

CANADIAN MENNONITE

January 16, 2023 Volume 27 Number 1

As the complexion of church transforms



will hearts follow?

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Chin song adds to hymnal 12

The holy paradox of modern Mennonite identity

WILL BRAUN

editor@canadianmennonite.org

I grew up happily embedded in white Mennonite culture in rural Manitoba. Our family regularly travelled to Winnipeg and on the edge of the city we would pass a Chinese Mennonite church. I never visited, heard about, read about or asked about that church. I just saw that sign and wondered vaguely how we all fit together.

How did the subculture so familiar to me fit within the broader, diverse, often distant Anabaptist reality?

Even now, though I know most Mennonites are not white, and though many of the most compelling Mennonites I've met are from the Global South, on some level German-Russian Mennonites still feel like the most real Mennonites to me.

In the feature on page 4, Joon Park—the Korean-Canadian co-pastor of a Mennonite church in Edmonton that combines Liberian-Canadians and Euro-Canadians —offers a forceful challenge to do the work necessary to become a truly intercultural family of God.

Does this challenge feel like a threat to those of us who are white Mennonites? Does it mean we need to recant our identity, discard our cookbooks and sink into guilt?

What exactly is the work of intercultural integration and what exactly is the goal?

In my observation, the white folks who have the most authentic cross-cultural relationships are people who bring a lot of themselves. They listen and

learn with sensitivity while also bringing their own stories, songs, jokes and ideas. They are rooted, humble, lively and not afraid of difference.

Stated another way, they don't act like guilty white liberals apologizing for their existence.

White people are responsible for tremendous harm, past and present. Colonization, racism and imperialism stain whiteness a deep red. Those sins must be interrogated, denounced, addressed and redressed.

Yet, God made white people and God made them good. We are all imperfect children of God. And surely it is in this divine embrace that we encounter one another deeply.

Intercultural integration requires Euro-Canadian Mennonites to give up certain things: control of decision-making procedures, committee composition, the order of worship, budgets, magazine content, etc. (Fortunately such letting go is good for the soul.) At the same time, there is much in our heritage and teachings worth sharing: non-violence, simplicity, counter-cultural impulses, *rollkuaken*, harmony, etc.

Our work is to be grounded in the best of that, not to negate ourselves. It's a paradox. We can own the worst and best of our heritage. By holding tightly to our identity, we can be more open. As Park notes, the grain of wheat that dies, bears fruit.

An analogy: I would not want to show up to a cross-cultural potluck empty

handed, offering only an apologetic colonial deconstruction of Mennonite food (which could be done). I would want to show up with a caringly prepared family favourite, as well as an eagerness to partake of the offerings of others.

What then is the intercultural goal to which Park, and others, point? As I have learned, the goal is not diversity for its own sake. It's not just noodles and numbers. It's not just eating food from other cultures—though that can be profound—and focusing only on numbers of non-white people in pews and on committees. The goal is collective spiritual vitality—a more complete realization of the body of Christ and the Kingdom of God.

Hiring

We're hiring an Eastern Canada Correspondent. This will be a 0.2-0.4FTE position based in the Kitchener-Waterloo area. Apply yourself or tap someone on the shoulder. Applications are due by February 10. For details, see canadianmennonite.org/employment.

Senior Writer

Aaron Epp, who has worked as full-time online media manager, will shift his focus partially in order to devote two days per week to serve as senior writer. Aaron brings skill, curiosity and commitment to the church. ☘



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FEATURE

One-anotherness in Christ

With this article we launch a new monthly column by Joon Park, interim co-pastor of Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton and a member of Mennonite Church Canada's Intercultural Church Steering Committee. Park is a graduate of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary. He and his family moved from South Korea to Canada in 2002.

By Joon Park

Special to Canadian Mennonite



DESIGN BY BETTY AVERY / HEADSHOTS FROM
MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE

Based on my first-hand experience with the Mennonite church in Canada and the U.S. over the past 18 years, I suspect that far less than 10 percent of primarily white Mennonite congregations are genuinely interested in embracing or pursuing a truly intercultural church.

Of Canadians who identify as Christian, 20 percent are immigrants, up from 17 percent in 2011 (according to Stats Canada). This shows that visible minorities are emerging within Canadian churches. Meanwhile white-dominant Mennonite churches remain largely culturally “cubiced.”

The 2021 national census revealed more than 450 ethnic or cultural origins reported in Canada. Only a minimal fraction of these are represented in Mennonite churches. This reality calls the church to be more ethnically diversified. We have a long way to go.

However, what surprises me is not only the small number of Mennonite churches contributing to interculturalization, but the superficial level of intercultural awareness among churches. Too many of them see the intercultural church as a checklist of how many ethnic groups or leaders are present under the same roof: “We have a Korean group, the Chin group, the Congolese group, etc.”

Of course, these churches acknowledge and cherish these groups as an invaluable resource and impetus to enrich their European-centred thinking, but sometimes it feels to me like, at the same time, they are ensuring that the ethnic influence not outweigh their traditional Mennonite way of running the church.

Many years ago these ethnic groups would have entered a white-dominant Mennonite church and unhesitatingly said: “We want to become part of your congregation. How can we become Mennonites?” Willingly or unwillingly, the congregation would then have become more intercultural. For the sake of unity, they would have gathered and worshipped together at least once a month and probably followed up with

an international banquet, no matter how spicy or mild the food. All people would have quite possibly seemed satisfied by this intermittent and controlled intercultural interaction.

The problem is that the relationship of host and guest would have remained unchanged. Even today, a wall still exists, invisible and seemingly insurmountable at times, that separates “original” Mennonites—whose origins are, as a matter of fact, untraceably blurred—and new Mennonites.

Sometimes it feels like groups merely tolerate each other, a sort of tentative contract by which they try not to make each other uncomfortable, but are ready to depart as soon as the unwritten contract is breached. It is nothing other than good-willed superficiality.

Each individual’s strong cultural identity should be ready to be bent, without being broken

It is difficult for me not to feel frustration. The other side of the frustration is that I long for deep, authentic intercultural connection within the family of God, old and new.

Being a truly intercultural church takes work—strenuous and intentional work. Nothing is earned for free. It requires costly sacrifice. The words in John 12:24 fit: “*Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.*” If we believe we are a grain or a seed of the intercultural church, we should be ready to die.

But what does it mean for us to die?

In some cases, it means giving up certain Mennonite traditions, such as always singing in four-part harmony or an obsession with the tidiness of church buildings. Such sacrifices may be required for the expanded unity and inclusion of new people. Likewise, from the perspective of incoming and new congregants, it could also mean giving up on certain cultural or ethnic

preferences.

What is more, each individual’s strong cultural identity should be ready to be bent, without being broken, in order for a bigger, new identity to be born. We need to learn from Paul’s versatility in becoming all things to all people so that by all possible means we might save some (I Corinthians 9:22). In Christ, Paul was given various situations so that he could sacrifice his own privileges as a traditional Pharisee and Roman citizen in order to bring new people to the light of Christ.

The Bible, especially in Paul’s epistles, exhorts us to build a truly intercultural church in practical ways. For this, we do not need to look up fancy programs outside the church or bring in any church planters or church growth experts; we need to go back to the basics of the Bible, and resume and rekindle the spirit of togetherness or “one anotherness.” This spirit is innate, born out of our inseparable connection with our Lord Jesus Christ. By that spirit, we can go beyond our human tendency to be fractured and disconnected. We can go beyond a shallow and superficial understanding of intercultural church that sees it simply as a “good thing.”

In the New Testament alone there are 339 occurrences of “one another,” highlighting the importance of belonging or connecting to one another in shared life. I gained this insight from Bruderhof pastor and writer Charles Moore’s essay, “It Takes Work,” which appears in the book *Called to Community: The Life Jesus Wants For His People*.

Here are some examples of “one anotherness” in the New Testament:

- **Honour one another above yourselves** (Romans 12:10)
- **Build up one another** (Romans 14:19; I Thessalonians 5:11)
- **Accept one another** (Romans 15:7)
- **Care for one another** (I Corinthians 12:25)
- **Wait for one another** (I Corinthians 11:33)
- **Serve one another** (Galatians 5:13)

- **Bear one another's burdens** (Galatians 6:2)
- **Forgive one another** (Ephesians 4:2, 32; Colossians 3:13)
- **Be patient with one another** (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13)
- **Be kind and compassionate to one another** (Ephesians 4:32)
- **Stir up [provoke, stimulate] one another to love and good works** (Hebrews 10:24)
- **Pray for one another** (James 5:16)
- **Confess your faults to one another** (James 5:16)
- **Be at peace with one another** (I Thessalonians 5:15)
- **Love one another** (John 13:34 and at least 15 other places)

There are also some negative one another commands:

- **Do not lie to one another** (Colossians 3:9)
- **Stop passing judgment on one another** (Romans 14:13)
- **Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other** (Galatians 5:26)
- **Don't grumble against each other** (James 5:9)

These passages raise the following question: How seriously has our church lived out these biblical mandates for us to become a truly intercultural, inter-personal, interrelational and integrative church?

If we are not ready, willing or committed to share our lives with one another without reserve, then our noble exhortations about diversity are nothing but a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If we truly hold intention to become an intercultural church, it will demand much more of us than we naturally assume. It is a life's task to be shared and understood beyond any cultural and ethnic differences.

Is it too overwhelming to invest your whole lives for the intercultural church? If you think so, it is because you think it is your own job alone to do this.

But you are not alone. Remember: "God is faithful and he will not let

you be tempted beyond what you can bear" (I Corinthians 10:13), and he is the foundation on which we are able to work for our church—our intercultural church. As such, we are called according to God's purpose to work together and to serve one another for his goodness.

Therefore, everything we do must be done in Christ, and placed under his power and authority. Don't misunderstand our work for church as a human plan or something based in our will; it comes out of Christ's divine initiative and we are the people who are called to fulfil that initiative. Only through the Spirit of Christ are we capable of living out the "one another" commandments. Only through Christ can a true and sustainable intercultural church be born and flourish.

Again, brothers and sisters, I tell you, building and seeking a truly intercultural church leads us to a radical, revolutionary restructuring of life on all levels. Such a task is never easy. It takes a life's work to give up our pride, pleasures, preferences, privileges, priorities and patterns, in order to embark on a journey with others who want their

lives to be shared and shaped by the joy of the gospel for the one holy, universal community beyond all differences!

Are you ready to explore and embody this uncharted intercultural adventure? It is a journey toward our unsettled one anotherness in Christ, which is sure to expand the boundaries of his kingdom on earth and to advance our solidarity here and now. ❧



Joon Park is interim co-pastor of Holyrood Mennonite Church in Edmonton.

❧ For discussion

1. What are the worship customs in your church? How receptive are people to new styles of singing, prayer, communion or other aspects of worship?
2. Do you think worship is something people prefer to have ritualized so they can feel comfortable and know what to expect?
3. Joon Park talks about the wall between original Mennonites and new Mennonites. In what ways have you experienced this separation?
4. Park mentions four-part singing or an obsession with tidiness as examples of Mennonite traditions that might need to be sacrificed to achieve an intercultural church. Can you think of other cultural preferences that might be hard to let go?
5. What are some of the blessings of being called beyond our cultural norms to an "uncharted, intercultural adventure"?

—By Barb Draper

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✍ Readers write

✉ Feeling like a pandemic leper

I really appreciate the three articles Will Braun wrote regarding the polarization of vaccines (“The sweet solace of polarization,” Oct. 3, Oct. 17, Oct. 31, 2022).

I am immunocompromised and was the first member of my church to get COVID-19, back in November 2020. After the two-week quarantine, I got much worse, with breathing difficulties and high fever.

So once the vaccine was authorized for usage—without prolonged testing—and then mandates introduced, I really felt like a leper. Having chosen not to get vaccinated, I was banned from taking my elderly dad to hospital, banned from a nephew’s wedding, told I could not attend my favourite pastor’s funeral nor attend my friend’s celebration of life reception.

Yet, as a waitress, I could work every day in public. When *Canadian Mennonite* magazine printed articles about how important it was to follow government mandates and get vaccinated as a way to show that we loved our neighbour as ourselves, I was mystified and a bit confused. At times I felt that *CM* was another arm of the government.

Yet I enjoyed other articles and so did not cancel my subscription.

All of my kids and husband had been double vaccinated, but they understood my perspective and choice. I accepted others’ choices and responses as well, despite often feeling judged and discriminated against.

I was prohibited from seeing my ailing mother-in-law in long-term care for over a year, so I eventually made the choice to get vaccinated, even if it put my own health at risk. Ironically, the mandate requiring proof of vaccine was lifted a few weeks later!

So thanks, Will, for your willingness to see and understand the other side.

MARIA SIEMENS MATTY, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

The writer attends Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, B.C.

✉ Giving should reach beyond Mennonite causes

Re: “The how and why of Christian giving,” Nov. 28, 2022.

I wish to augment the helpful comments of this article, in particular with regard to money.

It would be in our Christian interest to expand our giving beyond the Mennonite environment. There are voices within our regional area and outside the church that request and need our assistance. I am conscious of the Food Bank, Gleaners and those in our city tents.

Friends outside our conventional church circles request help. Our younger years undoubtedly exposed us to people

involved in Christian ministry, but not within the Mennonite church. A few examples are Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship of Canada, Mission Aviation Fellowship, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Latin American Mission and Trans World Radio Canada. As people of God, these, too, are within the body of the global church.

There was no mention of tithing, a voice we did hear from our pulpits a few decades back. Does this Old Testament discipline no longer apply?

The column made frequent mention of “perceived needs,” and “what we can “give.” Most of us make comparisons with others around us, including fellow church members. A consideration could be the other 90 percent of the world’s people who are in greater physical, mental and, for many, spiritual need.

JOHN F. PETERS, WATERLOO, ONT.

The writer is a member of Waterloo North Mennonite Church.

✉ Reader corrects location of famous oak

Re: “An ‘accidental visiting scholar,’” Nov. 14, 2022.

The article includes a photo of the offspring of the Chortiza oak tree, which grows in Winnipeg. It states that the original oak tree was a landmark on the Chortiza Island in Ukraine.

Actually, the 800-year-old oak tree stood on the outskirts of the village of Chortiza, which was part of the first village where our ancestors settled; it did not grow on the island.

Those of us who took part in the Mennonite heritage tours all visited this tree in the village of Chortiza.

This mistake had also been printed in the past; this time I thought it needed correction.

MELITA PENNER, SASKATOON

✉ More women in the Bible were objectified than identified positively

Re: “Women who prepared the way for Jesus” feature, Nov. 28, 2022.

It is good that there are women identified positively in the biblical literature who paved the way for Jesus.

