

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

May 19, 2023 Volume 27 Number 10



**Commerce,  
church and  
belonging**  
The story of  
Milo Shantz  
(and Zacchaeus)

## INSIDE

Ernie Regehr on Ukraine 15

MCEC gathering 16

Grebel grandma 21

# How I almost bought a Tesla

WILL BRAUN

editor@canadianmennonite.org



I came closer than I'd like to admit.

Three weeks before a family road trip to Ontario, our ex-Hutterite mechanic gave our 2004 Jetta wagon the death sentence. The ensuing car search turned into a troubling family crash course in the psychology of real-life environmental ethics.

A used Prius—Toyota's time-tested hybrid—was the obvious option: durable, fuel efficient (partly because it generates electricity while braking to later assist the gas engine) and large enough to haul the amount of eggs and produce our mini-farm generates. It's also notoriously utilitarian and gutless, so our boys, 12 and 15, went to work on more peppy and stylish options. Their focus landed on a used Tesla.

We were willing to pay extra for an electric vehicle (EV), but we live 140 kilometres from Winnipeg and drive there more than our consciences like, sometimes to deliver eggs and sometimes to deliver young soccer players, so range would be an issue.

The only real option with sufficient space and range was a 2013 Tesla Model S, listed for \$39,000 ("loaded") by a guy in a nearby town. That was double what we hoped to pay, but not impossible.

Part of me could not stomach the idea of owning a sleek, high-end 440-horsepower car, and part of me really wanted to find a justification. I was leaning Elon.

In the process, I talked to six EV owners, a few highly ethical friends who could never afford an EV, and an

Indigenous friend who lives too far north to even consider it.

One moment stands out. After talking to the guy who was selling the 2013 Tesla, my wife Jennifer noted that if this guy drove more than us—which he did, for his paramedic job—and if he was selling the car and going gas for financial reasons—which he was—then the environmentally optimal move would be for us to buy a cheaper gas car and offer him a low-interest loan so he could continue to drive the Tesla. As illogical as that sounds, it was a pivotal question about true motives. Net emissions would be lower if the person who drove more had the EV.

If we were considering a \$39,000 Tesla instead of a \$21,000 Prius (also used), and if limiting environmental impact were truly our goal, we had to ask: How could we do most good with \$18,000? By parking a luxury vehicle in our driveway?

I have chronic guilt around driving and I realized I was almost willing to spend \$18,000 extra for the privilege of driving with less guilt.

I wanted to buy off my conscience. I wanted to greenwash myself. The goal of making myself feel good had obscured the goal of doing what I considered right.

I see this dynamic in church. Rather than do what is most effective or strategic; rather than face truth square on; rather than do what makes most sense, we too often do what makes us feel we are doing something. We recycle rather than reduce, we create study resources rather than bold action plans,

we share land rather than give it back, we donate money from a distance rather than time on the margins, we buy an EV or hybrid rather than arrange our lives to reduce driving. We do what makes us feel good.

Feeling good is not bad, but it can pre-empt change and short-circuit inner transformation.

My point is less about the pros and cons of EVs—a truly complex matter—than the dangers of self-delusion. We do well to examine our decisions and motives with honesty.

Honesty required that our car deliberations acknowledge the possibility of moving to Winnipeg or getting out of the egg and/or soccer business to reduce driving. Those were shorter conversations. We choose our compromises. We also try to name them and revisit them.

We drove to Ontario in a rental car and bought a red 2017 Prius from a friendly redneck in a little town northeast of Kitchener. The paperwork done, I drove off, sighed, clicked on the radio, and rolled past horse-and-buggy farms listening to The Washboard Union sing "I Run on Country." But I was not running on country, nor on horse power, nor on 100 percent battery power; I was running on gasoline, with the occasional dash of guilt-free electricity. There's no free ride.

Our boys endorsed and lamented the decision (the car truly is dull), then started researching which used, modest EV we might get once range increases and price decreases. ☘



Funded by the  
Government  
of Canada

ISSN 1480-042X

Canada

# CONTENTS

May 19, 2023 / Vol. 27, No. 10

## ABOUT THE COVER

Milo Shantz pictured with a turkey in the late 1950s. Shantz and his brother Ross started a highly successful turkey business.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARCUS SHANTZ



**Does business belong?** 6  
Marcus Shantz reflects on the life of his father Milo, a successful, controversial entrepreneur.

## What in the World 4

This new item offers odds and ends from the wide and whacky world of religion.

## Ernie Regehr presents analysis of Ukraine war 15

Prominent peacebuilder Ernie Regehr discusses the beginning and possible end of the Russian invasion.

## New churches, new spending at MCEC gathering 16

Churches were welcomed and new spending announced at the MC Eastern Canada annual sessions.

## From the dark depths of concussion 29

Beaten and battered, musician Mike Janzen found solace, and three albums, in the Psalms.

## Regular features:

A moment from yesterday 5 For discussion 9  
Readers write 10 Milestones 10  
Schools Directory 26-27 Calendar 31

**Time to be a champion** Kirsten Hamm-Epp 11

**Standing ready for the end** Ed Olfert 12

**Everything is connected** Randy Haluza-DeLay 13

**Paths of kindness and truth** Joshua Penfold 14

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5,  
Waterloo, ON, N2L 6H7

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

Facebook.com/CanadianMennonite @CanMenno @canadianmennonite

**Please send all material to be considered for publication to**

**General submission address:** submit@canadianmennonite.org

**Readers Write:** letters@canadianmennonite.org

**Milestones announcements:** milestones@canadianmennonite.org

**Calendar announcements:** calendar@canadianmennonite.org

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40063104 REGISTRATION NO. 09613

**RETURN UNDELIVERABLE ITEMS TO:** Canadian Mennonite,  
490 Dutton Drive, Unit C5, Waterloo, ON, N2L 6H7

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

Published by Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service. Regional churches and MC Canada appoint directors to the board and provide about one third of *Canadian Mennonite's* budget.

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

## Canadian Mennonite Staff

**Publisher:** Tobi Thiessen, publisher@canadianmennonite.org

**Editor:** Will Braun, editor@canadianmennonite.org

**Managing Editor:** managinged@canadianmennonite.org

**Graphic Designer:** Betty Avery, designer@canadianmennonite.org

**Online Media Manager:** Aaron Epp, onlinemgr@canadianmennonite.org

**Editorial Assistant:** Barb Draper, edassist@canadianmennonite.org

**Advertising:** Ben Thiessen, advert@canadianmennonite.org

**B.C. Correspondent:** Amy Rinner Waddell, bc@canadianmennonite.org

**Alberta Correspondent:** Emily Summach, ab@canadianmennonite.org

**Saskatchewan Correspondent:** Emily Summach, sk@canadianmennonite.org

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

**Eastern Canada Correspondent:** Madalene Arias, ec@canadianmennonite.org

## One-Year Subscription Rates

Canada: \$52 + tax (depends on province where subscriber lives)

U.S.: \$70 International (outside U.S.): \$93.10

## Subscriptions/address changes

office@canadianmennonite.org

1-800-378-2524 ext. 1



PHOTO BY NIGEL J. HARRIS, SHUTTERSHOCK

## Anointed

The Archbishop of Canterbury said the May 6 coronation of King Charles was, at its core, “an act of Christian worship.” According to the royal website, at the apex of this service the Archbishop used the “coronation spoon” and the “coronation oil” to anoint the King on the hands, chest and head.

This ritual, “has historically been regarded as a moment between the Sovereign and God, with a screen or canopy in place given the sanctity of the anointing.”

The anointing oil was made with olives picked on the Mount of Olives. “From the anointing of King Saul through to the present day, Monarchs have been anointed with oil from this sacred place.”

Source: royal.uk



## Church bars media

The governing body of the United Church of Canada will no longer allow media to attend their meetings. The General Council Executive will now meet behind closed doors, despite objections from *Broadview* magazine, previously *The United Church Observer*, which had sent reporters to these sessions for decades.

