

CANADIAN MENNONITE

February 3, 2020 Volume 24 Number 3

MCC celebrates 100 years of global ministry

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EDITORIAL

Limits and surprises

BY VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER



I had other plans for this space; this is not the editorial I was intending to write. But, reading over this issue's proof pages, I saw some unexpected themes emerging.

Several contributors highlight ways in which we humans try to limit the intentions/purposes of our Creator.

Columnist Troy Watson (on page 14) reflects on the common tendency to get attached to our own desired outcomes in a particular situation, thus inhibiting our ability to dwell more deeply in the realm of God's person and purposes.

On page 10, columnist Christina Bartel Barkman tells about a personal dream she and her husband sought to fulfill before they found strength to live instead by more lasting values. An obituary on page 18 tells of a beloved mentor who once challenged a pastor's limited point of view: "So, is it up to you to shorten the arm of God's grace? Is it your call who can experience love and who can't?"

On page 16, a Mennonite who faced criticism for working with a man who had a long military career responded: "... God chooses who he chooses to use. God works in a way that he chooses to work." And a reflection on page 13 tells about a congregation's "painful and humbling journey" towards a new kind of inclusiveness.

Also present in this issue are stories of the unexpected. For example, a pastor who doesn't feel called to preach (page 22). And the centennial of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), an organization born out of a simple response to

human need on the other side of the world (page 24). Undoubtedly, those early organizers of MCC could not have foreseen how their simple humanitarian gestures would blossom into the worldwide ministry that MCC is today.

I'm the kind of person who likes to know what's ahead on the path, to predict exactly what I can expect and what is expected of me. (I've been known to plan for spontaneity!)

As I write, the Joint Council of Mennonite Church Canada is meeting and making decisions on behalf of our denomination. Since the re-structuring of our nationwide body last year, they, along with the Executive Staff Group and executive minister Doug Klassen, have been seeking to discern and participate in what God is doing in our church's new reality. There have likely been some surprises along the way.

I'm the kind of person who likes to know what's ahead on the path, to predict exactly what I can expect and what is expected of me. (I've been known to plan for spontaneity!) Yet, I'm learning to see the Spirit acting in ways that I never could have anticipated. It often demands a conscious effort to be open to the divine purposes that might be revealing themselves in new ways.

The New Testament story of Peter and Cornelius illustrates these themes so well, as John D. Rempel points out in the feature starting on page 4. Both the Jewish apostle and the gentile God-fearer had to stretch their understandings about what was happening in their

individual lives and in their communities. As Rempel states it, "God intrudes on both of them," and they couldn't argue away the picture they saw of God's larger intentions.

As Peter chose new ways of acting, other believers challenged him. His response offered another challenge: "Who was I that I could hinder God?" This question grew out of his attentiveness to the dream given to him by the Spirit and to the "coincidences" taking

place around him. Because of the choices this leader made, the early followers of Jesus began opening their arms and eventually grew into the body that today we call the church.

The God of the Bible often surprised people with new challenges and unexpected opportunities. That same Spirit is at work today in ways we cannot imagine or plan for. The challenge for those first Christ-followers—and for all of us—is to expect the unexpected and to see God's "interference" through the eyes of faith.

In this challenge of discipleship, how is God calling us to respond? What unexpected good might come out of these new situations? Let's resist the temptation to hinder God's work and instead respond with joy and a spirit of adventure.

Correction

An out-of-date Rockway Mennonite Collegiate advertisement appeared on page 28 of our Jan. 20 issue. The correct ad is on page 15 of this issue. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the mix-up. ☺

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A Spanish child benefits from an MCC feeding program in Lyon, France, in 1941. MCC began work with Spanish refugees who had fled to France in the wake of the Spanish Civil War. This relief work continued into the early years of the Second World War. Throughout 2020 MCC is celebrating 100 years of global service. Watch for more historical photos throughout the year in our "Et cetera" space below our columns.

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FEATURE

Who was I that I could hinder God?

Adapted from a sermon on Acts 10-11
preached at Bethany Mennonite Church, Virgil, Ont., on Sept. 23, 2018

By John D. Rempel



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS PHOTO (PUBLIC DOMAIN)

'Vision of Cornelius the Centurion,' by Gerbrand van den Eeckhout (1621-1674). In the collection of the Walters Art Museum.

The Book of Acts is the record of what happened to Jesus' followers when their universe exploded, when the Holy Spirit, the embracing presence of God, came upon them. Their world was turned upside down.

Jesus' friends were baffled by the wildness of God's new presence: The Spirit kept going ahead of them; they couldn't hold the Spirit fast.

The story, as told in Acts 10 and 11, has all these traits: upside down, wild, elusive. In fact, the opening scene of

the drama features not an insider, but an outsider, Cornelius. The writer tells us that he feared God. God-fearers were pagans who had come to believe in the God of Israel and abide by Jewish law. But the Apostle Peter, the other actor in this narrative, was convinced that his part in Jesus' mission was exclusively to bring the Messiah to his own people, the Jews.

Cornelius and Peter lived in separate worlds, like Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada. Left to their own devices, they would have stayed separate. But God intrudes on both of them by means of a vision—a moment in which we see and hear something about God that can't be argued away.

Cornelius is terrified when he hears an angel's voice. The angel commands him to send for a man from the faraway town of Joppa. This man will be God's answer to Cornelius's prayer.

Meanwhile, Peter, who doesn't know that yet, retreats to a quiet place in his house to pray. Suddenly he falls into a trance and sees something like a sheet lowered from heaven filled with unclean animals. He is told to eat them! Peter is revolted by this blatant violation of Jewish dietary law.

Before he has time to make sense out of the vision, there is a knock on his door. Men sent by this strange seeker, Cornelius, prevail upon Peter to go with them. It is only in the course of their journey that Peter begins to grasp the meaning of his trance. His opening words to Cornelius's household show this: *"I truly understand that God shows no partiality."* He is beginning to see that his presence in a Gentile home is not a violation of God's intent but a fulfilment of it.

When Cornelius and Peter meet, it's hard to tell who is more shocked. But both of them are convinced that God is behind this encounter. Meanwhile, Cornelius's whole household has assembled. Peter's first words astonish his hearers: *"I truly understand that God shows no partiality but in every nation anyone who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to him."*

As Peter lays out his novel claim, the



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS PHOTO (PUBLIC DOMAIN)
**'Peter's Vision,' from Charles Foster's
The Story of the Bible from Genesis to
Revelation, 1873.**

Holy Spirit falls on everyone in the room who believes; these outsiders to the covenant begin speaking in tongues just as the messianic Jews had done on the Day of Pentecost! When he gains his composure, Peter cries out, *"How can we withhold baptism?"*

The next episode in this uncanny tale

Peter retells his astonishing encounter to the messianic Jews in Jerusalem. First of all, they scold him for breaking bread with outsiders to the covenant. In response, Peter recites the highlights of his encounter with Cornelius: the vision with the sheet holding unclean creatures, the ominous knock on the door, the journey to Caesarea, and the overwhelming reception he received from his hosts.

He then asks his interrogators a rhetorical question: *"If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we first believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?"*

At first, the Jerusalemites are shocked into silence. But soon they, too, praise God.

Now that we've heard this story, what do we do with it? How can we apply it to our lives today?

First of all, this is a tale of two conversions.

The obvious one is that of Cornelius. We are let in on the secret friendship the Holy Spirit has entered into with him. But Peter also needs to be

converted, because he can't imagine that God has opened the covenant God made with Israel to all people.

The revolution in Peter's ministry happens when he learns that Cornelius is not an outsider to whom he can be indifferent, but someone in whom God's Spirit is at work. He learns that nobody whom God has created is unclean or beyond the call of God's grace. True evangelism happens when both the seeker and the witness are changed by meeting each other. The church is not "them" becoming more like "us," but all of us becoming more like Christ.

As I prepared this sermon, I heard Cornelius and Peter's adventures as if for the first time. Their excitement was contagious: God is at home in the hearts of everyone who will let him in. Witnessing to Christ is not a matter of trying to talk someone into something. Rather, it is being ready for a moment of truth when we put a name to the stirrings in someone's heart.

From contagious excitement to troubling issues

But the words of the church's witness often seem hollow. Too much talk about God trivializes God's reality. How on earth can we say something new about Jesus that people haven't heard a hundred times in church or on religious radio?

In our society, religion is advertised like cars and appliances. Those of us who have grown up in the church know its—and our—lapses into self-righteousness and hypocrisy. We squirm at calls for evangelism that seem triumphalistic and condescending. We feel that the least we can do in reclaiming some level of integrity is to keep our mouths shut. There are times, surely, when the truest witness is silence.

Mennonites are good at knowing that our witness to the gospel begins with how we live, before we talk. In fact, most of our confession of Christ consists of patient and persistent love of friend and enemy.

But then there are times when the Spirit prepares someone in our life to hear in words the reason for the hope

that is in us—someone like Cornelius. If we remain sensitive to the stirrings of the Spirit, we will know those times. If we remain silent, don't we leave the impression that we're good enough in how we live that our way of living will always point to God? The liberating message of the New Testament is not that we love others because we're good, but because we're loved.

Second, attempts to persuade someone of my truth seem disrespectful to people of another religion or of no religion, people with whom we work and live every day, or members of our family. Shouldn't we respect people different from ourselves and not suspect them until they become like us?

This is the really tough question. Here I find a tension between two truths that can't be let go of. God's Spirit stirs in all people, so we should look for stirrings of the Spirit in people of other religions, in their prayers and in their love of justice and mercy. Only God is their—and our—final judge. Our role is that of witnesses. If, like Peter and Cornelius, the Holy Spirit has shown us Christ as a living presence in our lives, we cannot help but reflect that in how we live and what we say out of gratitude for the gift of Christ.

Holding this tension in life giving ways

I have seen the Spirit call a Jew to Jesus. When I was the minister of a Mennonite congregation in New York City, we had a member named David. He once told me his faith story. He had been a secular Jew with no interest in religion. One day, as he was in the hospital recuperating from a cancer operation, he saw Jesus standing at the foot of his bed, radiating love and saying to him, "I want you to follow me."

David told me that the call was irresistible. At the same time, coming to faith in Christ did not lead him to abandon Judaism or to doubt God's covenant with the Jews. Yet, when he encountered people unmistakably looking for something they had not yet found, he risked a witness to Jesus as Messiah.

I have read stories of Islamic believers having a similar unbidden mystical encounter with Christ.

If we hold on to this tension, we will honour the faith of others while being a sign that Christ is alive—by our deeds, our words and our silences—to those who seek him.

The more urgent concern of the church's mission, however, is not people with another faith, but people with no faith, no community. In our secular society, the majority of people make no religious claims. When we see them love mercy and do justice, let us make common cause with them. When we see them broken by injustice, alone in the world, or seduced by things that cannot satisfy, let us point them beyond themselves—and ourselves—to the One in whom all things hold together. It is not ourselves we proclaim, but the One whom death could not hold.

I long to share the excitement of Peter and Cornelius when God turned their world upside down by leading them to others who were waiting for someone to tell them about God.