I think the larger picture we could glean from women in biblical literature is that they were more often than not objectified; chattels; spoils of war; virgins given to conquering warriors; sex objects lusted after by major biblical characters (David/Bathsheba); members of harems (Esther); raped by family members or political and religious leaders (Dinah); punished by exposure of their genitalia to the public and invitation to be beaten (Hosea); and, in general, subject to the patriarchy of every generation leading up to Jesus. These women, too, all paved the way for Jesus.

It is vital for us to recognize that the misogyny of women in the biblical literature has followed us into the 21st century,

even in Anabaptist Mennonite cultures, well beyond Jesus' arrival and departure from this fair earth.

While we acknowledge the biblical women identified, such as Rahab, Mary and Anna, I think some of the more salient questions of Anabaptist Mennonites to ponder should include:

- **How is misogyny** manifested within Mennonite church leadership and Mennonite academia?
- **How is misogyny** manifested within Mennonite homes?
- **How do we** participate in misogynistic systems in our society?

To my mind, we have a tendency to romanticize Christmas and Jesus' arrival. Of course, it is good news. However, I hope we continue to acknowledge the grim reality of misogyny in much of the biblical literature, and that we see Jesus' arrival as good news that there is no room for misogyny in the Anabaptist/Mennonite inn.

PETER REIMER (ONLINE COMMENT)

✉ **Column strikes a chord for reader**

Re: "The paradox of enoughness" column, Oct. 3, 2022.

This column really struck a chord for me.

Some years ago I read the book *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily: Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today* by Joan Chittister. It left a significant impact on my thinking and, in particular, the line from the Rule which says, 'Don't demand the best of everything.'

Wise advice in a society that encourages never-ending consumption and constant striving for more.

Thanks for Troy Watson's cogent and very well expressed thoughts.

PAUL THIESSEN, VANCOUVER

✉ **John misperceived in Advent feature**

Re: "Listening to the Spirit, with John," Nov. 14, 2022.

My understanding is that John followed the traditions and practices of being a Nazirite. A Nazirite followed the practices of no alcohol, etc., and was known in Old Testament times to be devout and dedicated to God. John's lifestyle and dedication to God were probably a big part of the reason why crowds were attracted to him.

I find the article portrays John in extreme language that I doubt was how he was perceived by his fellow Jews and listeners. I am impressed that his message also resonated with the soldiers who, I presume, were part of the Roman army and not Jewish by faith or heritage.

LINDA PETTY (ONLINE COMMENT)

✉ **Column is a true 'Christmas delight'**

Re: "Christmas delight?" column, Dec. 12, 2022.

What a lovely piece, unpacking through storytelling and direct experience the true unexpected and simple origins of genuine delight, as opposed to our many manufactured attempts—be it through consumerism or flashy services—to make it happen.

BLAKE POLAND (ONLINE COMMENT)

✉ **Request for clarification on what lies beyond inclusion**

The article, "Queer theology pushes beyond inclusion" (Nov. 28, 2022) reads as follows: "The question of inclusion is not even the most helpful, or interesting, question," [Melanie Kampen] said, noting that, with inclusion, 'you've just widened your circle to include another group of people. But it doesn't change anything about the structures that made exclusion of those people possible in the first place.'

What lies beyond inclusion? What structures should be eliminated and, if there were new structures, what would they be?

DAVID SHANTZ, MONTREAL

Be in Touch

- Send letters to letters@canadianmennonite.org. Our mailing address is on page 3.
- Please keep it concise and respectful. Any substantial edits to letters will be done in consultation with the writer.
- If you have feedback not intended for publication, please contact editor@canadianmennonite.org or at 1-800-378-2524 ext 5.

/// **Milestones**

Births/Adoptions

Godfrey—Ezra and Brinley (b. Nov. 18, 2022), to Joel and Sarah Godfrey, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Deaths

Bender—John Benjamin, 84 (b. Feb. 4, 1938; d. Nov. 8, 2022), Nairn Mennonite, Ailsa Craig, Ont.

Braun—Kenneth (Sam), 80 (b. Jan. 6, 1942; d. Nov. 28, 2022), Altona Mennonite, Man.

Byer—Evelyn Francis (nee Reesor), 89 (b. Nov. 4, 1932; d. Nov. 3, 2022), Wideman Mennonite, Markham, Ont.

Chamberlin—Philip Edwin, 80 (b. March 8, 1942; d. Nov. 24, 2022), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Driedger—John N., 91 (b. July 28, 1931; d. Dec. 5, 2022), North

Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Dyck—Betty (Jackson), 90 (b. May 28, 1932; d. Dec. 4, 2022), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Dyck—Marie (Klassen), 96 (b. Nov. 2, 1926; d. Nov. 18, 2022), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Elias—Cornelius, 77 (b. Nov. 12, 1945; d. Dec. 3, 2022), Altona Mennonite, Man.

Friesen—John P., 101 (b. Oct. 23, 1921; d. Nov. 29, 2022), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Friesen—Nettie (Enns), 87 (b. March 7, 1935; d. Nov. 23), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Guenther—Marilyn (nee Dueck), 73 (b. Feb. 9 1949; d. Dec. 18, 2022), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Hewitt—Mary (nee Quiring), 72 (b. Jan. 31, 1950; d. June 28, 2022), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Hildebrand—Karin, 72 (b. Nov. 23, 1950; d. Dec. 1, 2022), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

Henry—James Arthur Charles, 69 (b. April 26, 1953; d. Nov. 30, 2022), Vineland United Mennonite Church, Ont.

Hoepfner—Katherine (Dyck), 92 (b. June 16, 1930; d. Nov. 18, 2022), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Hoover—Lois Marie (nee Fretz), 95 (b. May 25, 1927; d. Dec. 2, 2022), Wideman Mennonite, Markham, Ont.

Krahn—Ruth Katie (b. April 26, 1946; d. Nov. 23, 2022), First Mennonite, Edmonton.

Letkemann—Helen (Hoepfner), 96 (b. Nov. 21, 1926; d. Dec. 13; 2022), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

Loewen—Joyce (nee Hiebert), 73 (b. March 19, 1949; d. Dec. 17, 2022), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

MacBride—Richard Patrick, 78 (b. Aug. 17, 1944; d. Dec. 17, 2022), Erb Stret Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Mulcaster—Louise (Driedger), 85 (b. June 25, 1937; d. Nov. 22, 2022), Leamington United Mennonite Church, Ont.

Penner—Victor, 96 (b. April 2, 1926; d. Nov. 22, 2022), Altona Mennonite, Man.

Schwartzentruber—Dorothy, 97 (b. Nov. 5, 1925; d. Nov. 22, 2022), Wilmot Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Steinmann—Ray, 86 (b. Sept. 5, 1936; d. Oct. 21, 2022), East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Unger—Anne (Wiebe), 89 (b. Dec. 2, 1932; d. Nov. 16, 2022), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Warkentin—Irene, 92 (b. Dec. 3, 1929; d. Oct. 29, 2022), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Wiebe—John, 88 (b. Sept. 2, 1934; d. Nov. 26, 2022), Springstein Mennonite, Man.

Wiebe—Helga (nee Peters), 90 (b. Feb. 10, 1932; d. Nov. 20, 2022), Springstein Mennonite, Man.

Wiebe—Len, 85 (b. Sept. 29, 1937; d. Nov. 28, 2022), Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Yordy—Ruth Miller, 99 (b. Dec. 29, 1922; d. Nov. 29, 2022), St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

A moment from yesterday



In 1893, Maria Kroeker married Johann Neufeld in Reinland, Man. The couple moved to Lost River, Sask. in 1911. Then, in 1926, when the Saskatchewan government insisted that Mennonite children attend government schools, Maria and Johann moved their 11 children to Paraguay, where they helped establish the village of Bergthal. Of the 1,778 people who moved to Paraguay at that time, 10 percent died within two years.

In each location she lived, Maria was part of the pioneering experience, building shelters from the ground up. Her letters to family in Canada are now in the Mennonite Heritage Archives. She wrote about her physical, mental and spiritual struggles. After some of Maria's children returned to Canada, they encouraged her to return as well. She replied: "When we consider the reason we cited for making this move [to Paraguay], namely for the sake of our faith, our conscience will not let us return." Her letters reveal anguish, heartache, determination and faith.

Text: Conrad Stoesz
Photo: Peter Kroeker Photo
Collection

FROM OUR LEADERS

What exactly do regional churches and MC Canada do?

Doug Klassen

Anual congregational meetings are just around the corner, a time when budget lines designated for regional churches are often queried. I'm reminded that many people do not have the history or know the people who stand behind the dollar figures.

I'm immensely grateful for the foresight of our elders who founded and supported, both financially and spiritually, the many ministries that are bearing fruit today.

Because of them, along with the ongoing support for regional and nationwide ministry, we are lifted up by the smiling faces of children eager to gush about their experiences at one of our camps. Lodges and cabins built by hands now wrinkled or gone await congregations and groups who retreat to nature at these marvellous camps.

In addition to camps, pastors and church planters carry on their ministry with the support of regional church mentors who work quietly in the background. Sometimes that help comes in mundane but critical ways you're unlikely to see, such as healthcare

and pension benefits, or continuing education. While many of our pastors have been shaped by one or more of our higher-education schools, other graduates go on to integrate their learned faith values into careers as varied as the Canadian landscape.

There are Sunday school handouts your children and grandchildren take home, beloved hymn books, songs you sing, and *Rejoice!* devotional books that guide the daily prayers of many. Books, DVDs, podcasts and worship-arts materials are available from Common-Word, your congregation's one-stop shop for church resources (shipping is free!). And there is one resource that offers something for everyone: it's the magazine you're reading right now. About one-third of *Canadian Mennonite's* budget is funded by Mennonite Church Canada and its regional churches.

The Mennonite Heritage Archives keeps alive the stories of faith held in our spiritual ancestors' diaries, photographs and recordings. In 2022, 95 students and scores of researchers from as far away as Amsterdam, Mexico City

and Dnipro, Ukraine, visited to learn about our faith legacy.

MC Canada ministries funded by your congregation's regional church budget line include support for International Witness workers in four countries and ministry partnerships in 11 more, a work that mutually transforms relationships in the global church. Here at home, we continue to walk toward reconciliation with Indigenous peoples through the efforts of Indigenous Relations coordination. And brand new for this year is a Climate Action office that will invite you on an eco-mission journey.

I'm immensely grateful that we still manage to find ways of connecting with a diverse collection of fellow Christians. Our bi-annual nationwide gatherings, Mennonite World Conference, and our relationships with the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and the Canadian Council of Churches, bring together a wealth of insight and growth for leaders.

I'm grateful for your eyes on these words, for your attention to the stories of challenge and inspiration that are to come this year in these pages, in newsletters, websites, meetings, gatherings and via your own church bulletins. Blessings to you all as we walk the Jesus road in 2023. ☸



Doug Klassen is executive minister of MC Canada.

Et cetera

Canada sets immigration record

Canada met its target of welcoming 431,645 new permanent residents last year, the highest such number in our history. According to a government release, this beat the previous record from 2021 and the next highest year, 1913.

Only about 20 percent of new permanent residents were admitted as refugees, protected persons or on other humanitarian grounds. The rest were economic immigrants or already had family in Canada. Canada plans to welcome even more new permanent residents, overall, in 2023 and 2024, though fewer refugees than in 2022.

Source: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada



 THE CHURCH HERE AND THERE

On boycotting church

Arli Klassen

I was a young adult in the time of the boycotts of South Africa. They were debated at length among my friends. How could it be right to boycott oranges from South Africa when that would negatively impact the masses of farm labourers in the country?

Then I moved to Lesotho, with my husband, to serve with Mennonite Central Committee. Lesotho is a tiny country completely surrounded by South Africa. We were there during the boycotts, a few years before the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994. We learned that the boycotts were requested and supported by the South Africa Council of Churches. We also learned that the boycotts that had the most impact on white South Africans were the sports boycotts, where South Africans were banned from international sporting events like the Olympics, rugby, cricket and soccer.

These days we hear concerns about corruption in FIFA—the body governing world soccer, including the World Cup—and the International Olympic Committee, as well as serious questions about human rights in Qatar, the country that hosted the recent World Cup. Those are all valid concerns. Is it right to boycott watching the World

Cup or the Olympics, when that will negatively impact the masses of athletes who are eager to compete?

Recently I read the news about Roman Catholic priests who were transferred from the Mount Cashel orphanage in Newfoundland to schools in British Columbia, where they continued their abuse of boys. I know the Mount Cashel stories resulted in a lot of Catholics (and non-Catholics) coming to the conclusion that they are “done” with church. This is their way of boycotting a corrupt system. Every new story of a church leader in any denomination who has broken trust through sexual misconduct validates these boycotts.

Similarly, the stories of the impact of multi-generational trauma of residential schools on Indigenous people raise questions about how on earth churches could participate in cultural genocide.

Is it right then to boycott the church?

Corruption is dishonest or fraudulent behaviour, providing benefits to the individual, while harming other individuals and preventing benefit to the larger society. Corruption is often understood to involve money, but I prefer a larger definition that focuses on self-benefit over societal benefit. Self-protection

and self-benefit are choices we all make in our lives, although the degree to which they harm other individuals and broader society vary greatly. Institutions and corporations struggle to balance benefits to their constituents or shareholders with societal benefits.

I boycotted South African oranges in the 1980s. I paid TSN for the benefit of watching the World Cup last year. I invest deeply in the church at all levels. Am I less radical in my 60s than I was in my 20s? Or am I more radical now, by choosing to invest in the church in an era when many have written the church off as corrupt, irrelevant and harmful?

I continue to choose hope that the Holy Spirit is at work in the church today. Yes, part of that is dismantling institutional systems that are too often focused on self-preservation instead of societal benefits. And yes, the bigger part is having the eyes to see where the Spirit is at work, not just in individuals, but in the church, as a diverse, inclusive, caring faith community where transformation of ourselves and the world around us is taking place. That is radical hope. ✎



Arli Klassen serves as moderator of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and as coordinator of regional representatives for Mennonite World Conference.

 Et cetera

Genetic research on Amish and Mennonites expands

In November 2022, the Clinic for Special Children in Lancaster County, Pa. began building a new and much bigger facility for its work in treating genetic and complex medical disorders. About 90 percent of the patients of this non-profit medical and research organization are from the Amish and Old Order Mennonite communities. Because Amish and Old Order Mennonites tend to marry only from within a closed community, and because they have extensive genealogical records, they are a good fit for genetic research. The clinic also benefits families suffering from genetic disorders.



THE CLINIC FOR SPECIAL CHILDREN WEBSITE PHOTO

Source: *Anabaptist World* and ABC 27

VOICES AND STORIES

Chin song adds breadth to newest hymnal

Anneli Loepp Thiessen

In 2017, the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship awarded members of the *Voices Together* hymnal committee a grant to explore Mennonite worship in communities that worship primarily in languages beyond English. Katie Graber, Bradley Kauffman and Darryl Neustaedter-Barg represented the committee on their visits to 11 congregations, ranging in location from Vancouver to Fort Myers, Fla.

the congregation's worship band was prepared to teach three of their "heart songs": the songs they cherish the most. After sharing "What the Lord Has Done in Me" by Hillsong, and "Above All," most prominently recorded by Michael W. Smith, they shared a new song called "Jehovah Shammah."