Source: Broadview



FLICKR PHOTO BY RON BAILEY



## King James

When King Charles took his coronation oath, his hand rested on a hand-crafted Bible edited to be as close as possible in wording to the 1611 King James Bible, including 350 original misprints.

Source: BBC

## 50 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

Our own prayer is that Watergate will also become a theological watershed, a death-blow to American civil religion, and a severe rebuke to all those priests who baptized the godfather's babies and kept on saving his soul without ever talking to him about his deception and bloodletting. FHE.

—Frank H. Epp, *Mennonite Reporter*, May 14, 1973  
(At the time, Watergate was in the news and *The Godfather* had recently won Best Picture at the Oscars.)



**Smug quote**

“I take seriously that Old Colony women know what their ideal world looks like and how best to strive for those ideals in their fragmented world. [Palestinian-American anthropologist] Lila Abu-Lughod calls on us in the west to let go of the ‘smug superiority’ that imposes the priorities of western feminism on other cultures and take seriously the desires and priorities of women in those cultures—priorities about gender relations, safety, food security, oppression, families, communities, the self—that often look different than our priorities.”

—Kerry Fast, in her essay “Women Doing,” part of a series of responses to *Women Talking* on the Anabaptist Historians blog



PHOTO BY BETTY AVERY

**A moment from yesterday**



By 1961, men’s groups in General Conference churches had proliferated to the point where a national organization, “Mennonite Men of Canada,” was formed. Here, in 1962, are executive members Henry M. Dick (Calgary), Carl Ens (Saskatoon) and Ted Friesen (Altona, Manitoba). Men’s groups met for fellowship, service projects and to run boys’ clubs. They served as a counterpoint to secular men’s service clubs in many communities.

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



## FEATURE

# Commerce, church and belonging

The life of a controversial businessman seen through the lens of Zacchaeus

By Marcus Shantz

*The following was adapted from a presentation given to MCEC pastors in January 2023*



PHOTO BY DEAN HOLTZ

*Diorama of a barn-raising at the St. Jacobs & Aberfoyle Model Railway, a tourist attraction in St. Jacobs.*

was delivering a sermon on the story of Zacchaeus last October when I realized that when I talked about Zacchaeus, I was actually thinking about, and picturing, my father.

Though not short in stature, my father, like Zacchaeus, was a man whose occupation was often controversial in his community. My father, Milo Shantz, who died in 2009, was a businessman.

For years, his main business was turkeys. He and his brother Ross founded Hybrid Turkeys which is now the world's largest exporter of turkey breeding stock. He sold that business in 1981 when I was 9. He then focused largely on property development in and around St. Jacobs, Ontario.

He was also intensely involved in church and church-related organizations. He served as treasurer of what was then the Mennonite Conference of Ontario, chair of Mennonite Economic Development Associates, and on various committees and boards.

Together with his brother, he established a charitable foundation that gave most of its donations to Mennonite church-related causes.

Late in his life, my dad told me that when he was a teenager in the 1950s, he saw that friends and contemporaries of his, like Ralph Lebold and Herb Schultz, would go on to seminary to become ministers and church leaders. My father knew that this wasn't his path. He had a learning disability that made school difficult. He only completed Grade 8. Knowing his skills and interests lay elsewhere, he resolved that he would serve the church through business.

### **Mennonite tourism**

By the 1970s, the economy in St. Jacobs was faltering. Businesses were closing. Around this same time, the St. Jacobs and Elmira areas began to see a growth in tourism. People would drive from Toronto to "see Mennonites." Local Mennonite leaders became concerned that as tourism grew it would become exploitative.

Realizing that tourism was coming whether they liked it or not, these

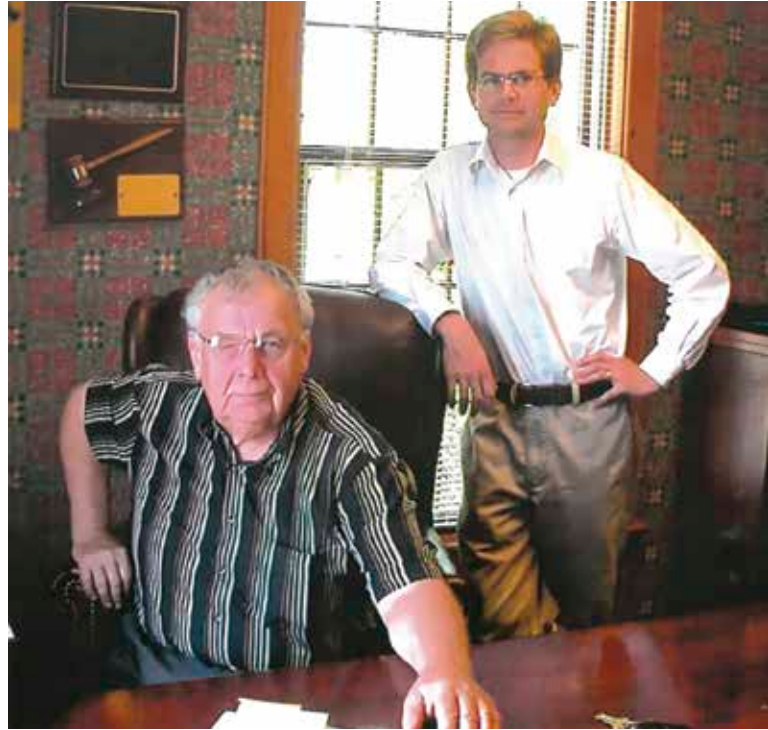


PHOTO COURTESY OF MARCUS SHANTZ

**Milo Shantz, left, and his son Marcus, pictured in 2004.**

church leaders reasoned that it would be better if a Mennonite had a role in shaping the local tourism sector.

That's how my father became involved. Encouraged by certain church leaders, he saw this role as the last act of his career.

With help from many people, he started The Stone Crock Restaurant and an interpretive centre now called The Mennonite Story. He repurposed historic buildings as space for artists and artisans. He was behind the expansion of the St. Jacobs Farmers Market.

St. Jacobs went from being a quiet village to a place that was frequently crowded. I think it would have happened whether my father had been there or not, but he became the face of change.

### **Rumours**

I grew up in St. Jacobs, and learned at a young age that not everyone liked what my father did. Two examples:

In 1987, his company opened a restaurant that had a liquor license. Many in the local church disapproved. Around the same time, my parents

began attending a different congregation. For years, a persistent rumour in town maintained that my parents had been quietly shunned from St. Jacobs Mennonite Church because of the liquor license.

Then, in the 1990s, the company borrowed to purchase land on the Woolwich-Waterloo border, with a vision to build housing for seniors. My father could not get municipal approval for that project, and his company was caught with the carrying costs of vacant land. So the company was forced to sell, and the only interested buyer was a developer of big box stores.

This generated anti-sprawl opposition, much of it directed at my dad. Many believed my dad was a land speculator seeking to enrich himself. The reality was that his company's financial situation was drastic. By the time the project was approved, the original offer had expired. The buyers took advantage and cut their original offer substantially. My father felt he had no choice but to accept it.

The land is now home to a Walmart.

My father returned to his investors, his employees and his family believing that he was a failure.

### The business of belonging

Those are just two situations I remember in which my father felt like he didn't quite belong in his community. I recall his reluctance to go to church some days because he didn't always know where he stood with people and he didn't want to face their judgments.

It may seem strange to say that Milo Shantz often felt like he didn't belong. He was, after all, a respected lay leader in the church and a well-known local business person.

But if Jesus had come to St. Jacobs and called out to Milo saying, "I'm coming to your house for dinner," I think that many in the crowd would have grumbled like they did when Jesus called out to Zacchaeus.

