, economics, and the arts.

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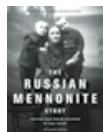
## FOCUS ON BOOKS & RESOURCES

1920, he kept a diary describing his six-month journey, as he explored how North Americans might assist Mennonites suffering in Russia. The ongoing civil war forced him to withdraw to Constantinople and meant that significant assistance had to be delayed. His diary gives an interesting perspective on the early work and origins of Mennonite Central Committee.

*Rise and Shine! 45 Years in the Land of the Rising Sun.* Mary Derksen. Privately published by David F. Loewen, 2018, 350 pages.

This book tells the story of Peter and Mary Derksen, who lived in Japan for 45 years, serving as missionaries with the Commission on Overseas Mission of the former General Conference Mennonite Church.

*The Russian Mennonite Story: The Heritage Cruise Lectures.* Paul Toews and Aileen Friesen. Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies, 2018, 106 pages.



This coffee table-style book includes the lectures given by the late Paul Toews during Mennonite heritage cruises to Ukraine between 1995 and 2010. Aileen Friesen has edited the

lectures and added lots of photographs. This is an overview of Russian Mennonite history that takes the story into the 21st century.

*Slipping the Noose: Two Escape Stories.* Helmut Lemke and Eva Daniel. Privately published with Authorhouse, 2018, 140 pages.

The two escape stories in this book deal with Mennonites at the end of the Second World War. In the first story, a Mennonite family flees from East Prussia pursued by the Russian army. In the second story, a young man goes from West Germany to East Prussia in search of his mother.



*Surviving, Thriving and Multiplying: Three Decades of Growth in the Honduras Mennonite Church.* James and Rhoda Sauder, with George and Lois Zimmerman. Masthof Press, 2018, 473 pages.

Using many photographs, this book tells of the early history of the Mennonite church in Honduras from 1950 to 1980. Grace and George Miller, the first missionaries serving in Honduras with Eastern Mennonite Missions, faced many



challenges.

### Other books

*Bird-Bent Grass: A Memoir, in Pieces.* Kathleen Venema. Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2018, 340 pages.

Venema has put together a kind of memoir of her mother's life, using her mother's stories and lots of letters written during the 1980s, when the author served as a teacher in Uganda with Mennonite Central Committee. It is also an exploration of how a daughter copes with her mother's progressing Alzheimer's disease.



*Nahayo: They Left Me for Dead.* Dustin Unrau, as told by Jackson Nahayo. DeFehr Foundation, 2017, 144 pages.

As a child, Jackson Nahayo fled from civil war in Burundi, miraculously making his way from country to country. With some help from Canadians working with Mennonite Central Committee in Zambia, he was able to emigrate to Canada and achieve



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his goal of education. He eventually returned to Burundi, where he works in medicine and development.

*Railquest: A Multi-Track Graphic Novel.* Tim R. Dyck. Privately published, 2018, 32 pages.



This graphic novel explores the philosophical meaning of life using an allegorical train where the reader is faced with questions and choices. Dyck is a former graphic designer at *Canadian Mennonite*. For more information, email info@thecolourjar.ca.

*Simply Amish: An Essential Guide from the Foremost Expert on Amish Life.* Donald B. Kraybill. Herald Press, 2018, 100 pages.

Donald Kraybill is respected for his accurate knowledge about the Amish way of life. This book provides insight into their life, culture and faith. It includes maps and colour photographs.

**Resources**

*Everyday Worship: Women's Bible Study.* Carol Penner. Mennonite Women Canada and Mennonite Women U.S.A., with MennoMedia, 2018.



This year's women's Bible study guide is again designed for individual study or for women's groups. Penner is assistant professor of theological studies at Conrad Grebel University College.

*Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology.* Institute of Mennonite Studies at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary and Canadian Mennonite University Centre for Faith and Life.

The Spring 2018 issue: "The Church and Young Adults."

**—Compiled by Barb Draper,  
Books & Resources editor**

Many of the featured titles on the book list are available for purchase or to borrow from CommonWord Book Store and Resource Centre in Winnipeg. For more information, visit [commonword.ca](http://commonword.ca) or call 1-877-846-1593.

