

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

January 6, 2020 Volume 24 Number 1

## Encountering the gifts of a global church

pg. 4



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## EDITORIAL

# Reporting on #ChurchToo

VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER  
Executive Editor



Over the years, *Canadian Mennonite* has reported on sexual misconduct within the Mennonite context. As a member of the church press, we have tried to carry out our ongoing commitment to report on such stories with journalistic integrity, respect and sensitivity.

Yet, sometimes the reports have stirred up pain and objections among readers. Occasionally, readers have wanted to know more about how we cover these kinds of news stories.

Dealing with sexual misconduct is complex, particularly in the church context. It involves not only the victim and the abuser but also many others in their circles, including family, friends, fellow church members, the institutions with which those persons are involved and even the larger community in which everyone lives and works. When our magazine reports on sexual abuse, more people are drawn into that circle, including readers who may have no direct connection to the case.

A starting point is to state unequivocally: sexual violence is wrong in all its forms. When someone uses power over another person for personal gratification, there is no acceptable excuse. This behaviour is against the laws of Canada and violates the highest standards of God's law. Sexual abuse should not happen within the Christian community or anywhere else.

As other publications do, *Canadian Mennonite* distinguishes between different types of content. From time to time, we publish articles designed to inform and raise awareness about sexual misconduct. We have carried features on pastoral misconduct, boundary crossing in congregations and an anonymous story by an abuse survivor. Various opinion pieces called readers to right behaviour in the church and to listen to—and believe—victims of abuse. Other pieces gave information about resources on this important subject.

We also publish news reports on actual cases of misconduct in the church community. Sexual assault is a crime, and we are committed to high journalistic standards in terms of how we report on these cases. This involves presenting the facts, as they are known, based on interviews, documents and other sources. In such articles, we aim to present the various perspectives of the parties involved, without introducing our own opinions. Through these news pieces, readers will gain information to help them come to their own conclusions.

With colleagues in other Anabaptist publications, *Canadian Mennonite* has developed—and is in the process of refining—guidelines on how church publications report on these stories. A group statement reads, “We believe the press is an essential part of the church's work as it attempts to deal with these situations with compassion, redemption,

and reconciliation for both victim and offender.”

Recognizing that each case is unique, here are some guidelines we do our best to follow when reporting on sensitive stories within the church community:

- **We report when** an official action has been taken by the police, the courts, a church body or a church-related institution. The case might need follow-up reporting, if significant new developments occur.
- **We are aware** that rumours and false accusations can flourish around cases of sexual misconduct. It is important that our print and online presence not help disseminate such content.
- **We work hard** to be sensitive to the persons making the accusations of sexual abuse, acknowledging their pain and knowing that they might be exposed to public scrutiny, criticism or disbelief.
- **Reporters and editors** need to do careful fact checking to make sure that inaccuracies or unfounded conclusions are not published. There are both ethical and legal concerns around this practice.
- **Until an alleged** offender is convicted, the presumption of innocence is important. Sometimes we check stories with an attorney or journalism colleagues for counsel.
- **It is a** common journalistic practice to contact the accused before publication to let the person know the story will be published and to invite comment. This is especially important when no charges have been laid.

Our Anabaptist publishing colleagues urge, “In dealing with sensitive stories, the church press must constantly ask, ‘How can this story be presented so that it will work toward building rather than tearing down the church?’” As we work at responsible journalism, that is our ongoing concern. Along with the rest of the church, we acknowledge that there is more to learn about this difficult reality.



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PHOTO: HENK STENVERS / MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE

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## FEATURE

# Encountering the gifts of a global church

A reflection for Anabaptist World Fellowship Sunday (Jan. 19, 2020)

By José Luis Moraga

**T**he world is getting smaller. Peoples, places and cultures that in the past existed in distant lands may today be just around the corner. Here in North America, because of migration, many neighbourhoods have become mosaics of people of a variety of skin colours, languages and cultures. Some of the newcomers are Christians and they exemplify what most of the Christian world looks like. They are the global church.

The term “global church” recognizes that the majority of people making up the Christian world come not from the West or North but from the South. To speak of a global church is to acknowledge the cultural diversity and the international and multicultural nature of the church. The term also highlights the equality and mutuality of affluent and poor churches around the world. If churches in North America and Europe used to shape the agenda of worldwide mission, today the aim is to build egalitarian relationships in which every voice is welcome to contribute to the conversation.

The trend is toward partnership relationships between churches. In doing so, there is a recognition that the church is composed of people from far and near, people from different social, cultural, ethnic, economic and political backgrounds.

Today, churches in the West have a unique opportunity to welcome and engage with the global church in their own places. In the intersection of these churches, it is important to remind ourselves that many of these seekers and followers of Jesus come from an unprivileged life. Most of the global church still lives in Asia, Africa and Latin America, where many are poor and where even elementary education is a luxury.

Unlike most Christians in the West, they face

suffering, persecution and misunderstanding. Yet, as Latin American theologian and pastor Samuel Escobar reflects, theirs is a grassroots Christianity “marked by a culture of poverty, an oral liturgy, narrative preaching, uninhibited emotionalism, maximum participation in prayer and worship, dreams and visions, faith healing, and an intense search for community and belonging.”

With a diverse body comes a variety of gifts. In all their multiplicity, those gifts are meant to be valued and integrated into the life of the church, for they have been



PHOTO COURTESY OF LASTON BISSANI

*Laston Bissani Mitambo, an evangelist who has planted many churches in the Palombe District in Malawi and in the Zambezia Province of Mozambique, prays for the communion bread.*

given by God (I Corinthians 12). Every person, of whatever background, has received “*grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift*” (Ephesians 4:7). Therefore, that grace is meant to be used to enrich and equip the church.

A global church brings a variety of gifts to our North American context:

- **One of those** is “cultural diversity,” which in itself is a gift from God.

The Apostle Paul affirms that we are one body with many parts and gifts (I Corinthians 12). The global church brings different skin colours, tastes, cultural expressions, languages, world-views, and theological and life perspectives. Yet such diversity is missing in many North American churches.

Indeed, “if you survey churches during Sunday morning worship, you will find that they are not as culturally diverse as the neighbourhood they serve,” says Paul Kroeker, author of *Every Tribe and Nation: Cultures and the Kingdom of God*. What would happen if churches in North America lived out their faith in the way of intercultural inclusion, acceptance and solidarity?

- **A second gift** is joy and spontaneity in worship.

The integration of emotions into worship is a common experience in the global church. While a regular service may have some structure, non-western Christians see spontaneity as an appropriate way to respond to God’s presence and work. This response may take the form of singing aloud, shouting hallelujahs or crying. Joy is externalized in dancing, clapping and other kinds of body movements. In the eyes of Christians in the West, displays of joy and spontaneity in worship may seem confusing and messy, especially if prophecy, dancing, visions and charismatic experiences are not part of their tradition. But these biases are rooted in culture, sometimes in racism, often in misinformation or in a sense of superiority.

Christians from the global church



MTAL PHOTO

*A Central American cohort of Anabaptist women theologians, members of the MTAL Movement of Anabaptist Women doing Theology in Latin America, meets in Honduras in 2018.*

who migrate to North America sometimes also view their brothers and sisters from the North with suspicion. They don’t see solemnity, structure and preparation in worship as gifts but as formalities. In this case, too, judgment arises out of cultural differences, ignorance and a sense of spiritual superiority.

What would happen if churches from western and non-western societies made an intentional effort to get together, learn from each other’s strengths and practise mutual encouragement—for the sake of the global church?

- **A third gift** is passion for reaching out.

The global church is a community that engages its neighbours with the good news of the kingdom of God, for it takes the Great Commission seriously. It has a sense of responsibility and urgency. The sense of responsibility lies in the authority given by the Messiah to his followers to go into the world and announce the dawn of a new age (Mark 16:15;

Acts 1:8). The sense of urgency lies generally in an apocalyptic worldview: Because the world is coming to an end soon, the church must actively participate in God’s mission in the world.

In contrast, in Canada I have observed fear and reluctance about witnessing to one’s faith outside the church. Many of us have seen examples of bad evangelism: random confrontation of people on the street, short-term mission trips that fail to establish relationships, unscrupulous televangelism that preys on the gullible and obnoxious defences of the faith on the internet.

Fear of being identified with these approaches justifies Canadian Christians in keeping their witness to themselves. Also, cultural sensitivity to others’ values and views makes many Canadian Christians reluctant to share their faith. They do not want to offend people with a religious outlook they might find disagreeable. Consequently, they keep their faith private.

But a global church understands that its commission and authority come

from God. For this reason, people in the Global South live out the missionary task with courage, love and obedience, and sometimes at great personal cost. They reveal a passion to proclaim the good news to anyone open to hearing it.

It isn't surprising that Christianity is not only surviving but also growing in the Global South. What would happen if churches in North America let their partners in the Global South help them rediscover and rethink their theology and practice of witness?

• **Fourth, a global church** comes bearing the gift of resilience in the face of suffering.

In the West, our main problems are related to mental health, violence, irregular migration, politics and various pressing international matters. Levels of anxiety, depression and the incidence of eating disorders and addictions are growing.

The hardships faced by Christians in the Global South are of a different sort. They do not enjoy positions of privilege. Poverty is a given. Most are at the margins and they face situations of social, political, military, religious and racial conflict. Persecution resulting from missionary activities is a real possibility, yet they are willing to risk their lives for the sake of the gospel. They are aware of Jesus' warnings that his disciples will be rejected and persecuted (John 15:18-16:4).

Despite all the challenges, Jesus-followers around the world find meaning, hope, strength and joy, and they experience resilience in the Spirit of the One who invited them to be part of his great multiethnic family (Ephesians 2:14-16; Revelation 7:9-10).

### Welcoming one another

The concept of a global church finds its roots in the New Testament. In the beginning, the Jesus' movement was mostly a Jewish movement. When his followers spread throughout the Mediterranean world, the movement became empire-wide and multiethnic. The challenge Jewish and Gentile believers faced was how to live together peaceably

despite their theological differences.

Under these circumstances, it is understandable that the Apostle Paul's main concern in his letter to the Romans was about the unity of these assemblies. After laying out a long, complex argument, the apostle advocated for the unity of the body of Christ (12:1-8). The climax of Paul's argument is the exhortation to *"welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God"* (15:7). As New Testament scholar Gordon Zerbe observes, "[E]verything in Romans leads, in one way or another, to this dramatic and concluding exhortation."

To Paul, God's action through the Messiah Jesus is the creation of a new humanity. He affirms that whoever trusts Jesus is incorporated into God's covenant people regardless of their cultural, social, national and ethnic background.

The global church is a diverse body consisting of a variety of members,

united by God's grace as embodied in the self-giving sacrifice of the Messiah on the cross (Romans 3:21-26). From eternity, God dreamed of building a multiethnic community of people who would embody God's love, justice, blessing and peace in the world.

A global church is a gift for a fragmented, self-centred and independent humanity. A global church with all its complexity offers the possibility of embodying unity, while acknowledging and embracing diversity, by welcoming the gifts that followers of Jesus from every nation, tribe and language bring to the table. ❧



*Adapted from an essay in Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology, Fall 2018. José Luis Moraga was born and raised in Santiago, Chile. He moved to Canada in 2011 and currently is pastor of discipleship at Springfield Heights Mennonite Church in Winnipeg.*

### ❧ For discussion

1. What variety of skin colours, languages and cultures are found in your community? Is there more diversity in your congregation or in the neighbourhood? What opportunities has your congregation had to be in partnership or build relationships with churches in other parts of the world? What influence has this had on your congregation?
2. José Luis Moraga says that churches in the Global South have more joy and spontaneity in worship than do most western churches. Do you agree? What are some of the strengths of being more emotional in worship? Why is worship in western churches less apt to be spontaneous?
3. Moraga writes that he finds Christians in Canada more reluctant to witness to their faith than Christians in the Global South. Do you agree? What makes the global church readier to proclaim the good news in spite of personal cost? How much resilience do Canadian Christians have in the face of possible suffering?
4. How can our churches do a better job of increasing cultural diversity within congregations? Is it more difficult for Mennonites to achieve cultural and ethnic variety than other Christians?

— By Barb Draper

## /// Readers write

### ✉ Silver Lake, MC Eastern Canada apologize for not speaking up sooner

**Re: “Decades-old sexual abuse comes to light.”**

On Aug. 24, 2018, *Canadian Mennonite* published a story about the long-term sexual abuse experienced by Ruth-Ann Klassen Shantz over 30 years ago by then Silver Lake Mennonite Camp director Lawrence Pentelow. Shantz had bravely come forward to disclose this abuse to the Silver Lake board and then talked to *Canadian Mennonite* about the impact of this abuse and its continued impact in the following years.

The magazine contacted Pentelow for a response to Shantz’s disclosure and included a number of points that he expressed, including his remorse for the hurt he caused Shantz in the course of what he called their “relationship.” The word “relationship” is an offensive and inaccurate term to describe the abuse inflicted.

Silver Lake and MC Eastern Canada believe that the use of this term and the decision to interview Pentelow caused harm. We understand the pitfalls of being silent on an issue like this and regret that we did not respond immediately.

The Silver Lake Board of Directors, jointly with the Executive Council of MC Eastern Canada, write this letter as an apology for our failure to take immediate action in responding to this article and the pain it caused in a clear and public way. For this, we are deeply sorry.

Silver Lake and MC Eastern Canada do not condone abuse of any kind. It is never okay for a person of leadership at camp or in a church who holds power in that context to be intimate with a camper or staff, or to characterize this deplorable behaviour as a “relationship.”

• DAVID LOBE, CHAIR, ON BEHALF OF THE SILVER LAKE MENNONITE CAMP BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
• ARLI KLASSEN, MODERATOR, ON BEHALF OF THE MC EASTERN CANADA EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

CM responds: Journalistic integrity and professional ethics require that, when a serious accusation is made against someone, a publication should give the accused person a chance to respond. This provides readers with relevant information they can use to form their own opinion. Censoring that response would be a disservice to readers, who are capable of judging whether the response is relevant or appropriate.

(Virginia A. Hostetler, Executive Editor)

### ✉ North American Mennonites probably more environmentally unfriendly

**Re: “Presentation warns of environmental degradation by Bolivian Mennonites” letter, Nov. 11, 2019, page 7.**

There are more than 100,000 Low German-speaking Mennonites living in Bolivia, in 106 colonies and settlements. They grow in numbers, as letter writer Peter Kroeger indicates, but also in diversity.

There is lots to be said for the agrarian lifestyle they continue to choose, and I would no more want to stereotype how they live, work and worship than I would those of us other Mennonites spread around the planet. I’m pretty sure they are aware there are practices among them that are not good for the soil but, for the most part, my understanding is that they do want to be compliant with Bolivian government expectations.

I’m also pretty sure that the relentless consumption with which we could easily stereotype ourselves in North America could be challenged as even more environmentally harmful.

Mennonite Central Committee’s work with colony Mennonites in Bolivia is relatively small, but it is important, and I hope that Kroeger and others continue to support that work, including the hemispheric work of the twice-monthly *Menno-nitische Post* distributed out of Steinbach, Man. *Menno-nitische Post* is highly valued by many. It keeps members of the Low German Mennonite population connected with each other and, significantly, with the broader world.