In Luke's account of Jesus' journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, Jesus repeatedly encounters and affirms outsiders and outcasts of various description: Samaritans, widows, the terminally ill and disabled. He affirms people with sketchy occupations: Roman soldiers, prostitutes and Zacchaeus the tax collector. All of this reveals his mission "to seek out and save the lost"—as Luke repeatedly puts it—all to the consternation of the Pharisees and the puzzlement of the slow-witted disciples.

That phrase, "save the lost," can cause problems for us. It's easy to assume that outcasts and outsiders mostly have themselves to blame for being lost. Their own bad choices led them astray.

If I identify as an insider, this is a soothing thought. It restores my sense of superiority over the outsider. It allows me to forget the troubling idea that the outsider might actually be more faithful than me. This thinking enables me to invite outsiders in, provided that they change themselves to fit my expectations.

But the whole point of the encounters Jesus has with outsiders on the journey to Jerusalem is to highlight and affirm the faith and faithfulness of people the community had lost sight of. Jesus tells

them: "You, too, are a son of Abraham." "Your faith has saved you." "Your sins are forgiven." In other words, you have nothing to be ashamed of.

### The wee little man

Zacchaeus was the chief tax collector in the city of Jericho. As we've all been taught, tax collectors were rich, and they were reviled because they extracted punishing taxes in collaboration with the Romans.

Ironically, the name "Zacchaeus" is derived from the word *zakkai*, which in Hebrew evokes meanings like "clean," "innocent" and "righteous."

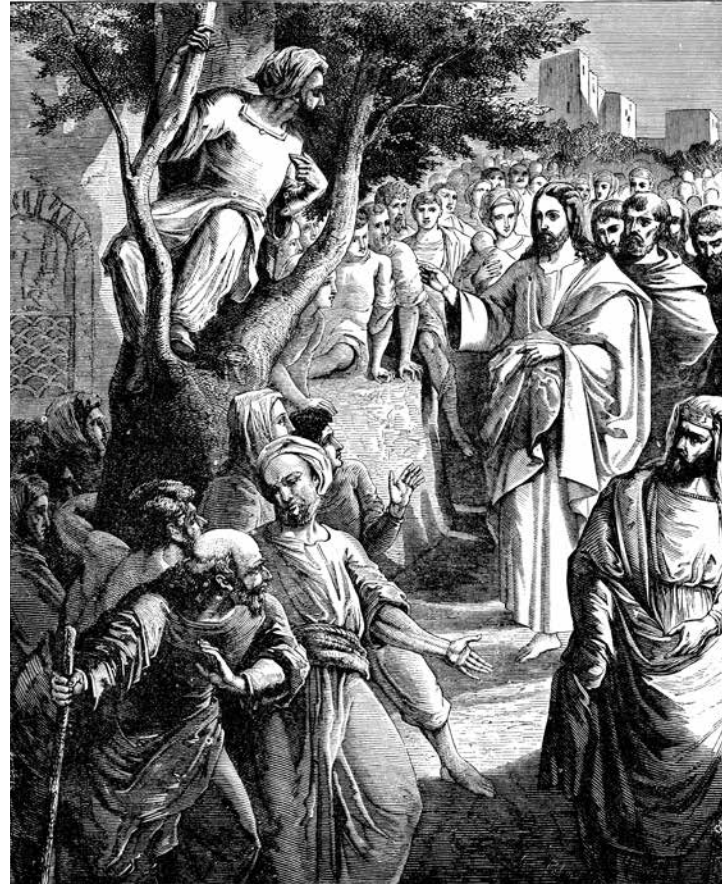
You know the story: Zacchaeus climbs a sycamore tree to get a good view of Jesus. Jesus sees him, calls him down, and says "I'm coming to your house." Zacchaeus comes down, but the crowd grumbles. Why, they ask, would Jesus go to this man's house.

At this, Zacchaeus makes the impulsive decision to change his ways. He declares that he will give half his money to the poor, and pay back four times what he took from all those he cheated. Jesus, pleased with this repentant sinner, declares, "Today salvation has come to this house."

That's the customary reading. But elements of this reading have always bothered me. Firstly, the story has a transactional feel to it. Zacchaeus gives his money away, and *in exchange*, Jesus proclaims his salvation. But in many other Gospel stories, salvation is more or less unconditional. Jesus doesn't heal the servant of the Roman centurion on the condition that the centurion quits his job as a policeman for an oppressive

colonial power.

Secondly, I'm uncomfortable that the story seems to reward the graceless crowd. In our normal reading,



ISTOCK PHOTO BY BENOITB

*Zacchaeus being called down from the sycamore tree by Jesus.*

Zacchaeus makes his promises in response to their grumbling, not in response to Jesus' call. But the crowd is almost always wrong in all the other stories. This doesn't fit the pattern.

### Another reading

At a recent lecture by Father James Martin, a Roman Catholic priest, I learned of an alternative interpretation of the Zacchaeus story. This reading comes from the noted Jesuit scholar Joseph Fitzmyer, who wrote a magisterial two-volume commentary on Luke in 1986.

In many translations, Zacchaeus says: "Look, I will give half of what I own to the poor." But Fitzmyer noticed that in



the original Greek, Zacchaeus speaks in the present tense: “Look, I give half of what I own to the poor.”

Fitzmyer also stressed the use of “if” in his next promise. Zacchaeus says: “If I have defrauded anyone, I pay it back fourfold.”

This raises the intriguing idea that Zacchaeus isn’t repenting at all. What if being recognized and welcomed by Jesus gave Zacchaeus the courage to defend himself against the crowd?

According to Fitzmyer, Zacchaeus might be saying, “Look, I may be a sinner, but I always give half of my possessions to the poor. And if you can prove that I’ve defrauded anyone, I’ll pay them back four times as much.”

What if the crowd had this guy all wrong? What if Zacchaeus really is “clean,” “innocent” and “righteous” despite his seedy profession?

What if Zacchaeus was living righteously the whole time, using his position and influence to redistribute wealth among those who most needed it?

I can imagine the back-story: Zacchaeus sees that the Romans are there to stay, so becomes a tax-collector in the hope of making things better than they otherwise would be by being an honorable tax collector.

What if, instead of expecting Zacchaeus to change his ways, Jesus recognized great value in Zacchaeus as he was, a person who put his street smarts and business sense to the service of God?

You might resist this interpretation, as many scholars do. Fitzmyer spends several paragraphs taking up objections to his reading of the story.

Why do we want to object?

As Fitzmyer wrote: “Part of the problem is the modern reader’s reluctance to admit that the Lucan Jesus could declare the vindication of a rich person who was concerned for the poor.”

### Work in the world

What attracts me to this understanding of Zacchaeus is that it aligns the story with Jesus’s other encounters with people on the margins, in which he recognizes them as people with unique

gifts who belong in the Kingdom.

So, what is my point here, apart from working through some personal family history, and maybe revealing more that I intended about my own inner psychology?

I’m not saying that business is beyond criticism, or that the church should bless everything business people do, or that the church should bless business as an end in itself, with the goal of accumulating wealth. That would be contrary to the Gospel.

My point is to provoke conversation and reflection about the working lives of the people in our congregations. We spend much of our lives at work, but I can’t remember the last time we had a serious conversation in my congregation about our occupations, and how we live as Christians in our workplaces.

Jesus commended a Roman soldier for his great faith; I suspect that we’d have a hard time doing the same. Just as business owners can end up on the edges of church because of their professions, the same can happen to people who work for large corporations.

Our congregations include software engineers working for “big tech,” farmers working in “big ag,” urban planners working for large land developers, geologists working for “big oil,” and scientists working for “big pharma.”

Business people pose a challenge for Mennonite churches. I think that’s partly because they are very much “in the world,” facing practical dilemmas and pragmatic choices all of the time. Yet I believe that if we asked them, most would say their faith matters in their work, and they think deeply about what it means to be faithful in their occupations. They might also be wary of having that conversation in a church setting, for fear of being misunderstood or misjudged.