The piece, now titled "Zisuh nih a zultu hna sinah (Peace Be With You!

gospel hymns; the melody bears some resemblance to ones like "I Have Found a Friend in Jesus (Lily of the Valley)," published in 1881 and included in the 1940 *Mennonite Hymnary*.

The song is intended to be sung rather quickly, so some communities may find it helpful to go over the text before singing it. The piece can be done in a contemporary style, accompanied by guitar, keyboard, bass and drums, or it can be done more simply with just acoustic guitar or piano.

The church pastor, Simon Tlumang, provided a rough English translation for the Chin text. The Mennonite Worship and Song Committee then created a more nuanced English translation. The version in *Voices Together* presents two verses in Chin, followed by two verses in English. The English chorus reads: "Holy light is shining in our hearts. Holy peace is flowing in our breath. God has promised us the things we need, giving us the victory over death. Hallelujah, all praise and glory to God."

A celebration of God's provision and abundant care, this piece offers a way of joining with Mennonite siblings who worship in a range of languages, places and ways. ❧



Anneli Loepp Thiessen is co-director of the Anabaptist Worship Network and was a committee member for

Voices Together.

To see a four-minute video about the worship project, including the song discussed above, visit canadianmennonite.org/zisuh-nih.



PHOTO BY DARRYL NEUSTAEDTER-BARG

Bradley Kauffman and Katie Graber, second and third from left, with members of Chin Emmanuel Baptist Church in Houston, Texas.

The goal of the project was to equip the committee to create a more expansive denominational worship resource. Kauffman, *Voices Together's* general editor, said of the study: "Since we don't all identify as hymn singers, this study will help bring a breadth of worship practices and needs more clearly into focus. A single hymnal cannot serve every congregation, so we hope to build something representative of a range of practices that are giving life to Mennonite worship."

When the group visited Chin Emmanuel Baptist Church in Houston, Texas, a Mennonite Church U.S.A. congregation,

Jesus Told His Friends)" is No. 165 in *Voices Together*. The worship band explained that the piece was originally written by a Chin person who converted to Christianity early on. One of the band members, Olivia Tluang, described what makes the song so special: "We like this song the most because it was written by one of the people who first knew Jesus and received God . . . and when he composed this song . . . he reminded us that God is our provider and our caregiver. I really like the lyrics and how the song flows."

The hymn writer was evidently influenced by turn-of-the-20th-century

LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Makin' space

Troy Watson

My youngest son, Cai, has developed a passion for working out, so for Christmas he asked for a home gym. More specifically, an Olympic barbell, bumper plate weights, an adjustable bench and a power rack. It was pretty expensive, so he offered to pay for half, and said, "You can use it too, Dad! It would be something we could do together."

I appreciated his excitement and agreed it would be nice to have something like that around the house. Unfortunately, his plan wasn't feasible in our current situation. We don't have a large house and our unfinished basement ceiling is very low.

"I'm sorry, son, we just don't have room for something like that in our house," I said.

He quickly agreed, as if expecting me to say that. "I was thinking we could set it up in the garage actually, not the house," he said.

Unfortunately, our single-car garage is packed wall to wall in winter. I gave up trying to park our vehicle in it years ago. It is strictly used as storage space for our kayaks, gardening tools, lawn-mower, snowblower, wheelbarrow, work bench, winter/summer tires, bikes, scooters, patio furniture, hockey equipment and so on. There is no space for anything else, let alone a large home gym.

"I'm sorry, son there's no room in the garage either."

"We could make room," he replied.

At first I resisted. It seemed like an impossible task. We would need six square metres of space to fit the set-up he wanted. I was convinced it couldn't be done. Yet his persistence and passion wore me down, much like the widow with the unjust judge in Luke 18.

"Come on Dad, we can do it," he said. "Where there is a will, there is a way. Right?"

I finally agreed to try. The following Saturday afternoon we spent hours moving and rearranging things, until we finally cleared enough space for a home gym. I marvelled at what we had accomplished. It seemed like a Christmas miracle. It's amazing what some rearranging and a bit of purging can do.

I wondered if this had other applications in my life. Like how I view my time, for instance.

At the beginning of December, I looked at my schedule and the list of things I needed to do, wondering how on earth I would get everything done. I certainly had no room in my schedule for anything else. Then it happened. For the first time since the pandemic began almost three years ago, I got sick.

Over the past few years, I had started to wonder if I had become invincible. For whatever reason, I had become immune to COVID-19 and all other viruses and bacterial infections in my late 40s. This delusion was wonderful to entertain while it lasted, but now, two weeks before Christmas, I was sick. I lost my voice. I ended up taking a week off work. I had to cancel my appointments and meetings. I definitely did not have time for this.

Yet, to my surprise, I did have room in my schedule for this. Everyone and everything got along just fine without me. Everything that needed to get done, got done.

I wondered, is it possible there's always more room than we think? With some rearranging and a bit of purging, perhaps there is always more space available in our lives than we think there is. More time for God, family, self-care, friends, meditation, prayer, exercise and that unfinished project we keep hoping to get to, when we finally find that ever-elusive window of free time?

Maybe there is no such thing as "free" time. Perhaps there is always a cost, and

UNSPASH PHOTO BY
AMBITION CREATIVE CO.-RICK BARRETT



we have to choose what area of our lives that cost will be taken from. Maybe the cost of our full schedules, governed by our addictions, attachments and assumptions, is our mental health, physical health, spiritual health or the health of our relationships with family, friends and God.

This week I've been wondering, how do I go about rearranging and purging my life, the way my son and I rearranged and purged our garage? How do I tap into the abundance of time and space in my life that the abundant life of Jesus promises? I haven't figured it out yet, but I'm now confident that, where there is a will, there is a way. ❧



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

BOOK REVIEW

Apocalypse, peace, identity

In her book *The White Mosque*, Somali-American Mennonite author Sofia Samatar weaves her story with that of the apocalyptic 'Great Trek' of Mennonites to Central Asia in the 1880s

By Shirley Hershey Showalter, for *Anabaptist World*

When Sofia Samatar took an American literature class at Goshen (Ind.) College more than 20 years ago, she wrote a paper about Walt Whitman, who is sometimes called the “good grey poet.” Among the thousands of student papers I read, this one stands out.

What made it remarkable was the way she complicated the meanings of “good” and “grey,” showing an ability, much like the poet’s own, to read radically, viewing both words and their contexts through many prisms.

To draw on the words of Whitman, one of her many literary mentors, Samatar is “large.” She “contains multitudes.” She sings the “body electric” this way: “My mother’s family are Swiss-German Mennonite, my father’s, Somali Muslims. I stand amid this lightning,” she writes.

Samatar chooses to stand with both traditions, inviting one to critique the other, celebrating strengths and observing weaknesses in both.

She worships with Community Mennonite Church in Harrisonburg, Va., knows how to play the “Mennonite game,” has read Ben Goossen’s analysis of Mennonite susceptibility to racism and fascism, and has studied *Martyrs Mirror* cover to cover. Few of us can match her education in contemporary Mennonite identity. None of us can make those issues more universal, poetic and prophetic.

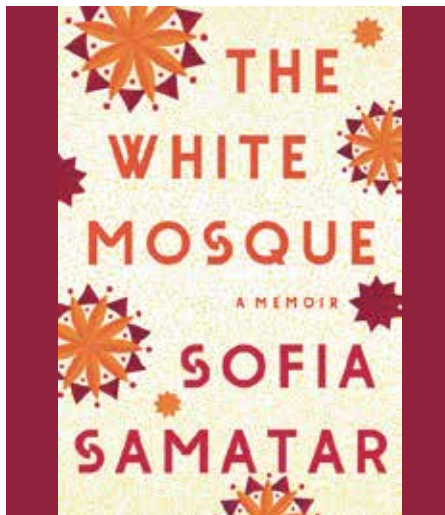
For Mennonites, Samatar’s memoir *The White Mosque*, published in 2022 by Catapult, should be required reading.

The plot centres on the so-called Great Trek in which a group of Mennonites from the Molotschna Colony, in present-day Ukraine, travelled to Central Asia in the 1880s. The group



GOSHEN COLLEGE PHOTO BY JULIAN GONZALEZ

Sofia Samatar speaks at Goshen College on Sept. 30, 2022.



was influenced by Claas Epp Jr., who had read a novel about Christ’s return at the end of the world and constructed his own prophecy. He designated March 8, 1889, as the day of the Second Coming and wrote his own book, *The Unsealed Prophecy of the Prophet Daniel and the Meaning of the Revelation of Jesus*.

Eventually he convinced scores of

families to undertake a dangerous journey eastward into unknown territory. They went in part because of Epp’s mesmerizing personality, but also because the Russian government no longer promised exemption from military service.

On top of this backstory, Samatar layers her own participation in a Mennonite and Uzbekistan history tour in 2016. What draws her? A photograph of a plain white cube building. Taken by the Swiss photographer and adventurer Ella Maillart in 1932, the photo depicts the church building of the Mennonite group that split off from Epp’s group and went on to live in the village of Ak Metchet.

The name of this town, where weary travellers found a welcome from the Khan and lived for 50 years, means “white mosque.” The Mennonite church building was called by the obvious name in the local language: mosque. Here was a place where Muslims and Mennonites met in a rare and distinctive way. No wonder the white mosque called to a

Somali-American Mennonite writer.

When Samatar met with a group of students of colour in 2016 at Goshen College, they named feelings of isolation they experienced in the presence of what they call “The Mennonite Wall.” As she recounts in the book, Samatar responded as an artist: “[W]hen I heard this, I wanted to write something for those young people who came from the world where most Mennonites live. They were something that seemed very odd, at least at first: a minoritized majority. Among my notes, a scribbled line: Write something to answer their confusion.”

The White Mosque is her answer to the confusion about how a church, which globally has more Black and brown members than white ones, still identifies itself as a white ethnic group. Implicitly, Samatar calls for a church that no longer minoritizes its majority. What could be more relevant to a world filled with strife among many religions and races?

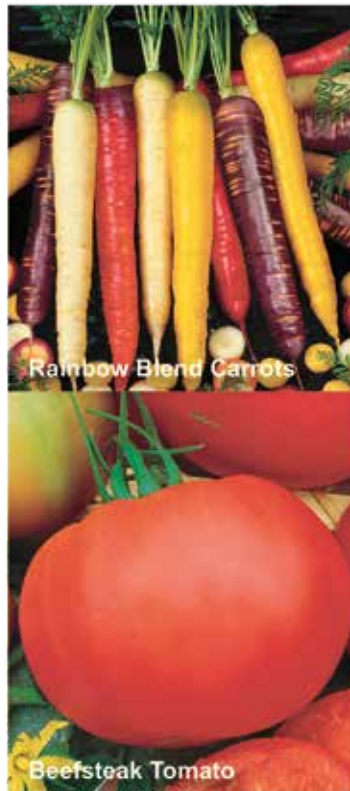
When I read these words in the book, I wept: “Let us recall the reason behind these struggles. The choice of Central Asia, it’s true, is based on prophetic visions, but the original reason for leaving Russia is peace: the refusal of violence, even in self-defense, the refusal to enable the violence of others. In this shining absolutism lies the great honor and dignity of Anabaptist life. This is their gift to the world, and it is

the reason the world needs them: These travelers are not just a quaint German-speaking cult but the stewards of a precious ethic.”

Samatar’s purpose is larger than the Mennonite church, yet she does not rush past the church to embrace the world. In fact, she shines a light on the great vision of wholeness that leads a

people to long for, search for and, sometimes find, home. ❧

Shirley Hershey Showalter taught at Goshen College from 1976 to 2004 and served as president of the college from 1997 to 2004. A version of this article first appeared in Anabaptist World. Reprinted with permission.



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NEWS

Anabaptist Worship Network supports worship and song leaders

By Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe
Manitoba Correspondent

Congregational needs for worship resources and support skyrocketed when the pandemic roared into full swing and people struggled to create meaningful worship experiences in an online world.

Two Mennonite worship leaders and academics stepped in to help and, in March 2020, created the Anabaptist Worship Network (AWN), a community on Facebook to support worship and song leaders by sharing resources and encouragement.

“For a whole bunch of people who hadn’t necessarily thought about this before, it was kind of on their shoulders,” says the network’s co-director Anneli Loepp Thiessen. “I think it needed to happen anyways, and then March 2020 accelerated that, just like COVID accelerated so many things,”

The 27-year-old is working on a PhD in interdisciplinary music research at the University of Ottawa, where she attends Ottawa Mennonite Church. She founded AWN with co-director Katie Graber, 46, who teaches ethnomusicology at Ohio State University and attends Columbus Mennonite Church.

The two met while on the committee developing *Voices Together*, the new Mennonite song collection. They recognized the project would continue long after the hymnal was published. “There’s a huge amount of work that goes into putting the hymnal together, but then getting people to use it is this whole other thing,” Loepp Thiessen says.

She adds that as they worked on the hymnal, they realized “how much the landscape around worship education and worship resourcing has changed since 1992, when the [previous] hymnal came out.” Fewer church music majors, pastors and denominational positions for worship development means the hymnal has entered a very different landscape than

30 years ago, she says.

Loepp Thiessen and Graber wanted to establish a platform where lay church leaders could compare their experiences and help each other with *Voices Together*.

“Mennonite worship is so dependant on lay leaders and there is something absolutely wonderful about that, but we have to make sure people have the supports they need to know what they’re

The AWN Facebook group’s 663 members use the space to make connections, ask questions, exchange ideas and explore different ways to worship. They’ve put together virtual choir recordings for each other and shared sheet music and videos. The group’s size and frequency of activity quickly grew to exceed the two women’s expectations.

“I continue to be surprised by how



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANNELI LOEPP THIESSEN

Anneli Loepp Thiessen, left, and Katie Graber are co-directors of the Anabaptist Worship Network.

doing,” Graber says. “I think there’s a whole group of church attenders who might be interested in worship leading or song leading, but feel like, ‘I can’t do that because I don’t know how.’”

people continue to trickle in pretty consistently . . . so pleased by the way people feel free to put a question out there,” Graber says. “That’s exactly what we were hoping for the Facebook page especially.”

What began as a Facebook group has flourished into a whole organization. The co-directors now work with a leadership team of 13 volunteer members to guide the network, which encompasses three groups “working to support and strengthen public worship in Mennonite communities,” its website states.

The AWN Projects Team furthers Anabaptist worship education by hosting webinars and in-person events, and writing a regular blog. The *Voices Together* Implementation Team leads workshops on the new hymnal and develops supplemental resources for the collection. The Together in Worship Leadership Team curates an ever-expanding online collection of free Anabaptist worship resources.