There are no pet formulas, no clever tactics, to being a witness. It calls for a way of living that listens for the promptings of the Spirit, either directly or through others. As we listen for the Spirit, let us remember that there are times for deeds, times for silence, times for words. Let us remember that there are many Corneliuses, or Cornelias, in the world, women and men in whom the Spirit of God is at work, waiting for some Peter, or Petra, to be a sign of Christ.

How will we respond the next time the Spirit says to us what she said to Peter: *"Look, these people are searching for you. Now go down and go with them, for I have sent them."*

Will we turn back in fear or will we take the risk? ☞



John D. Rempel is a Senior Fellow at the Toronto Mennonite Theological Centre.

☞ For discussion

1. Have you ever had an angel of God speak to you, or heard someone else describe such an experience? Why might that event be disorienting? Does an experience with the Holy Spirit ordinarily lead to having the world turned upside down?
2. Why were Cornelius and Peter so shocked to meet each other (Act 10:24-45)? What finally persuaded Peter that it was right to baptize non-Jewish believers? Do these kinds of interventions by the Holy Spirit still happen in the church today?
3. John D. Rempel writes, "Too much talk about God trivializes God's reality," and, "We squirm at calls for evangelism that seem triumphalistic and condescending." Do you agree? Have we become too reluctant to talk about our faith? Can silence be an important form of witness? How do we know when is the time to keep silent and when is the time to speak?
4. How can we encourage our congregations to listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit? Are we willing to take a risk if we do hear the voice of the Spirit?

—By Barb Draper

/// Readers write

✉ Old photo brings back 'fond memories'

Re: "Moment from yesterday" photo of the Rosengart church in Poland.

The picture brought fond memories back. It was my home church. I was baptized in it. I think the church was the only Mennonite church with a separate bell tower. I once pulled the rope in it to get the bells swinging and ringing.

The last leader was Ältester Heinrich Wiehler, a relative of mine.

The final Mennonite service was held for a small six-person congregation by Elder Cornelius Dirksen in August 1945. Russian occupation soldiers interrupted our service and a drunken Russian harassed him, pulling his beard and pushing him around. He had stayed behind in Prussia to care for the scattered Mennonites who did not succeed in fleeing from the Russians during the Second World War.

The church is now an active Polish Catholic church. The Polish priest and mayor let us conduct a short service in the church during a visit in 1999, singing as in olden times our favourite hymns. They still do this.

Frank Wiehler, a retired assistant of the European parliament, is now in contact with the Polish church in Rosengart and arranges visits for Mennonites who are interested in Prussian Mennonite history. He also cares for graves and tombstones of former congregational members buried in the cemetery.

HELMUT LEMKE, VANCOUVER

✉ Intervention not a substitute for belonging

Re: "Empower children...end poverty," Dec. 9, 2019, page 4.

Thank you to Derek Cook for the timely and passionate plea to end poverty, and thank you to *Canadian Mennonite* for making it your feature.

Cook covers a lot of ground about the state of Canadian and world poverty and the potential solutions. He mentions that "one of the important aspects of child poverty is that it disrupts what should be healthy dependent relationships." I agree. As a foster and adoptive parent (with Dina) and with involvement with housing and related social programs, I have come to realize that, in spite of massive government intervention, including money, programs and people, we seemingly can't get our collective heads around the fact that intervention is not a substitute for belonging. Shelter, food and a social worker are not enough.

A recent Vancouver Foundation study on youths who had aged out of care asked the youths whether or not they had a "significant other" in their lives. Shockingly, more than 70 percent said "no." This should bring us to tears! Maybe this is what Jesus was talking about.

We forget that of all of God's creatures, we are the smartest and most curious but the least successful at growing up without family!

—PETER DUECK, VANCOUVER

✉ MCC leaders pen letter to their Iranian friends

We write to you in solidarity and friendship at a time of great military tension. With the biblical prophet, we lament that "destruction and violence are before [us]; strife and contention arise" (Habakkuk 1:3, NRSV). As followers of Jesus, we are deeply committed to peace.

Since 1990, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) staff and friends have been privileged to enter with you and other Iranians into spaces of dialogue, learning and friendship. Over the years, our understanding and commitment to the gospel have been deepened by conversations with you about theology and faith. MCC staff have seen first-hand the beauty

(Continued on page 8)



MCC FILE PHOTO

Mohammad Ali Shomali, director of the International Institute for Islamic Studies, left, and J. Ron Byler, MCC U.S. executive director, display a wall hanging Shomali gave to MCC. Byler was part of a 2014 MCC learning tour that visited MCC partners and friends in Iran.

(Continued from page 7)

and richness of your ancient culture.

Throughout all these years, there has also been strife and tension between the governments of the United States and Iran, which now have reached an unprecedented level. Our hearts are deeply troubled by the aggressive actions taken by the U.S. government and the potential for this to continue to escalate into further violence. We recognize the fear and grief this is causing for many Iranian families across the globe.

We continue to pray and work fervently for peace and understanding between our countries and peoples. We are actively encouraging actions that take us away from violence and toward a negotiated peace. We know that our well-being is inseparable from yours.

“Human beings are members of one another / All created from the same precious jewel. / When, in the course of life, / Pain comes to a member, / The other members cannot remain at peace. / When you do not grieve at the suffering of others / You cannot be called by the name ‘human’” (Persian poet Sa’adi Shirzai, 1210-91).

“Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. . . . If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all” (Romans 12:15-16, 18).

In faith and hope for a more peaceful future.

J. RON BYLER, MCC U.S. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
RICK COBER BAUMAN, MCC CANADA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Clement—Ryan Wayne (b. Feb. 20, 2019), to Olivia and Keven Clement, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Dueckman—Charlotte Hope (b. March 29, 2019), to Sam and Tamara Dueckman, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Dueckman—Zachary Michael (b. Nov. 23, 2019), to Noel and Stephanie Dueckman, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Friesen—Brielle Helene Marie (b. Dec. 26, 2019), to Evan and Erika Friesen, Bergthaler Mennonite, Altona, Man.

Lebold—Axel Elgin Douglas (b. Nov. 23, 2019), to Alexandra and Jonathan Lebold, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Rempel—Nora Margaret (b. Jan. 1, 2020), to Garth and Jackie Rempel, Sterling Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Schmucker—Anika Mae Braun (b. Jan. 10, 2020), to Damaris and David Schmucker, Toronto United Mennonite.

Thwaites—Luke Reginald (b. Nov. 30, 2019), to Graham and Emma Thwaites, Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Vincent—Thaddeus Jamal (b. July 14, 2019), to Jamie and Malcolm Vincent, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Winter—Alida Rose (b. July 5, 2019), to Ben and Sarah Winter, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Baptisms

Micah Brandt, Emma Nickel—Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C., Dec. 29, 2019.

Deaths

Bluhm—Elma (nee Dyck), 85, (b. May 18, 1934; d. Dec. 26, 2019), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Boldt—Gerhard Werner, 87 (b. Feb. 12, 1932; d. Dec. 22, 2019), Calgary First Mennonite.

Enns—Peter, 85 (b. Aug. 23, 1934; d. Dec. 31, 2019), Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Friesen—David, 87 (b. Feb. 16, 1932; d. Jan. 2, 2020), Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man.

Hoch—Elisabeth (Neufeld), 99 (b. June 6, 1920; d. Jan. 9, 2020), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Klassen—Helen (nee Kehler), 89 (b. July 1, 1930; d. Nov. 22, 2019), Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Kruger—William, 88 (b. Oct. 27, 1931; d. Jan. 7, 2020), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Neufeld—Abram, 97 (b. Feb. 14, 1922; d. Sept. 21, 2019), Bergthaler Mennonite, Altona, Man.

Peters—Anna (Thielmann), 74 (b. April 12, 1945; d. Nov. 23, 2019), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Shantz—Marlene (Bast), 77 (b. July 12, 1942; d. Nov. 12, 2019), Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Sommerfeld—Olga (Kumpolt), 82 (b. Jan. 24, 1937; d. Dec. 28, 2019), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Zacharias—Frank, 97 (b. Jan. 13, 1922; d. Dec. 17, 2019), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

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

FROM OUR LEADERS

Expressions of encouragement

Kathy Giesbrecht

Over the years, I've attended many youth gatherings, even organized a few. But none were like the one I attended on Sept. 20, 2019, when the Manitoba Youth for Climate Action called students to gather for a Die-In in Winnipeg.

In solidarity, I and a number of Mennonite Church Manitoba pastors stood on the sidelines as hundreds of youth gathered, including a number of youth from our congregations, and "died" together. After a few minutes of lying on the ground motionless, they then rose up singing, clasping hands and swaying in mournful motion.

As I witnessed, I wept.

This scene, along with the stories I hear from youth, parents and pastors, have caused me to ask a number of questions: What do our children need from us in these days? What do they need to hear and experience in our congregations? What is ours to live and give?

As I've walked with these questions, responses have emerged both from within me and from the voices that surround me. Within I hear: Do your

homework; expand your knowledge; seek wisdom from people who have given themselves to understanding the changes and the consequences; and, most of all, listen to young people.

So I have set my feet on this path.

I recall a conversation I had in the summer with a high school graduate. I asked, "When you learn about some of the changes happening, what feelings begin to arise?" Her response: "It's frustrating to me when adults do not take what is happening seriously. Don't they think about their grandchildren?"

Sobering words that I need to carry within me.

This past fall, in an effort to hear voices of wisdom, I attended an evening lecture at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg entitled "And his hands prepared the dry land: Political theology of climate change." It was there that I heard the words "faith, hope and love." This was a framework of response offered to us by David Widdicombe, and it has stayed with me, in particular his words about love: "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." (See more at bit.ly/37gOYOK/.)

Encouragement can take many expressions, and I am trusting that our congregations will exercise their imaginations to find real ways to offer the maximum amount of encouragement, to love our children in ways they most need from us at this time.

One image that comes to me is to have our children experience our congregations as "living labs of creative hope," bodies of faith where lament leads to learning, anxiety leads to hopeful invention, fear leads us to trust in Jesus, and our life together is permeated by love.

May the Spirit make us bold in embracing the faith, hope and love that is ours to live and to give. ❧



Kathy Giesbrecht is the associate director of MC Manitoba's Leadership Ministries.

A moment from yesterday



In 1944, Cornelius Penner was separated from his wife and four children in Poland. He was sent to a German work camp while the rest of the family was taken to Siberia and later Tajikistan. Cornelius came to Winnipeg in 1949, and worked at the *Mennonitische Rundschau* newspaper. He never gave up trying to be reunited with his family, founding the Canadian Committee for Reunification of Families Separated by the 2nd World War. In a daring attempt, he secured a reporter's pass to a United Nations event in New York, where Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev would attend. On Sept. 23, 1960, Penner, foreground left, picked his opportunity to approach Khrushchev to give him a petition to release his family. But within a few feet of Khrushchev, a UN security agent came between them and a Russian agent behind the UN man grabbed the petition. Khrushchev, third from right, looked on with concern. In 1965, Penner's wife Maria immigrated to British Columbia, and two of four children followed in 1972. Cornelius died in Abbotsford, B.C., in 1973.

Text: Conrad Stoesz
Photo: Joel Landau /
United Press International



archives.mhsc.ca

THIRD WAY FAMILY

Giving up a dream

Christina Bartel Barkman

I didn't make New Year's resolutions this year but I definitely jumped into this new decade with a challenge to choose what matters most to our family.