Can our congregations be a space for these conversations? What can our churches do to seek out and save those who might be lost to us because of their careers and vocations? ❧

*Marcus Shantz serves as president of Conrad Grebel University College in Waterloo, Ontario.*

### For discussion

1. What roles do business people and those involved in big industries play in your congregation and community? How do you think they feel about their roles?
2. Why would the people of St. Jacobs not have welcomed what Milo Shantz was trying to do in the 1970s and 80s? Why might we question the motives of successful business people?
3. How do you respond to the reading of Zacchaeus that suggests he was an ethical tax collector?
4. Marcus Shantz writes, “Business people pose a challenge for Mennonite churches.” Do you agree? Why is it important to discuss “practical dilemmas and pragmatic choices” in church settings?
5. How might we encourage serious conversations about how we live as Christians in our places of work?

—By Barb Draper

See related resources at  
[www.commonword.ca/go/3444](http://www.commonword.ca/go/3444)

**CommonWord**  
Bookstore and Resource Centre

## OPINION

### /// Readers write

#### ✉ Perfection

**In response to various recent articles and letters about banning and cancel culture:** Most of what I've seen, heard or read about cancel culture appears to define it as the denigration of those whose actions or ideas may fall short of perfection, by those who believe they have attained it.

JOHN HILDEBRAND, MISSISSAUGA, ONT.

#### ✉ The ban and cancel culture have similar goals

**Re: "Is the ban back" editorial, March 13.**

Is it possible that at least one difference between fraternal admonition and cancel culture is the end goal? According to my understanding, the Christian ban is for the purpose of regaining the sinner.

What is the end goal of so-called cancel culture? Something along the lines of harm reduction and the end of victimization.

These two goals do not seem to be contradictory to me, or to the gospel as I understand it.

MARCO FUNK (ONLINE COMMENT)

#### ✉ Government doctrine

**Re: "An assumption of grace," April 21.**

Colonizers from Europe showed a European cultural belief system that existed in those centuries.

The explorers were working for the governments that paid their way and that shared the European culture of those who wrote the Doctrine of Discovery. Current governments should not use the Doctrine to duck responsibility for a preceding government's actions.

It is likely more important for communities to learn to live together as equals than it is to get history right. But it is important that responsibility for remediation be placed where it belongs.

LOIS EPP (ONLINE COMMENT)

#### ✉ In praise of the Enneagram

**My initial response to Emily Summach's article, "First Enneagram Prison Project launches in Saskatchewan," (April 21)** was a bit of resistance to yet another trendy way of doing ministry.

However, I recently read Darrell Heidebrecht's *A Little More Peace in the World*, and I'm also rereading Phyllis Tickle's *The Great Emergence: How Christianity is Changing and Why*.

The good news of Jesus obviously has already encountered a number of changing trends along with endless branding and rebranding of religions, including Christian denominations.

The Bible also makes considerable reference to gifts of the Spirit, precisely as the early church was trying to get itself organized in a redemptive way.

I am now thinking that Amanda Dodge and Leanne Schellenberg—both mentioned in Summach's article—are using their gifts for a very good and redemptive purpose, and increasing the possibility of a little more peace in this world. Amen.

JACOB FROESE (ONLINE COMMENT)

### /// Milestones

#### Births/Adoptions

**Dueck**—Brielle Paige (b. March 7, 2023), to Marcus and Paige Dueck, Steinbach Mennonite Church, Steinbach, Man.

**Montgomery**—Aurora Janice (b. April 13, 2023), to Karri and Aaron Montgomery, Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

**Reid**—Dawson Lionel, (b. April 29, 2023), to Lauren and Andrew Reid, First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, Alta.

#### Baptisms

**Nathan DiLaudo**—North Leamington United Mennonite Church, May 7, 2023

#### Deaths

**Driedger**—Henry J., 90 (b. March 19, 1933; d. April 25, 2023), North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

**Enns**—Edwin, 89 (b. April 11, 1934, d. April 13, 2023), First Mennonite Church, Edmonton.

**Enns**—Thelma, 91 (b. Nov. 17, 1931; d. May 5, 2023), Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man.

**Friesen**—Mary (nee Giesbrecht), 98 (b. May 30, 1924; d. Apr. 29, 2023), Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man.

**Gascho**—Roy Alvin, 90 (b. Sept. 3 1932; d. Jan. 22, 2023) First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont.

**Isaac**—Martha, 92 (b. Aug. 9, 1930; d. Dec. 2022), Fields of Hope/Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church, Glenbush, Sask.

**Kruger**—Helen (nee Zacharias), 88 (b. Aug. 10, 1934; d. Feb. 1, 2023), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

**Neufeld**—Katie, 91 (b. Oct. 2, 1931; d. Nov. 13, 2022), Fields of Hope/Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church, Glenbush, Sask.

**Neufeld**—Ruth Anne (nee Wiens), 64 (b. July 3, 1958; d. April 28, 2023), North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

**Penner**—Reginald (Reg) John, 67 (b. Aug. 10, 1955; d. March 29, 2023), Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

**Tourond**—Delores Heazel, 75 (b. Jan. 11, 1948; d. April 1, 2023), Steinbach Mennonite, Man.

**Wiebe**—Erna, 92 (b. Aug. 9, 1930; d. April 12, 2023), Fields of Hope/Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite Church, Glenbush, Sask.

## FROM OUR LEADERS

## Time to be a champion

Kirsten Hamm-Epp

**T**hese days I've been thinking about youth and the church. Connecting youth to the church is a passion of mine, and I'm fortunate that the wonderful people of Saskatchewan see fit to pay me to do this work. I am also fortunate to have had a number of people invest significant time encouraging me to live into my passion and work for the church.

When I started to think about the people—women in particular—who have been role models and champions in my life, the list quickly expanded from two to six, to more than 10. I could easily write an article dedicated to each one, but for now I'll settle with naming three: Marilyn Houser Hamm, Anna

Rehan and Kathy Giesbrecht.

In their own way, each one of these women has been a true champion of mine, encouraging me not just to share my gifts with the church, but telling me that the church needed me, and was calling me to serve. Thinking about them gives me pause and a feeling of deep, deep gratitude. Not to mention a big smile!

As questions (and concerns) are being raised about the lack of people pursuing a vocation in ministry in Mennonite Church Canada, I wonder if part of the way we can all respond is to make sure we are being champions for our youth. To tell them they are seen, they are appreciated, and there is a place in the

**In a lot of conversations with youth, we tend to be a bit shy . . .**

church with their name on it.

I am now at the phase in life where I get to be someone's champion; a humbling, exciting and more-than-a-little intimidating thought. Am I wise enough—*old* enough—to be someone's champion?

In a lot of conversations with youth, we tend to be a bit shy, apologetic even, when putting the option of serving the church on the table as a valid career and vocation. While the dangers of coming on too strong are worth consideration,

the reality is that this is exactly what younger generations need to hear in order to remain involved and engaged in church, at any level.

I have a sticky note on my desk reminding me, in no uncertain terms, that it is now my job to be the role model, to be the champion. To not just receive encouragement from others, but to make sure I am boldly and unapologetically encouraging youth to share their gifts with the church, now and into the future. Because it's true; we need their gifts, and we owe our youth the gift of calling them to serve.

It's our turn. Time to be someone's champion. ✎

*Kirsten Hamm-Epp serves as regional church minister for Mennonite Church Saskatchewan and can be reached at [youthminister@mcsask.ca](mailto:youthminister@mcsask.ca).*



Kirsten Hamm-Epp (right) and her mom, Marilyn Houser Hamm

SUPPLIED PHOTO

## IN THE IMAGE

# Standing ready for the end

Ed Olfert

**R**ecently, another of my old aunts died. Aunt Anne was my dad's sister. The Olfert family was a large one, with six boys and six girls. Three sisters and a brother remain.

Aunt Anne was a grand old lady, who carried the family trait of great determination. Her life was often not easy. A long-time widow, she had also buried two of her children.

My strongest memories of Anne are of her determination—there's that word again—to create family. That included the myriad nieces and nephews that filled her home frequently, such as when she hosted extended family on Sunday after church. If you shared genes with Anne, you had a fierce ally.