ABE JANZEN, CALGARY

### ✉ Why reject Don Cherry as not ‘worthy of our attention’?

**Re: “What shall I wear: Sport coat or cardigan?” editorial, Nov. 25, 2019, page 2.**

I am pretty sure that Virginia A. Hostetler’s intent was not to praise as upright all who wear cardigans while condemning as evil all who wear sport coats.

And I am equally certain that it was not Don Cherry’s intent to disparage or condemn anyone, but only to reprimand those, like me, who did not bother to buy a poppy. Why reject Cherry rather than treating him as a person “worthy of our attention”?

JOHN HILDEBRAND, MISSISSAUGA, ONT.

## FROM OUR LEADERS

## An incessant demand

Steve Heinrichs

“Where are you, Mennonites?”

A colleague and I are in a Winnipeg café discussing the current land struggles of many Indigenous peoples. I listen intently as she speaks of the Unist’ot’en, Muskrat Falls and the Tiny House Warriors. I nod my head in understanding and offer affirming murmurs. But then, halfway through tea, she looks at me impatiently.

“Where are you, Mennonites? You tell all these old martyr stories. And here we are—suffering and dying! Where are your martyrs now?”

I’m taken aback, not sure how to respond. I confess that the church often fails to join the poor and run the risks that they take. I share some of what we’re doing to address such, and where we need to go. She’s not buying it. Her eyes dismissively turn to a far window. A minute of silence goes by and then we head our separate ways.

As I bike to work, my mind relentlessly replays her lament, “Where are your martyrs now?” I’m tempted to defend

and distance myself. Yet my heart feels the cry—for the Earth, the poor and even the church.

At my office, sitting in sweaty cycle gear, I stare at my work wall and pray. It’s plastered with pictures of martyrs and sayings of saints. My eyes hone in on one particular witness—a 42-year-old statement from the Asian Catholic Bishops: “As long as the ministers of the church are not prepared to be martyrs for justice, but are satisfied to live a life outside and above the life [of the oppressed], their impact will be mighty little.”

I take a deep breath and close my eyes.

Like many Mennonites, I hold close the 16th-century stories of Anabaptist suffering. Like many, I’m haunted all the more by the dangerous memory of the Cruciform One: “Take up the cross, and follow me.” Yet, am I willing, like Christ, to bear the weight of salvation?

Picking up my phone, I message Chris Huebner, a philosophy and theology prof at Canadian Mennonite University,

who teaches classes on martyrdom. Not long after, we connect at a local bar and talk for two hours. As Chris shares, I learn that:

- **Exemplary witness, not death**, is what matters. We can’t manufacture martyrs but we can choose to live costly lives.
- **There are martyrs** among us. “If we believe,” says Chris, “the kinds of things that Christians traditionally believe about God and the church, that there will be martyrs is never a question. Who they are, and what they look like, is the hard part.” And yet, he continues, “If we believe what we say about Christ and the poor, then there’s no question that, in the Canadian context, the Indigenous story is full of martyrs.”

As I bike home that evening, my heart is grateful for rich conversation, and full with even more questions.

Lying in bed that night, I contemplate my friend’s impatient demand—“Where are you, Mennonites?”—and thank God for her troubling, holy question. ❧



Steve Heinrichs is the director of Indigenous-Settler Relations for Mennonite Church Canada.

## A moment from yesterday



In 1968, 115 Westgate Mennonite Collegiate students joined 2,000 members of Students for Educational Equality and Democracy (SEED) for a rally at the Manitoba legislature in Winnipeg. These students of private and parochial schools were seeking provincial funding, as recommended by a royal commission in Manitoba a decade before. This photo was cropped to appear on the front page of *The Canadian Mennonite* on May 7, 1968. The uncropped, archival photo is shown here. Can any of these young students be identified?

Text: Lauren Harder-Gissing  
Photo: *The Canadian Mennonite* / Mennonite Archives of Ontario



archives.mhsc.ca

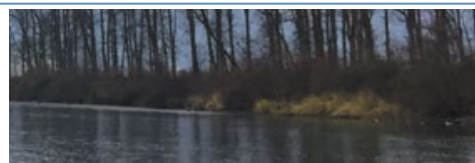


## THIRD WAY FAMILY



## To the river

Christina Bartel Barkman



**A**fter the hour-long drive home from my sister's with my four very energetic kids, I had had enough! Trying to quiet down hyper kids while driving is not an easy feat. Not wanting to yell at them over and over, I gave up and succumbed to their antics, eagerly longing for our driveway. I called my husband and said I would need serious backup upon arrival; I was spent!

When I arrived home, I quickly passed the kids on to my husband and made a beeline for my place of peace: the river. My pastor husband had just finished leading a memorial service that day for a young man from the community who had been killed. In retrospect, I'm quite sure my husband needed some rest more than I did, but he gathered the children and let me walk away from the chaos.

It's quite beautiful what the soothing rhythm of rapid waters can do for the weary soul. In a short five-minute walk, I was filled with peace as I was enveloped by the beauty of the river and the mountains. The river calmed me. The mountains comforted me. The fresh air cleansed me. In this place, I felt God's presence and could rest. As I took it all in, this prayer became my heartbeat:

"Lord, fill me today with joy in your creation, hope in your resurrection, and peace on your path."

Since our family spent six years living in the overpopulated city of Manila, nature nearby is something I never take for granted. Living in Manila meant nature was hours away. Rather than a river and a mountain on either side of my rural town, in Manila I could find about 10 different five-storey malls within a few kilometres of my house. There was much I loved and now miss about the bustling city we called home, but the lack of nature found me wanting. When I would steal away an hour from the kids, the only place I could go to was a mall. I often longed for a quiet walk by a river to steady my soul.

We have likely all felt closer to God in nature and feel healthier overall when we spend time outdoors, but studies have recently proven this innate feeling. People who have higher exposure to green space are more likely to have better overall health.

The book *Happy City* by Charles Montgomery also shares about the impact of green space on building trusting relationships in neighbourhoods, presenting studies that show

people trusted each other more in housing complexes that had green common areas compared to uninviting cement common spaces. We are created to be in nature, and the lack of it can be detrimental to our well-being, both individually and as a society.

With the colder and darker winter days this season brings, I find it really important to remember to get outdoors. While the river beckons us daily in the summer for fresh swims with friends, this season keeps us indoors more, feeling cosy on couches with a cup of tea.

But it is by the river that my soul finds rest and my mind feels most clear. It is in nature that we see God's glorious beauty and feel his calming presence. It is amazing how God's creation—whether a rushing river, a tree to sit under or a mountain to climb—can gather us into the presence of God and fill us with his peace. ☸



*Christina Bartel Barkman, with her four little ones and her pastor husband, seeks to live out Jesus' creative and loving "third way" options.*

## Et cetera

## MCC provides disaster relief around the world

**Mennonite Central Committee responded to 31 disasters in the 2018-19 fiscal year. This included the ongoing conflicts in Syria and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and flooding in India (pictured).**

Source: 2018-19 Annual Report for MCC in Canada



**Flooding in India has displaced many thousands.**

## THE CHURCH HERE AND THERE

# Canadian turkey and Salvadoran turkey

Arli Klassen

“The turkey tasted just like my mom’s turkey.” So said Sandra, a recent newcomer to Canada from Colombia. She was part of the First Mennonite Church (Kitchener) annual Christmas dinner. Our congregation’s tradition is to have both Canadian turkey and El Salvadoran turkey, mashed potatoes and rice, gravy and sauce. And tables full of special dishes of vegetables, salads and desserts, from traditions all over the world. We were 200 people, enjoying food, song and community together, people from many different cultures, languages and countries. It was a joyous celebration!

Our congregation is seeking to not only be multicultural, but to be intercultural. In a multicultural congregation the most powerful culture dominates in “how things are done.” In contrast, an intercultural church emphasizes and builds on difference as a key to building community. Safwat Marzouk from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, in his book *Intercultural Church*, says that an intercultural church embodies an alternative to the politics of assimilation and segregation.

Those are lofty goals. Marzouk says this is a biblical vision, affirming cultural, linguistic, racial and ethnic differences

as gifts from God that can enrich the church’s worship, deepen its sense of fellowship and broaden its witness to God’s reconciling mission in the world. Can the church, our church, be a witness to Canadian society around us of the power of the gospel to hold us together with our cultural differences? Or is society around us, particularly in urban centres, moving ahead more intentionally in becoming an intercultural community?

We at First Mennonite Church love to celebrate our differences as gifts from God. After our Christmas dinner, we all enthusiastically sang carols in English and Spanish. We willingly learned an Arabic song taught to us by Rebecca, originally from South Sudan. Our most recent refugee family, from Iraq this time, was delighted to join in singing in Arabic. We are a faith community joined together not only by song and food, worshipping and praising God together.

But it is not easy becoming an intercultural faith community. Cultural differences go much deeper than food and song. Even at our Christmas dinner, people sat at tables to visit and eat with the people they are most closely connected with, and this continues to divide us.

Planning happens in different ways. There was a time of confusion around

planning for lemonade after church in the summer. The sign-up sheet on the bulletin board had some empty spaces and there was informal communication about who was going to take care of the needs. The end result? Those relying on the paper tried to find people to fill the empty spaces and those relying on word of mouth made sure it was taken care of. We had a lot of people providing lemonade. We are learning to trust that both systems work.

We value the bridgebuilders among us, people who can help us understand and trust other ways to make things work.

The Sunday after our Christmas dinner KyongJung was our preacher. He greeted us in English, with a strong congregational response, and then in Spanish, also a strong response, and then in Korean, but there was silence. We are still learning. Then KyongJung said that we must look for the redemptive signs of the Kingdom of God in order to have hope. Yes, for me our congregation is one of those redemptive signs of the Kingdom of God.



*Arli Klassen is a member of First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., moderator of MCEC, member of MC Canada Joint Council, and staff for MWC. In this column Arli speaks only for herself.*

## Et cetera

### Hope in their own language

A radio station at the Qom Knowledge Educational Center Sayaten broadcasts in the Toba Qom language, offering spiritual input, health education and news to Indigenous listeners in some 14 villages of the Argentinian Chaco region. Programming includes Scripture reading, news and inspiration from the life of the Indigenous churches, and broadcasts of local, regional and national news that affects the Indigenous community, in an area not served by daily newspapers. Funding comes from a partnership of various Mennonite groups. To learn more, visit [bit.ly/toba-qom](http://bit.ly/toba-qom).



*A radio station at the Qom Knowledge Educational Center Sayaten broadcasts in the Toba Qom language.*

## VIEWPOINT

# 'Random acts of generosity'

Harold Penner

**H**enry "Sherlock" Friesen is a long-time Abundance Canada client. He follows a well-thought-out generosity plan that includes making regular charitable donations from his gifting fund. This methodical approach to charitable giving suits his analytical nature.

He's the first to admit that he rarely added an additional dollar to his grocery bill at the checkout nor did he buy chocolate almonds from people who knocked on his door. "My frugal nature made it tough to be truly generous in the small stuff," he explains. However, an unexpected inheritance changed all that.

Friesen's aunt donated most of her estate to Abundance Canada, but gave each of her surviving nieces and nephews \$500, with the stipulation that they spend it in memory of her. "My aunt was generous all the time," he remembers, "and her random acts of kindness really taught me a great deal about generosity."

Following in his aunt's footsteps, he decided to donate his inheritance, but he didn't want it to become just another donation rolled into his existing gifting fund. He cashed the inheritance into 50 \$10 bills and earmarked the funds for "random acts of generosity."

## A generosity challenge

"I set out rules for my little generosity project," Friesen explains. "No. 1: I had to give the money away in \$10 increments; and, No. 2: Each gift had to include an opportunity to tell someone about my aunt, so that her story might inspire them to become generous like she was."

With 52 weeks in the year and 50 \$10 bills in his pocket, it sounded easy enough to make a donation about once a week. But he soon discovered that this spontaneous generosity would stretch his giving muscles, and his heart, more than he imagined. "Giving away 10 bucks is harder than you might think," he muses.

At first, it was tricky to find places where such a small donation would make a difference. He slipped an extra \$10 bill into a shoe being passed around at a wedding; the next gift went to his receptionist heading out on summer vacation; and he dropped another into a donation box at the mall. The more he gave, the easier it became. Spontaneous generosity was actually a lot of fun!

"My aunt's inheritance turned into an extra tip for a waitress, a block of cheese for a shopper who came up short, a coffee for the person next in line, an extra thank you to a store clerk, a little

gift to the guy corralling the shopping carts at the supermarket," Friesen says. At the end of the year, he had given away the entire inheritance and gained an entirely new perspective on giving.

## Spontaneous generosity

"I realized this exercise of donating \$10 at a time helped train my brain to be more willing to part with money in the moment," he says. "This project caused me to think about my aunt a lot and it was a privilege to tell others about her generous life."

He hopes all the little interactions over the past year have inspired others to be generous. "Hopefully, when some of the people I've met find an extra buck or two in their pocket, they'll remember me and my aunt, and pay it forward."

Even though his Random Acts of Generosity Project is over, Friesen continues to keep a little cash in his pocket and his eyes peeled for opportunities to give. After all, you never know when a little spontaneous generosity might make a big difference in someone's day. ☺



*Harold Penner is a gift-planning consultant with Abundance Canada, a CRA-registered foundation that helps people*

*realize their philanthropy and giving potential in their lifetime and through their estate. Learn more at [abundance.ca](http://abundance.ca) or call 1-800-772-3257.*

## Et cetera

### Sanctuary for Edith

Edith Espinal, front row centre, has been living in sanctuary at Columbus Mennonite Church in Ohio since October 2017. She moved to the United States from Mexico with her father, but without documentation, in 1995, when she was a teen. Federal officials recently waived a US\$497,777 fine they had levied in June. She still faces the threat of deportation and separation from her husband and children. Democratic presidential candidate Julian Castro visited Espinal last October.

Source: [solidaritywithedith.org](http://solidaritywithedith.org)



## LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

## Paradoxical faith

Troy Watson

I've become aware of various patterns and cycles in my life. One of them is a regular oscillation between two different "kinds" or phases of faith. Sometimes I remain in one phase for years and sometimes I alternate between the two phases multiple times a day.

The first phase is what I call pragmatic faith.

Pragmatic faith accepts reality as it is. It accepts suffering, injustice, difficulty and impermanence as part of life. It accepts that everyone and everything changes and dies. It accepts that many of our struggles will be things we struggle with for the rest of our lives. It accepts the imperfection and incompleteness of everything, including ourselves. It accepts that most of us will never have the life we dream of and will have to settle for second, third or seven-hundredth best. Because this is the world God created and we trust God.

Pragmatic faith often places ultimate hope in the next life where everything will be better, where we won't have to worry about health issues, money problems or loneliness. But for now, pragmatic faith is what helps us accept all the hard-to-accept realities in this life. It isn't fatalism though. Pragmatic faith accepts our duty to right what is wrong in the world. It obeys God's command to love, forgive and serve others, especially the less fortunate. Yet it's also how we cope when there's nothing we can do to help others or fix what's wrong with the world.