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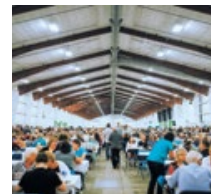
**Japanese Mennonites consider 'Shared Convictions'**

Japanese Mennonites used Mennonite World Conference's "Shared Convictions" to reflect on the faith and practice of global Anabaptists. [canadianmennonite.org/shared-convictions-japan](http://canadianmennonite.org/shared-convictions-japan)



**B.C. Festival for World Relief raises \$1 million-plus**

More than 20,000 attendees at the annual MCC B.C. festival donated money and time to support uprooted people locally and around the world. [canadianmennonite.org/MCCBC-one-million](http://canadianmennonite.org/MCCBC-one-million)



**'Everything was getting better'**

This Bolivian family used to eat a small quantity of vegetables, but their health improved with a steady diet of vegetables grown in their new greenhouse. [canadianmennonite.org/growing-vegetables](http://canadianmennonite.org/growing-vegetables)



**Manitoba Mennonites to explore mission and vulnerability**

Manitoba congregations will learn about mission and vulnerability at InFuse, a one-day event to take place on Nov. 3. [canadianmennonite.org/mission-vulnerability](http://canadianmennonite.org/mission-vulnerability)



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Fall 2018  
VOLUME 29 ISSUE 1

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# AMBS window

## On loving our neighbors

### A conversation with students Benjamin and Rianna Isaak-Krauss

**What good would seminary studies be if they didn't help students carry out the two commandments cited by Jesus: to love God and love your neighbor? We've asked Benjamin and Rianna Isaak-Krauss to share about how their AMBS studies have supported them in loving their neighbors.**

**Benjamin, a Master of Divinity student from Bammental, Germany, is majoring in Theological Studies: Peace Studies. Rianna is a Master of Arts in Christian Formation student from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. As part of their AMBS studies, they're currently participating in the Sustainability Leadership Semester at Goshen (Indiana) College's Merry Lea Environmental Learning Center in Wolf Lake, Indiana.**

**Rianna:** Recently I learned about a new dimension of loving our neighbor: "neighbors in time." At the **Sustainability Leadership Semester**, we're asking how we can love our neighbors in time — future generations, both born and yet unborn. This notion helps us think about global concerns like climate change and how our fuel-addicted lifestyle affects future generations.

While thinking globally is important, we can only love specific places. That's

why we're focusing on the scale of the Elkhart River watershed (a region where water that falls drains to a particular body of water). For example, if you take the Golden Rule and apply it to watersheds, you might say, "Do unto those downstream as you would have those upstream do unto you." Taking into account that anything I put into the ground — trash, pollution or even fertilizer — goes downstream and can harm others in my watershed in a different location is a very real way of considering the Golden Rule. We are also learning about both our human and non-human neighbors and about how actions like drainage or damming impact their livelihood, which often has negative consequences for us as well.

**Benjamin:** So my degree program is MDiv: Theological Studies: Peace Studies, and you could say that peace studies is about how to love our neighbors. For me, moving between learning about and engaging in peacebuilding in different contexts and studying theology and reading the Bible has been really useful and has informed how I try to show up in different places.

For example, last year I took **Witness Colloquium** [with Janna Hunter-Bowman, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Peace Studies and Christian Social Ethics], which combines conversations about peace and mission. Semester One consisted mostly of listening to guest speakers from the community talk about what witness meant to them and how it affected their lives. In Semester Two, it turned into a class for local engagement, and that's how I got involved in initiatives that I probably would not have gotten involved in otherwise, such as the Elkhart County Sanctuary Coalition and the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival.

As part of the Poor People's Campaign, I led a Bible study where we looked at the last week of Jesus' life and the last year of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life [who organized the original campaign in 1968] and how those relate. This inspired me to write my own Bible studies on the themes of the campaign, reading the biblical

**Above: Benjamin and Rianna Isaak-Krauss at a demonstration of the Poor People's Campaign at the Indiana Statehouse in Indianapolis in May. Credit: Thomas Frank**

## ON LOVING OUR NEIGHBORS (continued)

stories and King's words next to each other, letting them interpret one another.

**Rianna:** A class that comes to mind is **Leadership Education in Anabaptist Perspective** [AMBS's orientation course], which helped us reflect on who our neighbors are through readings on intercultural awareness and undoing racism.

One form of loving people I focus on is through listening, pastoral care and healing work. Through courses in the MACF program, I've broadened my perspective of what pastoral care looks like.

The **Spiritual Practices: Play and Rest** class [with Allan Rudy-Froese, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Christian Proclamation] really helped me expand the concept of what Christian loving looks like — how playing and resting are both an intrinsic part of our faith and of our interactions as humans. Creating spaces where we can play and rest together is a core part of loving, healing and worshiping. Since that class I have been playing regularly with a group of people through InterPlay, a form of improvisational body wisdom, storytelling and movement.