At Aunt Anne's funeral service, the presence of a large contingent of Olfert cousins—my generation—stood as a testimony to her role in the family. This group, about 30 in number, aged about 50 to 75, are somewhat loud and indecorous.

At the reception, cousin Terry, with no need of a sound system, rose and pointed out that we seem to have the biggest and best reunions at either weddings or funerals. He then asked the gathered people who was going to volunteer to be next.

The crowd chuckled. Then, in the moment that followed, Aunt Tina, Anne's sister, slowly pulled herself to her feet. Another aged sister, Margaret, joined her. These two grand old ladies

stood, with twinkles in their eyes.

I giggled for an hour or so. That's a testimony to who these sisters are: solid, strong, peaceful women, who take just a little pride in outrageousness. These two old mentors, even as they make this quirky offer to provide the next funeral to their family, these two old ladies are living and sharing a spirituality that is strong and good. They are ready to die, when the future goes that way. They have lived well, have loved well, and are simply at peace with whatever lies down the road. Their view of God, of the afterlife, is one of confidence and peace.

Years ago, I sat at the bedside of a

resonated. I do know that as I left his room, I felt a surge of anger at whatever institution, whatever individual, had filled this haggard man with this bizarre and guilt-ridden notion of God.

I'll go with the plain and practical faith of the old aunts. Aunt Tina was my Sunday School teacher in childhood days. Her understanding of the holy, her version of the Biblical stories, were filled with a theology of "yes." Yes, God loves you; yes, God loves all people, and living that is what it means to live faithfully. Tina is loved because her energy is directed to building up, not tearing down.



*Olfert cousins, gathered at Aunt Anne's funeral.*

SUPPLIED PHOTO

As for Margaret, her husband told a story of driving down a highway, encountering road construction. Soon he was fuming, why don't they work differently so they don't disrupt traffic so much! And he recalls Aunt Marg making the gentle observation, "oh, they probably have their reasons for doing it like that."

Give me gentle.  
Give me patient.

Give me wise. Hopefully. I will approach death with confidence, and maybe with a little twinkle.

"Where, O death, is your victory?  
Where, O death, is your sting?" ❧



*Ed Olfert lives in Laird, Saskatchewan and can be reached at p2peho@gmail.com.*

dying man. I didn't know him well, but had been asked to make a pastoral visit. These are visits that I typically value. But this man was not in that good space. With great spiritual agony, he recounted to me the children and grandchildren in his family who had not yet made a profession of faith. His guilt was insurmountable; he had failed in his life's task.

I don't know if my words of comfort

## MIND AND SOUL

# Everything is connected

Randy Haluza-DeLay

This column is going to attempt two tasks, because, well, everything is connected! As usual, I may be trying to do too much—let’s see!

First of all, May is mental health month. Several years ago, I wrote about my own mental health struggles. Of all the columns I have written, it was the scariest of all to send to readers, but also generated the most public and private responses.

Some of my struggles are ongoing, although I have more clarity about them through personal reading and therapy. For example, I have learned that what I was experiencing back then was severe burnout, which explains why medication for depression didn’t work, and why my body now overreacts to stress. In fact, as I write this, the past three weeks have been an agony with stress-associated symptoms that mimic a heart attack (the electrocardiogram was negative) and ongoing brain fog. Anxiety or panic attacks, the doctor now thinks, albeit not from any specific triggers. I feel embarrassed, but that doesn’t stop the paroxysms of pain. Even now, I wonder if I’m complaining too much, if I should just pull up my socks and stop making excuses.

Online searches point out the stigmatization of mental health in some religious communities. But the Bible includes the Psalms, full of feelings of sadness, fear and despair, and Jesus’ ministry to people struggling with mental and emotional difficulties such as the man possessed by demons in Mark 5. Many people still experience stigmatization, and we may even impose it on

ourselves. We need more discussion of mental health.

The second task of this column is to

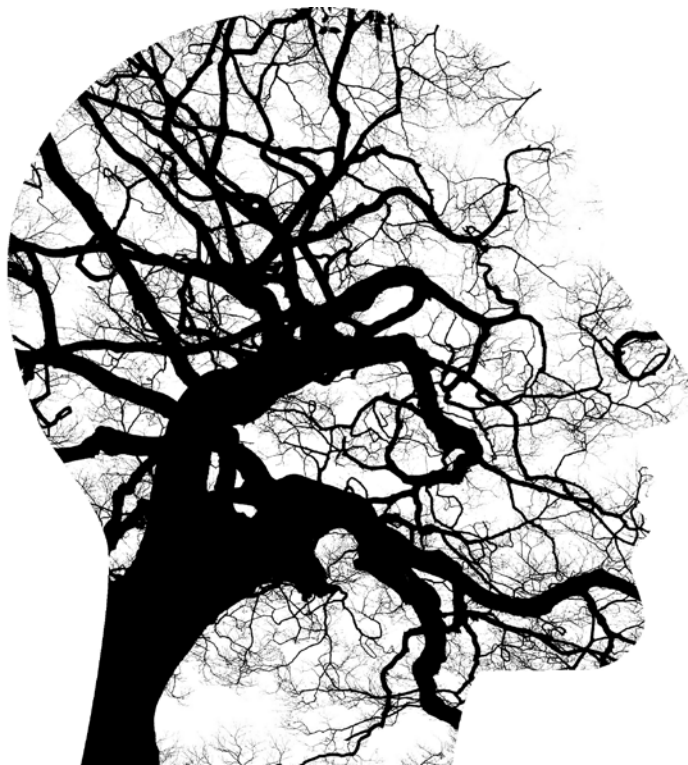


PHOTO BY TUMISU FROM PIXABAY

bridge from mental health to the Doctrine of Discovery. An Indigenous friend of mine observed that Indigenous people have experienced catastrophe for five centuries. Due to the transatlantic slave trade, intergenerational trauma also marks most of those with a heritage traced to Africa. Colonialism has been devastating to colonized countries around the world. One of the most important thinkers on the impacts of colonialism—Franz Fanon—was a psychiatrist. He wrote about the “colonized mind,” an internalization of the explicit ways colonialism tries to make colonized peoples feel and then act as inferior.

As a linchpin of European colonialism, the so-called doctrine of Doctrine of Discovery developed over time, starting with papal pronouncements in the fifteenth century. Those pronouncements, while not actual Catholic doctrine, began a process that legitimized European taking of land and the superiority of European Christian cultures. For more, see Sarah Augustine’s book *The Land is not Empty: Following Jesus in Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery*.

The Vatican formally repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery earlier this year (see the April 21 issue of *Canadian Mennonite*). That this formal repudiation came right before Holy Week is auspicious. The Doctrine of Discovery has had a global reach. The initial pronouncements first opened up colonization of Africa, predating Columbus’s (re)discovery of the Americas.

Most importantly, the work of eradicating its effects is ongoing. We need discussion of how social injustices are entrenched in our society.

I do see a common purpose in both tasks. The Christian life is one of following Jesus in what and how and why we do things. Whether growing as a whole and healthy person or working for a whole and health society—everything is connected. ☿



Randy Haluza-DeLay lives in Toronto and can be reached at [haluzadelay@gmail.com](mailto:haluzadelay@gmail.com).

## TALES FROM THE UNENDING STORY

# Paths of kindness and truth

Joshua Penfold

I grew up believing that God's will was specific. God had a plan for my life and I was either living faithfully along that path or veering from it.

It wasn't necessarily defiant disobedience that caused one to fall off the path. I feared that even a faithful attempt to follow God could result in a wrong turn if I hadn't been attuned closely enough to the Lord's will. Sure, God was gracious and would welcome me back like the father of the prodigal son, but you had to return, and it often felt like a kind of elusive poorly marked trail that was easy to wander off if you did happen to find yourself on it occasionally.