Pragmatic faith trusts God but doesn't really expect God to intervene in earthly affairs. God gives us strength, wisdom, family and community to get through the trials and tribulations of life and grants us gifts, abilities and resources to live right and serve the greater good of all.

The second phase I call transcendental faith.

In this phase of faith I'm overwhelmed with wonder, beauty and possibility. I see the "magic" of life everywhere I look. It's like I've been transported to another world where everything is new, exciting and full of promise. Here, nothing is impossible. I sense a mysterious divine plot unfolding in every aspect of life, bringing resolution, reconciliation and renewal to all things, and I'm invited to participate in this timeless story of redemption. I sense Divine Spirit active in the world, transforming things,

situations and people. The whole world has become a "thin place," where God manifests in thousands of different ways. The next manifestation could be right around the corner, if I have eyes to see and ears to hear.

I wake up each morning with excitement and expectation. Where will I encounter Divine Spirit today? Ordinary encounters with trees, snowflakes and strangers become extraordinary. Everyone and everything is a beautiful sacred mystery. Every minute of the day has potential to be a life-changing encounter with the Most High. In this phase I know God is present, transforming the world in mysterious and miraculous ways.

The past few weeks I've been reflecting on why I cycle between these two kinds of faith that are so different and seem to contradict one another. Is one right and the other wrong? Are they both partially right? Does it depend on my circumstances or mood?

Then another thought occurred. What if both are right? In every moment. It's just my dualistic mind can only grasp the

truth of one at a time, because to hold both equally true in the same moment would be to enter paradox. Hmmm. What if that's the point?

A paradox is essentially two or more truths that are incompatible and contradictory but, when held together, reveal a deeper hidden truth. The heart of the gospel message is paradox. (The claim that Jesus is 100 percent God and 100 percent human is a paradox for example.)

Christ is paradox, so to enter life "in

**A paradox is essentially two or more truths that are incompatible and contradictory but, when held together, reveal a deeper hidden truth. The heart of the gospel message is paradox.**

Christ" requires paradoxical faith—a faith that is able to hold contradictory truths together in the same moment, such as the pragmatic and transcendental dynamics of faith. When we live in this paradoxical tension, it opens us up to deeper truth—what Paul calls the mystery of the gospel.

Paradoxical faith creates space in us for paradoxical experiences. To experience total fulfillment and a holy desire for more at the same time. To be completely at peace with everything while driven to move mountains and change the world. To hold joy and sorrow, mercy and justice, belief and doubt, hope and skepticism in the same breath.

This is life "in Christ." This is a whole new level of freedom and wholeness.



*Troy Watson will be practicing paradoxical faith throughout 2020 and will keep you posted.*

# Churches partner to help residents in recovery

*Support comes through empowerment at 'Place of Refuge'*

By Amy Rinner Waddell  
B.C. Correspondent

Twenty years ago, two men attending Vancouver's Sherbrooke Mennonite Church desperately needed a safe place to live so they could find their way out of the world of addiction. Considering what could be done, Garry Janzen, Sherbrooke's then-pastor, proposed the idea to his congregation of helping people in addiction recovery.

"We did a feasibility study to discern the greatest need and we pursued other Mennonite congregations to partner in this initiative," recalls Janzen. "We learned that second-stage recovery [or transitional living] for men was the greatest need."

Sherbrooke joined with fellow Vancouver congregations First United Mennonite Church (now Peace Church on 52nd) and Culloden and Killarney Park Mennonite Brethren churches to develop the idea. A society was formed and a three-storey heritage house was chosen. Ten years after the idea was proposed, the house was opened on Aug. 1, 2009.

Place of Refuge celebrated its 10th anniversary with an open house and Christmas party on Dec. 8, dedicating a new resource centre on the property. Place of Refuge's mandate is "to provide a safe environment for people to become healthy, confident and drug-free."

Ten residents at a time call Place of Refuge home and may reside there for anywhere from six months to two years. To qualify, the men must be clean of drug or alcohol abuse for at least three months. Staff at Place of Refuge support the residents with general financial, life and literacy skills. The residents have access to counselling and are assured an environment free of drugs, alcohol and violence.

"We look for men that have completed some intensive treatment program," says Jeff Borden, Place of Refuge's executive director and a licensed addictions counsellor. "We want to have them ready to be able to reintegrate into the workforce or educational stream," and successfully transition into the

community. Clients are referred by local treatment centres.

The program at Place of Refuge is Christian-based, but, Borden says, "We don't proselytize; we invite them into the Word of Christ." Many men have chosen to accept Christ into their lives, but the service is open to all, regardless of faith commitment, as long as residents respect that the centre is run with Christian values.

Place of Refuge does not rely on government funding. Instead, support is raised through client contributions, donations from individuals, sponsoring churches and Mennonite Central Committee B.C. An effort is made to keep living costs affordable in a city where rent is extremely high.

Peace Church on 52nd, just a few blocks away, is actively involved with Place of Refuge. On Monday evenings, pastors Lydia Cruttwell and Adam Back spend time relating to the residents through conversation and viewing short animated videos from "The Bible Project" that explain biblical concepts. Once a month the residents are invited to a community dinner at the church.

"I try to connect with the guys as I can, just hanging out as friends," says Back. He and Cruttwell feel it is important to be involved in the common good and hopes of their neighbourhood. In addition to ministering to their own congregation, he says, "we imagine ourselves as neighbourhood pastors."

Janzen left the Sherbrooke pastorate in 2007 to become MC British Columbia's executive minister, but he remains as Sherbrooke's representative on the board that he currently chairs. "We are developing relationships with Peace Mennonite Church in Richmond and Point Grey Inter-Mennonite Fellowship [in Vancouver], which may hopefully lead to official partnerships," he says. ▮



PLACE OF REFUGE PHOTO BY JEFF BORDEN

**Board chair Garry Janzen, right, gives thanks for 10 years of ministry at Place of Refuge in Vancouver. A building project earlier this year enabled the construction of the Place of Refuge Resource Centre on the property, for office space and counselling.**

# Gleaners host Christmas open house to thank supporters

Story and Photos by Zach Charbonneau  
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
LEAMINGTON, ONT.

The work of farmers is difficult. They have to work with the land to bring about a decent crop in order to make a living. And even though they may successfully bring hundreds of hectares to fruition, there's no guarantee that all of that crop can go to market. Blemishes, bruises, deformities and imperfections can be the difference between a piece of food someone will buy and something destined for the trash heap.

The Southwestern Ontario Gleaners is an organization that rescues non-marketable produce and processes it before delivering it to people in need around the world. It gives farmers the opportunity to see more of their crops go to hungry people instead of to the landfill.

Based in Leamington, the Gleaners has made quite an impact since its inception in 2014. In November, it hosted its second Christmas open house to thank volunteers and supporters, and to raise interest in the community by giving tours and letting people see first-hand what the Gleaners do. The Nov. 23, 2019, open house hosted more than 175 people, generating new volunteers and new donors.

"It's all about getting people here," said Joel Epp, general manager, of the open house.

Currently, the Gleaners operates with a volunteer base of about 300 people, with up to 30 volunteers—often composed of church groups or community members—onsite each day. The work is also made possible by 28 corporate donors, hundreds of individual donors, and, of course, farmers.

"It's such a community effort, and we're always looking for ways to grow that community," Epp said.

The Gleaners receives deliveries by the tractor-trailer load. Recently, 22,700 kilograms of carrots arrived from Chatham.



*Dylan Ricci Adams is pictured with a load of carrots on their way to the washing machine.*

**Based in Leamington, the Gleaners has made quite an impact since its inception in 2014.**



*Todd Stahl shovels diced carrots into the auger that will deliver them to the Gleaners' gigantic dehydrator.*

It takes about three-and-a-half hours to process 2,270 kilos for use in dehydrated soup mixes.

Todd Stahl, one of a few Gleaners employees, said, "It feels good to take produce people throw away or turn into pet food, to feed people."

While the Gleaners is in the business of reducing food waste, its goes far beyond just rescuing produce from landfill.

"All the leftover peelings and cuttings go to a local company that produces liquid fertilizer to be spread over Essex County farmlands," Stahl said, adding that, apart from a few scraps that fall to the floor during processing, waste is almost non-existent in the Gleaners facility.

The entire process of preparing carrots is ingeniously simple:

- **Receive carrots** from farmers.
- **Wash and sort.**
- **Cut off** unwanted blemishes by hand.
- **Send into** the dicing machine.
- **Shovel diced** pieces into an auger that ascends into a school bus-sized dehydrator.

Once this is complete, the dried carrots are mixed with other ingredients, including previously dehydrated potatoes. Sometimes other ingredients, like broccoli or brussels sprouts, have been dehydrated and are added to the mix. Beans are added for protein. The dried-soup mix gets packaged with a pack of seasoning and awaits shipment in the warehouse.

Stahl and Dylan Ricci Adams said that there are currently 800,000 servings of food in the warehouse that will soon be delivered to Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

"The food is donated to other charities, and they do distribution on behalf of the Gleaners," said Stahl. "Logistics are left



**Todd Stahl is pictured in the Gleaners' warehouse. Each skid has 42,000 meals on it, and the whole room currently holds 800,000 servings.**

to other groups so Gleaners can focus on what we do best.”

At the other end of the process, people in desperate situations are receiving nutritious food that needs a minimum of hot water to rehydrate and eat. Many recipients add their own local flavourings—and sometimes meat—to the mix to create a more robust meal for them and those they share food with.

Some of the international nongovernmental organizations that the Gleaners work with are Canadian Food for Children, Loads of Love and Speroway. These organizations have made connections around the world with communities in need or in crisis, and with the Gleaners, which is able to be the bridge between Canadian farmers and a hungry world.

The Southwestern Ontario Gleaners has grown significantly over the past five years. By perfecting its operations since 2014, it has increased its yield from a million meals in its first year and is on track to producing four million by the end of this year. ☞



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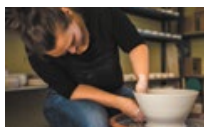
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A Manitoba pastor brings eyeglasses and hope to people around the world.

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### Two knitter and a potter

Three Mennonite women start a business together, fostering creativity and building community.

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### Who goes canoeing with their mother-in-law?

An avid canoeist releases his first book chronicling tales of outdoor adventures, in collaboration with his paddling partner.

[canadianmennonite.org/penner-canoe](http://canadianmennonite.org/penner-canoe)



PHOTO AND STORY BY ZACH CHARBONNEAU

**Denise Schmitt, a student at UMEI Christian High School in Leamington, Ont., was one of about 20 students from the school who took time away from studies on a Tuesday afternoon to help the local Goodfellows pack Christmas hampers for families in need. The students, representing each of the grades, were able to pack to the brim 778 hampers of groceries and produce. The Goodfellows then gathered local drivers of vans and pickup trucks and delivered the Christmas items to the doors and dining room tables of needy families in the Leamington area, including as far away as Wheatley. “It’s a blessing in the community and it’s a blessing for us who get to help,” commented Henry Hildebrandt, a member of the Goodfellows.**

# In Ethiopia the gospel is spreading

*Reflections on the silver anniversary of Meserete Kristos College*

By Carl E. Hansen

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

**T**he beginning of 2019 marked the silver anniversary of Meserete Kristos College.

In January 1994, there were only a handful of Meserete Kristos Church (MKC) leaders trained in Bible or theology. Now there are 1,864 men and women who have graduated from one of the college's certificate, diploma or degree programs in Bible and Christian ministries.

It is timely to ask, "What impact is the college having on the churches and the societies of Ethiopia?"

One may find its alumni scattered all over Ethiopia, giving pastoral or administrative leadership in congregations; preaching well-prepared, contextually relevant and challenging sermons; coordinating or staffing most of the 39 regional MKC offices; serving in the head office in the national capital, Addis Ababa, doing translation work, designing study and teaching materials, or directing mission programs.

Others are teaching in newly formed regional Bible schools; leading in the Orthodox Renewal Movement; reaching the unreached in missionary work; translating materials into vernacular languages; teaching or preaching in radio and TV ministries; serving in prison ministries; leading in peacemaking interventions; and coordinating other para-church organizations.

In January 1994, equipped with little more than a powerful desire to teach and a strong faith that, with God, "where there is vision, there will be provision," MKC launched its first class of 13 evangelist-students in small rented rooms. "Provision" came bit by bit, thanks to the generous support of sympathetic partners among the international family of faith.

Today, the college has a main campus of five hectares in Bishoftu (formerly Debre Zeit), 40 kilometres southeast of



PHOTO COURTESY OF MK COLLEGE PUBLIC RELATIONS

***The Promised Land: Five hectares given as a permanent home for MK College as seen in the fall of 2000. Pictured from left to right: Mulugeta Zewdie, the college's executive secretary; Mervin Charles and Susan Godshall of Eastern Mennonite Missions; and Linda and Bob Hovde, MCC Ethiopia representatives.***

the capital. Developing this permanent campus is still in process. It operates out of the first half of its incomplete academic building; has completed two dormitories with a capacity for 384 men and 258 women; has a guesthouse; and uses several temporary smaller buildings, including a temporary kitchen and dining hall/chapel.

The urgent need is for a permanent kitchen, as the temporary one has been deemed unfit by the Ministry of Public Health. (*See photo top right, next page.*)

Meserete Kristos College offers both two-year diploma and four-year baccalaureate degree programs in Bible and Christian ministries taught in both English and Amharic languages. Currently, 257 boarding students are enrolled at its Bishoftu campus, and 137 day-students are in its two extension campuses in Addis Ababa and Adama.

The college also administers a distance-education diploma program in Bible and Christian ministries taught in Amharic to 125 participants scattered throughout Ethiopia, especially in remote areas.

Thus, the college is currently responsible for the training of 519 church leaders in all of these programs. Perhaps this would qualify the college to be the largest Mennonite "undergrad seminary" in the world!

Apart from an occasional guest lecturer from the outside, all of the instructors are Ethiopian nationals. It is encouraging to see their high spiritual, intellectual and academic quality. Currently six of the full-time instructors and three part-time instructors at the Bishoftu campus are graduates of Anabaptist seminaries in North America: Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Eastern Mennonite



Seminary and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. The first Ethiopian female teacher with a doctorate joined the faculty in January 2017.

Most of the students admitted to full-time boarding at the Bishoftu campus are full-time servants nominated and sent by their congregations from the 39 MKC



regions. These students are required to bring a cost-sharing fee of \$275 (6,000 birr) for a full 10-month school year. The remaining cost of tuition, room and board is covered by the college in the form of scholarships worth around \$3,300 apiece. Most of this scholarship assistance is raised from supporters abroad. Some students are self-sponsored or sponsored by other denominations.

In addition, 31 other regional Bible institutes or Bible schools have been founded and operated by the regional offices or MKC congregations.