**Benjamin:** As Anabaptists, one thing we highlight is reading the Bible in community. I took a number of classes with Mary Schertz, Ph.D. [Professor Emerita of New Testament], who always says [quoting Dr. Ellen Davis] that we need to learn to read the Bible as if our lives depended on it, because they do. She also models reading the Bible with concrete situations in mind. I got to write a paper about debt and how Jesus deals with debt

in the New Testament. Doing that work, which I followed up on in **Economic Justice and Christian Conscience** [with Malinda Berry, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Theology and Ethics] and **Spiritual Practices: Money** [with Rudy-Froese], helped me get more of a grip on how the economic system impacts people's lives, and it was grounded in this movement back and forth between the Bible and our real-life situations.

Last semester in **Political Theologies** [with Hunter-Bowman], we read about different approaches to how church and state relate to each other and how having religious convictions and being in a public space where not everyone shares those convictions relate to each other. As Anabaptists, through reading the Bible and worshiping together, we form an imagination of how the world is and could be, and that becomes part of our contribution to social movements for justice.

Over the summer, Rianna and I provided jail support for the **Poor People's Campaign** in Indianapolis — keeping track of those who were getting arrested as part of the civil disobedience, keeping a witness outside the jail as they were being held, and accompanying them afterward through their legal trials. A lot of it involves listening to people, helping them process the emotions and the stress. That's something we were equipped for through our formation in church and our studies at AMBS, where we always emphasize that peace depends on strong relationships of trust across difference.

### More about the Poor People's Campaign

- Rianna and Benjamin share about getting involved: [www.bennisblog.de/?p=2335](http://www.bennisblog.de/?p=2335)
- Rianna's reflection on her time in jail: [radicaldiscipleship.net/2018/05/22/why-would-i-do-this](http://radicaldiscipleship.net/2018/05/22/why-would-i-do-this)
- PeaceLab podcast interview with Benjamin and Rianna: [peacelab.fireside.fm/35](http://peacelab.fireside.fm/35)
- Benjamin's Bible studies on militarism and civil disobedience: [www.commonword.ca/ResourceView/23/19923](http://www.commonword.ca/ResourceView/23/19923)

**Rianna:** During the first week of the campaign, I got arrested [for nonviolent civil disobedience] and was in jail for 14 hours. That was something I'd been praying about beforehand with an intercessory prayer group at AMBS; they supported me as I was discerning whether this was something I'd participate in.

I joined Benni on jail support after that for about 30 hours per week, to be present with people and offer support and prayer. I realized the pastoral care skills I had practiced in my studies and ministry were useful gifts in this high-stress secular activist setting. We didn't necessarily share all our convictions, and we used different language, but it was still pastoral care. •  
— *Annette Brill Bergstresser*

### AMBS Window Fall 2018 Volume 29 Issue 1

Distributed three times a year as a supplement to *Canadian Mennonite* and *The Mennonite*. Editors: Annette Brill Bergstresser, Melissa Troyer. Designer: Nekeisha Alayna Alexis.

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**At right:** MDiv students Gisselle Guity and Marcos Acosta walk the prayer labyrinth on campus.  
**Credit:** Peter Ringenberg





## Teaching for God's peace and reconciliation



**Malinda E. Berry, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Theology and Ethics**

### What are your goals for students?

One of my goals is for students to develop the ability to assist people in their communities — from congregations to social groups — in reflecting theologically on the range of ethical issues they face. I also want students to be eager to develop theologically informed opinions by wrestling with Anabaptist peace theologies. I want to nurture their desire and ability to help others do the same.

### How does studying in your discipline prepare people to participate in positive personal, spiritual and structural transformation and in the work of reconciliation?

The theological task, as I see and teach it, involves work Robert King describes as recovering “a sense of the wholeness, the unity and integrity, of the Christian witness.” Slowing conversations down, avoiding the temptation to glorify the soundbite, and sitting in a circle are three things I have learned both from my disciplines and from teaching their content to others.