College in rural Saskatchewan. Those two years being physically away from one another tested our relationship, strengthened our communication skills, and bore many new friendships.

During these years, though my commitment to Rebecca remained steadfast, I realized that if Rebecca and I had not been dating, there were some other people I had met that I could imagine a life with. There was never any concern in my mind about the security of my relationship with Rebecca, it just made me question the idea that there is "the one" that God has willed for me. The path with Rebecca is the path I chose, and continue to choose, but

about pursuing God, then discovering that in doing so your desires and God's will become one beautifully entwined byproduct.

All these thoughts bubbled up from reading Psalm 25:10: "*All the Lord's paths are kindness and truth for the keepers of his pact and his precepts.*" The word "paths" is plural. I'm not sure if this verse alone is enough to argue for the plurality of paths held within the will of God, but it has nonetheless, along with other verses, thoughts and experiences along the way, helped to reshape my earlier theology of God's one specific will and my one specific path of obedience.

I now find myself less worried about trying to meticulously keep on the one right path of a transcendent and omniscient God, and more in awe of the breadth of God's grace, the ability for God to use not just my faithfulness but also transform my blunders and even disobedience into glory. I've often been afraid of casting the net too wide, of being too inclusive of things outside of God's will and God's way, but I'm starting to laugh at myself . . . to think that I was worried about being more gracious, inclusive, hospitable and liberal than God.

Richard Rohr argues that when rooted in God, everything belongs. I'm still working that out, but I think it fits well with "*delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart*" as well as "*All the Lord's paths are kindness and truth.*" A life of holy contemplation and delighting in God's kindness and truth need not fear stepping out of God's will, it is the path itself. ❧



FLICKR PHOTO BY AJ

Over the years my understanding has shifted. When my wife and I were dating I spent a year traveling with Canadian Mennonite University's School of Discipleship (Outtatown) program. The following year, after getting engaged, I spent another year away from Rebecca while at Briercrest

maybe it wasn't the only God-honouring path.

There have been verses like "*delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart*" (Psalm 37:4) which have further encouraged me that perhaps life is less about pursuing God's very specific will for your life and more



Joshua Penfold lives in New Hamburg, Ontario and can be reached at [penfoldjoshua@gmail.com](mailto:penfoldjoshua@gmail.com).

# Ernie Regehr presents analysis of Ukraine war

By Maria H. Klassen  
ST. CATHARINES, ONT.

**E**rnie Regehr—a prominent Canadian voice on disarmament and peacebuilding for over 40 years—shared his unique analysis of the Ukraine conflict at Grace Mennonite Church in St. Catharines, Ontario on May 6.

Regehr co-founded Project Peacemakers in 1976 and currently serves as a research fellow at Conrad Grebel University College. He was named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2003.

As much as we all want the war to end, Regehr said, it is more complicated than just stopping the fighting. In his presentation, Regehr discussed the international cost of the war, the roots of war, how the war will likely end and negotiation mechanisms.

International law is hard to reinforce, Regehr said, but it works. When one country grabs another country's territory, and wants to change the government by force, such violations of the United Nations Charter do deep damage. The global multi-lateral system becomes polarized and increasingly militarized.

There is opposition to a ceasefire at this point because Russia is in control of some Ukrainian territory and a ceasefire would be seen as rewarding Russia's violation of the Charter.

Another cost of the war is seen in the far north. "In the Arctic, Russia and the NATO countries have co-operated in areas such as search and rescue activities, cleaning up oil spills and the joint management of fisheries," Regehr said. "This has all shut down."

As for the motivation behind the war, Regehr says the world is not sure why Russian president Vladimir Putin attacked Ukraine. Was it to reinforce his own unsteady position in his regime? Was it to create a compliant neighbour? Or was it that Russia felt increasingly vulnerable



PHOTO COURTESY OF CONRAD GREBEL  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

*Ernie Regehr*

**When one country grabs another country's territory, and wants to change the government by force, such violations of the United Nations Charter do deep damage**

to NATO creeping eastward?

"The world order could have gone differently in the 1990s and 2000s, and changed the way the East and the West related to each other," Regehr said. Did NATO's failure to seek a more cooperative path influence Putin's choice? Did Ukraine, as a small nation living next to a large

nation, also mismanage its relations with Russia? Did Ukraine's request to join NATO make the war more likely? Did Ukraine's lack of internal unity ease Russia into taking advantage of its neighbour?

How will it end? Anything can happen, but what will probably happen? The war is now stalemated, but in Regehr's analysis, it is not a "mutually hurting stalemate." He says the nations have not yet reached the kind of exhaustion that could bring them to a negotiating table. Russia has a new set of recruits and an expanded military industrial base, while Ukraine continues to receive new weapons. Could neighbours such as China and India help? "They have both been critical of Russia's invasion," Regehr says, having recently voted yes on a UN General Assembly resolution that included a brief reference to Russian aggression. This is a significant signal.

There are direct talks taking place between Russia and Ukraine about grain exports and prisoner exchange. Regehr believes efforts should be made to continue and expand such small exchanges, perhaps by including talks on protection of hospitals and schools. There is hope when there is talking, he said. Trust can build from small negotiations.

He believes a basic peace table needs to be set up, established and funded by other countries. Representatives from the warring parties would initially be at low levels, but with experts in negotiation and peacebuilding. This could be a place where proposals are informally tested and an inventory of constructive ideas built. Canada could become involved by sitting at this peace table and garnering funds.

The event ended with a time for questions and some talk of further local peace organizing. ❧

# New churches, new spending at MCEC gathering

By Will Braun

**A**t its annual gathering, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada welcomed new congregations, announced a break from status quo spending and heard bold challenges from Fanosie Legesse and Rebecca Riek.

During the evening worship service on Friday, April 28 in the gym at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, two congregations were welcomed as provisional members of MC Eastern Canada. Église Jésus-Christ Appelle Tous is a congregation made up mostly of newcomers from Swahili speaking countries in East Africa. It launched in August 2020 in Trois-Rivières, Quebec.

Église Bethésda Mennonite de Saint-Hyacinthe also began in 2020 in Saint-Hyacinthe, just east of Montreal. It is pastored by Ayeba Amuri who was a member of the Mennonite church in Africa since 1996. The congregation includes immigrants from Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Ivory

Coast, Cameroon and Chad.

Two other congregations moved from provisional membership to full membership. Shalom Worship and Healing Centre is a congregation of more than 400 people of Eritrean and Ethiopian background. It meets in Kitchener and Guelph.

Hochma is a non-traditional church plant among marginalized people in Montreal. In addition to worship services, Hochma offers “in from the cold” overnight shelter. During the pandemic it grew to become the largest shelter in the east end of Montreal.

The ceremonies of welcome for these congregations included prayers in French, Swahili and Tigrinya.

The evening also included a spirited sermon by MC Eastern Canada intercultural mission minister Fanosie Legesse and a graciously pointed address by Rebecca Riek. Legesse talked about change, which is both “brutally painful” and beautiful. With examples both biblical and from his

experience in his native Ethiopia, he said that not even persecution should make us “shrink back” from the change God desires.

Legesse noted there has been considerable change in MC Eastern Canada since he attended his first annual gathering 20 years ago. As an Ethiopian Canadian, he is not as “rare” in that setting as he once was.

Rebecca Riek, a member of First Mennonite Church in Kitchener, was asked to respond. Speaking just after the death of her mother in South Sudan, she challenged Euro-Canadians, drawing contrasts with African ways. She challenged the Euro-Canadian focus on budgeting and planning. She challenged the Euro-Canadian tightness with time. To repeated murmurs of agreement from the numerous people of African descent in the crowd, she said: “In Africa, Sunday is for God, not praying for one hour. Where are you running? We pray for three hours. Why? Because the Holy Spirit takes time.”

“I’m breaking rules here,” she said, presumably referring to the directness of her comments.

Then, quoting Jesus’ command to love our neighbours as ourselves, she noted that many Canadians do not even know their neighbours’ names.