AWN partners with organizations like

styles of worship have dominated the Mennonite narrative for a long time, Loepp Thiessen and Graber agree. Elements like four-part harmony or intellectually scripted sermons are often put on pedestals as the truest form of worship.

“It’s great if you love that, but that doesn’t make it okay to speak negatively about other kinds of worship,” Graber says.

“It’s a little ironic for Mennonites, who are so interested in neutralizing power and hierarchy,” Loepp Thiessen says. “Do we want to be upholding one particular way of worship as the most Mennonite way, or is it actually a truly Mennonite thing to reevaluate what we’re doing and bring in other ways of worship and connecting?”

Graber says worship has different purposes for different people—sometimes

‘Mennonite worship is so dependant on lay leaders and there is something absolutely wonderful about that, but we have to make sure people have the supports they need to know what they’re doing,’ Graber says.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, which offers financial support through a grant, and Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, which provides administrative assistance.

Graber and Loepp Thiessen recently received a grant from the Calvin Institute for Christian Worship, which they are using to organize an Anabaptist songwriting retreat from May 25 to 28 at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp in New Hamburg, Ont. (They are still seeking participants; more information can be found on the AWN website.)

The retreat will focus on creating non-English language songs and contemporary worship songs. Loepp Thiessen acknowledges *Voices Together* serves many different communities, but doesn’t take people very far in those two categories. “If we’re saying we’re an Anabaptist Worship Network, that means we want to not only resource very traditional, upper-middle-class Mennonite congregations, we want to move beyond that too,” she says.

Incorporating and celebrating the diversity of worship is important. Certain

they need the familiar to comfort them, and other times they need to set aside what they like so they can be hospitable “by creating a sound people will feel comfortable in . . . by stretching ourselves so we can stretch our idea of what community is, of who the family of God is, and that helps us stretch our idea of who God is.”

AWN currently does a lot of *Voices Together* resourcing, but Loepp Thiessen hopes its scope continues to grow beyond that, meeting broader needs of a wider variety of people. Graber hopes to do more research so she and her colleagues can be even better equipped to resource people for meaningful worship. ❧



❧ Staff changes

Pastoral transitions in Manitoba

Anna Marie Geddert

concluded 13 years of ministry at Jubilee Mennonite Church in Winnipeg on June 30, 2022. She was the pastor of community ministry and, more recently, also the acting executive director of Community Roots Resource Centre, an initiative started by the congregation. Prior to pastoring at Jubilee, Geddert was an early-childhood educator and the director of an organization providing social supports to families with young children in Winnipeg. She received pastoral training through an internship with a community ministry pastor and by attending numerous resourcing conferences. Since retiring from her position, she has continued her ongoing work as a doula and is starting a family daycare from her home.



Lawrence Siemens

retired from his role as the associate pastor for seniors at Morden Mennonite Church on Aug. 31, 2022. He served in the half-time position for approximately six-and-a-half years. Siemens’ main career was as a teacher, for which he earned his bachelor of arts degree and education qualifications, in addition to several Bible and theology courses over the years. He taught for 32 years, mostly in southern Manitoba, and entered pastoral work as a transition into retirement. Morden Mennonite’s other pastoral leaders and committees will absorb the tasks of his position.



—BY NICOLIEN KLASSEN-WIEBE

Backyard bakery creates community

By Emma Siemens
CM Intern

One might be able to live on bread alone, at least according to Jacquie Loewen.

The resident of Winnipeg's West End neighbourhood has spent the past year building a stone oven, learning to bake bread in it, and sharing this bread with her neighbours—all from the comfort of her own backyard.

"I have a really deep feeling that people should have good food," says Loewen, 40, who works as an actor, stunt performer, fight choreographer, writer, director and producer. "I thought, 'I want to do this for myself, and why not give the people who I live with the opportunity to eat good bread for whatever they want to pay for it?'"

Loewen, who completed Canadian Mennonite University's Outtatown program in 2001, says the food her low-income neighbours can afford isn't nutritious enough. Her backyard bakery, which was open every Wednesday from June until October this year, is thus founded on "reciprocal generosity."

"I give them the bread, and they give me what they want to share in return, and it creates an equitable relationship," she says, noting that she expects a reasonable payment, with an exception or two. "There'd be this one kid who'd always come by and want bread, and I'd be, like, 'I'll give you as much free bread as you want.'"

Baking loaves of bread for her neighbours was not necessarily what Loewen had in mind when she first began building her oven. She says she has a need to build things, and her unemployment throughout the COVID-19 pandemic gave her the chance to do this from her home of 12 years.

"The pandemic renewed my relationship with that house," Loewen says. "It created my relationship with my neighbours. I lived there, but I wasn't there for 12 years, psychologically. I was just always thinking I had to be someplace else, or my real life hadn't started, and then during the pandemic I had to be there."

In addition to her oven, Loewen has also built a deck and firepit in her backyard, where she speaks with neighbours passing by each time she works outside. "It's a long-form performance art project," she says.

Loewen's house is situated on a prominent corner lot in her neighbourhood. She chose to embrace her yard's prominence with a low chain-link fence rather than attempt privacy with a higher one, as others have done.

"Sure, then nobody can see in, but then I can't see out, and then what? You're just going to let the world go to [pieces] because you don't see it?" she explains.

Those who know her know this awareness and compassion are at the core of her backyard bakery, and her life overall.

"Jacquie has lived there with her eyes wide open to what's around her," says her aunt Lynda Loewen, who works as a social worker. "When she takes action, there's a really deliberate connection between the needs that she knows are there, and what she's doing. It's not what she imagines, or what a survey told her, or what she learned from a textbook. It's because she knows her neighbours and she lives with her neighbours."

Michelle Burkowski, Loewen's neighbour of 12 years, can attest to this: "She's not afraid to talk to anyone walking by. She'll help anyone."

Burkowski says her sociability is one that



PHOTO BY MICHELLE BURKOWSKI

Jacquie Loewen building her backyard oven.

catches on. "She's a great role model. I'm talking to way more people now because of how she interacts," says Burkowski, and she is not alone in this. The backyard bakery has "been a real community, and a place to gather" for the whole neighbourhood, Burkowski adds.

For Loewen, however, the backyard bakery needs improvement—or at least her bread does. "I don't feel like I've hit my best," she says. "But a bunch of people are really happy with it, and I'm, like, 'Fine, I'll do it again.'"

She plans to have her backyard bakery in business again as her schedule allows in 2023. ☘

Nazi collaborator with Mennonite ties dies in Netherlands

Source: *Vancouver Sun*, Dec. 21, 2022

Jacob Luitjens—who was convicted of aiding the Nazis, and much later attended First Mennonite United Church in Vancouver—died in the Netherlands in December at age 103, according to a report in the *Vancouver Sun*.

Either a notorious war criminal or someone caught up in something that turned out unimaginably worse than anticipated, depending on the version, Luitjens left Europe for South America before a Dutch court convicted him in absentia in 1948.

He met Olga Klassen on the boat to South America. They married, had three kids, and in 1961 moved from Paraguay to British Columbia, where Luitjens taught botany at the University of British Columbia and attended First Mennonite

United Church for some years.

In 1992, after years of investigations and legal proceedings, Canada deported Luitjens to the Netherlands, where he was imprisoned. At age 75 he was released from prison, largely due to his age, after serving only 28 months. He was not allowed to return to Canada.

Luitjens' wife Olga died in Rosthern, Sask., on Nov. 21, 2022, at age 95.

An article by David Barnouw entitled “Jacob Luitjens: A Dutch Mennonite War Criminal,” appeared in the April 2022 issue of *Mennonite Quarterly Review*. Among other things, Barnouw discusses Luitjens' father's allegiance to the Germans during the Second World War.

Dutch journalist Maarten van Gestel spoke with Luitjens in recent years. As

reported by the *Vancouver Sun*, in these conversations Luitjens “did not fully denounce Nazism but said he regretted the persecution of the Jews.” He said that “perhaps his story offered hope that ‘a monster can also become a normal person again.’” ❧

In 1992, after years of investigations and legal proceedings, Canada deported Luitjens to the Netherlands, where he was imprisoned.

❧ News brief

MWC breaks even with Assembly 17

As 2022 drew to a close, Mennonite World Conference (MWC) announced its financial report for Assembly 17 that was held in Indonesia last summer. “We are very pleased to report that . . . we met the financial goal of breaking even,” said chief operating officer Jeanette Bissoon. This was MWC's first time hosting a hybrid event with in-person and online participants. “There were many unknowns that made it challenging to budget for registration fees,” Bissoon said, adding, “Thanks to the careful planning and spending by Assembly staff, we were able to contain expenses, despite an additional year of commitments due to the postponement. Total expenses came in \$285,000 less than budget. These savings made up for the shortfall in revenues.” The net impact of the variances in revenues and expenses, along with a transfer of \$100,000 from general revenues that had been budgeted, resulted in a break-even position. “We are thankful to each person and organization that gave to make this result possible,” she said.

—Mennonite World Conference



PHOTO BY LOYCE TWONGIRWE

Rut Arsari, centre, helps Assembly 17 participants at the Mennonite World Conference registration table last summer.

Socks, socks and more socks

B.C. youth group collects for homeless shelter

By Amy Rinner Waddell
B.C. Correspondent



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARIAN PECKFORD

Youth at United Mennonite Church of Black Creek, B.C., with socks they collected.

The youth group at United Mennonite Church of Black Creek were thinking about Christmas stockings in December, but not what they would find in their own. They were all about supplying them to the less fortunate.

The group, consisting of youth aged eight and up, have been collecting socks for the past seven years for warming shelters in nearby Courtenay. Usually they get about 50 pairs for donation, but last month the youth parents and church members gathered a record 92 pairs.

The socks are tied with ribbons and

bows and delivered just before Christmas. In the past, they have been filled with treats such as candy canes, oranges and a small keepsake gift, but this year the shelters notified the Black Creek group that the extra goodies were not needed as they had plenty already.

Coordinator Marian Peckford dropped off the socks at three shelters in Courtenay that each have 25 beds to shelter homeless persons. "The shelters are always so thankful to receive these socks!" Peckford said. ❧



PHOTO COURTESY OF TIM KUEPFER /

TEXT BY AMY RINNER WADDELL

Members of Chinatown Peace Church of Vancouver celebrated Christmas in a non-traditional way on Dec. 24, after not meeting for the last two years because of the pandemic. The evening was divided into silliness, supper and the sacred. The first hour was games, Christmas trivia and singing silly/secular Christmas songs (pictured). For the meal, church members went cross-cultural and enjoyed the Quebecois (French Canadian) Christmas tradition of tourtiere (meat pie). The last hour was a traditional worship service with choir, carols and a Christmas message. 'It was one of the most special and meaningful Christmas Eves I can remember in a long time,' says Pastor Tim Kuepfer.

❧ Staff change

Pastoral transition in Saskatchewan



Lisa Martens Bartel has stepped into the role of pastoral leader of North Star Mennonite Church in Drake, Sask. She will be preaching, providing pastoral care and taking on other leadership responsibilities at the church. The half-time term role began in November 2022 and will run until this coming October. She has been a member of North Star since 2011. Martens Bartel recently served as an online pastor to Kelowna (B.C.) Mennonite Church. She and her family also run Grovenland Farm, where they use sustainable agricultural methods to raise chickens, beef and pork, as well as a large market garden.

—BY EMILY SUMMACH

What is Mennonite identity and why does it matter?

Pastors question what it means to be Mennonite and be church together

By Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe
Manitoba Correspondent

“Why are you a Mennonite?” That’s the question panellists were asked at the third instalment of *Canadian Mennonite’s* online discussion series on Nov. 16. People on 47 different screens tuned in to the conversation, engaging in a lively back-and-forth with the speakers.

Hosted by *CM’s* online media manager Aaron Epp, the event featured three pastors—Justin Sun, Kim Penner and Moses Falco—who explored what it means to be Mennonite and why this faith and community are relevant today. The panellists came to the dialogue with perspectives from different locations, genders, races and Mennonite backgrounds.

Falco grew up in the Baptist church tradition in Toronto, and joined the Mennonite church as an adult, when he married into it. Now he is pastor of Sterling Mennonite Fellowship in Winnipeg. Three core Mennonite beliefs attracted him: the centrality of Jesus, the dedication to community and the importance of pacifism. When he first joined the Mennonite church, he was amazed by how genuinely people cared about these values and how welcomed he felt, despite having no cultural connections.

Penner was born and raised in the Mennonite church, as the daughter of a pastor. Her experiences in the Mennonite church have disappointed her but have also left her hopeful. It is her family’s story that has shaped her—fleeing persecution, singing, working for peace—specifically the trailblazing women in her family. She is pastor of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., and an academic who writes and teaches on power and sexuality.

Sun pastors Peace Mennonite Church and Peace Chinese Mennonite Church, both in Richmond, B.C., although it wasn’t that

long ago that he didn’t really know what a Mennonite was. He grew up in the Chinese Alliance Church and jokes that he became a Mennonite by accident when he studied and lived amid them during college. “I think you know the values and theologies of a faith tradition by its fruit, the people it seems to crank out, and there are some pretty cool folks that I continue to get together with across Mennonite circles,” he said.

But identifying as Mennonite can mean so many different things sociologically, politically and theologically.

“In a time where ‘Mennonite’ is a word that can be defined and claimed broadly, what unites us, what divides us, and why?” Sun asked.

A viewer offered their insight: “I’ve come to think about Mennonites as more united by our common questions than common answers, where my church is the community I commit to pursue those questions with.”

“Identifying ourselves around the questions we ask opens us up to diversity and doubt, and seeing our connection even though we might not end up with the same answers,” Falco said, musing that Mennonites have traditionally liked to live in the grey areas.

Penner agreed about the importance of questions, which, she said, “reveal our openness to learning and to the mystery of the Spirit and God’s ongoing revelation.” She also observed: “Sometimes only asking questions leads to a grey that is actually not a question, but an answer. The lack of decision is a decision. It’s a decision not to say something, and that has implications for people.”

There is beauty in trying to hold unity in tension with difference. But Penner sometimes wishes the Mennonite church and its people could agree on more, like definitions of peace, violence, justice and love. “I wish we would start by affirming



Pictured clockwise from bottom left: panellists Justin Sun, Kim Penner and Moses Falco, and host Aaron Epp.

each person’s humanity, understanding that humanity includes our sexual diversity, racial diversity, cultural diversity, gender diversity, diversity in every way, and that we don’t make identity the moral issue,” she said.

Another participant contributed: “I’m hanging in as a Mennonite because we are willing to grow our faith into the emerging challenges of our time—gender, environment, race. Aren’t we somewhat unique in trying to keep our Jesus line central while consciously stretching our faith as a community?”