### How does AMBS's commitment to intercultural competence and undoing racism influence your teaching and research?

Because Christianity is a racially, ethnically and nationally diverse movement with adherents of all ages, genders and economic classes, I believe the sources my students and I look to in our reading, research, writing, teaching and learning are most faithful when they reflect this reality. As a woman of color in a predominantly white denomination

and teaching context, I consider it one of my responsibilities and joys to help others forge intellectual and spiritual connections with theologians and ethicists of all colors. •

*Malinda E. Berry is both a theologian and a teacher: she's passionate about the subject matter of her courses and believes that the content of a course should shape how it is taught. Her commitment to Anabaptism in the Mennonite tradition is evident in her approach to issues such as Christian social responsibility, environmental stewardship with an emphasis on human ecology, and renewing congregational life in its structural and spiritual dimensions.*

**Above: Betsy Ayrea Delfine (far right) speaks with students in the 2018 Leadership Education in Anabaptist Perspective course during their visit to Church Community Services in Elkhart, Indiana. She directs the nonprofit's Soup of Success program, which provides job and life skills training for women in the region. Credit: Peter Ringenberg. At left: Malinda E. Berry. Credit: Peter Ringenberg.**

## Your gifts at work

**Febri Kristiani, MDiv Campus student from Salatiga, Central Java, Indonesia**



“AMBS is a place where diversity is welcomed and appreciated. Students are given the opportunity to learn and grow academically and spiritually, personally and in community with each other. I appreciate the relationships I've formed with other students, faculty and staff, each of which has

nurtured me in countless ways. As an international student, I've been blessed to be part of this learning community. Learning about God and the Bible and worshipping God with others from different cultures and traditions is life-giving to me.”

### Will you support initiatives to expand our reach to international students?

**Ben Parker Sutter, MDiv Connect student from Kansas City, Kansas**

“I decided to apply to AMBS as I was discerning what it would look like to leave a profession in which I was feeling unfulfilled. I was looking for something that

would connect to my faith on a day-to-day basis and allow me to play a larger role in a faith community during the week. My spouse and I decided that part of that change would include moving halfway across the country and exploring living in intentional Christian community. Even though I was rather uncertain about whether it was the right thing to do, I felt God nudging me to try seminary out and see how it went. I'm so grateful that I did.”

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## AMBS SNAPSHOTS



## PRESIDENT'S WINDOW

SARA WENGER SHENK

## No matter where you are from ...

**N**o matter where you are from, we're glad you're our neighbor." A simple, powerful message — in three colors and languages. I've spotted this sign in far-flung neighborhoods all across North America. There's no way to know how many have been produced and distributed. One modest estimate is 150,000.

I have a family connection to the sign. Following the bombastic bluster of the first debate among the Republican candidates for president in August 2015, my pastor son-in-law, Matthew Bucher, asked that a sign be painted and posted on the front lawn of his congregation, Immanuel Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia. He chose Arabic, Spanish and English because those were spoken most in the neighborhood. About a year later, members of the congregation and district collaborated to reproduce the sign for sharing at a Mennonite Central Committee relief sale — and the rest is history. Countless stories have poured in about neighbors stopping by homes where signs are posted to express tear-filled gratitude.

I've long admired the public ministry of "Peace Pastor" Marty Troyer (M.Div. 2008) and Houston Mennonite Church. A recent Facebook post caught my attention, with "mugshots" of congregants each holding a mug with a message. One mug said, "Jesus told us to love our enemies." The accompanying observation was that "Jesus died exemplifying this teaching, and it changed the world forever."

Public messages of hospitality speak a consequential word of witness — especially powerful in today's fear-laden frenzy of racialized hatred. And it takes real people to put skin on neighbor love. At AMBS, we educate followers of Jesus to be healthy, down-to-earth human beings. When grounded in the vulnerable humanity we all share, we grow as leaders prepared to welcome neighbors no matter where they're from. Leaders, who like the Samaritan in Jesus' story, *show mercy*. Leaders who anoint and bandage wounds, bring injured persons to shelter and pay the costs. Leaders who in their mercy-filled humanity look like Jesus. •

## RESOURCES TO NURTURE RELATIONSHIPS



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## AMBS collaborates to provide Spanish Anabaptist ebooks

Biblioteca Digital Anabautista — a free, openly available collection of Spanish Anabaptist ebooks — is now online! The nucleus of the collection consists of materials from SEMILLA, the Latin American Anabaptist Seminary in Guatemala. "We're thrilled to be one of several partners in this ongoing effort," said Karl Stutzman (pictured), Director of Library Services. [biblioana.org](http://biblioana.org)