In Ethiopia the gospel is spreading, the churches are growing and the kingdom of God is expanding. In the past year, MKC churches baptized 27,008 new members, an average of 73 per day. In September, it counted 367,761 baptized members in a faith community of more than 647,441 who worship in 1,126 congregations and 1,112 church-planting centres. Fifty-nine new congregations were added last year alone. ☸



PHOTO BY CARL HANSEN

*Between 800 and 900 meals are served from the MK College kitchen, which urgently needs to be replaced. Contributions to help with the effort may be sent to: Mennonite Church Canada, 600 Shaftesbury Boulevard, Winnipeg, MB R3P 0M4, Attn. MK College.*



PHOTO BY HENOK TAMERAT

*The MK College campus as viewed from the west in 2019.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF MK COLLEGE PUBLIC RELATIONS

*The first class in 1994.*

# Theology for a climate emergency

*'Christian hope is not optimism and is therefore immune to pessimism'*

Story and Photos by Beth Downey Sawatzky

Canadian Mennonite University

WINNIPEG

Students, scholars and community members alike filled Marpeck Commons at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) on Nov. 13, 2019, hoping to lay a firmer hold on one essential subject: Actionable theology for the age of climate change.

Just days before the forum, 11,000 scientists from around the world unanimously declared a global climate emergency. The scope and weight of this issue showed clearly in the assembly at Marpeck Commons, as men and women across spectrums of age and race turned out to hear three presenters—singer-songwriter Steve Bell; David Widdicombe, an Anglican priest; and Gordon Zerbe, professor of New Testament at CMU—tackle the questions burning in Christian hearts today: How should we live, pray, repent, practise compassion, seek justice and move forward in faith in light of the Earth's dire prognosis?

Widdicombe's lecture addressed three seminal questions:

- **What theological** tools do Christians really have for grappling with the realities of climate change?
- **What responsibilities** do individual churches have amidst the current emergency?
- **What historical** Christian perspectives might the faithful today be able to retrieve, in order to resist—even oppose—the dominant, ecologically destructive modus operandi of our time?

The climate crisis, Widdicombe said, demands that Christians turn their primary theological and devotional attentions to three tasks: mitigation of ecological damage; adaptation to climate change; and suffering, which is inevitable. Christians can best orient themselves



*David Widdicombe, an Anglican priest, says, that the climate crisis demands that Christians turn their primary theological and devotional attentions to three tasks: mitigation of ecological damage, adaptation to climate change, and suffering, which is inevitable.*

in these tasks, he suggested, by aligning them with the three cardinal virtues or disciplines: faith, love and hope.

"Whatever the church does or says about climate change must be rooted in authentic faith in Jesus Christ as the incarnation of the eternal [word] of God. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever," he said. . . . "If faith seeks to understand the hidden realities beneath the surface of human affairs, love is its working out in the practical agency of women and men who serve humanity in

acts of mercy and political wisdom. Here the church must provide all assistance to the many organizations, agencies and individuals who are teaching us to adapt our ways of life to an increasingly hostile climate on a planet of limited resources.

"It requires us to make deeper, more practical commitments to our neighbourhoods. Especially, the church must afford the maximum amount of encouragement to the young people who are courageously and eloquently attempting to change the direction in which we are headed."

He concluded with these words: "In every age the question of human suffering raises the question of what we can hope for and what our hope is founded on. Christian hope is not optimism and is therefore immune to pessimism. It is founded on the promises of God vouchsafed to humankind through the bodily resurrection of his son Jesus Christ. Christians await not the end of history, but rather the judgment of God and the renewal of this material creation."

Following Zerbe's response to Widdicombe's lecture, both speakers took questions from the floor. At this time, Steve Bell contributed a question about the inevitability of suffering, and how Christians might prepare themselves for that inevitability. In response, Widdicombe spoke about the value of finding a constructive practice or discipline that can buffer one from "the sheer madness" of what is happening.

"If you listen to scientists or writers talk about all this, you might notice that they're using their scientific curiosity, or their writing skills, as a way to buffer them from the message they're delivering to you," Widdicombe said. "The scientist has a personal interest in trying to think through what that really means. Writers who write about social catastrophe are very good

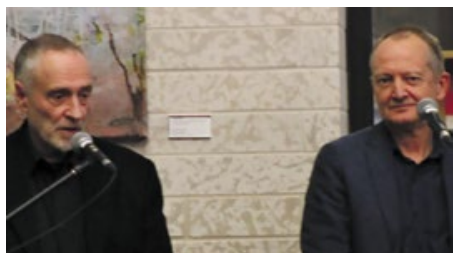


**Singer-songwriter Steve Bell performed at the opening and close of CMU's climate-change lecture on Nov. 13, 2019.**

writers and they keep on writing. . . . Teenagers especially need the same kind of buffering. One reason they're on the streets, I think, is because it empowers them. They have something to do. There's hope, and it can be a buffer. Thinking theologically about these issues can be a buffer. It's something constructive to do."

Widdicombe also emphasized the value of people finding friends and thinking partners among those who have gone before, or who work in different fields than they do.

"I think that people like C.S. Lewis and Wendell Barry . . . can be extremely helpful to us, because these are writers who are willing unflinchingly to look at the worst that could possibly happen to human beings," he said, recommending Lewis's essay "The World's Last Night," and his 1939 sermon, "Learning in War-Time," written to students at Oxford after the declaration of war with Germany; and Wendell Barry's *The Art of Loading Brush* (2017). ❧



**David Widdicombe, an Anglican priest, left, and Gordon Zerbe, professor of New Testament at CMU, answer questions burning in Christian hearts today: How should we live, pray, repent, practise compassion, seek justice and move forward in faith in light of the Earth's dire prognosis, due to climate change?**

# Everything is under the authority of Christ

Mennonite World Conference

**G**unungan is a figure from traditional Indonesian theatre that represents the world. The leaf-shaped art is used frequently around the country, including at the Mennonite church in seaside Jepara.

"This wood carving [pictured below right] expresses the mission and vision of the church," says artist Harjo Suyitno through the interpretation of Danang Kristiawan, his pastor. With the cross superimposed on top of the *gunungan*, the visual worship symbol represents the cosmic Christ (Colossians 1:15-23).

"Christ reconciled all creation to himself," Suyitno says, pointing to the tiger, bull, fish, monkey and birds in his artwork. "The cross reconciles the cosmos into the family of God, who presents peace in the world. It's a vision of the church."

The *gunungan* usually has a mask in the middle representing evil and temptation. In the Jepara cross, it has been replaced with a tree, representing life, with the cross on top of it all.

"Everything is under the authority of Christ, even the bad things," says Suyitno.

Some Christians question why he placed a snake in the drawing. It is also a symbol of wisdom, he points out, and repeats that it is underneath the cross.

Gereja Injili de Tanah Jawa (GITJ) is a Javanese MWC member church, Kristiawan says. "The good news is that Jesus loves this world. We want to picture this for our culture—Javanese people," he says.

At the same time, many young people have become distanced from their own culture, so the Javanese artwork helps connect them, says Kristiawan. The pastors preach in a mix of the Javanese and Indonesian languages on Sunday mornings, with a smaller, more modern service in Indonesian in the evenings.

Anabaptists have often emphasized separation from the world, but "Javanese culture and Christianity have many shared values," says Suyitno. In the church, "we

accept culture, but we must modify it, cultivate it, reimagine it."

Suyitno has changed his own culture for Christ. Born into a Muslim family, he became a Christian when he was middle-aged. A divorced father of four, he did not feel peace, but a Christian colleague urged him to pursue Jesus as his path to peace.

Suyitno is a visual, dance and music artist, who not only serves the church through showing the reconciling message of Christ through Javanese art, but he also designed the GITJ logo that incorporates the Pancasila, an Indonesian symbol. ❧

*Renewal 2027 is a 10-year series of events organized by Mennonite World Conference's Faith and Life Commission to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the beginnings of the Anabaptist movement. "Testimony" is a series that highlights leaders in the movement, from historical figures to the present.*



PHOTO BY KARLA BRAUN

**Harjo Suyitno designed the 'Cosmic Christ' cross artwork at Jepara GITJ church in Indonesian gunungan style.**

# Adapting to changing volunteer realities

*Restorative justice organization seeks new ways to meet inmates' needs*

By Donna Schulz  
Saskatchewan Correspondent  
PRINCE ALBERT, SASK.

**T**his is how I am a Christian," says Heather Driedger of her work with Parkland Restorative Justice. As executive director of the non-profit organization, Driedger provides programs for inmates at the Prince Albert penitentiary.

Supported by Mennonite Church Saskatchewan, Parkland offers three restorative programs:

- **Person to Person (P2P)** matches volunteers with inmates for monthly visits.
- **Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA)** helps sexual offenders reintegrate into society after serving their sentences.
- **Dad HERO (Helping Everyone Realize Opportunities)** teaches parenting skills to incarcerated fathers.

These programs reduce inmates' loneliness and isolation, and enable them to reintegrate into community life after they've served their sentences. But the programs rely heavily on volunteer commitment.

"We've been very fortunate to have had good core groups that have been volunteering for over 20 years," says Driedger. "They're now retiring because they're old."

Younger volunteers who are still in the work force are not available as consistently as their older counterparts once were. They may volunteer for six months and then step down as work and family commitments make their lives too busy. Those around retirement age may only be available for a few months of the year because they go away for the winter months.

This makes it hard for inmates to get to know volunteers and build relationships with them. "Building trust happens over time when people can count on each other be there," says Driedger.

It's hard to know why people's commit-



PHOTO COURTESY OF HEATHER DRIEDGER

**Volunteer Jim Wiebe, left, visited with Eugene from 1996 to 2011. Eugene continues to see Jim since his release. He says, 'It was good to be in P2P. It helped open my eyes to my surroundings and who I was. By watching and learning from my visitor, I realized life is more fun if you can control your urges.'**



PHOTO COURTESY OF HEATHER DRIEDGER

**Dale von Bieker is a P2P volunteer from Nipawin, Sask., where he is a member of the United Church. He wrote this poem a few years ago for an inmate he was visiting.**

ment levels and availability have declined in recent years. Perhaps increasing affluence has allowed people more choices as to what they do with their time.

Driedger notes that many volunteers used to travel to Prince Albert for their monthly visits along with their church groups. Inherent in carpooling was a certain level of accountability. Volunteers would go because others depended on them for rides.

On the ride home these volunteers would have a chance to talk about their visits and compare notes with one another.

"Visiting someone in prison is a difficult thing to do," says Driedger. "The debrief on the car ride home was just as important as the [visit] in terms of thinking about these relationships."

Those who volunteer as individuals don't have the support that comes from traveling with a group. They may get tired of making the monthly drive alone, or they may be paired with an inmate who really challenges them and they find they have no one to talk to about it.

"The group dynamic is vital to keeping people engaged," says Driedger.

She tries to be as flexible as possible when it comes to accommodating volunteers' busy schedules. P2P visits take place on Monday nights, but some volunteers aren't available on Mondays, so she matches them with inmates in minimum security, where they can visit whenever they like as long as the inmate is available. This means that fewer inmates in medium security are receiving visits, but, with this adaptation, Driedger has doubled the number of minimum-security inmates receiving visits.

Since she knows the importance of volunteering in groups, Driedger looks for new recruits in the networks of her volunteers, asking them whom they might know who would be interested in joining them.

She also tries to give volunteers what they're looking for. "If we can modify the experience at all for them, we try to do that," she says. When a volunteer wanted to tutor in the area of literacy, Driedger set up a placement where she could tutor once a week in the minimum security school.

"You have to really pay attention to your 'matchmaking,'" she says. This means listening to what both volunteers and inmates are asking for in a relationship. Inmates

who want help overcoming addictions may find a good match with volunteers with a background in Alcoholics Anonymous.

The inmates served by Parkland's programs inspire Driedger and her volunteers. "I always cry when I talk about them," she says. "We all talk about how much we learn from them. We receive more than we give sometimes."

Driedger sees the inmates as resilient. "These people have experienced so much in their lives," she says. "It's hard to think of being in their spot and the hope that they [express]." She knows that volunteers play an important part in bringing hope to these men.

"For me and for a lot of our volunteers," says Driedger, "the challenge of going to

that difficult place and hearing that difficult story and being able to walk with people—this is how we live out of the stories and teachings of Jesus." ❧



## News brief

### Voices Together presales far exceed initial projections

When MennoMedia staff initially discussed presale incentives for the new *Voices Together* hymnal, they set selling 10,000 copies of the pew edition as a goal. In early 2015, staff spent time comparing denominational figures from 1992, when *Hymnal: A Worship Book* was released, to today. "We studied the loss of denominational membership and changing patterns of music and worship when we set 10,000 as a presales goal," says Amy Gingerich, a MennoMedia publisher. "But what we failed to recognize was that the early adopters of *Hymnal: A Worship Book* are congregations that likely want to be early adopters of *Voices Together* too." In total, 29,388 copies of the pew edition have all been sold by the case—with 12 books per case. A total of 42 orders came from across Canada and 133 came from across the United States. In addition, Mennonite Church U.S.A. offered a free copy of *Voices Together* to the first 2,000 registrants at this past summer's convention in Kansas City. "Having more than 31,000 copies of *Voices Together* already sold speaks volumes about the way the committee has engaged people across the church around this work. We sense that Mennonites are eager to welcome this new collection into their worship life," Gingerich says.

—MENNOMEDIA



## Shaping Faith in a Digital Culture

### A joint conference of Pastors and Leaders 2020 and Deep Faith

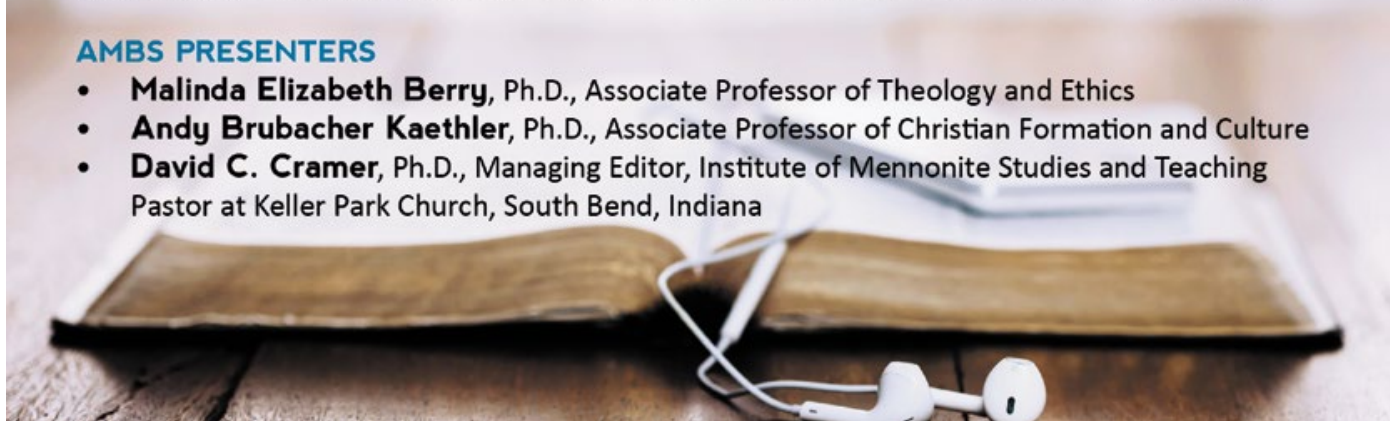
**MONDAY, MARCH 2, 7 p.m. – THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 12:30 p.m.**

**Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana • [ams.edu/pastorsandleaders](http://ams.edu/pastorsandleaders)**

**Join other faith leaders** in thinking theologically about living, worshiping and playing in digital spaces. **Karen-Marie Yust**, M.Div., Th.D, author of *Real Kids, Real Faith*, will join AMBS faculty members to explore practical ways both to participate in and challenge digital culture.