Being Mennonite shouldn’t be a static identity confined rigidly to one confession of faith or amendment, Sun said, because that wasn’t the spirit of the early Anabaptists. “It was a constant spirit of growth, development and evolution, asking deep questions about who we are and having that awareness and radical reformation,” he said. “In a way, what we’re doing today is part of that.”

CM’s online discussion series explores current events that are impacting the church and wider world. It launched on May 25, 2022, with a conversation about the climate crisis and followed that up with a discussion on Indigenous-settler relations. The magazine plans to host more events in 2023.

“Online panel discussions are part of *CM’s* mission to foster dialogue on issues facing Mennonites in Canada,” says publisher Tobi Thiessen. “By discussing difficult topics as a community, we hope the events model healthy dialogue. . . . We also hope the audience will get practical ideas on how to respond to issues in their own contexts.” ❧

Junior youth converge in Essex County

Story and Photo by Barry Bergen
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
LEAMINGTON, ONT.

Like many of their peers in Mennonite Church Canada congregations, the youth pastors in Leamington were wondering how to react to declining Sunday school participation and overall shrinking numbers of youth in their churches.

Last summer, the youth workers from North Leamington United Mennonite Church, Leamington United Mennonite Church and Faith Mennonite Church, all in Leamington, met with the director of community engagement at UMEI, the local Mennonite high school, to dream about what their next steps might be.

It didn't take long for them to realize that they all longed for the same thing: a desire for the junior youth of the area churches to get to know each other in an atmosphere that allowed for spiritual growth and fun.

One of the organizers, Chani Wiens, said, "As a member of [North Leamington], and as someone who grew up strongly identifying as Mennonite, I believe in community and bringing the churches together as much as possible."

This sentiment was echoed among the other leaders, and the "Junior Youth Converge" initiative was born. The group decided to start small to see where the spirit led. Four gatherings were planned during this school year, with a different leader taking charge of each.

The first event was held at UMEI, with 22 youths attending. The evening began with icebreaker games and, once all had arrived, moved into worship and singing, a snack time, and further games in the school gym.

The event was 90 minutes long, and the only complaint any of the leaders heard



Young people from three Leamington Mennonite churches participate in icebreaker games at the Junior Youth Converge event on Nov. 25, 2022.

was that the youth didn't want it to end so soon.

The second event held to the same format, and took place on Nov. 25, 2022, also at UMEI.

The youth leaders appreciate their desire and ability to work together. The feeling that all four groups are working and planning together gives them a lot of energy and bolsters the feeling of community they are trying to spread. They hope to continue and expand this initiative in the following years.

Other churches with small junior youth contingents across Essex County are especially welcome to join in the fun.

Mykayla Tiessen, one of the organizers, exclaimed, "I'm very excited to see what God has in store for our 'Junior Youth Converge' program in the years to come!"

News brief

MCC Canada relocating head office to downtown Winnipeg

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada plans to relocate its national office to 330 St. Mary Avenue, Winnipeg, this spring, following renovations to the space on the ninth floor, which MCC Canada will lease. "With large windows on three sides, we anticipate a bright, inviting place for both staff and visitors," says executive director Rick Cober Bauman. "And with the building's environmental designation, we can better meet our commitment to care for God's creation." The office tower recently won the BOMA Manitoba Earth Award for its environmentally friendly and efficient operation, including energy management; indoor air quality; recycling, reduction and re-use; tenant awareness programs; and health and safety. "Although we will no longer share office space with our colleagues from MCC Manitoba, we won't be far from each other," says Cober Bauman. "We bless MCC Manitoba as they serve and connect with community members at their new location in Winnipeg's Exchange District. MCC Canada is grateful that we've found a site that meets our unique needs. And we look forward to welcoming visitors very soon." MCC Canada and MCC Manitoba jointly owned the property at 134 Plaza Drive in Winnipeg, which was sold last spring. Both entities have been working on relocation plans since that time.

—MCC CANADA



PHOTO COURTESY OF COLLIER'S
MCC Canada's new office will be located in this Winnipeg office tower.

Service over evangelism

MC U.S.A. releases final denominational survey report

Mennonite Church U.S.A.

Mennonite Church U.S.A. has released the completed report from its denominational survey, “The Mennonite Experience: MC USA Membership Study 2021-22.”

The 85-page report revealed that members have deep commitments to their faith, a passion for peace-building, a heart for service and close congregational ties. They also desire denominational leaders to focus on ministries that centre on Jesus (51 percent), and embrace diversity, and emphasize peacemaking and outreach to others (88 percent).

The denomination’s Executive Board commissioned the study to provide a snapshot of what it means to be a Mennonite and a member of MC U.S.A. The final report captured 2,276 survey responses and 63 follow-up interviews, representing voices from all 16 conferences.

“This survey provides us with important insights, especially as we consider the role of program agencies and the priorities of the denominational staff,” executive director Glen Guyton said. He added that, while the data may not be entirely representative of all the lived experiences of MC U.S.A.’s members, the respondents who participated are people that are engaged and committed church members.

The survey features four chapters that focus on membership demographics, defining what it means to be Mennonite, experiences and understanding of the role of the denomination, and the tenets and philosophies that drive membership.

Outreach and missions

Across the board, participants (88 percent) agreed that outreach is important. Despite this, “evangelizing nonbelievers” was ranked last among the personal faith



commitments, with only 18 percent of respondents saying it is “very important.” The preferred mode of outreach for 70 percent of respondents was service.

“We need to do better at reaching out and sharing our faith locally,” said Guyton. “Our approach to missions is not just international. We must become missional people that impact the community. There is a desire for that in our denomination.”

Congregational life

Survey data showed that the local church plays an important role in the lives and faith of members. Seventy-eight percent of respondents said that organized church matters to them. Participants spoke positively about their congregations, saying that they felt their congregations care about what is happening in their personal lives (85 percent), help them deepen their relationship with God (89 percent), and strengthen their faith through connection (87 percent).

Guyton affirmed these results, saying: “We need strong congregations with well-equipped leadership. The national body is there to serve the congregations and its members, not the other way around. We must have strong, relevant local churches.”

Denominational leadership

Respondents view the essential activities of the denomination as working for peace and justice (68 percent); sharing God’s love in word and deed (65 percent); partnering globally (34 percent); and educating (25 percent) and equipping members (24 percent). Survey responses and interviews show that members want the denomination to move toward a more progressive and innovative approach to church

(58 percent); to be committed to antiracism (93 percent); to diversify and include the marginalized in meaningful ways, and to advocate for migrants and refugees, regardless of documentation status (87 percent).

Being Mennonite

Most respondents (56 percent) defined a Mennonite as “one who agrees with Mennonite theology.” When asked about their personal faith commitments, respondents listed “Following Jesus in daily life” (84 percent), “Expressing Christian love in all relationships” (80 percent), and “Peacemaking and nonviolence” (76 percent) among their “very important” personal faith commitments. The majority (77 percent) said they engage with the Anabaptist/Mennonite faith because of the church’s mission and values.

“A key insight from this data is that we must stick close to our Anabaptist roots and put Jesus at the centre of all we do,” said Guyton. “We have a special call as Anabaptist Christians to focus on the life of Christ. Without that distinctive, any work we do loses its true power.”

Guyton presented the survey to the Constituency Leaders Council on Oct. 21. In his presentation, he said: “People want to serve. People want to get engaged. People want to do ministry where they get their hands dirty, where it touches other people’s lives.

“Make sure you’re including some type of service, some type of engagement, so people can see the work that you are doing,” he said to the group of leaders from MC U.S.A. agencies, conferences and constituency groups. “Get busy doing work in your local community,” he added.

Guyton identified next steps that leaders should consider in reference to the survey results. These included:

- **As we** become more diverse, we have to change our systems and paradigms.
- **Lean into** the basic tenants of Anabaptism, and not popular religious rhetoric.
- **Get busy** doing ministry work in the community and abroad.
- **Do ministry** in smaller circles. Focus on local ministry and contextual needs. ☘

Diverse responses to Hockey Canada scandal

By Emma Siemens
CM Intern

Like other Canadians, many Mennonites watch or play hockey. But in the wake of Hockey Canada's recent sexual-assault scandal, some Canadian Mennonites are considering what it means to be a Mennonite hockey fan. Opinions differ.

"It's devastating, but it's not surprising for me," Curt Warkentin, the associate director of athletics at the University of Manitoba, says of the controversy. "We know there's more going on than just what happened with Hockey Canada." For Warkentin, these stories affect how he does his work.

In May 2022, Hockey Canada was exposed as having privately settled a lawsuit from a sexual-assault allegation made against Canada's 2018 junior men's team when the woman shared the story

publicly. More instances of a similar nature, dating back to 1989, have come to light since. In response, Hockey Canada's major sponsors, including Tim Hortons, Scotiabank and Canadian Tire, cut ties with the organization, and its CEO and board of directors have stepped down. Hockey Canada's new board of directors were elected on Dec. 17. Five of the nine board members are women. The chair, Hugh Fraser, is a retired judge and former Olympic sprinter who was born in Jamaica.

"Things have changed," says Warkentin. In his 15 years working in the university's athletic department, he has seen increasing emphasis placed on the athletic code of conduct and the accessibility of athletes to counselling and sports-psychology resources.

These developments are "not a specific reaction to one specific situation, but it has been a trend," he says. "I think the accountability and being public about it is growing, but I don't think the number of incidents is growing."

For Warkentin, then, his surprise at the Hockey Canada scandal had more to do with what happened after the woman came forward publicly.

"My most severe reaction to this whole thing was being really upset at the sponsors for leaving Hockey Canada," he says. "I understand, business-wise, why you don't want to be associated with something like this, but if you sign up to partner with somebody, your response should be, 'How can we shift our sponsorship so that it includes a program to address this?'"



Flicker photo by Brad Saunders

In the wake of Hockey Canada's recent sexual-assault scandal, some Canadian Mennonites are considering what it means to be a Mennonite hockey fan.

Warkentin says this reaction is informed by his years of experience as a sports administrator. “I think Hockey Canada is in a really tough spot, because they’ve got a lot of repairing to do, and now they have no resources or partners to do the preparations,” he says. “I think there needs to be room for growth and forgiveness and things like that in these situations. This is not to say you’re not held accountable, but, instead, ‘You made a mistake. Let’s work together so that mistakes aren’t happening again.’”

He would rather have seen the Hockey Canada board of directors step down temporarily to undergo training before reclaiming their leadership roles.

Warkentin says that his belief in the necessity of “forgiveness and grace” in this scandal is a reflection of his Mennonite faith.

Other Mennonite hockey fans would disagree.

“I found it encouraging to see big companies and corporations being willing to boycott Hockey Canada,” says Allegra Friesen Epp, an avid fan of the National Hockey League’s Winnipeg Jets. “I would argue that strategies like boycotting are effective forms of nonviolent direct action.”

She says she supports this nonviolent direct action because of her Mennonite faith: “I believe violence is wrong, in all its forms. There are many systems and corporations that are doing a lot of violence right now, that as Mennonites and Anabaptists we could stand up to, or withdraw our support from.”

Friesen Epp says that applying financial pressure is often one of the only ways to bring about positive change in large organizations.

That said, she is not sure she will stop watching hockey altogether. “For me, this is a reminder that we need to cultivate healthier spaces in sports and in other areas of our lives,” she says.

With the 2023 World Junior Ice Hockey Championships now finished, both Friesen Epp and Warkentin are hoping some positive change will come from a challenging year in hockey. ❧

A new movement of God

Mennonite World Conference

In remote corners of Tamil Nadu, India, gospel workers trained by Gilgal Mission Trust (GMT) are shining the light of the Gospel hand-in-hand with education and vocational training.

Selvi has been able to join the workforce to improve the family’s finances. In the evenings, the family comes to the prayer centre to learn more about Jesus.

“This incident lightened a great bright-



PHOTO COURTESY OF MENNONITE WORLD CONFERENCE

Kalai Selvi and her son Arun Kumar.

Along the Amravati River in Coimbatore District, many people in the Anaialmalai forest are uneducated. They work as day labourers and live in neglected government-built houses.

One such family is made up of Kalai Selvi, her husband Aruchami, and their son Arun Kumar, who was in poor health, unable to go to school and dependent on his mother’s care.

Gilgal Mission Trust gospel worker Senthil Ruben began to visit the village to start a prayer cell and children’s classes.

Hearing of Ruben’s work, Selvi brought her son for a healing prayer. His condition improved; within a month, he began attending school five kilometres away.

Selvi and Aruchami are happy to see their son on a pathway to fulfil his dreams. At school, Arun receives nutritious meals and the teachers are attentive to his slowly improving health.

ness in their life,” says Paul Phineas, GMT’s president.

GMT initiated 15 adult literacy centres in the religiously sensitive Kaliyapuram Panchayat region of Pollachi. The motto of the centres is to educate everyone to know the Saviour. GMT also opened a sewing centre in Ettidurai. Women learn tailoring as a life skill and are taught the gospel by a local pastor.

“A new move of God is evolving in the southern part of India after COVID-19,” says Phineas. “We are experiencing and hearing of church attendance growing beyond our expectations, and many newcomers are experiencing the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit.”

Daily power outages, corruption and violence are some of the challenges the local people face, but “the church has to influence society with the life-changing gospel of Jesus,” he says. ❧

PEOPLE

Radio-style discussion series spotlights nonviolent resistance

'We Need to Talk' raises voices above drums of war

By Nicolien Klassen-Wiebe
Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG

When Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, Karen Ridd was struck by how many people around her immediately called for military troops to be sent.

"In those moments it becomes really hard as a pacifist to find ways to speak into that conversation, when we know there are atrocities happening," says the instructor and peace activist. "Yet I also don't want to chuck my beliefs out the window and be silent in these moments."

It got her wondering if there is a role for nonviolent resistance in a situation of open conflict like Russia-Ukraine.

Ridd isn't new to these kinds of questions, with more than 30 years of experience practising conflict resolution and nonviolent action. She is a teaching associate professor of conflict-resolution studies at Menno Simons College, the downtown campus of Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg.

She brought her idea for a series of interactive discussion events to David Balzer, CMU's associate professor of communications and media, and together they launched, "We Need to Talk: Voices of Nonviolent Resistance."

The interactive call-in show is hosted on Zoom, inspired by the classic style of radio program that allows listeners to call in with questions. It has featured several guest speakers and so far has covered topics like women and nonviolent action, bringing home peacebuilding learning from abroad, and the conflict in Ukraine nine months in.

"We've tried to be intentional about how we set up the conversations," says Valerie Smith, CMU's co-founder and former co-director of the Canadian School of Peacebuilding (CSOP). "It's not intended to be a debate, but it's also not intended to avoid

disagreement or difficult conversations."

"I love hearing the stories of nonviolent action and peacebuilding," she adds. "I find it really inspiring and such a helpful counterpoint to the mainstream narratives around violence and military, and fear of the other."