## Pastors and Leaders 2019: "Loving Our Neighbors in Tense Times"

Feb. 25–28. How do we respond to hate, intolerance and systemic racism in productive, transformative ways? What does the gospel of Jesus Christ call us to do in situations like these? We'll explore the biblical and theological grounding of our call to get involved and become equipped to lead — right here, right now. Speakers: Andrew Draper, Ph.D.; David Hooker, Ph.D.; Maren Tyedmers Hange, M.Div. [ambs.edu/pastorsandleaders](http://ambs.edu/pastorsandleaders)

## Online Anabaptist Short Courses (noncredit)

- **Understanding Anabaptist Approaches to Scripture: What's Different and Why?**, with Loren Johns, Ph.D.: Jan. 9 – Feb. 19
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# From Kitchener-Waterloo to Kenya

*A passion for serving others led Amanda Snyder to start a summer camp in Nairobi*

BY AARON EPP  
Young Voices Editor

A young woman is impacting the citizens of a community 13,000 kilometres away from her home in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ont.

Amanda Snyder is the co-founder of Camp Marafiki Pamoja, a health- and education-based summer camp in Riruta Satellite, a high-poverty area of western Nairobi, Kenya. The camp offers children in the area the opportunity to eat together, sing, play games, make crafts and learn lessons related to science and health.

This past August, 110 children attended the two-week camp.

Snyder first visited Riruta Satellite from June to August 2015 as part of a service term with International Volunteer HQ, a New Zealand-based volunteer travel company. While working in a school called Bright Star Learning Center, she met two other volunteers, Janet Kamiri and Michelle Whelan.

Snyder, Kamiri and Whelan were so moved by the dedication of Francis Ongeri, principal of Bright Star, that they wanted to return the next summer and continue being involved with the school.

They felt strongly that a day camp could build on the mission and success of the school during the students' August school holiday.

"Unfortunately, when the youth aren't learning, they're more likely to get into trouble and engage in, and witness, unhealthy behaviours," says Snyder, 27. "We started Camp Marafiki Pamoja to offer the students a safe place to go to, where they

could balance learning and having fun during their break."

With Ongeri's support, Snyder, Kamiri and Whelan returned to Bright Star in 2016 and ran the inaugural camp. (The camp takes its name from the Swahili words for "friends united.") This past August, Snyder and Kamiri ran the camp for the second time.

In the community where Bright Star is located, unemployment is high and the area lacks adequate social services. Many of the school's students are orphans after losing both of their parents to AIDS.

Still, the school's hopeful theme is, "To bring change in the life of kids, bring joy and happiness instead of tears, and to transform the society to be a better place for these young ones."

"Even from the very beginning, I knew this was a place I wanted to be," Snyder says. "The people [are] what I really fell in love with the most. . . . I definitely have a Kenyan family that I love returning to now."

Snyder adds that what she enjoys most about running the camp is seeing the impact it has beyond just the students who attend.

"It's really something that seems to be bringing the community together," she says. Parents and teachers volunteer their time to help out, and they help shape the camp's programming. "It's amazing to see."

Camp Marafiki Pamoja is also impacting Snyder's home congregation, Breslau  
(Continued on page 28)



PHOTOS COURTESY OF AMANDA SNYDER

*Amanda Snyder is the co-founder of Camp Marafiki Pamoja.*



*Children at Camp Marafiki Pamoja get a little messy with some science experiments.*

*(Continued from page 27)*

(Ont.) Mennonite Church, where she works half-time as the children, youth and young adult coordinator.

When Breslau Mennonite held its annual summer Bible camp program earlier this year, youth who attended learned about Kenya through hearing stories and looking at pictures. They wrote letters to the children at Camp Marafiki Pamoja, which Snyder delivered to them when she travelled to Riruta Satellite in August.

The students at Camp Marafiki Pamoja, in turn, learned about the children at Breslau Mennonite.

"It was really cool to be able to make those connections," Snyder says.

Eleanor Epp-Stobbe, Breslau Mennonite Church's pastor, agrees. She adds that, for the congregation, supporting Snyder in her work with Camp Marafiki Pamoja is one way the church can live out its mission.

"It's a very grassroots way we can extend our peace, love and justice beyond our own

community here, to a place and people that we . . . feel a little closer to through Amanda," Epp-Stobbe says, praising Snyder's vision. "It's a remarkable program, an amazing initiative, of a passionate, faithful young woman," Epp-Stobbe says.