Riek also told the beautiful story of how she ended up in a predominantly white Mennonite church, after asking God to show her which church to be part of.

She encouraged listeners to rely on the Spirit, to move beyond comfort, to follow Jesus’ call to touch and transform lives.

The evening ended with worship led by a group from Shalom Worship and Healing Centre.

## Numbers

On Saturday, attention turned to reports and budgets. In the last fiscal year, MC Eastern Canada brought in just over \$2 million, well shy of the budget expectation



MCEC PHOTO BY PAUL SCHMIDT

*Members of Shalom Worship and Healing Centre lead worship.*



of \$2.3 million. Expenses were over budget as well, leaving an overall shortfall of \$362,000. This was well beyond the planned budget deficit of \$204,000.

The shortfall was covered by a draw on the Faithful Steward Fund, a bequest fund established years ago to supplement general revenues from congregations.

For the current year, MC Eastern Canada is budgeting a slight increase in revenue over last year's actual revenue and a \$168,000 increase in spending. This will require a draw of \$520,000 from the Faithful Steward Fund. That will use up nearly half the \$1.06 million in the fund at the end of the last fiscal year.

Leadership said that after a couple years of "status quo" budgets, this year marks an investment in change, a willingness to put some money behind shared dreams. About \$80,000 of the new money will go toward initiatives arising from the Courageous Imagination visioning process. This will include: hiring a part-time fundraiser; bumping eco-minister Wendy Janzen from quarter-time to half-time; providing additional funds for Legesse to conduct intercultural workshops for church clusters; hiring consultants to look at youth, young adult and intergenerational

ministries; and providing subsidies for youth internship opportunities in Toronto, Montreal or with an International Witness partner.

In addition to this \$80,000 in new spending, an additional \$90,000 will go toward cost of living increases for staff and other staff expenses. Another \$15,000 will be allocated for the next annual gathering, and \$25,000 will go to "council and committee travel and expenses" which includes consulting fees, some of which are related to a new round of strategic planning.

In a question from the floor, the point was made that allocating new spending from reserve funds is the "easy stuff," and the "hard part," that of cutting, lies ahead. Outgoing moderator Arli Klassen acknowledged that, indeed, the "cutting is yet to come." The "overage" is not sustainable.

The regional church has two main funds that support general ministries: the Faithful Steward Fund and the Legacy Initiatives Fund. The Legacy fund is just over 10 years old. At that time, MC Eastern Canada received a major bequest from the estate of Harold and Enid Schmidt that has allowed them to disperse \$8.7 million

dollars to various projects and ministries. At the end of last year, about \$3.3 million remained in the fund.

An additional, comparable amount of income is expected from this bequest in the next few years. MC Eastern Canada plans to change course, shifting emphasis from "entrepreneurial" disbursement of the money. The intent with the additional income, as stated in the gathering documents, is to invest much of it "in a way that will provide a steady annual income stream to MCEC, along with the annual contributions from congregations and individuals."

The Faithful Steward Fund contains bequest monies not designated for specific projects. It held just over \$1 million at the end of last year.

The close of the gathering also marked the end of Arli Klassen's time as moderator. Ben Cassels of Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church takes over. Ann Schultz's term of interim director has been extended until the end of the next annual gathering in April 2024. Her term began in January 2023. ☸

## Hospitality as witness

*Bridge Building ministry reaches into community*

By Emily Summach  
Alberta Correspondent

**D**ecolonization, interfaith dialogue, intersectionality—these terms can feel heady and intimidating, but Suzanne Gross says they can all happen through the well-practiced Mennonite art of hospitality.

Gross serves as Bridge Building Facilitator for Mennonite Church Alberta. MC Alberta has a long history of intercultural, interfaith work. Dona Entz built the foundation for the ministry. For 10 years, Entz and her husband Lorne lived in north Edmonton, which has a large Muslim and newcomer population. Entz

sought to know her neighbours, giving and receiving hospitality in her local context. When Entz retired from her role in 2011, MC Alberta considered what the next steps might be and how each MC Alberta congregation could be an agent of peace in their own specific context.

"This initiative was related to tensions in broader society," explained Tim Wiebe-Neufeld, executive minister for MC Alberta. "Peace comes when we find those places to cross boundaries, rather than getting into our own silos."

Suzanne Gross, who also pastors

part-time at Holyrood Mennonite in Edmonton, has been tasked with leading the next iteration of the bridge building ministry. The framework of the ministry consists of four intersecting areas: hospitality, peacemaking, dialogue and witness. Gross emphasizes communal responsibility for the ministry. "This is what I inherited, but it is for all of us to embrace." She sees her role as helping communities imagine what the work could look like in their context. "For example, Edmonton has a large Somali community," she notes. "The principles used there play into how



PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

*Joan Perrott (left), Dolly Jeffares, Marah Rafih and Sana Almotlak at the 2020 Great Winter Warm-up event in Edmonton.*

we relate to everyone.”

Gross’s work includes preaching in MC Alberta churches, connecting with other faith groups and supporting Mennonites in applying Bridge Building ideas to their own contexts. Gross encourages people to use the long-held Mennonite tradition of hospitality as a starting point. “Hospitality is not about entertainment,” she says. “It’s about creating genuine space.” It’s about “peace-building.”

Referencing I Peter 3:15, Gross says hospitality really informs how we, “tell people the source of your hope.” Through hospitality, “we’re building hope together,” she says.

As much as Mennonites are known for their hospitality, they also have a reputation for being insular, even among fellow Mennonites. Gross, who is Swiss Mennonite by background, recalls bringing some Swiss Mennonite foods to a church potluck to share with her Russian Mennonite congregation. “There wasn’t as much curiosity as I’d hoped,” she laughs.

She says that curiosity is the panacea to being insular. “You know, there’s nothing wrong with ‘the Mennonite game.’ It’s when curiosity stops, that is the problem.” Her vision is for the family of nations to come alongside each other, to celebrate similarities and differences, to overlay, overlap and adapt. “All that leads into peace-building,” she says, “genuine peace-building.”

Hospitality will often pull us out of our comfort zone. Gross recounted a story about Mennonite Central Committee’s Great Winter Warm-up comforter making event in early 2020. MCC had worked with Edmonton’s Islamic Family and Social Services Association (IFSSA) to help bring Syrian refugees to Canada. Through IFSSA, event organizers hoped to welcome some Muslim neighbors to participate. There was little interest until Gross made a personal connection with the invitees, letting them know about the mutual relationship between IFSSA and MCC. “Connections have to be made,”

explained Gross, “you don’t just dance alone.” In the end, 22 Muslim women came and stayed for the entire day.

Ultimately, Gross encourages each congregation to look around, both at who is in their pews as well as in their neighbourhoods and to simply show up. “Every congregation should consider the passions of people in the benches. Prayer is maybe the foundational part of this. Keeping in our prayers the right relations that we’re all longing for. So, who is in the benches? Is there someone who has a natural knack for showing up, and bringing others along? Every church has someone like that. Then we need to empower them on behalf of the church to show up,” she emphasizes. “As people, we’re not good at showing up, but someone goes with you, that makes all the difference. In our culture, there is a poverty of being vulnerable, and work is about relationships. And everyone can pray, and listen to stories. We do things in community.” ❧

# Philippines learning tour

By Maria H. Klassen

Over brunch on Sunday, April 23, at Niagara United Mennonite Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, two members of the church shared about the Mennonite Church Canada learning tour to the Philippines. Dorothea Enns and her niece Anita Dong spoke about the time that they and 10 others spent in the Philippines during the January 12 to 22 trip.

The group was led by Norm Dyck, who serves as International Witness liaison for

in peace building. The Pantojas, who are Canadians but born in the Philippines, founded PeaceBuilders Community Inc. (PBCI), which is working with 80 Indigenous tribes. They train and teach local farmers how to peacefully coexist with other tribes, with various political parties and corporations, who are all competing for the same land. Part of the teaching is to ensure fair return for their produce while also using responsible environmen-

requests are even coming to use it in the military. Material has been used by the Obo Manobo tribe, who were dealing with a large energy development company. Can there be harmony and peace between the tribe and the company?