#### AMBS PRESENTERS

- **Malinda Elizabeth Berry**, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Theology and Ethics
- **Andy Brubacher Kaethler**, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Christian Formation and Culture
- **David C. Cramer**, Ph.D., Managing Editor, Institute of Mennonite Studies and Teaching Pastor at Keller Park Church, South Bend, Indiana



# Life in a remote B.C. congregation

Story and photos by Gerry Binnema  
BLACK CREEK, B.C.

*Gerry Binnema was invited to share news about United Mennonite Church, the congregation he pastors in Black Creek, B. C. Here is his creative and tongue-in-cheek response.*

**G**reetings from this far-flung western outpost of Mennonite-ness here on the edge of the untamed northern Vancouver Island. I have been posted to this remote location now for six years, and what a struggle it has been. Having lived for many years in the populous lower mainland of B.C., the transition to island life has at times been difficult. For instance, people here drive at the posted speed limit! Can you imagine? Behaviour like that in Abbotsford would get you run off the road.

When you go to Costco here, the line-up is seldom more than five minutes. Quite often, you just walk up to an open till. The locals clearly have not yet understood what modern life is supposed to look like.

When I arrived, I was determined to activate a tremendous growth strategy. I convened brainstorming meetings, launched Alpha programs, networked, socialized, interacted and lots of other things. But to no avail. The people here seemed impervious to modern-day church growth strategies. I began to feel



*The Friday Night drop-in for kids has been popular with community kids in Black Creek.*

disheartened.

About a year ago, I pretty much gave up. People seemed so happy if I just preached the Word and visited my congregants. So that is what I did. Sure, we had established connections in the community and we had a choir practising in the building on Wednesday nights, and we opened our doors to the little community food bank that runs on Tuesday mornings. Our youth worker had established a great Friday Night drop-in for kids that was popular with community kids.

Then this weird thing happened. New people started just showing up on Sundays. Not people drawn from other congregations (well, maybe a couple), but some people came

who hadn't found a church to call home for 20 years. People who had not felt safe in a church but felt safe in our little community.

Over the last year, there has been a renewed sense of community at UMCBC. If you come to visit, you will find a pretty laid-back Sunday service, complete with missteps and the odd shouted comedic comment from the peanut gallery. Our church has quite the cast of characters! But when people are asked to greet one another near the beginning of the service, the roar of conversation carries on until the service leader shouts it down and orders people back to their seats.

After church, the coffee and cookies keep people hanging out and talking for a good long time.

So, we don't have cell groups, or a missional strategy, or a five-year outreach plan. And in all honesty, I feel a little guilty about that because I feel like I should be doing that stuff. Our worship style is—impossible to define. But we do have a group of really wonderful, gracious Christians trying to do life together. ☸



*The United Mennonite Church building in Black Creek is used for a community food bank.*



# VOICES *Together*

Do you have everything you need?

## Worship Leader Edition / \$26.99 CAD

The worship leader edition will be a must-have for anyone involved in planning or leading worship through prayer, music, spoken words, visuals, and more. This simple, accessible volume will be filled with theological grounding, practical suggestions, and words for worship. It will include quick introductions to topics like the Christian year and the use of technology in worship, as well as easy-to-use suggestions for preparing prayers. It will also include worship resources for the practices central to our faith and life—including baptism, communion, child blessing, and funerals.

\* For every case of the pew edition purchased or for every copy of the accompaniment edition purchased, add the worship leader edition for only \$12.99 CAD. Worship leader edition must be purchased at the same time as the other product(s) to receive the discount.

## Accompaniment Edition / \$121.99 CAD

This essential resource for accompanists and music leaders will provide full accompaniments for many songs in the pew edition of *Voices Together*. In addition to the many keyboard accompaniments, there will be parts for various other instruments, alternative tunes, and notes on common practice. It will also include resources and ideas for leading the music within *Voices Together*. The attractive hardback will make this accompaniment edition long-lasting and easy to use.

## Projection Edition / \$674.99 CAD

Formatted for projecting notated music and lyrics, this edition of *Voices Together* will contain the music and worship resources found in the pew edition. This projection edition will come on a flash drive—with music and worship resources available in PowerPoint, PDF, and XML formats. It will come with files to project just lyrics or the full music.

\* This product is not for individual sale. Minimum purchase of 4 cases (48 copies) of pew edition required.



**MennoMedia**

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[VoicesTogetherHymnal.org](http://VoicesTogetherHymnal.org)

# 'Re-learning to swim in baptismal waters'

*CMU professor shares baptism research with pastors*

By Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe  
Manitoba Correspondent

**W**e are witnessing the first time in history when many young people in Mennonite Church Canada congregations are actively participating in the church but are choosing not to be baptized. Why is that? Irma Fast Dueck, associate professor of practical theology at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), is researching exactly that question.



PHOTO BY DARRYL NEUSTAEDTER BARG

***Irma Fast Dueck presented on baptism to more than 40 pastors and lay leaders at Mennonite Church Manitoba's Leadership Day in November.***

Fast Dueck, who attends Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, started diving into the baptism question about ten years ago. She has led numerous workshops in churches and in February 2019, she delivered Conrad Grebel University College's Bechtel Lecture, titled, "Take Me to the Waters: Baptism, Commitment and the Church." She started writing a book on baptism in 2013, which she's hoping to finish on her sabbatical during the winter 2020 semester.

Fast Dueck recently worked with more than 40 pastors and lay leaders from Mennonite Church Manitoba (MCM) congregations, presenting the topic "Re-Learning to Swim in Baptismal Waters"

at MCM's Leadership Day on Nov. 27.

"I loved it," she says. "It was great to hear from pastors." They were eager to learn and discuss, which hasn't always been the case. "When I started, it felt like no one really wanted to talk about baptism. . .but it's like it's suddenly beginning to dawn on people how important rituals are to the life of the church."

The leadership day at Camp Assiniboia began by diving into Fast Dueck's findings on why young people are choosing not to be baptized. Pastors around the room then shared what they have heard from young people. They confirmed that baptism is still important to pastors and they brainstormed ideas of how they could highlight baptism in the church.

"In some ways it makes you feel like as congregations we're not alone," says Marla Langelotz, lead pastor at Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church (SAMC), who attended the leadership day. "This is a larger reality and time in our life as a church, which means it's valuable to assess and think again."

Fast Dueck's interest in baptism was sparked when she was teaching about baptism and she asked the class of 70 people how many would identify as Christian. About 80 percent raised their hands. When she asked who was baptized, only about seven said they were.

"I thought, what is going on here? These are people that identify as Christian and are involved in the church, working at camps, teaching Sunday school. Why aren't those people getting baptized?" says Fast Dueck.

Through a research study by CMU students Peter Epp and Joseph Kiranto, she learned that young people had a high view of the church, not a low one. Because of this high view, some felt they weren't good enough to be baptized, that they didn't live up to the church's standards. Others felt the

church wasn't meeting their high expectations of what it should be, and they didn't want to be identified with the homophobia and colonial and ecologically destructive actions they saw happening in the church. Some placed such a heavy importance on the event of baptism, similar to how some treat wedding days, that they thought if they didn't love the pastor or didn't know everything the church teaches by that day, they shouldn't be baptized. Still others equated baptism with membership, which to them meant endless committees and institutional proceedings.

However, Fast Dueck argues that baptism is still an important part of the church. Mennonites lack a ritual sensibility because early Anabaptists pushed against its strong influence during the Reformation. But we need it. "The symbol and the ritual is such a gift to a world that's so logical and rational and word-oriented," she says. "It's important for us not just to let this go," says Langelotz. "There's something in ritual that holds us and continues to form us and keep the faith going and vibrant."

So how do we create a baptismal ecology in the church?, Fast Dueck asked the gathered pastors. First, we need to stop thinking about baptism as a one-day event, but instead as a spiritual journey and practice. Langelotz suggests using baptismal language in more than just baptism services, putting up symbols of baptism around the church and having photographs available to help us remember.

"One of the things that struck me was how little we talk about baptism," Langelotz says. If churches aren't doing many baptisms, youth don't see it and have less imagination for it. At SAMC, they have missed the lectionary text of Jesus' baptism for multiple years in a row because they have done a sermon series every January. "So here's a Sunday where we could be thinking about baptism and the act of baptism being an act of resistance really ... I wonder whether that would actually fire the imaginations of some of our people."

Several pastors shared stories at the leadership day of how baptism has changed their lives, which "is a way to strengthen the community imagination of baptism," says Langelotz. They closed the day with a worship service in which pastors re-affirmed their own baptismal vows. ❧



# MASTER OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE



The Master of Theological Studies (MTS) at Grebel is a two-year degree program open to persons from a range of academic backgrounds. Study the Bible, Christian theology, church history, and the practice of ministry in an interdisciplinary and ecumenical setting with a distinctive Anabaptist-Mennonite perspective. Join Grebel's Theological Studies program to study with our committed faculty: Alicia Batten, Jeremy Bergen, Jane Kuepfer, Troy Osborne, Carol Penner, and Derek Suderman.

## Melding the Theoretical and the Practical

Combining academics and practice is vital to learning. Recognizing this, Professor Jane Kuepfer, Schlegel Specialist in Spirituality and Aging, integrates experiential learning in the classes that she teaches in the Master of Theological Studies program at Grebel. "Academics is a way of processing what happens in daily life. Our interactions and service outside of the classroom are enriched as we strive to understand ourselves and others better through readings and discussion in class."

Students in Jane's MTS course "Aging & the Spiritual Life" meet with a person over the age of 70 a few times throughout the term and keep a journal about their experience. Students then write a reflection paper with the goal of seeing the world through the eyes of their "senior partner." Students are also encouraged to reflect on the role and influence of spirituality on their senior partner's daily life.

MTS student Sandy Conrad thoroughly enjoyed "Aging & the Spiritual Life." "I have realized that there is nothing like the lived experience of people who work daily with the aging population. It was a necessary humbling! I have teaching and writing skills, but they are not useful if there is no understanding of what the needs and challenges are as people age."

"Jane is a very gifted teacher and she created an atmosphere of warmth and trust," Sandy continued. "Her experience and compassion is a wonderful guide, along with a wide and deep knowledge of the issues around aging."

"My interests in church, ministry, and aging all grow out of my involvement in congregational life and long-term care," Jane explained. Jane also teaches "Church & Ministry," in which students explore their own calling, what it means to be a ministering person, and different understandings of church.

"I teach practical theology in order to support the church in the challenge of living our faith," Jane noted. "Learning and living is a cyclical process."

*Students in the MTS program at Grebel have the opportunity to tailor their degree to fit their specific interests and vocational goals, including ministry and further studies. The program offers three degree options: coursework, applied studies, and thesis.*



All full-time Canadian MTS students receive **FULL TUITION SCHOLARSHIPS**

## Student Reflections

I have been able to make many connections with people. Each person that comes to the MTS program brings so much wisdom, experience, and hospitality – it has been such a joy to connect with everyone. They each bring their own perspectives and faith stories, which add so much to the discussions in class.

– Mollee Moua, MTS student

I have found staff and faculty extremely helpful and approachable. I can see that the courses fit well with my existing ministry involvement and my strong desire for personal, intellectual, and spiritual growth.

– Mike Foulger, MTS student

## PEOPLE

# ‘A mile in my moccasins’

*Cree woman demonstrates moccasin-making while sharing her story*

Story and photo by Janet Bauman  
Eastern Canada Correspondent  
KITCHENER, ONT.

**M**adelaine Kioke was born in the woods near Attawapiskat, in the James Bay region of northern Ontario, where her parents hunted and trapped. She lived out on the land until she was nine years old, learning to hunt and fish, and set traps and snares with her father. At age six, when her mother first gave her a sewing needle, her love for making moccasins began.

Kioke, a Cree artisan, and great-grandmother, led two moccasin-making workshops in Kitchener, Ont., sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee Ontario’s Indigenous Neighbours program. At the October 18 and 19 event, called “A mile in my moccasins,” some 40 people learned how to make a pair of deerskin moccasins over the two days.

In between patiently explaining and demonstrating the seven steps in the process, Kioke shared stories from her life. She explained how coming “from a family of residential school survivors” means each generation “lost the chance to learn” from the generation before them.

She is motivated to share their story as a way to remember her uncle who ran away from residential school in the spring of 1941, but was found, returned to the school and punished. That summer, when children came back to their home communities, her uncle was not among them. His family never found out what happened to him.

Kioke watched her grandmother go through the pain of losing a child, and her father live with “a legacy of pain” over losing his brother.

Kioke was the second of nine children. Her mother managed everything while her father was out on the trapline. Their staples were Canada goose, fish and moose. Each season, they prepared provisions to sustain them in the next season. “We had everything we needed,” she said.

When her father got sick and was sent to the tuberculosis sanatorium on Moose Factory Island, the local priest decided her mother could not handle all her children alone, so four of them, including Kioke, were taken to a residential school. She lost four brothers to smallpox and polio, common diseases at residential schools.

Kioke chose not to share the details of her own residential school experience. “I’m not going through that again,” she said. “A lot of bad things happened.” She has shared her story previously, in order to preserve it.

Kioke demonstrated the difference between running and rolling stitches, and basting. She encouraged fine, even stitches no bigger than a quarter inch. Step seven was the most difficult and involved, getting pleats spaced evenly while stitching through three layers of hide. It takes a special needle with a very sharp, 3-sided head to sew through hide.

Once they caught onto it, several people noted how hand stitching became meditative. “You can get lost in this,” said Kioke, “and it’s a good lost!” She also makes



*Madelaine Kioke, a Cree artisan, demonstrates hand-stitching on a moccasin while sharing from her family story during “A mile in my moccasins” workshop, sponsored by MCC Ontario’s Indigenous Neighbours program.*

As the workshop progressed, participants gained greater appreciation for the time, skill and patience involved in crafting handmade moccasins. It takes about 10 hours to finish a pair, according to Kioke. But before that it takes three or four weeks to tan the hide—soaking, scraping, stretching, drying and smoking it.

mukluks, mittens, wrap-arounds and fur hats.

At the end of the five-hour workshop, most people left with one moccasin mostly finished and the instructions for how to complete the other one in the pair—a tangible symbol of the invitation from Kioke to walk “a mile in my moccasins.” ❧



Winter 2020  
VOLUME 30 ISSUE 1

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# AMBS window

## Listening and adapting

### AMBS adjusts offerings to meet the church's changing needs

I have always known that AMBS is one of the church's great gems when it comes to theological and pastoral education. During these past months of listening to our staff, students, constituents, donors, alumni and church leaders, I am newly amazed by and grateful for how AMBS has equipped leaders to build up the body of Christ. I am also humbled by the responsibility that has been entrusted to me as president of this wonderful learning community.