My husband and I came incredibly close to buying our dream house, and then, at the last hour, with all our number-crunching and life-planning efforts exhausted, we gave it up. With tears in my eyes, we told our friend, the owner of the most charming old house in our town, that we had to back out of this amazing opportunity. It was with heavy hearts, yet sound minds, that we had to choose between the dream house and the life we have always felt called to.

Despite the years of living overseas as missionaries, and many financial, family and comfort sacrifices, we had never, before this house, felt so pulled in two directions, so torn between something we want and the way we want to live. Moving to the Philippines with two kids under 2 wasn't actually a hard decision; we were excited and more than willing to start the adventure. We knew the sacrifices we were making but we never hesitated.

We thought this dream house would still fit into our dream life, but once we realized some unfortunate added costs, the numbers just didn't add up. We

weren't willing to give up valuable volunteer work for paid work, nor were we willing to sacrifice days at home with my toddler, after-school pick-ups and playtime for daycare, and more work days.

A friend asked me, after I shared all about our house ordeal, if we had prayed about this decision and if God had showed us an answer. I told her, yes, we had prayed about it, but I also shared that we didn't wait for a clear answer from God; we didn't offer him a fleece or wait on a sign.

There have been times when special moments helped us to make decisions, when paths coincided so well that it felt God was explicitly leading us in a specific direction. Like the time, a day after our move home from the Philippines, when my husband ran into the former pastor of the church he was candidating at. It felt divine that he happened to drive by the church manse at the exact hour the former pastor was moving out and driving to the Prairies. Meeting the former pastor, praying together, and getting an unexpected tour of the house as the couple packed their final belongings, was so special. It was a gift from God and gave us extra clarity in our decision.

But this time, throughout our decision

process, in many ways we felt led to buying the house. Yet when we realized the sacrifices we'd have to make in order to live on this beautiful 0.2-hectare lot, we knew it wasn't the path we should choose. We knew what matters to us, and we knew that these values we carry, coming from a lifetime of commitment to Jesus, would always come first.

My husband and I stumbled into this new decade with a reminder of what matters to us, a reminder to choose a life of service to others, simplicity and commitment to family. I feel as if we inadvertently were asked to decide our path for the next decade. Welcome to 2020, now make a decision on what matters most!

I didn't feel like I needed to make resolutions this year, but I know I have to live out the one big decision that led us into the new decade. I choose to serve God by serving others—my family, the church, those in need—and our life path will always be guided in the direction of this calling. ☿



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 blankets for Japan

A Japanese family received this Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) blanket sometime around 1950. In the 1940s, MCC primarily worked in Europe, helping resettle Mennonite refugees, but then MCC joined 12 other church agencies providing rehabilitation assistance to Japan. From November 1946 to June 1952, the Licensed Agencies for Relief in Asia distributed about \$400 million worth of relief supplies to 14 million people.

Source: MCC / Chinese newspaper photo



 THE CHURCH HERE AND THERE

'We discuss and we divide'

Arli Klassen

In early December, I received an email from Jeremiah Choi, our Mennonite World Conference (MWC) regional representative for Northeast Asia, about the situation in Hong Kong, where he lives and pastors: "Please pray for Hong Kong churches for unity. We were not used to discussing political issues. Now we discuss and we divide. Some people left their churches because the churches were on the government side while some left their churches because their churches were on the side of the demonstrators. Please, pray for the Hong Kong churches, for their unity."

We have seen the news from Hong Kong over the last six or seven months. Stable and prosperous Hong Kong has experienced unprecedented violence, escalated by both protesters and the police. Families are divided. Churches are divided. People do not agree on the end goals nor on the tactics to achieve them.

MWC sent a global delegation to Hong Kong in December, to offer solidarity to the three Mennonite congregations there, and to respond to the request for further perspectives on Anabaptist peacemaking.

And so we add prayers for the churches in Hong Kong to our prayer list.

But maybe we here in Canada should

be asking for prayers from our global Anabaptist family as well. Mennonite Church Canada has passed various controversial resolutions over the decades, with one in 1977 affirming the rights of Indigenous people in regards to their land. And yet we remain divided as we think about protesters and the government/police around pipelines, land claims and hereditary chiefs, particularly in British Columbia.

Some of us join the protesters, and many are willing to support them. Some of us support the government and the police. We do not agree on the end goals nor on the tactics to achieve them. And we worry.

MC Canada recently sent out this prayer request: "Please pray for a restorative response and a just peace. In the days ahead, solidarity actions and prayer vigils in support of the Wet'su-wet'en will be taking place across Canada."

How are we being the church together when we disagree deeply on what is the just and right thing in our society around a specific political issue, and the tactics to work toward that goal? It might be easy to pray for the church in Hong Kong, but it becomes much harder when the divisive issues are right

here at home. Can we find a third way where each and every one of us acts in ways that point to the kingdom of God?

My husband Keith Regehr and I were members of an Anglican church in Canada and in Lesotho for about 10 years, and we developed appreciation for weekly communion. This practice is far from our Mennonite tradition of taking communion so seriously that it is celebrated only a few times each year.

But since the 2008 elections in the United States, there are Mennonite churches that led the way on organizing "Election Day Communion." Some Canadian congregations did the same for our national elections in 2019. These congregations celebrate communion together in order to affirm that we are together in Christ no matter how we vote or how much we disagree politically.

Mennonite churches in Hong Kong and Canada are not so very different from each other. We discuss. Some of us are called to action. We disagree, sometimes intensely. We pray for the protesters and for the government. We act for peace. And we celebrate communion together because we are the body of Christ. Together. ☺



Arli Klassen is a member of First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont.; moderator of MC Eastern Canada; a member of the

MC Canada Joint Council; and on staff at MWC. In this column she speaks only for herself.

 Et cetera

The Mennonite, Mennonite Mission Network launch Spanish-language podcast

For those who want to nibble sound bites for the soul while sipping evening tea with friends, listening to a new Spanish-language podcast, *Merienda Menonita* (bit.ly/2RcxCwo), may be the perfect match. The new podcast, named after the Spanish term for a light dinner or tea in the evening, includes such episodes as "What does it mean to be an evangelical Anabaptist?" "Anabaptism and creation care," and "The reality of the Latin American context."

Source: Mennonite Mission Network / Photo by Jon Carlson



Sharing food and conversation combine in a Latin American merienda. A new Spanish podcast, Merienda Menonita, seeks to share more broadly conversations on matters of faith and life, as close friends would around a table.

VIEWPOINT

Mennonites and deforestation

John D. Roth

On Oct. 18, 2019, the Amazon Conservation Association, a highly regarded group devoted to the preservation of the Amazon rainforest, published a report entitled “Mennonite colonies: New deforestation driver in the Amazon.”

The report included time-lapse satellite photographs from 2017 to 2019 that reveal with graphic clarity the steady encroachment on the western Amazon rainforest by three traditionalist Mennonite colonies in Peru and Bolivia. According to the analysis, two relatively new colonies in Peru—Tierra Blanca and Masisea—were responsible for the deforestation of 2,500 hectares since 2017. An older colony—Río Negro—in the department of Beni, Bolivia, has clear cut about 5,000 hectares since 2017.

To be sure, these three colonies represent a small fraction of a much larger problem. In 2018, an estimated 121,500 hectares were deforested, with most of the problem focused on illegal gold mining or logging operations. But the rapid expansion of traditionalist Mennonite colonies in Mexico, Paraguay, Bolivia and Peru is having an environmental impact.

Over the past several years, thanks in part to my work with Mennonite World Conference (MWC), I have received nearly a dozen emails from people who have become aware of Mennonite complicity in environmental degradation in Central and South America.

For more than a decade, for example, Mennonite settlements in the state of Chihuahua, Mexico, have faced public criticism for the rapid decline in the water table due to their irrigation practices. *The Guardian*, a British newspaper, has featured several articles sharply critical of the rapid expansion of Mennonite-owned cattle ranches into the Paraguayan Chaco. In 2014, several Old Colony Mennonite leaders in

Campeche, Mexico, spent time in jail for unauthorized clearing of land. And environmental groups elsewhere in the Yucatan have raised additional concerns about Old Colony Mennonite charcoal production and use of pesticides.

Nearly always, the messages are accompanied with a sense of outrage. Someone, the argument goes, should put a stop to this.

These concerns are not misplaced, especially given our global environmental crisis. But before we speak too loudly in accusatory tones to our Mennonite cousins, we should spend a long moment in reflection and confession. After all, most of us are also living on land that at one time was “wilderness.”

In our American mythology, Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox are regarded as heroes for their logging prowess. For Mennonites who trace their ancestry in North America to 18th- or 19th-century immigrants, our great-grandparents staked claims in the westward expansion. At family reunions, we often honour their backbreaking work of removing stumps, draining swamps, plowing the prairies and converting vast acres of wilderness into land suitable for farming.

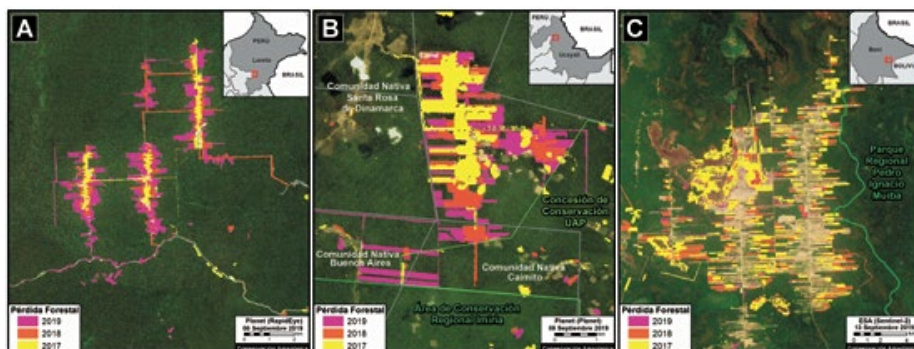
Many of us are the heirs and

economic beneficiaries of those practices. We simply have the good fortune of being a century removed from the circumstances of the Mennonites who are now doing the same thing in Tierra Blanca, Masisea and Río Negro.

Without a doubt, the loss of the Amazonian rainforest is a profound tragedy. But even as we speak out against further deforestation, we should do so with a certain humility. The various groups of Mennonites who have been in the news recently are not uniquely complicit in the environmental crises of our time. Like people around the world, they are trying to feed their families.

In many regards, their efforts to do so by wresting resources from the natural world are no different from the Iowa farmer or the Kansas wheat producer, or, if we are honest, from the rest of us whose standard of living has a profound environmental impact, albeit one that does not show up with the same stark clarity of a satellite image. ❧

John D. Roth is secretary of MWC's Faith and Life Commission. Originally published in the December 2019 issue of The Mennonite. Reprinted with permission of the author.



AMAZON CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION MAPS (MAAPROJECT.ORG/2019/MENNONITE)

Deforestation in three Peruvian colonies, from 2017 to 2018, from left to right: Tierra Blanca, Masisea and Río Negro.

CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTION

Calling a pastor

Jana Lepp

Toronto United Mennonite Church celebrated with Peter Haresnape, on Jan. 12, as he was installed as pastor and licensed towards ordination with Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. He joined Michele Rizoli on our congregation's pastoral team last October, when our congregation affirmed and welcomed him with resounding applause and palpable joy.