Snyder, and Kamiri, who lives in Indiana, are already busy planning the 2019 program for Camp Marafiki Pamoja. Goals for the future include establishing the camp as a non-profit, phasing out North American volunteers so that adults in the community can take complete leadership, inviting more input from the community, and starting a year-round meal program at Bright Star so that every student who attends the school can receive a meal there.

In the process, Snyder says that she is receiving much more than she could ever give. "I don't go a day where I don't think about the kids there and my Kenyan family there," she says. "They have changed my life." ❧



*"They have changed my life," Amanda Snyder says of the people she has met in Nairobi.*



*In addition to singing, playing games and learning, campers receive two meals.*



# No Village

*Abbotsford, B.C., musician signs record deal, makes solo debut with Human Nature*

BY AARON EPP  
Young Voices Editor

After releasing two full-length albums and an EP with experimental alt-rockers Oh Village, musician Scott Currie is striking out on his own. The Abbotsford, B.C. native, who performs under the name Kuri, recently signed a record deal with Nevado Music.

"Friends! The waiting is over!" Currie announced on Facebook at the end of September. "I've officially signed with Nevado Music. This is a very exciting development for me."

Currie released his debut EP, *Human Nature*, independently at the end of 2016. To coincide with his signing to the label, Nevado Music re-released the six-song collection on Oct. 12.

Currie began working on the material for *Human Nature* while Oh Village was on hiatus. The band has since amicably parted ways. In many ways, the songs on the EP pick up where Oh Village left off. Piano, guitar, bass and drums form the bedrock, and Currie augments the sound with lush strings, rich vocal harmonies and his alluring lead vocals.

It's a sound that's "rooted in organic performances, classically infused orchestration, jazzy free-form spirit, cinematic ambition and, ultimately, inspired observation," according to a news release announcing the EP.

Currie grew up in a musical household. He was the youngest of four brothers, and his mother bought him a drum set so he could jam with his guitar-playing siblings. By age 12, he had transitioned from behind the kit to an old piano in the house.

In the dozen years since, Currie has become an accomplished singer, multi-instrumentalist, songwriter and producer. He describes himself chiefly as "an observer," though. "I like to watch, analyze and create systems in my brain," he says in a release. "As a solo artist, I enjoy the freedom to express exactly what I want by drawing on what I see."

Growing up at Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford incited "a sense of questioning everything to figure out why we do what we do," he says.

On *Human Nature*, Currie strains his emotions through that analytical approach. "I don't necessarily process everything that happens to me from an emotional standpoint because I'm so analytical," he says. "The EP is me going through deep situations with relationships, loss of identity within community, and things like that. I'm trying to process from a third-party perspective rather than simply saying, 'Woe is me. This is how I feel.'"

Currie is currently at work on the full-length follow-up, which Nevado Music will release next year.

Ultimately, he wants to connect with people who hear his music. "I hope my music brings healing in some way to listeners," he says. "I want to be candid and hopefully encourage others to do the same. I hope they feel something." ❧



*Kuri Human Nature*

PHOTO COURTESY OF SWEISS PR

To watch Kuri/Scott Currie perform "Human Nature," visit [bit.ly/kuri-human-nature](http://bit.ly/kuri-human-nature). The EP is available to stream or download at [kurimusic.bandcamp.com](http://kurimusic.bandcamp.com).



KURI PHOTOS BY RACHEL PICK

*Kuri is the solo project of singer, multi-instrumentalist, songwriter and producer Scott Currie.*



PHOTO BY ABBY DAHL

Prior to his solo career, Scott Currie, second from left, performed in Oh Village with David Dueckman, Stephen Dahl and Matthew Jake Janzen.



## Calendar

### British Columbia

**Nov. 10,11:** MC B.C. Symphony of Hymns 3, with Calvin Dyck: (10) at Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, Vancouver, at 7 p.m.; (11) at Level Ground Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, at 3 p.m.

**Nov. 13,15:** Mennonite Heritage Museum, Abbotsford, presents "The Last Objectors," a Refuge 31 film, at 1:30 p.m. each day.

**Nov. 16-18:** Senior youth Impact retreat at Camp Squeah.

**Nov. 19-24:** Christmas at the Museum, a Christmas market at the Mennonite Heritage Museum, Abbotsford.

**Dec. 1,2:** Advent Vespers with Abendmusik Choir, at 7:30 p.m. both nights: (1) at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford; (2) at St. Philip's Anglican Church, Vancouver.