What I did not fully understand until recently is how AMBS is seen in the *global* Anabaptist community as a standard-bearer for Anabaptist theological education. In a meeting with Mennonite World Conference General Secretary **César García**, I learned that many church leaders around the world would love to study through AMBS. With 29 international students (a record number!) and more wanting to access the resources we offer, AMBS continues to create spaces — both in person and online — where students can enter a rich, intensive formation experience in a faith-filled community of worship, Bible study and theological inquiry.

In this time of seismic change in the church and world, AMBS is responding to a growing number of requests for distance-learning opportunities. Since 2013, the



**David Boshart, PhD, of Wellman, Iowa, began as AMBS President in January.**  
Credit: Jason Bryant

**MDiv Connect** program has made it possible for students to be formed for professional ministry in their own context, without having to relocate to Elkhart. In 2019, in response to the growing demand for online degrees, AMBS launched the fully online **MA: Theology and Global Anabaptism** (see p. 3). The Church

Leadership Center's nondegree **Journey Missional Leadership Development Program** has been adapted for use by a cohort of six students in Southeast Asia.

These are just some of the ways that AMBS is adapting to meet the ever-changing needs of the church. Rather than being seen only as a seminary on Benham Avenue in Elkhart, AMBS is increasingly viewed as a resource for theological and leadership education for the church in various expressions and places. Our success in this area depends on close collaboration with the church — here and everywhere. In every conversation I have with leaders in local, regional, national and international contexts, I am renewed in hope that we can partner with the church in deeper ways to form disciples for God's reconciling mission in the world. • —David Boshart

**Above (standing, l. to r.):** Students Marisa Smucker (U.S.), Febri Kristiani (Indonesia), Margaret De Jong (Canada), Endalkachew Degefu (Ethiopia), Salomé Haldemann (France), Benjamin Isaak-Krauss (MDiv 2019) (Germany) and Esther Muhagachi (Tanzania) worship in multiple languages in a chapel service. Credit: Jason Bryant



The Wadsworth Bell on the AMBS campus. **Credit:** Peter Ringenberg

## Seminary's ATS accreditation reaffirmed through 2029

**A**MBS has been accredited by the **Association of Theological Schools (ATS)** since 1958. As we have done every 10 years since then, in 2018–19 we gave an extensive accounting of our work and hosted a campus visit for a team of accreditors to assess our compliance with the ATS Commission Standards and Procedures. These standards are used to measure the quality of theological education among approximately 170 ATS theological schools in Canada and the U.S. We submitted AMBS's Self Study Report to ATS in December 2018 and hosted a four-member ATS Evaluation Committee for a visit in February 2019.

The ATS Board of Commissioners met in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in early June and voted to reaffirm the accreditation of AMBS for a period of 10 years.

We were heartened by encouragement from the Evaluation Committee during their visit. The committee members made a point of communicating to us four "distinctive strengths" they observed at AMBS as part of the evaluation process:

- a cohesive group of faculty members who collectively carry the ethos of the school, and a hard-working administration and staff who are committed to the welfare of the seminary;
- the development of organizational structures that foster transparency and

shared governance to a rare degree in institutional life;

- a deeply held institutional commitment to intercultural competence and the dismantling of institutionalized racism as an embodiment of justice- and peace-making;
- a spirit of courage, creativity and experimentation that enables the school to try new endeavors while closing those that should not be continued.

The visit team also offered specific recommendations for reviewing required courses in the areas of ministry practice and for how AMBS gathers and shares quantitative and qualitative information for decision-making. We will provide ATS with an updated financial sustainability plan by November 2021 and a revised educational assessment plan for all degree programs by April 2022.

The rigor of the accreditation process is a gift to us as a higher education institution. We were grateful to have the committee reflect back to us the strengths they saw in us as a theological school within the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition. We will seek to build on what we have learned to strengthen our work in nurturing and preparing leaders for the church and world. •

—*Beverly Lapp, EdD, Vice President and Academic Dean*

### AMBS Window Winter 2020

Volume 30 Issue 1

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Mennonite Church USA and  
Mennonite Church Canada

## BY THE NUMBERS

### Academic year 2019–20

Graduate students: **88**

Journey Missional Leadership  
Development Program participants  
(nondegree): **24**

Men: **60**; Women: **52**

International (outside of the U.S.  
and Canada): **29**  
Canadian: **10**  
U.S.: **73**

Countries represented by the graduate students: **Argentina, Canada, Chile, Ethiopia, France, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, U.S., Zimbabwe**

Four of the 10 Ethiopian students are enrolled in the new online **MA: Theology and Global Anabaptism** (see p. 3).

Locations of Journey participants: **Canada, Southeast Asia, Tanzania, U.S.**

Graduate students by program

- Master of Divinity: **51** (of these, **27** are in the distance-friendly MDiv Connect program)
- Master of Arts degrees: **23**
- Graduate Certificate: **3**
- Nonadmitted students: **11** (includes **5** visiting students from other schools)



**Henok Mekonin of Nazareth, Oromiya, Ethiopia, an MA: Theology and Peace Studies student and MATGA Ethiopia Assistant, talks with MDiv Connect student Josh Landis of Souderton, Pennsylvania. Credit: Peter Ringenberg**

## Fully online MA takes off internationally

In April 2019, in response to a growing demand for online master's degrees, AMBS launched a new fully online **Master of Arts: Theology and Global Anabaptism (MATGA)**, effectively making Anabaptist theological education accessible to people anywhere in the world with a high-speed internet connection.

The first students to enroll were more than 7,500 miles away. Four graduates of **Meserete Kristos College (MKC)** in Bishoftu, Ethiopia, began AMBS's Leadership Education in Anabaptist Perspective (LEAP) orientation course in Semester One and will complete the degree program entirely from Ethiopia.

The students will fulfill the requirements for a customized version of the 46-credit-hour MATGA that AMBS is providing for MKC graduates who are recommended by college administrators.

While MKC offers baccalaureate degrees in Bible and Christian Ministries in both English and Amharic, among other programs, it does not yet offer a master's-level program in Bible, Theology and Peace Studies from an Anabaptist perspective. The college's leaders invited AMBS to help them develop a graduate-level program to educate leaders for the Meserete Kristos Church (the Ethiopian Mennonite Church), expressing a need "for trained leaders and other professionals capable of defending the faith and promoting peace by interfaith dialogue, human rights and interethnic peacebuilding."

The MKC-AMBS partnership was developed by former MKC President **Kiros Teke Haddis**, MKC Board Chair **Kelbessa Muleta** (MDiv 2012) and former AMBS President **Sara Wenger Shenk**, EdD, while the new MATGA was being approved by the Association of Theological Schools, AMBS's accrediting agency. **Emebet Mekonnen**, EdD, MKC MA Program Coordinator, and **Beverly Lapp**, EdD, AMBS Vice President and Academic Dean, have been working together on curriculum arrangements for the partnership.

"Students in the MATGA Ethiopia Cohort will take a combination of contextualized courses that will explicitly engage the content within the Ethiopian context, and regular online courses in which they will interact with AMBS students from North America and other parts of the world," said Lapp. "The general elective courses for the Ethiopia Cohort are carefully selected to also create a focus on peace studies in the curriculum, as requested by MKC leaders."

Of the 16 courses required for the Ethiopian

version of the MATGA, six courses will be offered in a sequence of summer intensive courses held on the MKC campus, to be taught by AMBS professors starting in 2020. These include Proclaiming the Faith; Economic Justice and Christian Conscience; and History of Christianity in Africa. Lapp and Mekonnen anticipate that the first cohort, several of whom are pastors, will be able to complete the degree in three years of study.

**Rebecca Slough**, PhD, AMBS Missional Leadership Development Director, led the orientation course for the first Ethiopia cohort with the help of **Henok Mekonin** of Nazareth, Oromiya, Ethiopia, an MKC graduate who is a current AMBS campus student in the MA: Theology and Peace Studies program. Mekonin is serving as MATGA Ethiopia Assistant to help with communication and intercultural aspects of the program.

MATGA Program Director **Drew Strait**, PhD, Assistant Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins, is the academic advisor for the current Ethiopian students. Additional MKC graduates will join the cohort in Semester Two and will take Anabaptist History and Theology online with **Jamie Pitts**, PhD, AMBS Associate Professor of Anabaptist Studies.

"Anabaptism has grown into a global tradition with adherents in every inhabited continent," reflected Pitts. "This MA is attuned to the tradition's global dimensions to help us understand our past, present and future." •

—Annette Brill Bergstresser

## Fast facts

### MA: Theology and Global Anabaptism

**Who?** Scholars, teachers, pastors and leaders in North America and across the world

**Where?** Online, in your context, with online course formats and interactive live-streaming technology

**How long?** 46 credit hours: four years with part-time study (two courses per semester); fewer with full-time study

#### What will I do?

- Study the biblical, theological and historical foundations of the Anabaptist tradition.
- Analyze how Anabaptism developed in Western and non-Western contexts and interacted with other Christian movements.
- Deepen your faith through spiritual and intercultural formation.

- Gain skills for engaging in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, communicating the relevance of Anabaptist Christianity today, and leading congregations and other peacebuilding organizations and communities.
- Design a program that meets your goals for future study or ministry.
- Access the AMBS Library's electronic Anabaptist theological resources.

**When?** Apply now to start in 2020–21! Scholarships and generous need-based financial aid are available.

**Learn more:** [ams.edu/matga](https://ams.edu/matga)



## Equipped for a changing world

### New and continuing Church Leadership Center programs build on successes

As the educational needs of leaders and learners around the world shift, AMBS continues to explore ways to meet those needs. Since 2000, AMBS's **Church Leadership Center** has offered opportunities for spiritual and theological reflection on leadership and guidance in the wise practice of leadership skills.



**TOP:** Participants in a Journey Weekend Learning Event at AMBS in February 2018. **ABOVE:** Panel discussion at Pastors and Leaders 2019. **Credit:** Jason Bryant

As the Church Leadership Center has grown, it has continued to expand the seminary's reach by providing programs designed to equip active and emerging

leaders across the world in all seasons of their life, said **Jewel Gingerich Longenecker**, PhD, Dean of Lifelong Learning.

"We've focused on creating and improving a range of programs to meet the educational needs of the whole church — promoting and inspiring a biblical vision of effective leadership for a changing world," she said.

Two programs introduced in 2019–20 — **Ministry Integrity Circles** and **Transition to Leadership** — are sponsored by the Lilly Endowment Inc.'s Thriving in Ministry initiative. With the support of this grant, the Church Leadership Center hired **Julia Schmidt** (MDiv 2018), Program Administrator, and **Steve Norton**, BSW, Program Assistant, to administer these new programs.

**Ministry Integrity Circles** bring together pastors four times over one year for ministry reflection to help them reimagine their call to ministry during a time of transition. The program serves two cohorts of six pastors each year, one beginning in the fall and one in the spring.



(l. to r.) **Transition to Leadership** participant **Ben Woodward Breckbill** (MDiv 2017) of Newton, Kansas, and his mentor, **Safwat Marzouk**, PhD, Associate Professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible. **Credit:** Jason Bryant

During a 24-hour retreat in November 2019, the first cohort, which consists of six pastors from Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada, met to discuss current transitions they are facing in their ministry. Two consultants, **Nekeisha Alayna Alexis** (MATS 2008), AMBS Intercultural Competence and Undoing Racism (ICUR) Coordinator, and **David B. Miller**, DMin, Teaching Associate of the Church Leadership Center, guided the group, facilitating a space of trust and

## INVITE AMBS

Would your congregation or organization like to hear a specific professor speak? Would you like to explore a certain topic with guidance from an experienced facilitator? Through **Invite AMBS**, the faculty and staff of AMBS can come directly to you! Let us know your topic and we'll help develop something for you.

### Presenters

- **Nekeisha Alayna Alexis**, MA, Intercultural Competence and Undoing Racism Coordinator
- **David B. Miller**, DMin, Teaching Associate of the Church Leadership Center
- **Bryan Moyer Suderman**, MTS, Teaching Associate of the Church Leadership Center and Advancement Associate for Canada (pictured at left)
- Members of the **AMBS Teaching Faculty**

**Possible topics:** Preaching • Consultation regarding pastoral ministry challenges • Intercultural Competence and Undoing Racism coaching and workshops • Healthy Boundaries Training • Improvisational Leadership: Formation and Practice • Reading the Bible with Jesus workshops • **Find out more:** [amsb.edu/invite](https://amsb.edu/invite)





**Church Leadership Center Team: Front (l. to r.):** Chialis Thuan, Volunteer; Jewel Gingerich Longenecker; Cheryl Zehr, Executive Assistant. **Back (l. to r.):** Nekeisha Alayna Alexis; Ed and Gay Kauffman, Volunteer Coordinators; David B. Miller; Julia Schmidt; Steve Norton. **Not pictured:** Dan Schrock, Bryan Moyer Suderman, Ben Parker Sutter. **Credit:** Perdian Tumanan

vulnerability where pastors could find new insights and support.

**Transition to Leadership** guides recent seminary graduates over a period of two years as they move into a pastoral ministry role. Through one-on-one mentoring, regular gatherings with peers, and learning sessions with consultants, new pastors will find a supportive structure and freedom to learn in ways that are suited to their settings and experiences. The program is designed for cohorts of five people.

Gingerich Longenecker pointed out that these new programs build on the success of current programs. The Ministry Integrity Circles structure draws on the form of the internship courses in the seminary's Master of Divinity program, and the Transition to Leadership structure is similar to that of the nondegree Journey Missional Leadership Development Program.

"We see both programs as empowering pastoral leaders to (re)imagine their calls and ministries so that they can lead their

congregations confidently, joyfully and nonanxiously," she noted.

**Invite AMBS**, another new Church Leadership Center initiative, helps connect congregations and organizations to AMBS by facilitating speaking and consulting engagements with faculty and staff. (See "Invite AMBS" on p. 4 to learn more.)

In addition, the Church Leadership Center continues to offer **Spiritual Direction Seminars** led by **Dan Schrock**, DMin; the distance-friendly undergraduate-level **Journey Missional Leadership Development Program**; six-week online **Anabaptist Short Courses**; and the annual **Pastors and Leaders** conference.

If you or someone from your congregation is interested in participating in any of these programs, consider planning now and requesting that your church include the item/s in its budget. See: [amsb.edu/lifelong-learning](http://amsb.edu/lifelong-learning) •

—Ben Parker Sutter, Church Leadership Center Marketing Coordinator

## BY THE NUMBERS

Academic year 2018–19

 **688**

Total Church Leadership Center participants

 **462**

Number of workshop participants (over 11 events)

 **143**

Number of Pastors and Leaders conference attendees

 **57**

Number of Short Course participants

 **17**

Students in Journey: A Missional Leadership Development Program

 **9**

Number of participants in the Spiritual Direction Seminars

### BUILDING NEW SKILLS

"The [intercultural competence and undoing oppression] workshop with all staff was enlightening, challenging and critical in helping educate and inform us as we move forward."