Smith hosts and produces the show along with Ridd; Wendy Kroeker, associate professor of peace and conflict transformation studies and academic director of CSOP; and Darryl Neustaedter Barg, media production coordinator and adjunct professor of communications.

The first episode in April hosted by Ridd and Balzer was a hit, with Balzer using his more than a decade of experience working in broadcast radio to help guide the conversation for the many participants that tuned in. When health issues put the project on hiatus for several months, and required a reconfiguration of the team, Ridd wondered whether they should continue. But when they thought of the countless other issues going on in the world in addition to war in Ukraine, they affirmed there was value in having more conversations. They resumed the series in October.

"The mainstream narrative around the world is that violence solves our problems," Smith says. In this kind of world, nonviolence is countercultural and often unpopular. Even Ridd considered nonviolent resistance naïve and pointless well into her young adult years.

Ridd grew up in a non-pacifist, United Church-going household with extended family members who fought in the world wars, or desperately wanted to, and a father who was a chaplain with the Canadian Armed Forces.

It was only after years of working in

Nicaragua, El Salvador and elsewhere in Central America, doing human rights work amidst the civil wars of the 1980s, that she became committed to nonviolence. There she saw the undeniable differences their nonviolent actions were making, even when simply being an outside presence observing injustices.

She says she learned that "it's one thing to feel like [nonviolent action] is the right thing and then to realize it's actually the most effective thing. Not [only] from a moral perspective—if you want to win this struggle, you've got to be thinking about this."

She says there is a lot of ignorance when it comes to the possibilities of nonviolent action:

- **Students are** taught primarily the history of war, not the history of peacemaking.
- **People aren't** shown examples of nonviolent action the way they are inundated with examples of war and violence whether in school or the media.

Kroeker says people criticize nonviolence much more thoroughly than violence. Students ask, aren't there limits to nonviolence?

"Have you really taken nonviolence to its edges?" she will often reply. "Why are we quick to ask about those edges for nonviolence but we don't explore them for violence? . . . If we're going to interrogate one we have to interrogate the other with a similar set of questions."

Kroeker was on sabbatical in Europe when Russia invaded Ukraine. She joined "We Need to Talk" because she had spent months immersed in conversations with European Mennonites and others about the conflict.

All three hosts emphasize that nonviolent resistance is something any person can do. Whereas violent action requires specific skills, equipment and money, and has only a small sector of people able or willing to do it, nonviolent action is

cheap and accessible to every age group and ability.

“The work of peacebuilding, difficult conversations and nonviolent action—this is not just work for experts, this is work for everybody,” Smith says. ❧

Upcoming episodes will address how to have conversations with people who have different beliefs from them, peacebuilding and the arts, and more. Find them at cmu.ca/community/nonviolent-resistance.



Leaving a legacy of good works

Garry Janzen retires from MC B.C.

Story and Photo by Amy Rinner Waddell
B.C. Correspondent

In his 15 years as executive minister of Mennonite Church B.C., Garry Janzen ordained, preached, led, coordinated and worked to inspire the pastors and congregations of the regional church. Now, as he looks to retirement, he reflects gratefully on his years in the position.

Although the title is executive minister, Janzen says, “I’m one who’s quick to say it’s not administrative. It’s one of vision and leadership.” He believes his role was largely one of “making sure all the pastors do the things they do.” “The ultimate goal was developing good leadership.” He says he saw his role as “engaging God’s world, cultivating a vision, growing communities.”

Janzen began his role in 2007, coming from the pastorate of Sherbrooke Mennonite Church in Vancouver. During his first two years in office, he visited every congregation in the regional church. Mostly those were times of transition, such as an ordination or pastoral installation. But he also appreciated being invited to speak in churches at many other times. He says he is now “blessed to have friends in all our congregations.”

Janzen oversaw many changes throughout the years, including the Being a Faithful Church process that dealt with matters of sexuality within MC Canada. Some conservative elements of MC B.C. questioned the regional church’s place within the nationwide church. In 2017, MC B.C. passed resolutions stating that pastors within MC B.C. will not officiate at same-sex weddings and that congregations will not appoint people in same-sex relationships to roles of pastor or other leadership

positions.

Disagreement on these issues had the potential to tear MC B.C. apart, and some left the church because of it.

“After that, there was significant work in restoring relationships,” he recalls. “The resolution brought us together. To me, this was an affirmation for a strong love of wanting to be together, rather than people needing to have things go their way.”

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 presented another challenge, as churches closed down temporarily. Until that time, MC B.C. pastors had been meeting in person regularly, and they missed the personal interaction. When one of the pastors suggested the group meet once a week via video conference, they began regular online meetings, first once every two weeks, and eventually once a month.

“Our pastors thrived,” he recalls. “We shared a lot of wisdom with each other, just because we need each other. We still do it; that’s been really, really important.”

Janzen says he has gained much during his time as executive minister. “I learned that every leader in the church is different,” he says. “I’ve learned to love people as they are, to find a good way to celebrate and find the good in them and love them as they are. Also, all leaders come up short; we need God’s grace. God is working with all of us and shaping us.”

A farewell gathering for Janzen on Dec. 6, 2022, honoured his years as executive minister, with 65 in attendance, including 17 via video conference from around B.C. and beyond. Among Janzen’s qualities mentioned in spoken tributes were his



Gerry Grunau, right, moderator of MC B.C., presents outgoing executive minister Garry Janzen with a retirement gift.

integrity, openness, kindness and caring for people.

Citing some of the controversies Janzen worked through, Frank Berto of Living Hope Christian Fellowship in Surrey, said, “Sometimes the Fruits of the Spirit aren’t the first thing out of us, but you oozed the Holy Spirit. . . . Your kindness is a tonic.”

“Thanks for being such a wonderful messenger of the Gospel,” said MC B.C. moderator Gerry Grunau, adding that Janzen was leaving a “legacy of good works.”

Now Janzen looks forward to spending more time with his wife Diane and their children and grandchildren.

He continues as chair of the board of Place of Refuge, a transitional housing ministry in Vancouver, and he will be travelling to Vietnam in February, where he has previously visited and developed a relationship with Vietnamese churches.

In the new year, he will also be taking on a role as half-time transitional pastor of Vancouver’s Peace Church on 52nd, from March until the end of the year.

Also, he adds, he will be “riding [his] motorcycle, playing hockey, and I have a whole shelf of books to read!” ❧

Meet MC Canada's new climate coordinator

By Amy Rinner Waddell
B.C. Correspondent

Sandy Plett of Morden, Man., is the new climate action coordinator for Mennonite Church Canada. Having started the half-time role on Nov. 28, 2022, Plett shared some thoughts with *Canadian Mennonite* correspondent Amy Rinner Waddell. The interview has been edited for length.

Amy Rinner Waddell: *How did you get into climate work?*

Sandy Plett: I grew up loving the outdoors, being a thrifty shopper and a gardener. In recent years, my passion for the church and growing concern about the climate crisis led me to begin exploring what my personal role in the struggle for climate justice might be. It began with simply opening myself to learning about the realities of the crisis. I say simply, but really this was the hardest part.

I knew that, in order to find efficacy in the struggle, I'd have to face the difficult realities of not only the crisis but of the challenges facing those who are working for change. I began looking for ways that I could lend my gifts and skills to the work.

I started leading Faithful Climate Conversations, which are guided conversations designed to help participants move through surfacing emotions and experiences of the climate crisis, to exploring ways that they might take action. This work led me to get involved with the MC Manitoba Climate Action Working Group in 2021 and, most recently, to this work as climate action coordinator for MC Canada.

ARW: *What authors have influenced you?*

SP: Jim Antal's *Climate Church, Climate World* was one of the first books I read about how the church must engage in advocacy for climate justice. Shortly after



PHOTO COURTESY OF
MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA

Sandy Plett is MC Canada's new climate action coordinator

reading Antal, I discovered the work of Katherine Hayhoe, a climate scientist and also a Christian. Her book *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World* is an inspiration for me.

ARW: *What are you most excited about in this new role?*

SP: My task is to facilitate connections between the regions. Across the country, groups within our church families are working at this in different ways. The challenge of bringing up the themes and threads of this work into the light and sharing them across the country is very exciting to me.

ARW: *What do you see as major challenges?*

SP: Hmm. I haven't been on the job long enough to see these yet.

ARW: *From a Christian standpoint, why do you think climate action is important? What have you sensed from fellow Mennonites on environmental issues?*

SP: The climate crisis/emergency is all around us. As followers of Christ, as people who have committed ourselves to doing justice, loving mercy and walking humbly, we have so much to contribute and also so much to learn as we open our eyes to the devastation that we have wrought on the planet. Love calls us to the work of serving our sisters and brothers in the web of life, around the world and in our own backyards. God cares, and therefore we must care.

I think the gifts of the Spirit are essential ingredients for the sustained work of climate action. From the richness of our faith we can bring tones of joy, hope and love to the work, as we join those around the world and in our neighbourhoods who are taking action.

ARW: *What have you sensed from fellow Mennonites on environmental issues?*

SP: In my circles close to home and in conversations with folks from Mennonite churches in Manitoba, I sense a deep concern regarding the trajectory that we're on in terms of climate instability ("global weirding"), and the devastating impacts of the changing climate.

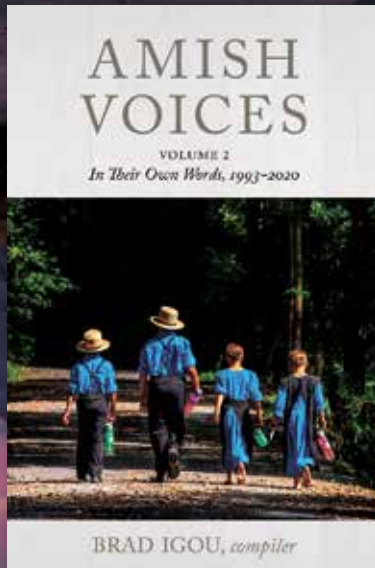
I also hear words like "helpless," "overwhelmed" and "anxious" when I ask groups to identify feelings related to the crisis. A task of this moment in the church is to attend to these responses and to join the struggle, moving into a place of confident and effective action together. This is a significant undertaking, but one I believe we are equipped as a church to approach with joy, hope and love.

I am looking forward to hearing different articulations of the call from across our denomination as I learn more about how people in each region are taking action on climate change. ☸

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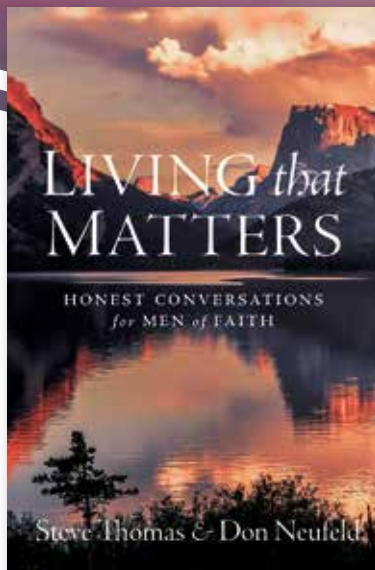
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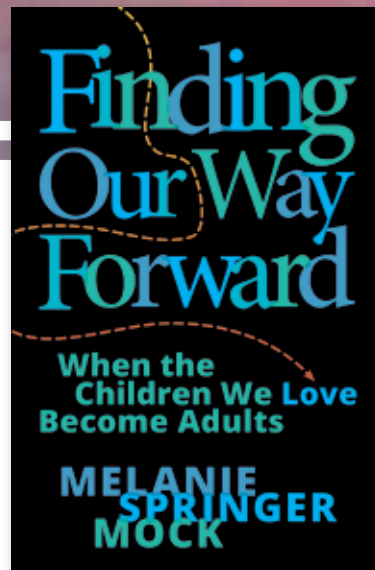
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UpComing

Conference to focus on 'Reimagining Ministry'

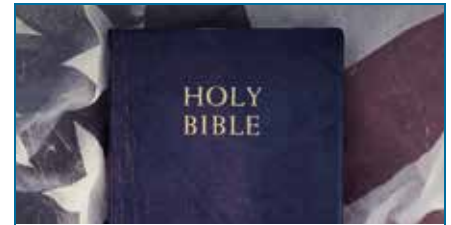


ELKHART, IND.—Planners of the upcoming Pastors & Leaders conference at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind., considered the question, "How do church leaders think about their ministry in this time of collective trauma stemming from the coronavirus pandemic, racial injustice, economic uncertainty and rising polarization in society?" as they chose the event's theme, "Reimagining Ministry." This year's conference is designed to give pastors and church leaders ideas and practices to help nurture resilience, compassion and hope in themselves and in their congregations by learning from Jesus' ministry. The conference, which runs from Feb. 13 to 16, allows participants to attend in person on the AMBS campus or from a distance via livestream and video conferencing. The conference features keynote speakers:

- **Joni Sanken**, top left, a professor of homiletics at United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, where she also oversees the preaching seminar. A former pastor, she is the author of *Words that Heal*, Abingdon, 2019; and *All Our Grievs to Bear*, Herald, 2022.
- **April Yamasaki**, top right, resident author with Valley CrossWay Church in Abbotsford, British Columbia, and editor of MennoMedia's *Rejoice!* devotional magazine. Also a former pastor, Yamasaki's works includes *Four Gifts*, Herald, 2018; and *On the Way With Jesus*, CSS, 2019). Yamasaki will present her sessions online.

Learn more about the schedule, meals, lodging, transportation and registration at ambs.edu/pastors-and-leaders-conference. Registration deadline is Jan. 30.

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**Conrad Grebel
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(Credit: Hansoo Kim)

AMBS window

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Leadership matters

From the President: David Boshart, PhD

In all the places I have traveled around the world in the past year, the message is the same: *Leadership matters, and AMBS is needed.* In the summer of 2021, we began asking church leaders a focus question: “What is the most meaningful thing AMBS can do to support current and future leaders for the church?”

The responses to that question are changing how we educate leaders. While our theological programs are very strong, we’ve come to understand that we need to give more attention to developing skills for practical administrative leadership and community engagement.

As part of this work, we are asking an important and foundational question in a new way: “What makes leadership *Anabaptist*?” This leads to two more important questions: “How is Anabaptist leadership understood in the global Anabaptist context?” and “When we have a clear picture of the values that make leadership *Anabaptist*, how can we be sure that the education we are offering results in *effective* Anabaptist leadership for the challenges leaders are facing today and will face tomorrow?”

Church leaders around the world have invited AMBS to provide leadership education due to our

historic scholarly tradition in service to the church and the Anabaptist witness of our many alumni. It’s both an honor *and* humbling to

be asked to support the global Anabaptist community in strengthening the Anabaptist identity of leaders and congregations all around the world.