It is worth remembering that, not that long ago, our congregation would not have been in a place to recognize the depths of Peter's gifts and his ability to pastor our community.

Peter is well known as an engaging preacher who challenges us to see the gospel and our world in new ways. He is regularly asked to preach, teach and

It is worth remembering that, not that long ago, our congregation would not have been in a place to recognize the depths of Peter's gifts and his ability to pastor our community.

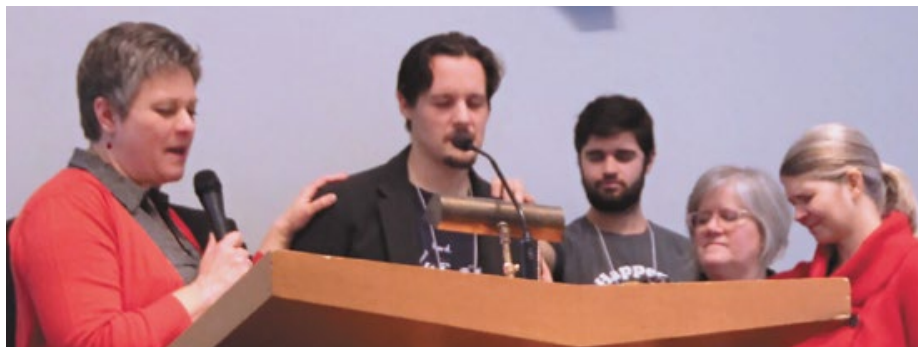
lead at other churches and organizations, both Mennonite and in the broader ecumenical world.

He led international delegations exploring Indigenous solidarity with Christian Peacemaker Teams and helped to make space for marginalized and homeless people with the Church of St.-Stephen-in-the-Fields.

As a founding member of Cahoots, a Christian festival of faith, justice and do-it-yourself, he has helped people of all ages seek what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

And as part of our congregation for the past nine years, he has brought this conversation to the junior youth, in particular, as well as others in the church.

He puts his faith into action, and, with a calm, generous and thoughtful



TORONTO UNITED MENNONITE CHURCH PHOTO

Peter Haresnape, second from left, is pictured at his installation and licensing toward ordination service at Toronto United Mennonite Church on Jan. 12. Also pictured, from left to right: Marilyn Rudy-Froese, MC Eastern Canada's church leadership minister; pastoral staff members Cedric Martin and Michele Rizoli; and Alicia Good, pastor of North Leamington United Mennonite Church, who preached at the installation service. Good was a former pastor of Toronto United Mennonite.

spirit, he has an uncommon way of helping each person he meets to feel inspired.

The congregation has walked through a painful process where, for many reasons, we did not affirm LGBTQ+ persons in positions of leadership. We have lost many friends and leaders during that journey—deeply Christian, loving children of God. We acknowledge that we have participated in unjust and oppressive practices that have caused harm to others. As God has led us to a point of understanding our wrongdoing, we know that we must act intentionally to repair and heal as we move forward.

This painful and humbling journey is not the reason we called Peter to be our pastor. It is, however, the reason why we are now able to receive his call to

ministry with gratefulness and joy.

The result is that Peter holds the remarkable position of being the first openly gay, married pastor at our church, and one of the first openly LGBTQ+ pastors in the Mennonite

church across Canada. This milestone is momentous, but by no means the end of our journey. We have further work to do in becoming a more just, loving and inclusive community.

Toronto United Mennonite is trying to be intentional about appreciating the nuanced differences within the congregation, respecting and challenging one another as we work as a community to discern what God has in store for us.

Peter recently shared with the congregation that he comes to the pastoral role here with an openness to seeing what the Spirit intends for this time and place.

We find ourselves called to continually grow into the church that God is wanting us to be, to seek out meaning amid the busyness of our world, and always to reflect the love that God shows to us. ❧

Jana Lepp is a long-time Toronto United Mennonite Church member; she currently sits on the church board.

LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Dwell in, not on

Troy Watson

Scripture encourages us to bring our requests to God in prayer. The problem is when we get attached to our desired outcome, which we usually do, resulting in our joy, peace and contentment becoming dependent on things turning out the way we want them to.

This is why we lose our peace and joy so often. We make them dependent on getting our desired outcome. Many people lose their faith for the same reason. I've heard countless stories of people abandoning Christianity because they prayed and God didn't answer the way they'd hoped. This way of praying turns prayer into a Christianized version of rubbing the magic lamp so God the genie pops out to grant our wishes.

I've found true prayer is more like a game of Jenga than releasing a genie. When I bring my requests to God, they rise with expectation like a tower of blocks. Prayer continues as God and I take turns picking that tower apart until it collapses. When the tower of attachment to my desired outcome finally collapses, I'm set free—free to receive God's peace, joy and hope no matter what happens, regardless of how my prayer is answered.

This is one of the purposes of prayer: to be set free from attachment. This

kind of prayer is an intentional process, though. It's hard work. Sometimes it takes a long time for that tower to fall. Sometimes it happens quickly, like with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. He brings his request to God, saying, "God, take this cup from me." Then he immediately lets any attachment to his desired outcome crumble, saying, "Not my will but your will be done." Jesus shows us that prayer is about tuning into God's desired outcome rather than convincing God to get on board with ours.

A few years ago, I was on a spiritual retreat, asking God to help me figure out how to deal with a particular problem. Each day I prayerfully came up with a plan and presented it to God. Each day God took my plan apart like a Jenga tower, until it collapsed. This happened each day for four days. On the fifth day these words came to me: "Let it go. Dwell in me, not on your problem."

I realize this isn't a groundbreaking insight. It's essentially a re-wording of the familiar cliché, "Let go and let God." But in that moment I was able to receive this message on a deeper level. As I focused on dwelling in God's presence, instead of dwelling on my problem, my body relaxed. I felt light. I exploded with confidence that God would guide me even though I didn't yet have the

solution I was looking for.

Like most people, I have a tendency to dwell on problems, issues, hardships and challenges. I seem to think that the more I dwell on them, the more likely I'll come up with a solution. It rarely works out that way.

What I've learned since my retreat is, that when I start dwelling on something, I know I have to drop "it" before I can properly deal with "it"—whatever "it" is. To drop or let go of a problem, issue or challenge, means to stop holding on to my desired outcome in the situation. Letting go is choosing to trust God even if the issue or problem never changes or goes away. It's choosing to find peace, joy and fulfilment in God alone, not in solutions to problems or by eliminating hardships or adversity.

When I do this, I'm set free from entanglement, enmeshment, entitlement, egoism and expectations, which enables me to see more clearly. Problems and issues often disappear. Things that seemed threatening or intolerable a few minutes prior suddenly become insignificant and small. They grow dim in the light of God's glory and grace.

This doesn't mean my problems go away. It just means I'm now in a better place to discern whether the problem needs a solution or whether it is something I need to accept as is. I've found that only after I drop "it" am I able to see if I need to pick "it" back up and deal with "it." I often discern that I still need to deal with certain problems and issues. The gift is that when I'm dwelling in God's presence, rather than on the problem, I'm in a much better state of being able to deal with "it." ❧

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Troy Watson is slowly learning to "dwell in, not on."



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PEOPLE

New vision, new life

Pastor brings eyeglasses to communities around the world

By Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe
Manitoba Correspondent

Adjust the dial. Pick a colour. Pop, snap. A new pair of glasses is ready to wear in five minutes.

This is the project of Global Vision 2020 (GV2020), an organization based in the United States, that works internationally to screen vision and distribute prescriptive eyeglasses to the 2.5 billion people who need them but don't have access to an optometrist.

Greg Wiens of Winnipeg is GV2020's faith-based outreach coordinator. He reaches out to faith-based organizations and churches, providing the necessary supplies and training to help them bring glasses to a GV2020 project or a project of their own.

Together with more than 20 organizations like Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), World Vision, Operation Mobilization and many individual churches, GV2020 has reached 38 countries so far. In 2019 alone, the organization delivered 50,000 pairs of glasses. It has been presented with the Inventors Guild of America Award for Best New Innovation in Social Justice, the European Union's Aid Exhibition Innovation of the Year Award and the million-dollar WeWork Creator Award.

Wiens grew up at Glenlea (Man.) Mennonite Church. He has spent the last 20 years as a Mennonite Brethren (MB) pastor in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. In addition to GV2020, he now works as a missions mobilizer for Multiply (formerly MB Mission).

He became involved with GV2020 in 2009, when he read about the organization in a magazine and he later had a persistent dream that, in the future, the idea had died because nobody promoted it. He believed God was directly calling him to take part in this work.

Wiens got in touch with Kevin White, founder and executive director of GV2020 and a retired U.S. Marine and Naval



PHOTO COURTESY OF GLOBAL VISION 2020 AND MULTIPLY

Greg Wiens assembles glasses on a trip to the West Bank with MCC in 2018.

Academy graduate. White began tackling the issue of poor vision and eye care in 2005, when he was director of humanitarian and civic assistance while on active military duty. The two soon became good friends and colleagues. "He is a brilliant man, whom God has used in such a significant way," says Wiens of White. "He's an exceptional man of peace."

Wiens says a lot of Mennonites he has talked to about the organization have expressed their discomfort with White's involvement in the military. "But God chooses who he chooses to use. God works in a way that he chooses to work," says Wiens.

White invented the USee device, a pair of glasses with adjustable dials and colour-coded numbers, that has made fitting glasses a simple process that takes only a few minutes. A wearer puts on the USee, looks at an eye chart and turns the dial, changing the prescription until they can see clearly. The glasses technician then takes pre-cut lenses that correspond with the colour and number on the USee and

snaps them into the frame of the wearer's choice. The glasses are durable, stylish and cost only about \$3 per pair.

In the last decade, Wiens has travelled all around the world setting up these eye-care stations, including in Cambodia, the Philippines, Palestine and Malawi. He has seen first-hand the effects of the organization and God at work.



PHOTO COURTESY OF
GLOBAL VISION 2020 AND MULTIPLY

Mennonite farmers travel to Malawi with Greg Wiens as part of the joint project between MCC and Multiply.



PHOTO COURTESY OF
GLOBAL VISION 2020 AND MULTIPLY

Refugees in Malawi who are trained and certified to be eyeglass distributors carry out vision tests.

Just a few months ago in Zimbabwe, Wiens helped a legally blind man get glasses, and with a negative six prescription, he walked away seeing well enough to pass a North American driver's eye exam. The man had been working in construction for only five weeks when he let Wiens know that he wanted to start his



PHOTO COURTESY OF
GLOBAL VISION 2020 AND MULTIPLY

Greg Wiens, left, is pictured with a man in Zimbabwe who was able to go from being legally blind to seeing well enough to pass a driving eye exam with the help of Global Vision 2020.

own furniture-building business. Those glasses enabled him to work and literally changed his life, says Wiens. "That trip was worth getting him alone some glasses."

GV2020's work in Zimbabwe and Zambia is through joint projects between MCC and Multiply. They also run peace clubs for youth and leadership, and Wiens says they are exploring agriculture projects for 2020.