### Alberta

**Nov. 16-17:** "Faith (Re)focused" Phase II: "Open to God's leading-listening,

learning, renewing," at Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary. Leader: Betty Pries.

**Nov. 24:** Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta fall conference, at Lendrum Mennonite Church, Edmonton; from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Keynote speaker: Dr. Tim Janzen. Theme: "DNA and genealogy." For more information, call 780-218-7411.

### Saskatchewan

**Nov. 14:** RJC Kielke and sausage fundraising supper, at Bethany Manor, Saskatoon.

**Nov. 24:** MC Saskatchewan fall leadership assembly.

**Dec. 19:** RJC Christmas concert, at Knox United Church, Saskatoon.

**Dec. 21:** RJC Christmas concert, at RJC gymnasium, at 7 p.m.

### Manitoba

**Until Nov. 10:** Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg, presents its 20th-anniversary exhibition featuring 76 artists from Winnipeg and around

the world.

**Nov. 14:** Jane Coop recital, featuring the music of Beethoven and Rachmaninov, at CMU's Laudamus Auditorium, at 7:30 p.m.

**Nov. 15-17:** The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada's 50th anniversary conference, "A people of diversity: Mennonites in Canada since 1970," will be hosted by the Chair in Mennonite Studies, at the University of Winnipeg's Convocation Hall.

**Nov. 21:** Evening of the Arts, at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m. Music by the school's band and choral groups, plus art displays.

**Nov. 24:** Christmas at CMU concerts, Winnipeg, at 2 and 7 p.m.

**Nov. 26:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate annual general meeting, at 7 p.m.

**Dec. 2:** Winnipeg First Mennonite Church Choir, with orchestra and soloists, presents Mozart's "Te Deum" and Vivaldi's "Magnificat," among other works, at the church, at 7 p.m.

**Dec. 8:** CMU Festival Chorus and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra

perform Handel's "Messiah," at the Centennial Concert Hall, Winnipeg, at 8 p.m.



**Dec. 10:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Christmas concert, at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

**Dec. 15,16:** Faith and Life Choirs' Christmas concerts: (15) at Springfield Heights Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.; (16) at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m.

### Ontario

**Until May 2019:** Sites of Nonresistance: Ontario Mennonites and the First World War exhibit of letters, photographs and documents from the Mennonite Archives of Ontario, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

**Oct. 27:** "Reflecting on teaching practice (current or future)," an Anabaptist Learning Workshop event, at the Toronto School of Theology, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Speaker: Matthew Bailey-Dick, ALW coordinator.


**NOW HIRING**

**Chief Human Resources Officer  
Abbotsford, BC**

Communitas Supportive Care Society is a faith-based, registered charity providing care in communities across BC to those living with developmental disabilities, mental health challenges and acquired brain injury. We are currently inviting applications for Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO).

The CHRO works as a member of the executive team to provide oversight to all Human Resources functions related to the organization. The CHRO is responsible for leading the HR team, and upholding the Communitas Vision, Mission and Values, as well as all HR Policy. This position works directly with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and a five-member executive team.

To learn more and to apply, call 604 850 6608 or visit [CommunitasCare.com/careers](http://CommunitasCare.com/careers)




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**Oct. 27:** The Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario presents "Living history: Indigenous and Mennonite stories of encounter," at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Oct. 27,28:** Pax Christi Chorale presents Slavic Devotion, featuring works by Stravinsky and Rachmaninoff, at Grace Church on-the-Hill, Toronto; (27) at 7:30 p.m., (28) at 3 p.m.

**Nov. 3:** Conrad Grebel University College and University of Waterloo open house, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Nov. 4:** Junior Youth Make a Difference Day. Theme: "Music: Voices together." Join youth from across MC Eastern Canada to learn some new songs, talk about worship and create worship materials.

**Nov. 10:** Menno Singers presents "Inspiration," a concert of English choral composers, featuring Emily Rempel, the 2017 Abner Martin Scholarship winner, at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, at 7:30 p.m.

**Nov. 10:** MCC Ontario peace conference, at Forward Church, Cambridge, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, visit [mcco.ca/peace-conference](http://mcco.ca/peace-conference).

**Nov. 10:** An Evening of Story and Song for Hidden Acres Camp fundraiser, at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, Ont., at 7 p.m. For tickets, call 519-625-8602.