—Jenna Liechty Martin, Executive Director of Camp Friedenswald, Cassopolis, Michigan, on a session led by Nekeisha Alayna Alexis in October

### ON THE JOURNEY

"I love the interaction, the teachings and the way my thoughts swirl around in new ways. I am working at becoming a student again — this time in a paperless world of technology. I love it."

—Jan Croyle, Journey Missional Leadership Development Program participant from First Mennonite Church of Wadsworth (Ohio)

## AMBS alumni to receive new benefits

Our alumni are our most important influencers of prospective students and are among our most faithful donors, helping to ensure that AMBS can continue to educate and form current and future generations of leaders for the church. In my role as Alumni Director, I'm delighted that AMBS is giving special attention to the benefits we offer our graduates and other alumni (those who have completed 12 or more credit hours of study). Here are some of the benefits we're providing as a way of expressing our gratitude:

### "Alumni and Friends" tours

- Fifteen alumni are participating in **Encountering Egypt: Past and Present**, a learning tour that **Safwat Marzouk**, PhD, Associate Professor of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible, and **Drew Strait**, PhD, Assistant Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins, are leading Jan. 25 – Feb. 8, 2020.
- **Heather Klassen** (MATS 2001) and **Byron Remple** (MACF 2001) will lead an Alumni and Friends tour to **Indonesia** and the **Mennonite World Conference gathering** in July 2021. Heather and Byron served with Mennonite Central Committee in Indonesia for four years immediately after graduating from AMBS. The tour will include connecting with AMBS alumni and their ministries, connecting with Mennonite churches, engaging Indonesian culture, learning about history and current issues, and experiencing the natural beauty of the country. To put your name on the "interested" list, please email [jbjohnson@ambs.edu](mailto:jbjohnson@ambs.edu).

### Graduate discounts for AMBS courses

- AMBS graduates receive a **25-percent discount** on any campus courses they audit (currently \$92 per credit hour instead of the regular audit rate of \$124).
- Graduates may take one course for credit at a **50-percent discount** — a new benefit! Online, hybrid and campus classes are all eligible for this discount.



A cold and snowy day in November was the perfect time to fire up AMBS's new cob pizza oven, a gift of the Class of 2019! This group learned how to use the oven to make personal pizzas (l. to r.): Karen Hinrichs, a visiting church leader from Germany; Ed Kauffman (MDiv 1976), Volunteer Coordinator; Andrew Hudson, student from Oregon; Rianna Isaak-Krauss, student from Manitoba; Benjamin Isaak-Krauss (MDiv 2019), coordinator of the oven-building project; Kristen Swartley, student from Iowa; Janeen Bertsche Johnson (MDiv 1989), Alumni Director; and Andi Santoso, student from Indonesia. The oven is made of a mix of clay, sand and organic matter and is located behind the Student Activity Center, adjacent to the pergola given by the Class of 2017. **Credit:** Andy Brubacher Kaethler, PhD, Associate Professor of Christian Formation and Culture

### Alumni connections

- We're planning to create a password-protected **online directory** where alumni can update their contact information and find that of other alumni.
- Twice a year, we'll distribute **alumni newsletters** by email, featuring news from alumni.
- The **AMBS Alumni Facebook Group** regularly highlights articles by and updates from alumni around the world. If you are an alum and aren't already one of our 630+ group members, ask to join!

We give thanks for our 2,500+ alumni and for the ways in which they are applying their seminary learnings and making a difference across the world.

**To our alumni:** Thank you for your ongoing support of and prayers for AMBS! We are grateful that you not only help identify but also invest in the leaders who are engaging AMBS's resources to strengthen their leadership and ministry skills. We offer you our prayers as well, and we welcome you to share ideas for other ways that AMBS can continue to support you. •

—Janeen Bertsche Johnson (MDiv 1989),  
Director of Campus Ministries, Alumni  
Director and Admissions Associate



# Faculty and staff transitions

The AMBS learning community bid farewell to several employees and welcomed new employees in the summer and fall of 2019. The seminary also implemented some structural changes.

AMBS's **Enrollment and Advancement** departments were consolidated under one director, **Daniel Grimes**, MPA, in 2019. Grimes, former Director of Enrollment and Financial Aid, is Vice President for Advancement and Enrollment in the new structure. Former Interim Director of Advancement **Paula Killough\***, MDiv, is staying on for several months as Interim Advisor to Advancement to assist with the transition.

As part of this shift, Campus Pastor **Janeen Bertsche Johnson\***, MDiv, took on some advancement responsibilities. To offset her workload, which also includes serving as Admissions Associate and Alumni Director, a **Campus Ministries Team** was formed in which she is now Director of Campus Ministries alongside Teaching Faculty members **Rachel Miller Jacobs\***, DMin, Director of Worship, and **Andy Brubacher Kaethler**, PhD, Director of Campus Care.

**Bryan Moyer Suderman**, MTS, of Kitchener, Ontario, began in May as Advancement Associate for Canada, in addition to his existing role as a Teaching Associate of the Church Leadership Center.

**S. Robert (Bob) Rosa**, DMin, ended his time as Admissions Counselor and Student Services Coordinator in June after 12 years of service. Rosa is now Associate Pastor at Clinton Frame Church in Goshen, Indiana.

**Mary Ann Weber\***, MA, began in August as Admissions Counselor and Student Services Coordinator. She has also

worked for MennoMedia and Mennonite Central Committee Great Lakes.

**Krysta Hartman**, MM, ended her roles as Enrollment Specialist and Administrative Assistant for !Explore in July after three years of service. She accepted a position with Goshen High School as Music Accompanist and Music Office Manager.

**Teresa Thompson Sherrill**, MDiv, began in September as Enrollment and Financial Aid Specialist and Administrative Assistant for !Explore. An ordained minister, she served in Japan for more than 20 years with Mennonite Mission Network and Presbyterian Church USA.

With support from a Thriving in Ministry grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc., the **Church Leadership Center** hired staff to administer two new programs, Ministry Integrity Circles and Transition to Leadership.

**Julia Schmidt\***, MDiv, began as Program Administrator in June. She also works as Immigrant Resource Coordinator with the Center for Healing and Hope in Goshen. **Steve Norton**, BSW, began as Program Assistant in September; he also coordinates the new **Invite AMBS** program (see p. 4). Norton formerly co-pastored Goshen City Church of the Brethren and was a pastor/church planter in Germany for 14 years before that.

**Ben Parker Sutter**, BA, an MDiv student from Kansas City, Kansas, is Digital Marketing Manager and Church Leadership Center Marketing Coordinator. He also works as Outreach Coordinator for Rainbow Mennonite Church in Kansas City. •

\*Denotes AMBS graduate  
—Annette Brill Bergstresser



Willard Swartley, PhD, in 1995.  
Credit: J. Tyler Klassen

## Swartley remembered for prolific scholarship, faith and humility

The AMBS community lost a beloved colleague, teacher, mentor and friend on Nov. 6, 2019, when **Willard M. Swartley**, PhD (BDiv 1962), 83, Professor Emeritus of New Testament, died of natural causes in Goshen, Indiana. He had lived with a heart condition for many years.

Swartley, who retired in 2004 but continued to be a regular presence on campus, will be remembered for the ways in which he lived out his deeply rooted faith in Jesus — both within and beyond his academic work. Those who knew him speak of his gentle and humble spirit, his pastoral presence and his consistently encouraging nature, in addition to his intellectual curiosity and numerous contributions to biblical and peace scholarship.

"Willard was an exceptional and widely respected biblical scholar and a committed teacher," said **Beverly Lapp**, EdD, Vice President and Academic Dean. "He lived his faith, looking after those who were struggling in life, and he believed in the work of Christ and the church to increase God's kingdom here and now. He loved AMBS so very much."

From 1978 to 2004, Swartley taught New Testament at AMBS. During his tenure, he also served as Academic Dean and Director of AMBS's Summer School. Swartley was actively involved in fostering scholarship for the church, serving as Director of the Institute of Mennonite Studies (IMS), AMBS's research agency, for more than a decade. At IMS, he was also Editor of the Occasional Papers series and Co-editor of the Studies in Peace and Scripture series. His final book, *Jesus, Deliver Us: Evil, Exorcism and Exousiai* (Cascade, 2019), is the 16th volume in the latter series.

Read the full article about him at [amb.edu/swartley-memorial](https://amb.edu/swartley-memorial). •

—Annette Brill Bergstresser



Top row (l. to r.): Daniel Grimes, Paula Killough, Janeen Bertsche Johnson, Rachel Miller Jacobs, Andy Brubacher Kaethler. Bottom row (l. to r.): Bob Rosa, Mary Ann Weber, Krysta Hartman, Teresa Thompson Sherrill, Ben Parker Sutter. Pictured on pp. 4–5: Bryan Moyer Suderman, Julia Schmidt, Steve Norton.



**Top:** Participants in the international potluck.  
**Left:** MDiv student Ann Jacobs of South Bend, Indiana, leads those present in a song.  
**Credit:** Perdian Tumanan, MA: Theology and Peace Studies student from Surabaya, Indonesia

## Celebrating our cultural diversity

Each Thursday evening, members of the AMBS community gather for a potluck. But in early November, the meal was unlike any other they had created. The Student Life Committee planned an international celebration, and the AMBS community — which represents countries from around the world — responded with a feast of nations.

Following a meal of spring rolls, Irish potatoes, borscht and so much more, attendees were treated to a program of songs, poems, stories and skits from many cultures.

MDiv student **Jacob Curtis** of Dublin, Ireland, noted, “We had people representing Canada, Chile, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Tanzania, Trinidad, the U.S. and Zimbabwe. I love AMBS!” •

—*Janeen Bertsche Johnson, MDiv, Director of Campus Ministries*

## UPCOMING OFFERINGS

### Anabaptist Short Courses

Join the forum discussions in these six-week online noncredit courses to deepen your understanding of Anabaptist history, thought and witness. No grades, no papers!

- **Understanding Anabaptist Approaches to Scripture: What's Different and Why?**, with Loren Johns, PhD: Feb. 12 – March 24, 2020
- **Transforming Congregational Conflict and Communication**, with Betty Pries, PhD: April 15 – May 26, 2020

[ams.edu/shortcourses](https://www.ams.edu/shortcourses)

### Shaping Faith in a Digital Culture

Monday, March 2, 7 p.m. –  
 Thursday, March 5, 12:30 p.m.

A joint conference of **Pastors and Leaders 2020** and **Deep Faith** on recognizing the gospel in our digitally saturated culture. For pastors, lay leaders, youth leaders, parents, educators and those forming faith in the community.

**Speakers:** Karen-Marie Yust, MDiv, ThD, and AMBS faculty members  
[ams.edu/pastorsandleaders](https://www.ams.edu/pastorsandleaders)

### Leadership Clinics 2020

Monday, March 2

- (Re)thinking Sunday School: A vision for faith formation from the makers of the Shine Curriculum
  - Forming Faith in Digital Spaces: Workshop with Scribes for the Reign of God
  - Healthy Boundaries 101 Training
  - Healthy Boundaries 201 Training
- [ams.edu/leadershipclinics](https://www.ams.edu/leadershipclinics)

### Study at a distance

- **Master of Divinity Connect** (online and hybrid courses)
  - **MA: Theology and Global Anabaptism** (fully online)
  - **Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies** (fully or partially online)
- [ams.edu/academics](https://www.ams.edu/academics)

### Study on campus

- **Master of Divinity Campus**
  - **MA in Christian Formation**
  - **MA: Theology and Peace Studies**
  - **Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies** (customizable)
- [ams.edu/academics](https://www.ams.edu/academics)

### AMBS Intensive Term 2020 courses (without prerequisites)

- **Hybrid course** (online May 4 – July 17, with one week on campus: June 1–6): History of Christian Spirituality
  - **Campus Session 1 course** (May 4–21): Religion and Peace Processes
  - **Campus Session 2 courses** (June 8–25): Biblical Storytelling; Practicing and Embodying Nonviolence
- Nonadmitted students get 50 percent off their first course for credit! Also, check out audit options for campus courses.  
[ams.edu/onecourse](https://www.ams.edu/onecourse)

### !Explore: A Theological Program for High School Youth

!Explore gives students in grades 10–12 an opportunity to explore ministry and theology, grow in spiritual practices and biblical engagement and listen for God's call. The summer program includes a 100-hour congregational internship and a Group Experience (June 30 – July 16, 2020). Scholarships are available. Encourage someone you know to apply!  
[ams.edu/explore](https://www.ams.edu/explore)

# Helping others, one stitch at a time

By Maria H. Klassen  
Special to Canadian Mennonite  
ST. CATHARINES, ONT.

**E**ric Berg, a member of the St. Catharines (Ont.) United Mennonite Church, has been making blankets and donating them to MCC for a number of years. It all started years ago when he was helping his wife Marlies, an avid sewer and quilter, cut out squares. When he was cutting faster than she could sew and the squares were piling up, he started sewing them together. In the last seven years he has been making the entire blanket—cutting out the pieces, designing a pattern, sewing the squares together, pinning the backing and batting to the top, and sewing all the layers together.

Eric says it helps to have a floor large enough to lay out the tops. He pins the pieces together with safety pins rather than straight pins, as the straight pins have a tendency to get lost or fall out. His other hints are not to use wrinkly cloth, and to press the squares immediately after sewing them together.

Before he started making blankets, Eric had never sewn anything. Marlies had a sewing machine with speed control which helped him to start slowly and gain confidence. He chuckles as he says that he is sewing faster these days.

Eric and Marlies have also done a specialty quilt or two together. In 2012 they sewed a quilt for the Rankin Cancer Run in St. Catharines using 72 t-shirts. Eric cut the squares and Marlies sewed them together.

A quote from Mother Teresa inspires Eric: “Help one person at a time.” With every blanket he finishes he feels he has helped one person stay warm. And that is MCC’s goal as well, to provide warmth and a tangible message to people that their needs are not forgotten.

In the year 2020 Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) will be one hundred years old. One way MCC is celebrating this

milestone is with The Great Winter Warm-Up project, attempting to collect 6,500 comforters by Jan. 18 so they can be delivered to people affected by disaster and conflict around the world. ☼

PHOTO BY MARLIES BERG

**Eric Berg works on the floor, pinning together the top, batting and lining of a blanket.**



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[www.clinicaltrials.gov](http://www.clinicaltrials.gov) Protocol No. 80-M-0083

# Glimpsing the face of God

*MC Canada International Witness workers see God through the eyes of people who aren't like them*

By Jeanette Hanson  
Mennonite Church Canada

**W**hy are we doing international ministry? As I engage with people in many regional churches I often get this question. It is my favourite question. Don't ask unless you are prepared for my long answer, but I can also point you to the answers of others for a shorter version.

The Ministry Initiative Development Guide for Mennonite Church Canada states: "The primary purpose for any initiative will be related to the creation, resourcing or strengthening of Anabaptist/Mennonite faith communities and our shared commitment to witness to God's work in the world."

I would add to this an important piece that I have learned in years of international ministry: to see God.