Our global engagements continue to widen and deepen. For the first time in AMBS history, the majority of our students are from outside of the United States and Canada. Whether studying on

campus or at a distance, all of our students widen and deepen our thinking about effective Anabaptist leadership in several ways:

- Students from diverse communities offer case studies from places where the church is thriving

(continued on p. 2)

(above, l. to r.): These guest students were among 14 who took an AMBS course in South Korea in September via a new partnership between AMBS and the Nehemiah Institute for Christian Studies in Seoul: Sanghwan Ko, Hansoo Kim, J. Lee, Dongeun Kim, Youngsoo Kang, Core Adjunct Faculty James Krabill, KyeHyun Kim, Sun Ju Moon (M.Div. 2011), Hyojin Chang, JuneHo Han.



We are asking an important and foundational question in a new way: “What makes leadership *Anabaptist*?”

(continued from p. 1)

and where it is struggling. These cases highlight what is required of leaders to meet the challenges of this time with resilience.

- Sharing experiences from many diverse contexts in our classrooms adds complexity to our understanding of the challenging issues the church is facing in many places.
- Engaging with students from many contexts reminds us that they come with vastly different kinds of preparation for the leadership roles to which they are being called. Offering graduate-level, undergraduate-level, nondegree, short- and long-term, face-to-face and distance-friendly theological education options are all necessary means of educating leaders for the church today.

AMBS is responding to what we are hearing from church

leaders with new programs and projects:

- When I travel as President of AMBS, I am curating oral interviews with Anabaptist church leaders in Mennonite World Conference to understand what *effective* Anabaptist leadership looks like in a wide range of contexts.
- The first cohort of students in our new **Doctor of Ministry in Leadership** program began studies in January (see p. 3). The new program will meet the goals of ministry leaders (1) who want to refresh their leadership skills after being in ministry for some time; (2) who attended non-Anabaptist seminaries and would like to study Anabaptist leader-

ship; and/or (3) who have been in general ministry for some time and would like to develop a particular specialization. The program's competency-based format aligns well with AMBS's existing educational philosophy of "knowing, doing and being." The curriculum also will invite students to think globally about what Anabaptist leadership means.

- In support of our new DMin, each Teaching Faculty member has been invited to contribute to a three-year **research and publishing project on the nature of Anabaptist leadership**.
- In 2023, we will develop a new **applied leadership curriculum** with a menu of flexible learning modules that will address practical administrative and organizational skills needed for the challenges the church is facing today. **Luis Tapia Rubio** (MDiv 2021) (see p. 6) will direct this initiative with the guidance and support of an advisory panel of church, business, organizational and local leaders along with members of our Teaching Faculty.

As you can see, we are listening to the church and attempting to respond to the most urgent and relevant needs that church leaders are naming.

AMBS has been given a wonderful calling to educate followers of Jesus to be leaders for God's reconciling mission in the world. But this work is not for the faint of heart. As **Jamie Pitts**, one of our professors, told me recently, "What we are doing at AMBS is hard, terrifying ... and it's really fun!" I completely agree, and on further reflection I would add that it is all three of these things — hard, terrifying and fun — at the same time, all the time! ●

“Engaging with students from many contexts reminds us that they come with vastly different kinds of preparation for the leadership roles to which they are being called.”

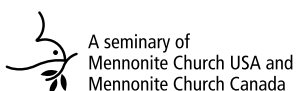
AMBS Window Winter 2023

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(below, l. to r.): Incoming students Micheline Ilonga of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Amy Marshall of Pickerington, Ohio, during orientation in August 2022. (Credit: Peter Ringenberg)



(Credit: Rachel A. Fonseca)



What to know

AMBS's DMin in Leadership

In January, a cohort of eight students began studies in AMBS's new **Doctor of Ministry (DMin) in Leadership** degree — the only DMin in the United States to be deliberately developed with an Anabaptist framework. It's also the first DMin in the U.S. and Canada approved by the Association of Theological Schools to be designed from the outset as a competency-based program.

"We know from consultations with pastors and leaders in the church, as well as from feedback from our own alumni, that the church needs leaders who continually grow in specific competencies," said **Beverly Lapp**, EdD, Vice President and Academic Dean. "We've shaped and focused our new DMin in response to these needs. This program will enable ministry professionals to build on what they've gained from their prior studies and leadership experiences and will be an important part of our strategy to resource leadership for the church."

DMin Program Co-Directors named

Dan Schrock, DMin, and **Jewel Gingerich Longenecker**, PhD (MA 1992) (pictured above), began Sept. 19 as DMin Program Co-Directors. They're sharing the half-time position, overseeing the program's faculty and curriculum as well as guiding student advisory groups and doctoral research project committees. Both will continue in their existing AMBS roles — Jewel as Dean of Lifelong Learning and Dan as Core Adjunct Faculty in spiritual direction.

Here's why they stepped up to serve:

Dan: "This degree comes at a tender time in the life of the church, when what often worked well in the past will probably not work so well in the future. We are looking for fresh expressions of church life that engage the realities of our time. For such a time as this, we need leaders who have a higher degree of competence."

Jewel: "It felt natural and right to say 'yes' once I learned that Dan would be Co-Director. With his extensive experience in pastoral ministry, spiritual direction for leaders, and seminary teaching, I felt that my background in competency-based education, leadership theory, and administration of Lifelong Learning programs could be a helpful complement in the startup phase for this new degree." •

— *Annette Brill Bergstresser*

DMin program details

- **Designed for:** mid-career pastors and ministry leaders
- **Goal:** to strengthen students' leadership capacities for the advanced practice of ministry
- **Hours:** 32 credit hours
- **Length:** three years (9–12 credits per year)
- **Structure:** Students do most of their coursework online while based in their professional ministry or leadership context, coming to campus each January for one week of in-person coursework.
- **Process:** Using the question, "What more do I want to know, become or do as an Anabaptist leader?," students will create a **customized learning plan** to gain expertise in **five key competencies:** Anabaptist Leadership, Intercultural Leadership, Teaching Leadership, Change Leadership and Resilient Leadership. They'll also take core leadership courses, develop a leadership portfolio and complete a doctoral research project. Throughout the program, they'll gain knowledge about leadership, apply it to their work, and reflect on how this experience is deepening their leadership identity and expertise.
- **Community support:** Each student will be part of a cohort and will work closely with a faculty mentor and an advisory ministry group.
- **Benefits for congregations:** DMin graduates will help their congregation/organization to:
 - be more resilient when unforeseen events happen;
 - adapt to intercultural relationships;
 - use thoughtful processes to navigate changes the church wants or needs to make;
 - deepen the church's biblical and theological insights;
 - strengthen its Anabaptist identity.
 In addition, the church benefits from having leaders who have fresh ideas and new enthusiasm for congregational life.
- **Cost:** The total cost is relatively low for doctoral studies. A congregation that budgets \$6,000/year for three years would help their leader cover most of the cost.
- **Application deadline:** Nov. 1 for the January 2024 cohort. See: amsb.ca/dmin

Meet our Journey graduates!

Six participants from Mennonite Church Canada, Mennonite Church USA and Evana congregations completed the **Journey Missional Leadership Development Program** in 2022. The distance-friendly undergraduate-level certificate program develops leaders centered in Jesus Christ for ministries in local churches and communities. It's designed for pastors, those exploring a call to ministry, church planters and lay leaders.

The program consists of online study, biweekly meetings with a mentor, and two in-person gatherings per year. It currently has 12 participants from the U.S., two from Canada, and two from Uganda.



Charles Baraka of Madison, Wisconsin, was ordained in Africa, where he led a church for seven years as senior pastor; in Madison, he preaches in different churches and is part of Madison Mennonite Church (Central District Conference, or CDC). He also works in the University of Wisconsin Hospital. His mentor was **Lavon Welty** (MDiv 1979) of Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen, Indiana (CDC).

Charles is applying what he's learned in Journey to his work as CEO of Amahoro Ministries for Communities, a nonprofit organization he founded that works in Burundi, the Great Lakes Region of Africa, and Madison. This program is one way he is living out his calling to work for healing, peace and reconciliation.

"It's an opportunity to continue empowering other church leaders and Christians in different churches in Africa — to help them to be transformed and call them to transform others in their communities, country and the world," he said. "I know that God still has hope in the church. Through Journey, I can help my church spiritually and my community for God's glory."



Ramon Lianez of Wauseon, Ohio, began Dec. 1 as Associate Pastor of North Clinton Church in Wauseon (Evana). While participating in Journey, he was Co-Pastor at Central Mennonite in Archbold (Ohio Conference).

His mentor was **Gary Stuckey** of Inlet Mennonite Church in Wauseon (Ohio Conference).

Dick Barrett, Conference Minister for Ohio Conference, first suggested Journey to Ramon when he was going to Ohio Christian University, a Wesleyan school in Circleville.

"He felt I needed to get more faith formation in Anabaptist beliefs, and I totally agreed," Ramon said. "I went through the Journey program to get that. I felt I got that and so much more."

"I loved the fact that there were so many different people from different cultures and walks of life. I loved how we all gelled together and respected one another and asked some really tough questions out of love so we could grow. That was just phenomenal. The leaders and guest speakers would ask us questions and see where we were at, and help us grow as individuals and in the Word with an Anabaptist theology. I can't express how grateful I am for that to have been the way it was."



Rebecca Riek of Kitchener, Ontario, Canada, is currently involved in the Intercultural Committee of her congregation, First Mennonite Church in Kitchener (Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, or MCEC).

"We organize events and plan services that are multicultural, e.g., choosing songs in different languages to sing for worship or praying in different languages," she said. "I also work within my community as a faith leader to participate in praying during funeral services or events such as baptisms."

Rebecca is now enrolled in AMBS's distance-friendly Master of Divinity Connect program, majoring in Christian Faith Formation. Her Journey mentor was **Rebecca Yoder Neufeld** (MDiv 1981), also of First Mennonite.



Janet P. Schumacher of Bluffton, Ohio, is currently helping with pastoral care in her congregation, First Mennonite Church in Bluffton (CDC). Over the summer, she served as a guest speaker in

(below, l. to r.): Journey participants Maciel Hernandez of Toronto, Ontario, and Bikash Shankhar of Evanston, Illinois, at a Weekend Learning Event in 2022.



(Credit: Peter Ringenberg)

Journey adapted for use in Southeast Asia

Through the leadership of AMBS alumnus **Jonah Yang** (MA 2018) of North Branch, Minnesota — in partnership with **David B. Miller**, DMin (MDiv 1993), Teaching Associate of the AMBS Church Leadership Center — the Journey program was adapted for use with a cohort of six Hmong-speaking students in Southeast Asia from 2019 to 2022. The group met in person three times over the three years and via Zoom during the pandemic. A final session in July–August 2022 included a closing graduation ceremony, with Jonah and David presiding.

Pictured at right are four Journey Southeast Asia graduates (front, l. to r.): **Chia Chue Yang**, **Chue Chang**, **Leng Yang** and **KouYang XioungHer**, with David and Jonah in the back. Two graduates are not pictured due to security concerns. ●

— *Jewel Gingerich Longenecker*



(Credit: Memcee Yang)

area Mennonite churches. Her mentor was **Gloria Hernandez Bucher**, also of First Mennonite.

“Journey just fit me perfect,” she said. “I could learn, but without the demands of seminary. I’m glad I did the program because it helped me to learn more and know more, and to grow as a person.”

Janet said she enjoyed the learning aspects of the program and found the in-person Weekend Learning Events especially meaningful: “Those were very sacred times for me. I just appreciated that time and the camaraderie and community we built, and I still feel connected to my peers even though we don’t meet anymore.”

Participating in Journey helped Janet recognize that her gifts lie in caring for people. For her independent study (required of participants from CDC), she opted to focus on pastoral care and enjoyed visiting with a variety of people in her congregation.



Ly Vang of Kitchener, Ontario, has been involved in leadership for many years at First Hmong Mennonite Church in Kitchener (MCEC). She’s been an elder, Sunday school director, treasurer and youth director, and has helped with Hmong women’s ministries. She’s currently a mission elder and helps support refugee families sponsored by the church. Ly’s mentor was **Nancy Brubaker** (Certificate 1983) of First Mennonite Church in Kitchener (MCEC).

“The program helped me to see the history of Anabaptists and their suffering, how they have grown and how from generation to generation they’re still growing,” she reflected. “They have impacted the community. I feel like I had seen the

fruit [of the tree], but now I see people as a part of the root, and I see how strong it is and where it is holding the tree. It can bring blooms and beauty and bear fruit for others to eat. I see myself as part of the fruit and the leaves and the beauty of it.

“The program also helped me to see further who God is and who I am, and that being a Christian is not just believing the Word but doing the work.”



Beth Yoder of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, is on the lay leadership team of Sermon on the Mount Mennonite Church in Sioux Falls (Central Plains Mennonite Conference, or CPMC). She plans and leads worship and leads the congregation in exploring new ways to relate to their community. Her mentors were **Jack** (MDiv 1982) and **Cathy Scandrett** of CPMC.

Professionally, she is a Life Skills Educator with two programs of Volunteers of America — working part time with homeless teenagers and part time with pregnant women and mothers in a chemical dependencies rehabilitation treatment center.

For Beth, whose family has a history of involvement in and leadership of the church, participating in Journey felt like “coming home.”

“Being in the Journey program has solidified my passion for the church,” she reflected. “It has helped me articulate my faith better. It has helped me articulate my sense of calling for myself and for the church and how the church can be relevant for our world. I now have confidence in myself as a leader, which I never thought of myself as before.” ●

— *Annette Brill Bergstresser*

2022 Alumni Ministry and Service Recognition Gary Harder, Mesach Krisetya and Sarah Nahar



(Photos provided)

(l. to r.): Gary Harder, Mesach Krisetya, Sarah Nahar

Gary Harder, DMin, of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada; **Mesach Krisetya**, DMin, of Salatiga, Central Java, Indonesia; and **Sarah Nahar**, MDiv, of Elkhart, Indiana (traditional land of the

Potawatomi and Miami peoples); are the 2022 recipients of AMBS’s Alumni Ministry and Service Recognition. All three earned a Master of Divinity: Gary in 1972, Mesach in 1973 and Sarah in 2011.

“Gary, Mesach and Sarah have touched so many lives through their ministries and involvements,” said Alumni Director **Janeen Bertsche Johnson** (MDiv 1989). “They embody effective, visionary leadership and a commitment to sharing the peace of Jesus Christ in contexts around the world. We hope their stories inspire others to see seminary education as vital preparation for a lifetime of service.”