**Nov. 13:** Theatre of the Beat presents "#ChurchToo," at North Leamington United Mennonite Church, at 7 p.m.

**Nov. 15:** "Aging as a natural monastery: Spirituality in later life," with Bill Randall, at Steinmann Mennonite Church,

Baden, at 4 p.m., followed by supper. For more information, email [jane.kuepfer@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:jane.kuepfer@uwaterloo.ca).

**Nov. 16:** "Spirituality, aging and narrative: The sacred art of story listening," with Bill Randall, in the Conrad Grebel University College Great Hall, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. For more information, email [jane.kuepfer@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:jane.kuepfer@uwaterloo.ca).

**Nov. 16-17:** Annual Spirit of Christmas live music and craft show, at Nairn Mennonite Church, Ailsa Craig; (16) from 6:30 to 9 p.m., (17) from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Featuring juried crafts, Ten Thousand Villages, baking, chocolate, greeting cards and a tea room. For more information, visit [nairnmennonite.weebly.com](http://nairnmennonite.weebly.com)

**Nov. 17:** Nithview Community Auxiliary Christmas Bazaar, in New Hamburg, from 2 to 4 p.m. Includes bake sale, silent auction, community vendors and a tearoom.

**Nov. 17:** Fairview seniors community, Cambridge, holds its annual handicraft sale, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Includes Christmas decorations, knitting, woodworking, used books and baking for sale. Tea room and lunch available from the Fairview Auxiliary.

**Nov. 17:** Theatre of the Beat presents "#ChurchToo," at Toronto United Mennonite Church, at 7 p.m.

**Nov. 18:** Theatre of the Beat presents "#ChurchToo," at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, at 7 p.m.

**Nov. 22:** Theatre of the Beat presents "#ChurchToo," at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, at 7 p.m.

**Nov. 23:** Theatre of the Beat presents "#ChurchToo," at Hamilton Mennonite

Church, at 7 p.m.

**Nov. 24:** Theatre of the Beat presents "#ChurchToo," at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, at 7 p.m.

**To ensure timely publication of upcoming events, please send Calendar announcements eight**

**weeks in advance of the event date by email to [calendar@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:calendar@canadianmennonite.org). For more Calendar listings online, visit [canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar](http://canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar).**





**East Zorra Mennonite Church  
Employment Opportunity**

East Zorra Mennonite Church is inviting applications for half-time Faith Formation Pastor starting this fall. East Zorra is a vibrant, multi-generational, rural congregation of approximately 250, located just outside of Tavistock, Ontario. We are a welcoming, family-based congregation with a heart for growing as disciples and joining God's mission in the world.

The Pastor of Formation would join our collaborative, three-person pastoral team. The primary focus of the Faith Formation Pastor would be to provide vision and direction to Christian faith formation and discipleship across the ages, with attention given to junior and senior youth ministry. We invite persons with a commitment to Anabaptist theology and values, and who have a passion for mentoring leaders, teaching and relationship building. Musical gifts would be a blessing.

For a full job description and to apply visit:  
<https://mcec.ca/jobs/faith-formation-pastor>

To view a congregational profile contact Marilyn Rudy-Froese:  
[pastoraltransitions@mcec.ca](mailto:pastoraltransitions@mcec.ca)

## Classifieds

### Employment Opportunities



**Employment opportunity  
Assistant Professor of Biology**

Canadian Mennonite University invites applications for a full-time, 3-year contract faculty position. The successful candidate will work with other faculty to develop a growing undergraduate science program and will teach introductory biology, genetics, and cell biology, and have opportunity to develop complementary courses.

For full job description and to apply visit:  
[www.cmu.ca/employment](http://www.cmu.ca/employment).



**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](http://mccbc.ca/openings).  
For more information, contact Sophie Tiessen-Eigbik, MCC BC HR Manager at 604-850-6639, Ext 1129.



PHOTOS BY JESSE WOLFE / TEXT BY GLADYS TERICHOW  
*The barn at Camp Assiniboia near Winnipeg was filled with laughter and music as people of all ages enjoyed a dance party, sing-along and pie auction fundraising event. 'We might have set the record for world's longest Menno line dance,' says Dorothy Fontaine, Mennonite Church Manitoba's mission director. 'We had at least 50 dancers, maybe more.' Funds raised at the Sept. 22 barn dance will be used to complete a new \$120,000 workshop at the camp. MC Manitoba also owns Camp Koinonia, which is located in Turtle Mountain Provincial Park.*

# God at Work on the Dance Floor Snapshots