Henri Nouwen, the late Dutch Catholic priest, professor, writer and theologian, writes: "Ministry is, first of all, receiving God's blessing from those to whom we minister. What is this blessing? It is a glimpse of the face of God."

Get involved in international ministry to see God through the eyes of people who are not like you. The four stories that follow are glimpses of God being revealed in MC Canada ministries internationally.



PHOTO BY MYRRL BYLER

**Palmer Becker, left, presents a Mandarin version of his Anabaptist Essentials book to Yin Hongtao and Zhang Shaojie.**

## China

History from 500 years ago seems recent in the context of China's 5,000 years. But the excitement produced by Anabaptist study has prompted a group of Chinese Christians to open an Anabaptist study centre where they can encounter more of this teaching.

"We have finally found that our reading of the gospels and looking at the life of Jesus has roots in church history and fellow travellers in this way"

One pastor, whose name has been withheld, says that Anabaptist teaching fits with traditional Chinese culture better than other Christian traditions: "For us, people who are deeply spiritual would never condone violence. The peace teachings of Jesus have been ignored by the Chinese church until now. This has made Christianity at odds with our cultural understandings, and, for many, a foreign religion."

George and Tobia Veith, MC Canada International Witness workers in China, are working with these Christian leaders to translate and write Anabaptist study resources that are helpful and relevant to today's Chinese believers.



PHOTO COURTESY OF  
TOBIA VEITH

**Tobia Veith, centre in blue top with scarf, teaches a group of Chinese women.**



PHOTO BY TOM POOVONG

**The Poovong family moved to Thailand five years ago.**

## Thailand

A celebration took place from Oct. 9 to 11 last year, as the Friends of Grace Church (FGC) Thailand Association opened its new office in Khon Kaen. This celebration brought together five congregations already registered as planted by FGC Thailand and 25 worshipping groups that are not yet registered as churches.

The event was a significant milestone for MC Canada Witness workers Tom and Christine Poovong. Since arriving in Thailand five years ago, they have ministered through church planting, discipleship and income-generation ministries. This event was the first fruits of that labour.

"We have our income-generation ministry for making disciples that will have steady income, so they can give back to their



PHOTO BY TOM POOVONG

**The Friends of Grace Church Association opens its new office in Khon Kaen, Thailand.**

local church,” writes Tom. “Our end goal is to establish an Asian Mennonite peace church that is owned locally, run locally and becomes self-sustainable,”

Located in the northeastern corner of Thailand, where there is a large Laotian population, means that this initiative is also naturally expanding into Laos.

Tom cites Matthew 5:9: “*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God,*” adding, “I am not ashamed to be called Mennonite Christian, even in Asia, because that message of peace that Jesus brought us has transformed my life, making peace with myself, my family, my friends and all people.”

## Korea

It seemed amazing to MC Canada International Witness workers Bock Ki Kim and Sook Kyoung Park, that 200,000 people would accept their invitation to walk for peace near the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea.

Working together with other organizations, MC South Korea planned this walk as part of a nationwide event to mark the first anniversary of the summit between North and South Korea. People formed a human peace chain and carried a three-kilometre-long peace banner.

“It became the event that all people could join,” says Kim. “There was no difference between men and women, old and young, ethnicity, religions, etc. Many people have hope for the peace movement

here in the future.”

Inspired by the peace-chain event, and in order to promote collaboration between peace organizations, Kim contacted eight peace organizations in Korea to create the *Peace Journal*. He is no stranger to this type of publishing, having started the *Korean Anabaptist Journal* seven years ago, after identifying the need for Korean Anabaptists to connect and share resources. The editorial team estimates the readership is around 1,500.

Known as coming from a peace church, Kim is inundated with requests to speak in congregations that want to know what Jesus says about peace.



PHOTO BY BOCK KI KIM

**Mennonite Church South Korea members prepare for a peace march held last April.**



PHOTO COURTESY OF PEACEBUILDERS COMMUNITY, INC.

**‘Our teams at PeaceBuilders Community, Inc., and [Coffee for Peace] are being led, spiritually, to work with leaders of Indigenous Peoples [in the Philippines] . . . This spiritual perspective of partnership governs the inclusive development strategies we practise in the field,’ say Dann and Joji Pantoja, left.**

## The Philippines

Daltu Vic Saway is an elder of the Talaandig Tribe, who has worked in partnership with Coffee for Peace (CFP) and MC Canada International Witness workers Dann and Joji Pantoja since 2012. His community recently committed to enhancing its coffee farming and tree planting on the Mountain of Kitanglad.

CFP started as an income-generating program of PeaceBuilders Community, Inc. It has evolved into a distinct social enterprise, focusing on coffee farmers in Indigenous communities affected by resource-based armed conflicts.

“Our teams at PeaceBuilders Community, Inc., and CFP are being led, spiritually, to work with leaders of Indigenous Peoples who . . . walk with what we mutually understand as the Creator’s just and peaceful statutes, as they serve as stewards of their ancestral domains and as they struggle to realize their right to self-determination,” write Dann and Joji Pantoja. “This spiritual perspective of partnership governs the inclusive development strategies we practise in the field.” ❧

*Jeanette Hanson is the interim director of Mennonite Church Canada International Witness.*

## Calendar

### British Columbia

**Until Feb. 8:** "Faces of Jesus," a Metzger Collection exhibit, at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford. Open Wednesdays, Fridays and the second Saturday of each month, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Feb. 5-29:** MCC B.C. winter banquets: (5) at Kelowna Gospel Fellowship; (7) at Sardis Community Church, Chilliwack; (8) at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond; (14) at South Abbotsford MB Church; (15) at North Langley Community Church, Langley; (21) at North Peace MB Church, Fort St. John; (22) at Westwood MB Church, Prince George; (29) at United Mennonite Church, Black Creek. For more information, visit [mccb.ca/events](http://mccb.ca/events).

**Feb. 28-29:** MC B.C. Lead conference and annual general meeting, at Cedar Valley Mennonite Church, Mission.

### Alberta

**March 20-21:** MC Alberta annual delegate sessions.

**June 5-7:** MC Alberta women's retreat.

### Saskatchewan

**Jan. 30:** Rosthern Junior College is hosting a Turnaround Strategy presentation and reception at Station Arts Centre at 7 p.m. Everyone welcome.

**Jan. 31-Feb. 2:** MC Saskatchewan youth retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre, Waldheim.

**Feb. 29:** Silent retreat at the Ancient Spirals Retreat centre, south of Saskatoon. More details to follow.

### Manitoba

**Jan. 18:** "Great Winter Warm-up" comforter-making event, at North Kildonan MB Church, Winnipeg, beginning at 9 a.m.; in aid of MCC's international relief efforts.

**Jan. 26:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate open house, from 1:30 to 4 p.m.

**Jan. 30-31:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's junior-high students present three one-act plays, at the Centre Culturel Franco-

Manitobain, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.  
**Jan. 31:** CMU campus visit day, at 8:30 a.m.

**Jan. 31-Feb. 1:** Opera and musical theatre workshop, at the Laudamus Auditorium, CMU, Winnipeg, at 10 a.m. each day.

**Feb. 11-12:** ReNew pastors and ministry leaders conference, at CMU, Winnipeg, at 10 a.m. each day. Keynote presenters: Andy Root and Thomas Yoder Neufeld.

**Feb. 22:** Discover Outtatown, an off-campus visit day for prospective students, at CMU, Winnipeg, at 8:30 a.m.

**March 6:** Music therapy coffee house, at CMU's Marpeck Commons, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

**March 17:** Finale of the Verna Mae Janzen music competition, at CMU's Laudamus Auditorium, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

**March 28:** Jazz at CMU, in the Great Hall, at 7 p.m.

**March 29:** Guitar and handbell ensembles, at CMU's Laudamus Auditorium, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

**March 30:** Community Concert Band performance, at the CMU Chapel, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

**March 31:** Open house for prospective students, at CMU, Winnipeg, at 8:30 a.m.

**April 3:** "Spring at CMU," a fundraising event, at CMU, at 7 p.m. Presentation by Mary-Jane McCallum, the 2020 Pax Award winner.

### Ontario

**Jan. 18:** "The church is for belonging: Stories about inclusion, disability and faith," an event for MC Eastern Canada pastors, chaplains and congregational leaders, at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, from 8:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. For more information or to register, visit [bit.ly/2XpYNoZ](http://bit.ly/2XpYNoZ).

**Jan. 30:** MennoHomes annual general meeting at 50 Kent Ave., at 2 p.m. The newest project will be officially announced. Call 226-476-2535 for details.

**Jan. 31-Feb. 1:** Conrad Grebel University College Bechtel Lectures: "Food and faith: Mennonites farming locally and globally." (31, at 7:30 p.m.) Paul Plett screens his film "Seven Points on Earth," followed by discussion and reception. (1, at 9

a.m.) "Farmers breakfast panel." For information or to register for either event, visit [bit.ly/bechtel-2020](http://bit.ly/bechtel-2020).

**Feb. 20-23:** Conrad Grebel University College, in partnership with Aha! Productions, presents "Nonsense: The Musical" in the Great Hall: (20, 21) at 7:30 p.m.; (22) at 2 and 7:30 p.m.; (23) at 2 p.m. Proceeds will go to Grebel's "Fill the table" campaign to expand its kitchen and dining room space. To order tickets online, visit [uwaterloo.ca/grebel/nonsense](http://uwaterloo.ca/grebel/nonsense).

**Feb. 22:** Menno Singers present an afternoon hymn sing, at 3 p.m., and an evening hymn service with Matthew Boutda, the 2018 Abner Martin Scholarship winner, at 7 p.m. Both events at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener. For more information, visit [mennosingers.com](http://mennosingers.com).

**Feb. 23:** Menno Singers presents an afternoon hymn sing, at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, at 3 p.m. For more information, visit [mennosingers.com](http://mennosingers.com).

**March 29:** Menno Singers perform "Creation is a Song: Songs of Water,

Wind and Earth," at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, at 3 p.m. For more information, visit [mennosingers.com](http://mennosingers.com).

**April 26:** Pax Christi Chorale presents the Toronto premiere of "Considering Matthew Shepard," at the George Westin Recital Hall, Toronto, at 3 p.m. For more information, visit [paxchristichorale.org](http://paxchristichorale.org).

**May 2:** Menno Singers perform "Operas in the Aria," with soprano Sarah Dufresne, at First United Church, Waterloo, at 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit [mennosingers.com](http://mennosingers.com).

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



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## Classifieds



**Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church**

**Employment Opportunity**  
**Pastor**

Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, a vibrant urban congregation in Kitchener, ON invites applications for a full-time Pastor position, with a start date in the summer of 2020. The pastor's responsibilities include leadership in the areas of worship/public ministry, pastoral care and administration. The pastor is also the leader of a team, which includes a half-time Pastor of Faith Formation (currently open, to be filled once the full-time Pastor is found), a half-time Missions, Peace and Justice and Outreach Worker and a half-time Music Director. Go to [www.stirlingmennonite.ca](http://www.stirlingmennonite.ca) for more information about the congregation.

More information about the full-time Pastor position can be found at [www.mcec.ca/ministry-opportunities](http://www.mcec.ca/ministry-opportunities). For further inquiries, contact Marilyn Rudy-Froese, Church Leadership Minister, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, [pastoraltransitions@mcec.ca](mailto:pastoraltransitions@mcec.ca)

**Employment opportunity**

**Intercultural Mission Minister**

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada invites applications for Intercultural Mission Minister. The Intercultural Mission Minister will be a leader who inspires and leads pastors and congregations across MCEC to fully embrace the call to be missional church. Primary areas of responsibility will include missional church development, in particular with new Canadian churches and church plants.

The applicant for this full-time position will be a strong team builder and a skilled communicator with excellent listening skills. They will work closely with the Mission Minister leading in the development of MCEC as an intercultural church body. The applicant will encourage integration and interconnectedness within churches by being present to listen, observe and encourage.

Applicants will have a demonstrated commitment to Anabaptist theology and a love for Christ and the church. Experience in pastoral ministry would be an asset. Experience in intercultural settings and the ability to speak more than one language would be an asset.

The start date is flexible but preferably Spring or Summer 2020. Resumés are accepted until January 17, 2020.

For more information, the full position description, or to submit an application, contact:  
Brent Charette, MCEC Operations Minister  
Email: [bcharette@mcec.ca](mailto:bcharette@mcec.ca)




**Bethel Mennonite Church**

**Employment opportunity**  
**Associate Pastor**

Bethel Mennonite Church (Winnipeg, MB) is seeking a full-time Associate Pastor to lead and inspire children, youth, young adult and young family ministries. This position begins summer, 2020. Processing of applications starts on January 31, 2020.

For more information, please visit the Bethel website at [bethelmennonite.ca](http://bethelmennonite.ca) or [mennochurch.mb.ca](http://mennochurch.mb.ca).



**Wellesley Mennonite Church**

**Employment opportunity**  
**Associate Pastor 0.5 FTE**

As Wellesley Mennonite Church discerns God's calling, we are seeking a 0.5 FTE Associate Pastor who will focus on music, worship, youth and children's programs and Christian education.

The successful candidate has, or is receiving, training, or has experience relevant to this position. This individual models a Christian understanding of the Anabaptist Mennonite faith.

The Associate Pastor works within a team environment that is led by the pastor. Start date is negotiable with the goal of filling the position early in 2020. Applications are being accepted until the position is filled.

For more information please go to the Mennonite Church Eastern Canada website [www.mcec.ca/ministry-opportunities](http://www.mcec.ca/ministry-opportunities) or contact [pastoraltransitions@mcec.ca](mailto:pastoraltransitions@mcec.ca).

[www.wellesleymennonite.ca](http://www.wellesleymennonite.ca)

## Invitation

Friends, have you ever heard the literal, audible voice of God? We don't talk much of this sort of thing, but people say it happens. What was the message? How did it change you? This is for my personal interest and will not be shared with others Please submit responses to: [faithlistening@gmail.com](mailto:faithlistening@gmail.com)

## Advertising Information

Contact  
D. Michael Hostetler  
1-800-378-2524 x.224  
[advert@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:advert@canadianmennonite.org)



PHOTO BY JOANNE DE JONG

*Peace Sunday is a chance to remind both adults and children that peace is an action word. Under the direction of Ron and Sue Taniguchi, Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton prepared a puppet feature for the children on Nov. 10, 2019, that encouraged them to not just 'think' about peace but to 'act' as peacemakers. The Taniguchis used the example of eight-year-old Nate Lopaschuk (pictured at right) from Trinity Mennonite Church in De Winton, Alta., who recently used his birthday money and allowance to purchase Mennonite Central Committee school kit supplies for children overseas. With the help of his grandmother, Nate also sewed four kit bags.*



# Photo finish

PHOTO BY LAURA WIEBE

*Mennonite Church Alberta congregations were given the chance to experience the new hymnal, Voices Together, on Nov. 2, 2019, at Calgary First Mennonite Church and on Nov. 3 at First Mennonite Church in Edmonton. Singing was led at both events by Anneli Loepf Thiessen, centre, who is pictured with accompanists Rick Tarnowsky, left, and Chad Miller at the Calgary event.*