Wiens's first collaboration with MCC was to Palestine last year. Distributing glasses while standing in the same place where Jesus walked and went on trial was a surreal experience, he says.

GV2020 trains local people how to test vision and make the glasses, so they can run the program on their own. In Malawi, refugees have used the money they are making from the glasses centre to make down payments on farmland. Working with MCC and Multiply's joint agriculture project, they have planted more than 10,000 trees, many of them fruit-bearing, and test plots for five different drought-resistant crops, to adapt to the effects of climate change.

Wiens visited Malawi in November, along with six farmers from Mennonite Church Canada, MB and Berghaler churches, all coming together to bring agricultural education and assistance.

"All of this is done in the name of building the local church," he says. The MB church in Malawi started with four people and, in its 12 years of existence, has grown to 19,000. The church works holistically, preaching the gospel, educating on trauma care and counselling, starting agriculture projects and providing eye care.

In Zambia and Zimbabwe, Mennonites from all different denominations, and people with no Mennonite background at all, have come together to form a huge church community. People see that "God is moving here in a mighty way," Wiens says. ☞

For more information, visit gv2020.org/.



PHOTOS BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE

Greg Wiens, the faith-based outreach coordinator for Global Vision 2020, makes a pair of glasses right on the spot for Manitoba correspondent Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe, to demonstrate how the process works. The finished product is pictured below.



Distributing glasses while standing in the same place where Jesus walked and went on trial was a surreal experience, Greg Wiens says.

A life of grace and 'holy impatience'

Bill Kruger
Oct. 27, 1931 – Jan. 7, 2020

By Donna Schulz
Saskatchewan Correspondent
SASKATOON

“We always knew Dad was a special man,” said Chuck Kruger, “but we have come, after his passing, [to learn] more about the influence he had in many ways.”

William (Bill) Kruger had a profound influence on many lives. Three friends paid tribute to him at his funeral at Nutana Park Mennonite Church in Saskatoon on Jan. 11. Robert (Jack) Suderman, author and theologian; Terry Schellenberg, Canadian Mennonite University’s external vice-president; and Doug Klassen, executive minister of Mennonite Church Canada, all spoke of how Kruger mentored, challenged and inspired them.

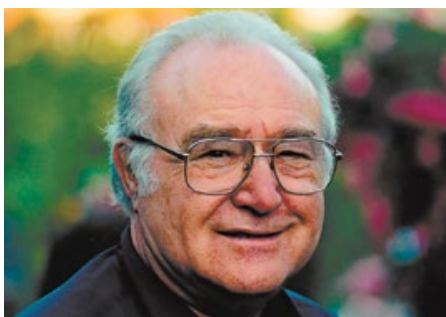
Born in Dalmeny, Sask., Kruger attended Rosthern (Sask.) Junior College (RJC); Canadian Mennonite Bible College (a founding college of Canadian Mennonite University); Bethel College; and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries (now Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary).

While studying in the United States, he worked with troubled youth at a correctional facility in Fort Wayne, Ind. This experience awakened in him a passion for teaching and nurturing youth.

Kruger taught at RJC from 1960 to 1966. He was principal at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate in Winnipeg from 1966 to 1972, and at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener, Ont., from 1972 to 1991.

“He had a vision that the church schools were an arm of the church,” said his daughter Marlene Wiebe.

Schellenberg, who taught under Kruger at Rockway, said, “He always, persistently, claimed that church schools . . . were nothing if not rooted in deeply interdependent relationships with the church. Indeed he saw these schools as essential for how



Bill Kruger

missions is imagined and embodied by the church.”

Suderman taught under Kruger at Westgate. He said, “[Bill] never forgot that institutions are, first and foremost, people. The institution . . . existed only insofar as it was created by people and was designed to serve people.”

Kruger believed in giving students second, and sometimes even third, chances.

“Bill’s educational vision was imbued with grace,” said Schellenberg, adding, “Bill had a way of holding students accountable without ever being demeaning.”

Grace was important in Kruger’s life as a pastor as well.

Klassen recalled an encounter he had with Kruger when they served together at Foothills Mennonite in Calgary, when Kruger challenged his own more-conventional point of view. “Looking at me intently, [Bill] said, ‘So, is it up to you to shorten the arm of God’s grace? Is it your call to say who can experience love and who can’t?’”

Even as he challenged his colleague to be more gracious, Kruger extended grace to him. The encounter left Klassen sleepless

for several nights. “A few days later, I said, ‘Bill, you have ruined me,’” said Klassen. “A loving, generous smile came over his face and he said, ‘No, I’m trying to save you from yourself.’”

In addition to his years at Foothills, Kruger served as music minister at First Mennonite in Winnipeg and as pastor of Osler Mennonite in Saskatchewan. He and his wife Helen served together as interim pastors at Zion Mennonite in Swift Current, Sask., and at Mount Royal Mennonite in Saskatoon.

Kruger had a great love for the church at both congregational and conference levels. “The conference meant so much to him,” said Wiebe. “He saw no difference between the conference and the churches,” adding, “Other families went camping; we went to conferences. He was very passionate about the church working together.”

Suderman said, “He understood that the church—when it truly is the church—is the primary vehicle for the profound transformation needed in our society. This deep conviction was the root and the motor of both his creative energy and his holy impatience.”

Perhaps it was the “holy impatience” that made Kruger embrace controversy.

“He welcomed debate,” said Wiebe. “He didn’t mind confronting people, but he was always loving.”

Klassen agreed. “Rather than running away from conflict, he ran to it,” he said.

Schellenberg added, “I never met a person with thicker skin—able to weather challenges and criticism and disagreement—and at the same time offer a bear hug embrace to that same person whose vision was simply too narrow or legalistic for his faith and his world.”

Klassen reflected on the influence his mentor had on so many. “He didn’t do it out of a desire to make a name for himself,” he said. “He did it out of a desire to serve Christ and the church. He carried the full weight of people in his heart.”

“A big part of Dad’s legacy is carried in the many people who were profoundly affected by his pastoring and educating,” said Kruger’s son Chuck, adding that many people in the church and beyond can say that their “faith and worldview were, at least in part, informed by Dad’s actions and words.” ❧

For 22 years it was 'all about the residents'

*Linda Tiessen retires as administrator of
Leamington Mennonite Home*

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

Growth, change and progress are three big words that come to mind when looking back over Linda Tiessen's time as administrator of Leamington Mennonite Home. And after serving nearly 22 years at the home, she is ready to enjoy retirement.

She was hired in 1998 at the encouragement of Menno Epp, then pastor of Leamington United Mennonite Church. The Home was in a challenging period, and her first task was to get as many people as she could behind the idea of revitalization. She was also given the job of settling the Home's debts and balancing its budget.

As time went on and balance emerged, growth and development were on the horizon. Tiessen, with the help of her husband Hugo, was able to increase corporate and community sponsorships to the home.

She also doubled the support from Mennonite churches to the Home. Previously, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada was the only conference involved with the Home, but the Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference, Old Colony and Mennonite Brethren conferences all came on board as well.

"It brought different visions together under the common goal of serving the needs of others," Tiessen says.

Other lasting contributions from this time are the annual Mennonite Home Gala and the Mennonite Home Golf Tournament, which still bring in significant support for the Home.

The biggest project she undertook was the development of the long-term-care facility at the Home.

"It is the largest project that this

Mennonite community has seen so far," she says. "It's an example of what people can do together."

The development of the long-term-care facility took three years of fundraising and planning, and another 18 months until construction was complete. This increased the capacity of the Home from 82 residents to 140. Of course, an increase in staff became necessary. In her time, the home went from 85 staff to 170.

Although Tiessen has been a key figure in the Home's development, she is still impressed by what has actually come of the facility. "The vision is rather advanced," she says. "We have independent seniors who can choose the services that fit them; assisted living; retirement residences with supervised care, as needed; and long-term care providing assistance with all the activities of daily living. There is also palliative care."

Even in the midst of all the structures and layers of administration, Tiessen still sees the residents as the most important piece of it all. "It was all about the residents," she says. "Hearing stories of their life experiences and how they came through those life experiences and what they remember, it's interesting to see how a life is processed and internalized over time to become a story. It's a cool thing."

She is especially happy when when residents are able to say, "It's good to be home," at Leamington Mennonite Home.

Tiessen has been an active and engaged pillar in Leamington for many years outside of the Home, having served as executive director at South Essex Community Council, overseeing the transition to a multiservice space before her time at the Home, and as a teacher and then



Linda Tiessen, who recently retired from her administrative duties at Leamington (Ont.) Mennonite Home, is pictured in front of the facility with her granddaughter Larissa.

principal of the United Mennonite Educational Institute (now UMEI) before that.

For her, it's been about people all along. "I wouldn't work in a for-profit," she says. "It serves the needs of people, but it's about shareholders and not community people. You should not do it because you're going to make money, but because you see a need and you're going to relate to that need. It's about serving the needs of a community and not as a service that allows shareholders to make money."

The process of moving from an imagined future to a living reality is something that Tiessen reflects on at the end of her full career. She plans to spend time with family, two grandchildren and aging parents. "Travelling is nice, but it's not a priority," she says.

A well-deserved retirement may be the latest step of many for Tiessen, but it doesn't sound like she is ready to put her feet up just yet. Volunteering is a passion for her. She still leads devotions at the Home and is a member of its auxiliary, raising funds, supporting projects and visiting residents.

She and Hugo also run the HL Tiessen Foundation, a charity that supports local organizations like the Bridge, UMEI, the Home, the Gleaners and the Bank Theatre.

And she remains an active member of the Leamington United Mennonite Church community, attending worship and other events, and helping facilitate the monthly German services still held there. ▮

GATHERING AROUND THE TABLE

Breaking bread builds community

By Katrina Steckle

Every Wednesday at 5:30 p.m., students, staff and faculty at Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ont., gather to share a meal called Community Supper.

This tradition traces back to the mid-1960s, when the college was founded, and to Grebel's very first president, J. Winfield Fretz. In those early days, he insisted on having small round tables in the dining room that sat six people, because "round tables," he explained, "rather than square tables, allow all people, whether it is two, three, four, five or six, to face each other directly." He understood the importance of inclusive conversation in the building of community, and so he introduced Community Supper as a means of community building.

Another tradition that began nearly 20 years after Fretz initiated Community Supper was the act of breaking bread together. In the early 1980s, Community Supper bread was added to the weekly meal, becoming a treasured tradition. The bread is made in the Grebel kitchen every Wednesday morning, and as its scent wafts out of the kitchen and into the dining room, it builds anticipation for the meal and fellowship that will happen later that day.

"I like to think of Community Supper as Grebel's 'Sunday Morning,'" says Grebel's current president, Marcus Shantz. "It's a time when the entire community gathers to hear speakers, share announcements,

have good conversation and enjoy a delicious meal."

The delicious meal includes Community Supper bread, of course, and announcements are made to spread the word about upcoming opportunities and events. Speakers vary widely from week to week, and include professors from Grebel and the University of Waterloo, local and global activists, musicians and remarkable alumni. The carefully

cultivated diversity of speakers ensures that students, staff and faculty hear from a wide variety of people throughout the year.

Good conversation is guaranteed at Community Suppers. The combination of students, staff and faculty from a broad range of areas of study and expertise, as well as cultural and religious backgrounds, promises lively discussions around each table.