Gary pastored for 37 years in total in congregations in Goshen, Indiana; Edmonton, Alberta; and Toronto, Ontario. After retiring from full-time ministry, he and his wife, **Lydia Neufeld Harder**, served as Intentional Interim Pastors at churches in Ontario and Québec for six years. Gary also was Chair of Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now University) in Winnipeg and held leadership roles

on commissions of the General Conference and the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

Mesach, a longtime church leader, counselor, educator and administrator, passed away Sept. 30, 2022, at age 83. He had learned in June that he was to receive AMBS’s alumni award. In October 2007, the Indonesian Department of Education conferred upon him the title of Professor of Theology and Pastoral Counseling in recognition of his pioneering work and contributions to pastoral counseling in Indonesia. Mesach also was Chair of the GKMI (Muria Christian Church of Indonesia) Synod multiple times between 1975 and 1999, and served Mennonite World Conference (1990–2003), first as an Executive Member and then as President.

Sarah was Outreach Coordinator and then Executive Director of Christian (now Community) Peacemaker Teams (2012–17). She has been an organizational consultant for the Martin Luther King, Jr., Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta and the revitalized Tolson Center for Community Excellence in Elkhart. She writes and presents on religion and ecology; nonviolent global liberation; environmental justice; and the human right to sanitation. In 2019, Sarah was a Rotary International Peace Fellow at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand. She is currently pursuing doctoral studies in Religion and Environmental Studies in Syracuse, New York.

Read more, view the reception recording and nominate a graduate for the 2023 award:

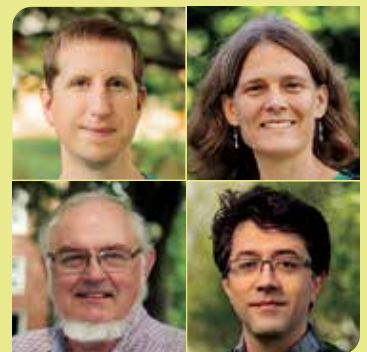
ambs.ca/alumni • — *Annette Brill Bergstresser*

Employee transitions

The AMBS learning community welcomed new employees in the second half of 2022:

- **Orion Blaha** began Aug. 15 as Assistant Director of Maintenance. He has served as a Systems Maintenance Technician and Facilities Engineer for Goshen (Indiana) College and as a General Contractor for Hope Builders in Elkhart.
- **Kajsa Herrstrom**, MSLIS (MDiv 2022), began Aug. 22 as Resource Access Librarian. She had served the library as a student employee and as Interim Librarian. She has worked in the University of Illinois Library and Champaign (Illinois) Public Library.

- **Paul A. Keim**, PhD (MDiv 1985), began Sept. 6 as half-time Student Services Coordinator. He has been a Core Adjunct Faculty member in the Bible Department since 2003. He has worked at Goshen College since 1997 and brings many years of academic and intercultural experience.
- **Luis Tapia Rubio** (MDiv 2021) began Nov. 15 as half-time Applied Leadership Curriculum Director. He has experience in pastoral ministry, administration, research and teaching, and he is pursuing a PhD.



(clockwise from top left): Orion, Kajsa, Luis and Paul

Read more: ambs.ca/news

Endowed scholarship carries on leadership legacy

Darrell Fast of Leamington, Ontario, Canada, loved to preach, teach, travel and grow through international experience. He earned a Bachelor of Divinity from AMBS in 1966 and subsequently served as a pastor in churches in Toronto and Leamington, Ontario; and North Newton, Kansas. He believed that pastoral ministry was a calling, for which AMBS provided a solid biblical foundation. He also understood the importance of mentoring potential pastors, having been nudged in that direction by a pastor in his youth.

Darrell served the wider church as AMBS Board Chair (1982–92); General Conference Mennonite Church Moderator (1992–99); and Mennonite

“He understood the importance of mentoring potential pastors, having been nudged in that direction by a pastor in his youth.”

Church Eastern Canada Moderator (2003–06). After he died in June 2017 at age 77, his wife, **Loretta Fast**, and family established an endowed scholarship in his name to honor his commitment to

the church and to preparing pastoral leaders. The **Darrell W. Fast Scholarship** is for an AMBS student who intends to go into pastoral ministry and is a woman, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) or an international student.

Since its inception, the scholarship has supported three students. In 2022, to mark the five-year anniversary of Darrell’s death, the family set a goal of raising an additional \$15,000 to cover 15

percent of the tuition cost for one student for one year.

Darrell’s scholarship is one of about 90 endowed scholarships at AMBS. Most students require financial aid, and most endowed scholarships are awarded based on need, not merit. Some endowed scholarships support up to three students each year.

All endowed scholarships work in the same way: after a donor gives a financial gift, AMBS invests the money in its endowment fund and uses regular payout to help students.

Endowing a full-tuition scholarship requires \$300,000; a half-tuition scholarship requires \$150,000; and a scholarship covering one-third of tuition requires \$100,000. It doesn’t take that much to establish an endowed scholarship, though, and anyone can contribute to an existing one. The name of a benefactor can be added to an endowed scholarship once the fund reaches \$25,000.

To establish a new scholarship or contribute to an existing one, contact development@amsb.edu. We’re grateful for all those who have contributed to endowed scholarships throughout AMBS’s history in support of current and future leaders! ●

— *Bob Yoder, DMin, CFRM, Director of Development; and Heather Grennan Gary*



Darrell Fast

(Photo provided)

Thank you to our board members!

The AMBS Board of Directors comprises representatives of the seminary’s sponsoring denominations (Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada) and other constituencies. We’re grateful to our board members for contributing their time, experience and expertise! (See amsb.ca/board.) New members, or those with new roles, include:

- **James Gunden** of Sellersville, Pennsylvania (board member 2018–22; Chair 2022–26); Zion Mennonite Church, Souderton; Mosaic Mennonite Conference

- **Terry Stefaniuk** of Hague, Saskatchewan (board member 2014–22; Vice Chair 2022–25); Osler Mennonite Church; Mennonite Church Saskatchewan
- **Paul Bergen** (MDiv 1999) of Sherwood Park, Alberta (2022–26); First Mennonite Church in Edmonton; Mennonite Church Alberta
- **Myrna Miller Dyck** (MDiv 2004) of Baden, Ontario (2022–26); Mennonite Church Eastern Canada



(clockwise from top left): James, Terry, Myrna and Paul

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(at right): Carrie Mast, Graduate Certificate student from Bluffton, Ohio



(Credit: Jason Bryant)

UPCOMING OFFERINGS

Online Short Courses

- **Transforming Congregational Conflict and Communication**
April 12 – May 23, with Betty Pries, PhD
- **Resisting Christian Nationalism with the Gospel of Peace**
April 12 – May 9, with Drew Strait, PhD

Register by March 22 to save \$50!
ambs.ca/online-short-courses

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Faculty members are available to speak on trauma-informed caregiving, undoing racism, intercultural competence, improvisational leadership and more. Ask about virtual visits!

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Journey: A Missional Leadership Development Program

This distance-friendly undergraduate-level program offers mentor-mentee partnerships and community support.

ambs.ca/journey

Ministry Integrity Circles

Pastors, need help with ministry transitions or significant challenges? This program provides the support of consultants within a community of peers. The Spring 2023 cohort, which starts March 27, will meet via Zoom and is free to participants. Apply by Feb. 27. ambs.ca/integrity-circles

Pastors & Leaders 2023

Feb. 13–16: Reimagining Ministry
ambs.ca/pastors-and-leaders

Rooted and Grounded

Conference on Land and Christian Discipleship: Sept. 28–30.
Pathways through Climate Doom: Resistance and Resilience
ambs.ca/rooted-and-grounded

Free journals online

- *Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology* 23.2 (Fall 2022): "Spirituality and Aging"
ambs.ca/vision
- *Anabaptist Witness* 9.2 (October 2022): "Mission and Health"
anabaptistwitness.org

Intensive Term courses

Hybrid courses

(Online work: May 8 – July 21; Hybrid Week on campus: June 5–10)

- Ethics and Care: Living and Dying with Purpose
- Preaching

Campus courses (open to auditors)

- Practicing and Embodying Nonviolence: May 8–25
- The Spirit World and the Global Church: May 18–26
- The Religious Other in the Bible: June 12–23

Nonadmitted students get 50% off their first three credit hours.

ambs.ca/upcoming-courses

You can afford seminary!

AMBS's generous need-based financial aid, scholarships and church matching grants can help you study either on campus or at a distance, full time or part time. Apply for merit-based scholarships by March 15 and ministry scholarships by April 1.

ambs.ca/tuition

Calendar

Nationwide

Jan. 18-23: MC Canada, together with the regional churches, invites people to participate in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Resources and a listing of events by region can be found at weekofprayer.ca.

British Columbia

Feb. 25: MC B.C. annual general meeting, at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond.
April 21-23: MC B.C. youth impact retreat, at Camp Squeah, Hope.
May 6: MC B.C. women's day.
May 21: MC B.C. arts fundraiser, at Heritage Hall, Vancouver.
Oct. 13-15: MC B.C. women's retreat.

Alberta

March 17-18: MC Alberta annual delegate sessions, at Springridge Mennonite Church, Pincher Creek.
April 22: MC Alberta all committee meeting, at Bergthal Mennonite Church, Didsbury.

Saskatchewan

Jan. 27-29: MC Saskatchewan youth retreat at the Shekinah Retreat Centre, near Waldheim. Volunteer kitchen staff still needed. To volunteer, call Zach Dueck at 306-880-6834.

Manitoba

Feb. 3: CMU campus visit day, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Feb. 4: Menno Office at the University of Winnipeg is hosting a Valentine themed fundraising coffee house at Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship Church, Winnipeg, from 7 to 9 p.m. Highlights include musical groups and a charcuterie hosted by Doris Penner's catering services from Landmark Man.
Feb. 10-12: Camp Assiniboia hosts a retreat for youths in grades 7 to 12. Theme: "Living more with less." The retreats include: worship, learning and conversation circles, outdoor recreation and shared meals. To register, send completed forms to newert@mennochurch.mb.ca. For

more information, email Kathy Giesbrecht at kgiesbrecht@mennochurch.mb.ca.

Feb. 19: "New Blood," a play about reconciliation featuring poetry, music, and contemporary and traditional dancing, at Jubilee Place, Winnipeg. For more information, visit mennochurch.mb.ca/newblood.

March 10: CMU campus visit day, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

July 14-15: The Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies and the University of Manitoba present "The Ruslander Mennonites: War dislocation and new beginnings" centenary conference. The event will mark the centenary of the arrival Ruslander from the Soviet Union to Canada.

Ontario

Until Feb. 28: The Brubacher House Poetry Project is looking for self-composed, previously untranslated German Mennonite poetry to be included in a bilingual collection of works from Waterloo Region poets.

The project's goal is to maintain dialogue across generations within the local Mennonite literary tradition by translating these works. Works written in German or Pennsylvania Dutch are both encouraged. Email submissions and an author statement to brubacherpoetryproject@gmail.com. The project will culminate with a public reading in the spring.

January to May: MCC Ontario presents its "Applied peacebuilding skills certificate program" online, every other Wednesday from mid-January to May. For more information, visit mcco.ca/events.

Jan. 21: MC Eastern Canada presents "Becoming a restorative church: Seeking peace and justice," an online event for pastors, chaplains and congregational leaders, in English and French, from 9 a.m. to noon. Learn more at mcec.ca/events.

Jan. 21: "Palestine/Israel and international law" presentation, with Professor Michael Lynk, at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, at 7 p.m. For more information, visit mcec.ca/palestine-israel-network#workshop.

Jan. 22: MC Eastern Canada junior-

youth gathering, "Come together," at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, from 1 to 5 p.m. For students in grades 5 to 8. Theatre of the Beat will lead an art of peace workshop feature peer-led music, interactive drama, robotics and Dutch Blitz. Learn more at mcec.ca/events.

Jan. 25: MennoHomes' in-person annual general meeting, at 544 Bridgeport Road, Kitchener, at 2 p.m.

Jan. 26: MCC Ontario presents "Training active bystanders," a learning session that teaches people how to respond to a violent situation when they see one. The event takes place online, from 7 to 9:30 p.m. For more info and to register, go to mcco.ca/events.

Jan. 31: MC Eastern Canada presents "Strengthening leaders: Exploring ministry gifts," an online workshop in English and French, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Learn more at mcec.ca/events.

Feb. 6-13: MCC Ontario's Great Winter Warm-up encourages comforter making to give the gift of warmth around the world. For those who want to come to the material resource centre in New Hamburg, sign up at <https://bit.ly/3HYXVkk>

Feb. 2: Conrad Grebel University College presents the 2023 Sawatsky Visiting Scholar lecture, at 7:30 p.m., in-person and online. Speaker: Darla Schumm of Hollins University. Title: "The power of misfitting: Disrupting sinner, saint and super-crip controlling images."

Feb. 28: MC Eastern Canada presents "Becoming a restorative church: Theology, leadership and accountability, for pastors, chaplains and congregational leaders, in English and French, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Learn more at mcec.ca/events.

March 9-11: MCC Ontario presents "Rooted in right relationship: With one another and creation," a peace and justice student seminar, in

Ottawa. For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/3Wzxcu>.

April 1: Menno Singers presents "Rachmaninov's Vespers," at Trillium Lutheran, Waterloo, at 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit www.mennosingers.com.

April 18: MC Eastern Canada presents "Living the Gospel as a diverse group of believers," an online workshop on cultural integration, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Learn more at mcec.ca/events.

April 28-29: MC Eastern Canada annual church gathering, at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, in English and French. Learn more at mcec.ca/events.

May 5: Menno Singers presents its "Spring Concert," at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, at 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit www.mennosingers.com.

May 11: MC Eastern Canada presents "Becoming a restorative church: Embodying our safe church policy." A hybrid event, in English and French, at 50 Kent Avenue, Kitchener, and on Zoom, from 7 to 9 p.m. Learn more at mcec.ca/events.

June 3: MC Eastern Canada presents "Being a restorative church: Creating brave and accessible space." A hybrid event, at Shantz Mennonite Church, Baden, with French on Zoom, from 8:30 a.m. to noon. Learn more at mcec.ca/events.

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.



Advertising Information

Contact

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Photo finish



MDS PHOTO BY JOHN LONGHURST

Ten weeks, 179 tree clean-up jobs and 28 roof repair or rebuild jobs. That's what 133 Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) Canada volunteers did last fall in Antigonish and Cape Breton, N.S., in response to Hurricane Fiona. The hurricane struck the province on Sept. 24, 2022, blowing down thousands of trees and damaging homes. The Cape Breton region, where MDS was active, was particularly hard-hit. The first volunteers from the MDS Atlantic Canada Unit arrived six days later, while members from the Ontario Unit came on Oct. 3. Volunteers served in Cape Breton

until Dec. 10, when the response was closed for the year due to the onset of winter. Pictured, David Peters of the Old Colony Mennonite Church around Aylmer, Ont., cuts up tree limbs in Glace Bay. 'We will be forever grateful to MDS volunteers for coming to help and support our most vulnerable community members at a time when they needed it most,' says Lynne McCarron, executive director of United Way Cape Breton, the organization MDS partnered with most closely for its Hurricane Fiona response.