The importance of this time together has inspired Grebel's latest renovation project—a kitchen and dining room expansion.



PHOTO BY JEN KONKLE

First-year residents Grace Enns, left, Amy Wiens, Melody Turner and Sydney Martens enjoy slices of bread as students gather for Grebel's weekly Community Supper.

Currently, associate students, staff and faculty must be put on a wait list for Community Suppers due to limited space in the dining room. The expanded dining room will seat up to 300 people—a large improvement from the current capacity.

This construction project will allow Grebelites to continue the school's "fill the table" tradition. Filling the table—filling all of the seats at one table before starting to fill a new table—creates the school's hallmark inclusive and welcoming environment. The expansion project has been named after this tradition: "Fill the table: Making space for community."

The smell of freshly baked bread may be what excites Grebelites for Community Supper every Wednesday, but it is the welcoming, caring community that sparks inspiring conversations and enduring connections once supper starts. ❧

The authentic recipe for Community Supper bread can be found at canadianmennonite.org/community-supper-bread.



/// Staff change

Pastoral transition in Manitoba

Jonathan Muehling began as associate pastor of Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church in Winnipeg on Dec. 1, 2019. He previously worked half-time as a pastoral apprentice at Westwood Community Church, also in Winnipeg, while studying in the Graduate School of Theology and Ministry at Canadian Mennonite University. He will graduate in April with a master of arts degree in Christian ministry, and will be installed at Sargent Avenue on Feb. 9.

—BY NICOLIE KLASSEN-WIEBE



Life on the geographic fringes of MC Canada

By Will Braun
Senior Writer

Mennonite Church Canada is characterized by various geographic concentrations of churches, some thicker than others. But a few congregations exist far from any other MC Canada sisters and brothers. What is church like in the farther flung reaches of our denomination? What do congregations do to stay connected? What are the advantages of remoteness?

Andrew Wiens is pastor of Nordheim Mennonite Church in the village of Winnipegosis, a four-hour drive northwest of Winnipeg. In Manitoba, pretty much everything is in relation to Winnipeg, including our denominational geography. “Everything is, ‘Come to Winnipeg, come to Winnipeg,’” says Wiens, referring to medical appointments, shopping and denominational events.

“Because of location,” he says, many people in the church “don’t feel closely connected to other churches in MC [Manitoba] or conference in general. . . . It does feel a little bit like we are out in the wilderness.”

But that shifted somewhat in the past couple of years. In October 2018, Nordheim started going through the list of MC Manitoba churches alphabetically. Wiens would reach out to a congregation, saying his congregation wanted to learn about it and pray for its ministry. He asked for photos, if possible, and prayer requests. He would present the information to his congregants on Sunday morning, and Nordheim would pray for that church. Sometimes Wiens would ask if anyone in his congregation had connections to that particular church. He would also put a pin on a map for each congregation his church learned about and prayed for.

All but two of the other 38 congregations in MC Manitoba responded.

Wiens says there was “building interest over time” within Nordheim. People wanted to know which church they would

learn about each Sunday.

The benefits? Wiens says Nordheim gained a better sense of who it is within the larger body. It realized who it is a part of. This was particularly important in recent years, as the congregation had struggled with a sense of belonging. A feeling of being “distant from all things conference” had been there for some time.

When in Winnipeg, Wiens has dropped off notes of encouragement to some of the churches his congregation learned about. He says the initiative helped in terms of him making connections when he does attend regional church gatherings.

Wiens says the Apostle Paul, in his letters, keeps encouraging us to pray for one another. Nordheim is considering extending the initiative to MC Saskatchewan and perhaps beyond.

If the congregation extended its project to the eastern most reaches of MC Canada, it would learn about Petitcodiac Mennonite Church in New Brunswick. This is another congregation that knows about the challenges and advantages of remoteness.

Minister Gordon Driedger needs to drive 16 hours to get to the Mennonite Church Eastern Canada mecca of Kitchener-Waterloo, Ont. For him, the primary

value of the regional church connection is that it provides a “theological home.”

“We don’t want to be on our own . . . making things up as we go along,” Driedger says, emphasizing the value of a theological base.

Practically speaking, though, the congregation’s connection to the broader Mennonite world comes less through the regional church than through direct involvement with Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Disaster Service and Ten Thousand Villages (TTV). The church has owned a local TTV store and does festival sales throughout the Maritimes.

The tight-knit congregation is also involved in the local food bank, a home for people with disabilities and prison ministry.

Having spent 12 years in the Mennonite-dominated Altona area in southern Manitoba prior to his nearly 10-year stint in New Brunswick, Driedger says being further from a Mennonite centre provides “a little more room to breathe.” Having peer support nearby was a plus for Driedger when he was in Manitoba, but the danger, he says, is that church tends to become more inward looking in that setting. In a remote setting there is less of a sense of people “looking over our shoulder,” he says.

Whatever the pros and cons, remoteness is simply the reality for Petitcodiac. “We’re off on our own, and that’s the way it is,” Driedger says, with no hint of bitterness. “We accept the fact that we’re a 16-hour drive away, so we’re not going to get a lot of connection. . . . We are doing without and are okay with it. ☸



Nordheim Mennonite Church in the village of Winnipegosis, Man., is a four-hour drive northwest of Winnipeg.

'A fantastic model at Springridge'

How a small church in rural Alberta picks up the slack for its 0.3 FTE pastor

By Joanne De Jong
Alberta Correspondent

A small rural church had a 0.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) pastor. Now its pastor has retired and it decides to hire a 0.3 FTE pastor. Is this realistic? How will the new pastor spend her time?

In January 2019, Springridge Mennonite Church in Pincher Creek approached Tany Warkentin, a long-time member, and asked her if she would be willing to serve as its part-time pastor.

Warkentin had not really thought of being a pastor except as a co-pastor with her late husband Jeff, who passed away of meningitis at age 32 in 2011. The couple had served as Witness workers for five years with Mennonite Church Canada in Burkina Faso, before returning to her childhood home in Pincher Creek that year. She felt that "together" they could have been a great pastoral team. Alone, she knew some of the needed pastoral gifts would be missing.

The only way Warkentin could take this job was to be honest and upfront about her weaknesses. A traditional pastor does

preaching, teaching, visiting and counselling, and this was not realistic for a 0.3 FTE position. She felt her strength was not in preaching, so how would that work? Preparing sermons is time consuming and she wondered if that would be the best use of her time.

Leaders and congregants had a frank discussion, and right away there was agreement that the church needed a fresh vision that had to include more people participating in worship and community life. They would do something new. They were all going to be open, no matter their age. Everyone was going to need to step up.

The idea was to break the service up into smaller segments so it would be easier for people to participate. Since sermons mostly focus on head nurturing, Springridge Mennonite decided to shift to more heart nurturing by exploring multi-sensory worship. Warkentin, whose official title is pastoral leader, would act more as a facilitator than as a traditional pastor.

At first, there was some anxiety around



PHOTOS BY DEL WILLMS

A 2019 Lenten service at Springridge Mennonite Church in Pincher Creek, Alta. Plants were grown at the front of the sanctuary and then compared to how congregants nurtured God-like growth in their own hearts and lives. Pastoral leader Tany Warkentin is pictured at right.

what individuals would be asked to do, but relationships in the church are generations deep, with a strong level of trust. It also helped that everyone knew Warkentin from when she was a child growing up in the church.

It was decided that the church would try to find two guest preachers a month. On the other Sundays, alternative ideas would be explored.

"I couldn't speak highly enough about the CommonWord online resources



Hugo Neufeld, left, a guest speaker from Trinity Mennonite Church in DeWinton, Alta., invites a variety of people from Springridge Mennonite to the front, representing the rich diversity of God's people in the Pincher Creek congregation.

through MC Canada and the Canadian Mennonite University,” Warkentin says, especially the material the church found for its Lenten, Good Friday and Easter services, including growing and weeding plants; darkening the sanctuary with curtains; holding different objects throughout the service, such as rope and wood; and exposing the light and plants to joyful singing on Easter morning.

Readers theatre, skits, reading excerpts from books, showing video clips and sharing personal testimonies are all used as substitutes or partial substitutes for traditional sermons. Springridge Mennonite will also have someone read a sermon that was written by a pastor, or listen to the audio, on occasion.

Material can easily be found online, including from MC Alberta pastors. On Eternity Sunday, the congregation baked bread during the church service for communion while presenting a reading written by Pastor Chad Miller at Foothills Mennonite Church on Jesus as the “bread of life.”

Recently the congregation worked its way through the book *The Bible Unwrapped* by Meghan Larissa Good, an Anabaptist pastor. Some of the chapters focus on books of the Bible, including Jonah, Joshua and Job. One person in the congregation read the background of that week’s book of the Bible, another person read the Scripture, and then another read the portion of the chapter that told the story in an engaging way with modern-day applications.

Springridge Mennonite is a congregation of 30 to 35 people attending each Sunday. Three families have children, there are a couple of young adults, and the rest are mostly between 60 and 70. Congregants have found themselves being refreshed and renewed as they do more and the pastor does less.

Warkentin worries when she sees other pastors wearing down, as they are repeatedly expected to perform at a level of excellence in all areas. “I would love to see our churches say to their pastors, ‘We know you are weak in these areas, so we will take that role as a church,’” she says. “I think we have a fantastic model at Springridge.” ❧

Homeless find shelter in MCC building

Story and Photo by Amy Rinner Waddell

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

By day, the material aid warehouse at Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) B.C.’s headquarters is used to store and process items such as school kits and blankets to be shipped overseas. But, in the colder fall and winter months, by night the space is converted into an extreme weather shelter hosting the city’s most vulnerable.

The shelter is operated by 5 & 2 Ministries, with MCC B.C. providing the space. It runs nightly from 7:30 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. from October to March, providing accommodation for 20 adults aged 50 and older.

Some guests are referred from other community organizations, but as MCC B.C. is conveniently located on Abbotsford’s Gladys Corridor, an area populated by the “street-entrenched,” word about the

shelter gets out.

“Shelter guests are provided with a light supper—soup, fruit, etc.—and access to washrooms,” says Sue Kupp, interim program director for MCC B.C. “5&2 Ministries funds the shelter through B.C. Housing and hires staff who are on disability and unable to steadily work, providing them with extra income.”

A shelter such as this benefits the larger community as well as the individuals.

Kupp reports that “5&2 has many stories of guests who have been supported back into housing, have found work, etc. The City of Abbotsford also has statistics regarding money saved from emergency room visits and hospital stays since the community shelter/extreme weather shelter system has been implemented.” ❧



Frigid, snowy days don't occur often in B.C.'s Fraser Valley but, when they do, some homeless seniors have at least one warm place to spend the night. MCC B.C.'s material aid warehouse provides temporary sleeping space for street people, operated by a local ministry.

MCC celebrates 100 years of global ministry

By Linda Espenshade
Mennonite Central Committee

One hundred years ago, calls for help came from Mennonites in southern Russia, where war, disease and famine had left them in desperate straits.

“Brethren! Help us, we are perishing!” wrote one man to Mennonites in the United States. “The famine is raging more and more, and suffering is increasing daily, yes, hourly.”

Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren groups formed a “central committee” in July 1920 to coordinate their responses to this crisis. Together, they pledged to help hungry people, including those who were suffering in southern Russia (present-day Ukraine).

Over the next several years, the committee, which took on the name Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), provided food for as many as 25,000 people at times, as well as shipped in tractors and seeds to plant for the future.

A century later, MCC is celebrating the ministry that grew from that first endeavour. Throughout 2020, the public is invited to explore MCC’s history by participating in commemoration events, comforter-making, giving opportunities, storytelling and more.

Today, MCC serves in more than 50 countries, including Canada and the United States, providing humanitarian relief, encouraging sustainable development and strengthening peacebuilding initiatives.

“The origins of MCC are rooted in a desire to see God’s justice and peace brought to those being oppressed or harmed,” says Rick Cober Bauman, executive director of MCC Canada. “It is a privilege to celebrate all those who began this work and all those who supported it.”



crisis was to send comforters.

On Jan. 18, the public took part in The Great Winter Warm-up, a comforter-making event held across Canada, the U.S. and Europe. (See photos next page of some of the Warm-up events.)

Volunteers attempted to complete 6,500 comforters in one day. “Comforters are an excellent metaphor for the nature of our work around the world at MCC,” says Cober Bauman. “One square of fabric alone cannot keep the cold away, but many pieces connected together produce warmth against the cold. When our volunteers and supporters came together to create comforters for The Great Winter Warm-up, they made a difference in the lives of people affected by conflict and disaster.”

Last year, MCC shipped more than 53,000 comforters around the world.

Buckets of thanks

On Thanksgiving, Canadians and Americans take the time to recognize what they are thankful for. During MCC’s centennial year, it invites supporters to fill a

Bucket of Thanks with valuable relief and hygiene supplies and provide something for a family experiencing hardship to be thankful for.

Last year, MCC shipped more than 22,000 buckets (or relief kits) to families experiencing conflict or disaster all around the world.

The Great Winter Warm-up and Buckets of Thanks are just some of the exciting events MCC is holding to celebrate our 100 years of service. (For information on all the other events happening this year, visit mcccanada.ca/centennial/events.)

100 stories for 100 years

No anniversary is complete without stories, photos and videos. MCC’s 100 stories for 100 years online collection provides glimpses of the people and ministry of MCC over the years.

The collection shares stories about remarkable people such as Lois Gunden, who protected Jewish children from Nazi death camps, and Issa Ebombolo, who started hundreds of peace clubs in schools all over Africa.

They describe how simple resources like canned meat and tarps give vital support to vulnerable people facing the devastation of disaster, and how MCC and partner organizations have developed new farming techniques over time, right up to today’s initiatives that help farmers cope with climate change.

Stories will be added throughout the



MCC PHOTO

The Great Winter Warm-up

One of the ways MCC and its supporters showed their compassion for people in

This feeding centre in Trans-Volga, Russia, circa 1922, was one of 140 MCC-supported centres in southern Russia that distributed 38,600 rations daily at the peak of the relief effort in 1922. This kitchen excelled over most other kitchens in cleanliness and orderliness.



PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Barb Wolfe ties a quilt at Rosthern (Sask.) Junior College during MCC's Great Winter Warm-up.



PHOTO BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE

Clockwise from left, Tracy Wright, Rebecca Janzen, Daniela Stahl, Isaac Wright and Lena Regier tie a comforter together at North Kildonan Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, where 350 participants and volunteers made 210 comforters for MCC's Great Winter Warm-up.



PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Comforter knotters for MCC's Great Winter Warm-up at First Mennonite Church in Edmonton were joined by members of the Islamic Family and Social Services Agency. Pictured from left to right: Joan Perrott, left, Dolly Jeffares, Marah Rafih, and Sana Almotlak.

For more Winter Warm-up photos, visit canadianmennonite.org/warmup.



year at mcccanada.ca/100-stories, where people can also sign up for monthly email alerts about the collection.

Your stories and gifts

Thousands of people have served with MCC at home or in other countries; contributed to vital efforts such as meat canning, relief sales, thrift shops and material resources centres; supported MCC with gifts of money, kits and comforters; and in other ways experienced MCC's work firsthand.

They have stories to tell, too. Anyone who wants to share a photo, video or a short vignette about their MCC experience can do so on the "Share your story" web page at mcccanada.ca/centennial/share-your-story.

Saulo Padilla, MCC U.S. immigration education coordinator, shares how he arrived in Calgary in 1986 as an immigrant from Guatemala and the son of a political refugee. Later, he signed up for an MCC skills training session, which he called "a window to self-awareness and a path to new life opportunities."

"As I work with immigrant communities in the U.S., I am reminded of how new opportunities can heal past trauma and provide life-giving opportunities. I am eternally grateful for the people at MCC, who offer recent immigrants an opportunity to have a new hope."

Looking to the future

To continue MCC's work and to expand it beyond this centennial year, MCC is encouraging people to give an extra financial gift through the Our Faith, Our Future centennial fundraising campaign.

MCC was called into being to help people who had been forced to leave their homes. Supporting displaced people has been a central part of its work for a century. To donate, visit mcccanada.ca/centennial/our-faith-our-future or call toll-free 1-888-622-6337.

"There would be no MCC without each person who has supported us in any number of ways these last hundred years," says Cober Bauman. "Every prayer, every dollar, every minute offered, has been absolutely essential to the continued success of MCC's mission." ❧

'Fight for unity'

Anabaptist preacher calls mission and service workers to Jesus-centred discipleship

Story and Photo by Janet Bauman
Eastern Canada Correspondent
OAKVILLE, ONT.

Bruxy Cavey's message to mission and service leaders in Anabaptist organizations was plain. "We have lost a younger generation of leaders because the church has been so divided," he said. "To fight for unity will be one of the most powerful things this next generation of leaders, young and old, can do together."

Cavey was addressing the Council of International Anabaptist Ministries at its annual conference, held from Jan. 14 to 16 at The Meeting House in Oakville. The gathering provides Mennonite World Conference-related agencies with "resources and a forum for dialogue on global witness and service."

Cavey is the senior pastor at The Meeting House, a multi-site Anabaptist congregation described as "a church for people who aren't into church," that is part of the Be in Christ Church of Canada (formerly Brethren in Christ). The Meeting House has 20 sites across Ontario, at which thousands of people connect with God and each other through a widespread house church network, Sunday services and online interactions.

Cavey, who was nurtured in several denominations, said Anabaptism "felt like home" for him, when he discovered it, adding that there is "something peculiar" about the tradition that is worth speaking up about.

In his address, entitled "Engaging new missional leaders," he named obstacles that keep young people from church, but emphasized that an Anabaptist "Jesus-centred message" inspires people of all ages.

Using texts from First and Second Timothy, where the Apostle Paul mentors the young leader, Cavey said that Paul was "setting the bar high for new missional leaders." Their calling is to "set an example for the believers. . . . Don't dumb it down. Don't make it easy."

Most important for all mission and service, he said, "the goal is love." To affirm that God is love "reorients our understanding of the universe in which we live," and creates a vision for us," he said, insisting that God is relational. Love, he said, is the "DNA of the divine," and, "Jesus is the evidence that God is love."

Discipleship is also relational, according to Cavey. He described it as an "apprenticeship in the way of the teacher" who is Jesus. He encouraged mission and service workers to keep Jesus in the centre of what they do, adding that the younger generation connects better with Jesus. There is "no teacher like him . . . once you fall in love with Jesus, you start to trust him," he said, urging his listeners to realize that Jesus is more than a teacher, and through him people believe in God.

He acknowledged that many young people "want to hang out with Jesus, but not the church." But he reminded them that, as disciples of Jesus, they are the church. "You are loved, forgiven, embraced and reconciled. Go and offer that to others," Cavey said, adding, "The Word of God is to be embodied."

When young people criticize the hypocrisy and legalism of the church, he said, they "sound like Jesus," who also "challenged the legalism of his day." He affirmed how Paul, in his letters, "leads out of his brokenness" and vulnerability, sharing how he was changed by Jesus, despite seeming so unworthy. In this way, Paul's story of transformation reinforces his message, Cavey said.

Cavey also addressed the relationship between Jesus and the Bible. "We believe in the inerrant, infallible, authoritative Word of God, and his name is Jesus," he said, calling the Bible "the gateway to Jesus," and adding that Christians learn from Jesus how to read Scripture.



Bruxy Cavey addresses the Council of International Anabaptist Ministries at its annual conference, held from Jan. 14 to 16 at The Meeting House in Oakville, Ont., where he is the senior pastor. Cavey called for Jesus-centred, relational discipleship as the way to engage new missional church leaders.

But he warned that "Scripture weaponized can do a lot of damage" by calling people to war, judgment and arrogance. He said the Bible can be "one of the most dangerous books on the planet unless we keep Jesus at the centre."

Cavey said that he can find only four justifications in the Bible for churches to divide:

- **Preaching a different Jesus.**
- **Preaching a different gospel.**
- **Abuse of grace.**
- **A persistent divisive disposition.**

All the rest, he said, can be debated but are not grounds for dividing.

During the Q&A session after his presentation, people wanted to learn more about The Meeting House model of church. Cavey emphasized the importance of the 200 house churches that meet weekly for Bible study, discussion, confession and prayer.

"Real church happens when you turn the chairs to face each other, and ask each other, 'What are you going to do differently in light of what you are learning?'" ❧

Ten Thousand Villages Canada shuts down corporate operations

Mennonite Central Committee Canada
WINNIPEG

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada is closing the corporate operations of Ten Thousand Villages (TTV) Canada, its fair-trade social enterprise. This includes the head office and distribution centre in New Hamburg, Ont., as well as TTV Canada's web store, wholesale operations and 10 remaining company stores, with the wind-down of all operations to be completed by June 30.

Company stores will gradually liquidate inventory over the coming months, with the last store shuttered by May 29.

A number of independently owned TTV stores in Canada, known as "board stores," have chosen to remain open and will continue to operate under a licensing agreement with MCC Canada, including locations in Abbotsford, B.C.; Calgary; Edmonton; Brandon and Steinbach, both in Manitoba; Port Colborne and Cobourg, both in Ontario; and Pte. Claire (Montréal).

"After embarking on an unsuccessful multi-year sustainability process, we've made the difficult decision to discontinue corporate operations in Canada," says Rick Cober Bauman, MCC Canada's executive director. "With dramatic changes in the Canadian retail landscape and consumer habits, our retail model is no longer viable."

"We had hoped for a different outcome," says Brent Zоргdrager, interim TTV Canada chief executive officer. "But we are grateful for the opportunity to have been part of more than seven decades of providing sustainable and fair income for tens of thousands of artisans. In bringing their products to Canadian consumers, we've been able to share traditions of beauty and creativity across the globe."

In 1946, MCC launched what would become known as the worldwide fair-trade



CANADIAN MENNONITE FILE PHOTO

In 2006, when TTV celebrated its 60th anniversary and Marvyn Frey, pictured, was the executive director, sales had tripled over the previous seven years and new stores were opening.

movement. Hoping to find a market for the handicrafts made by artisans she had met overseas, Edna Ruth Byler began selling the items out of the trunk of her car. As the project grew, Byler ran the business out of her basement in Pennsylvania for more than two decades.

In 1965, this work expanded from the U.S. to marketing in Canada, when the Canadian Overseas Needlework and Crafts Project launched in Saskatchewan. In 1972, the first TTV store opened in Altona, Man.—then known as Self-Help Crafts of the World—and the New Hamburg, Ont., store and warehouse opened in July 1981.

"We're grateful for the thousands of staff and volunteers who have poured their time and energy into the ministry and vision of Ten Thousand Villages Canada," says Cober Bauman. "Without these dedicated and passionate men and women, none of this would have been possible."

News brief

Recent Order of Canada appointments

Paul Born of Waterloo, Ont., and **Eric D. Friesen** of Toronto, were among the 120 new appointments to the Order of Canada announced by Governor General Julie Payette on Dec. 28, 2019. The Order of Canada honours individuals whose significant contributions to society make the country a better place.

Born, who attends Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener, was honoured for his work in reducing poverty. As co-CEO of Tamarack Institute, a non-profit organization, he has worked with communities across Canada to bring positive change. Liz Weaver of the Tamarack Institute commented, "Paul has long understood that there is a direct correlation between people's sense of community and their willingness to improve the conditions of those who live around them."



Friesen was recognized for contributing to public appreciation of classical music through his work as a broadcaster, writer and speaker. Born and raised in Altona, Man., he has supported and promoted the performing arts in Canada. In response to his Order of Canada he said, "I love the motto of the O.C.—*Desiderantes meliorem patriam* ('They desire a better country')—implying that it is a perpetual work in progress. It is now an obligation as well as an aspiration."



—BY BARB DRAPER

TTV U.S., a separate entity from the Canadian enterprise, will continue to operate as usual, including its brick-and-mortar stores and web store, and will begin to ship to Canadian addresses once the Canadian web store has been closed. ❧



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Watch: Katie Sowers makes Super Bowl history

Get to know Katie Sowers, an alumna of two American Mennonite colleges who made history recently as the first woman and first openly gay person to coach in the Super Bowl.

canadianmennonite.org/video/sowers



A bit of 'colour' inside

Former Alberta correspondent Donita Wiebe-Neufeld relates an experience she had visiting inmates in the Edmonton Institution for Women.

canadianmennonite.org/deprivation



It hinges on a hyphen

An Edmonton pastor reflects on his faith and the faith of his children on the CM blog.

canadianmennonite.org/blog/pc-hyphen



MWC delegation visits Mennonite churches in Hong Kong

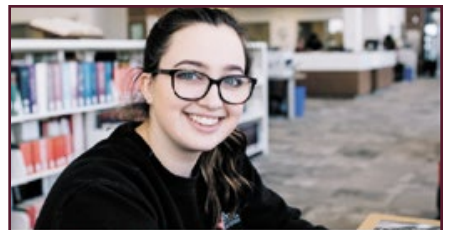
A Mennonite World Conference delegation recently travelled to Hong Kong, which is experiencing its most tumultuous political situation in decades.

canadianmennonite.org/mwcdelegation

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FOCUS ON Travel

If you have stories or photos about how your travel experiences have impacted your life or faith journey, please send them our way.

Chosen stories will be printed in our **March 16 Focus On Travel issue (deadline: March 2).**

You can send your stories, photos or news (400 words max + photo) to submit@canadianmennonite.org.

CANADIAN MENNONITE

Schools Directory featuring Westgate Mennonite Collegiate

‘Caring for God’s creation’

By Terry Dirks
Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Winnipeg

The 2019-20 chapel theme at Westgate is “Caring for God’s creation,” an apt choice in this time of climate-change awareness, when Australia is burning and Manitoba has suffered from both a flood and a drought in the same crop year.

Jarrett Rempel, Westgate’s senior outdoor education teacher, explains how outdoor education helps students cope with the crisis of these concerning times: “Creation awareness equals creation care. Getting kids outside and connecting them with these natural resources helps students understand their own impact, and that they need to become part of the solution as they value the beauty of their planet.”

Westgate’s Outdoor Education Program, now a major part of the fabric of the school’s ideology, began developing in the early 1980s. Junior classes were already enjoying year-end camping trips, but teachers felt the need to develop senior outdoor trips as well.

In 1983, Bob Hummelt led the first Marsh and Mountain Club winter camping quinzee (shelter)-building overnight trip. In those early days, senior trips had voluntary student participation and generally included about a dozen participants.

Over the past four decades, interest has grown tremendously. Junior camping trips continue to help develop students’ basic outdoor skills. Senior trips, scheduled in



Jarrett Rempel, Westgate’s senior outdoor education teacher, in Kananaskis, Alta.

fall, winter and spring, now have 50 to 70 students hiking, canoeing, snowshoeing and biking in Canada’s wilderness.

“The buzz word in education these days is ‘resilience,’” says Rempel. “These trips provide authentic challenges, where students gain that true sense of accomplishment in doing something that is really hard. In recent years, I have noticed that in our comfort-seeking society, an aversion—a fear of nature—is developing. Our students may not all choose the outdoor life but they will not fear it.

“And, for many, the awe they experience in the wilderness will encourage them to live sustainably with faith in God’s good and beautiful world.”

Calendar

British Columbia

Feb. 21-29: MCC B.C. winter banquets: (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 mccbc.ca/events.

Feb. 28: MC B.C. Lead conference, at Cedar Valley Mennonite Church, Mission, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Topic: "Being human: The church and mental health. Lunch included.

Feb. 29: MC B.C. annual general meeting, at Cedar Valley Mennonite Church, Mission, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Theme: "Connections: God's church in the 21st century, living into the MC B.C. imagination."

March 7,8: Lenten vespers with Adendumusik Choir: (7) at Emmanuel Free Reformed Church, Abbotsford, at 7:30 p.m.; (8) St. Philip's Anglican, Vancouver, at 7:30 p.m. In support of the Menno Simons Centre.

Alberta

March 20-21: MC Alberta annual delegate sessions.

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

Saskatchewan

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

March 13-14: MC Saskatchewan annual delegate sessions, at First Mennonite Church, Saskatoon. To register online, visit mcsask.ca/2019-ads-registration-form/.

Manitoba

Until March 14: Art exhibit at Mennonite Heritage Gallery, Winnipeg, "Mother Earth and Her Lovers: repair and maintenance."

Feb. 21-23: MC Manitoba senior-high winter retreat, at Camp Assiniboia.

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 7: MC Manitoba annual gathering, at Altona Berghaler Mennonite Church

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.

April 10: Winnipeg First Mennonite Church Choir presents Brahms's "Ein Deutsches Requiem," at the church, at 7 p.m.

May 11: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's bursary banquet, at the Canad Inns Polo Park, Winnipeg. For more information, visit westgatemennonite.ca.

May 13: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's community work day.

May 27: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's junior-high spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

May 28: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate's senior-high spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

Ontario

Until April 24: The Grebel Gallery, Waterloo, presents "The Cultural Life of Drones: KW Drone Dialogues," created by Sara Matthews, which explores the myriad ways drones are embedded in people's everyday lives. For more information, call 519-885-0220 x24204.

Until May 2021: "Growing family: Design and desire in Mennonite genealogy" exhibit showcases family trees, hand-drawn charts

and other ways Mennonites have remembered family; at the Mennonite Archives of Ontario, Waterloo. For more information, visit uwaterloo.ca/grebel/growingfamily.

Feb. 13: Book launch for William Janzen's book, "Advocating for Peace: Stories from the Ottawa Office of Mennonite Central Committee, 1975-2008," at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, at 7 p.m. For more information, visit uwaterloo.ca/grebel/events.

Feb. 17: Family Day open house with lots of activities at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. See website for details. RSVP to info@hiddenacres.ca or call 519-624-8602.

Feb. 20: Grade 10 night at the University of Waterloo and Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, from 5:15 to 8:30 p.m. Start with a pizza dinner at Grebel, then learn about its residence and academic programs. To register for dinner, email pbartel@uwaterloo.ca.

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.

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.

Feb. 23: Menno Singers presents an afternoon hymn sing, at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, at 3 p.m. For more information, visit mennosingers.com.

Feb. 28: Grebel MTS ministry forum brown bag lunch for congregational leaders, in Grebel's community education room, Waterloo, from noon to 2 p.m. Topic: "Sexual orientation, gender diversity and pastoral care: New opportunities." RSVP to theological.studies@uwaterloo.ca by Feb. 21.

March 6: An evening of jazz in support of the Toronto Mennonite



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Theological Centre, at Hirut Café and Restaurant, Toronto, at 7 p.m. Featuring the Tom Reynolds Trio. For more information, visit grebel.ca/TMTC/events.

March 12: J. Winfield Fretz Visiting Scholar Lecture, "Where moth and rust destroy: Archives and the contest over Anabaptist information," at Conrad Grebel University College Chapel, Waterloo, at 7:30 p.m. Speaker: David Y. Neufeld, who holds the 2019-20 J. Winfield Fretz Fellowship in Mennonite Studies. For more information, visit uwaterloo.ca/grebel/events.

March 13: "Technology and peacemaking," a Grebel church youth event, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, at 6 p.m. For more information, visit uwaterloo.ca/grebel/events. To register (by March 9), email rjdejong@uwaterloo.ca.

March 21: March break open

house at Conrad Grebel University College and the University of Waterloo, Ont., from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, visit uwaterloo.ca/grebel/events.

March 27: Absent Friends Film Series presents "The Fault in our Stars," a film based on John Green's book of the same name, followed by a discussion afterwards, at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, from 7 to 9:30 p.m. For more information, visit grebel.ca/events.

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.

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.

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.

May 24: Hawkesville Mennonite Church celebrates its 70th anniversary with a homecoming service, at 11 a.m. A potluck meal (beverages included) and fellowship time follow the service.

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



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Preston Mennonite and Wanner Mennonite churches are two Anabaptist congregations in Cambridge, Ont., ready to embark on a new venture in staff sharing. Located five kilometres apart, with 80-100 active members between them, Preston is situated in town beside a thriving seniors community and near three elementary schools, while Wanner is in a lovely rural setting next to a new housing development.

We desire to remain separate and distinct as congregations. Together we wish to extend God's love through outreach to the people of Cambridge who are in need, to nurture the well-being and spiritual growth of the people in our congregations, and to increase our numbers with new members and families.


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www.mcec.ca/ministry-opportunities
or contact
pastoraltransitions@mcec.ca.

Get to know us:

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www.prestonmennonite.com



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PHOTO BY AMY RINNER WADDELL / TEXT BY AMY RINNER WADDELL AND JOANNE DE JONG

Fifty-seven candles were lit during the Jan. 12 worship service at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, B.C., honouring each of the Canadians who lost their lives aboard Ukrainian Flight 752 that was shot down over Iran on Jan. 8. The rose on the front of the table symbolizes Iran. The night before, in Edmonton, Mennonites were invited to a memorial at the Imam Hussein Islamic Society, that, according to Donna Entz of North Edmonton Ministries, included 'several cycles of beautiful Qur'anic recitation, remembrances and photos from those who knew the victims well, and Persian music. Men and women cried openly during the songs, which sounded like songs of lament. Perhaps music was more helpful than a sermon to facilitate the grieving process.'

Photo finishH