Another stop for the tour group was at the Bagabo Togabawa tribe settlement, site of a massacre in 1989, where communist rebels entered a church building killing 38 worshippers. The group had a poignant conversation with a woman whose husband and four children had been killed.

At the headquarters of the Coffee for Peace project, located at the Malipayon Peace Hub, the group heard how Indigenous farmers grow coffee beans in the best possible way, to roast them and to produce a high quality product. Tour participants saw how hard the farmers work, what has already been accomplished and what is still needed to make the facility fully operational. One building has already been constructed, another is still needed, as well as vehicles, storage and roasting machines. A modern clean facility will allow the roasted coffee beans to be inspected and certified for export.

Enns and Dong came home inspired to raise funds toward the completion of the \$200,000 Malipayon Peace Hub project. Valuable life lessons were learned. Enns says, "Never

underestimate the power of a personal invitation. You are never too old. Always have a dream. God connects us in mysterious ways. We all have a part to play. What will be your part?" ❧



PHOTO BY DOROTHEA ENNS

*Coffee beans drying outside at the Malipayon Peace Hub.*

MC Canada, and included several people from Leamington United Mennonite Church which sponsors Dann and Joji Pantoja, who are Witness workers in the Philippines.

Highlights of the trip included visiting the Coffee for Peace project, and learning from the Pantojas about their ministry

tal practices.

The first visit was with the Talaandig tribe whose pastor is part of PBCI. The next day was a teaching day during which Enns, Dong and the rest of the tour group saw the teaching materials used to help people work through conflict. This material has become highly regarded, as

# Film society screens *Women Talking*

By Amy Rinner Waddell  
B.C. Correspondent

An Abbotsford audience had the chance to view and discuss *Women Talking*, the film that has generated buzz in both Mennonite and Hollywood circles.

The movie had not been shown in the local theatre, but Aaron Dawson, president and founder of the Abbotsford Film Society, arranged a screening at the Mennonite Heritage Museum in April. It proved so popular that a second screening was added, with discussion between the two viewings.

A panel consisting of Dawson, along with Janet Boldt, professor emeritus at Columbia Bible College, and Elsie Goertzen, program coordinator of the End Abuse program at Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) B.C., gave

their perspectives on the issues raised in the film based on sexual abuse in a conservative Mennonite colony. They also answered audience questions relating to the film and its relevance to society and the church.

Dawson talked about storytelling and film, saying, “It’s important to note that [Women Talking] is a fictionalized tale inspired by true events.” He also explained the difference between a documentary, a drama and a docu-drama.

Boldt talked about faith and forgiveness, saying forgiveness must involve remorse, restitution and renewal. “Forgiveness is a process that cannot be forced,” she said. “Forgiveness leads to change.”

Goertzen talked about the End Abuse

program at MCC and noted there is no difference between the general population and Christian families in incidences of abuse. “Abuse happens when a perpetrator sees an opportunity,” she said. “There is never a ‘best response’ to the question to stay or go—it’s hard. Women have their own wisdom.”

Dawson, who grew up at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, chose to show the film because of its relevance to the Mennonite community and because it won an Oscar. He says he founded the film society to “think critically” about the types of films people consume. “It’s important to dig a little deeper about what a film is presenting,” he says. ☞



A scene from *Women Talking*.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL GIBSON/ORION PICTURES

# Grebel grandma

By Farah Jurdi  
Conrad Grebel University College

**W**hile cousins Adam and Owen Roth had grown to “love the Grebel community,” as first-year students at Conrad Grebel University College, one crucial thing was missing from their new lifestyle: supper at Grandma’s.

“Before we came to Grebel, Owen and I would eat meals at Grandma Leola Roth’s house every week,” said Adam. “When we came to Grebel, although the Grebel meals are fantastic, we still missed spending time at Grandma’s,” he added. Fortunately, Grandma Roth was more than delighted to host suppers on Saturday nights for

Leola Roth. When her grandsons and their friends arrive at her home, she has a table full of food prepared and a loving smile on her face. “She always makes sure to have dessert to share, and sometimes even two different kinds. Grandma always encourages her guests to eat as much as they would like,” said Adam. “She absolutely loved it when our friend David ate a large slice of pie followed by three tarts!”

Grandma Roth freely facilitates conversation and connection while the group digs into the homecooked meal. “Our conversations usually consist of stories

mini sticks in the basement like we are kids again.”

The cousins say they love bringing together groups of students who might otherwise not get together. “Sometimes, a trip to Grandma’s is just what we need. Also, we just love her food,” they added.

“When we leave, Grandma always thanks everyone for coming and says we’re all welcome to come back anytime,” said Owen and Adam. “The Grebelites we take with us are always very grateful and excited to come another time.” ❧



SUPPLIED PHOTO.

*Jaxsen Lubbers (left), Cam McMahon, Adam Roth, Mark Leistra, Leola Roth and Owen Roth enjoy an intergenerational supper together.*

the Roth cousins as well as their friends.

Not long after the first visit to Grandma’s, Owen knew he wanted to share this joy with others at Grebel. “Our goal has become to invite all sorts of Grebelites to Grandma’s for dinner.”

Warm hospitality comes naturally to

about ancestry, what town you’re from, funny memories, and how life was long ago,” said Adam. “Grandma always has plenty of wisdom to share with us.”

The meal is followed by conversation or a game. “Or, if we are really feeling it,” said Adam, “we’ll play a sweaty game of



For additional content  
follow us on social media.

[facebook.com/Canadian.Mennonite](https://facebook.com/Canadian.Mennonite)

[twitter.com/CanMenno](https://twitter.com/CanMenno)

[instagram.com/canadianmennonite](https://instagram.com/canadianmennonite)



PHOTO BY GERALD WARKENTIN

*Over this past winter, Gerald Warkentin of Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg made a total of 28 snow messages on the church grounds, beginning with Christmas greetings and ending with 'Bye snow, love you' in late April. Of his endeavour, he says: 'It was fun to make something meaningful out of that which we are so happy when it's gone. Snow at Bethel Mennonite this year became a blessing.'*

 A woman wearing a colorful headscarf and a white hairnet, smiling, with a blurred background of other people.
 

# In business for good

*Celebrating 70 years of entrepreneurs investing in entrepreneurs.*

[meda.org/business](https://meda.org/business)

 The MEDA logo, featuring the word "MEDA" in a bold, sans-serif font with a stylized globe icon to the right.

## /// News briefs

### MCC Ontario hires new ED



MCC PHOTO/SHOUA VANG

#### **Michelle Brenneman**

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario announced the appointment of Michelle Brenneman as its next executive director. Brenneman, who now serves as the organization's director of human resources, will start in her new role on June 1. She takes over from John Head who is retiring.

Brenneman started her work with MCC Ontario in the restorative justice program 16 years ago.

### CMU announces social work program

Starting in fall 2024, Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg will offer a Bachelor of Social Work degree program. Alexander Sawatzky will begin developing the program this September as professor and chair of social work. Sawatzky currently heads the School of Social Work at Booth University College in Winnipeg.

In a CMU release, Sawatzky says, "A Mennonite understanding of peace and community has real potential for a compassionate, transformative, and distinct form of faith-based social work practice that can be a beacon during a time of increasing polarization and conflict."

### MCC launches climate campaign

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada and MCC U.S. formally launched a new climate campaign with a virtual event on May 17. The related web resources tell stories of people in the Global South suffering and addressing climate impacts. The material also discusses policy issues and action options in North America.

"The federal governments in Canada and the U.S. can—and must—generate the kind of change that would make a difference," reads [climateactionforpeace.com](http://climateactionforpeace.com). "We need your voice to help bring about climate justice."

### Joint Council update

The governing body of Mennonite Church Canada, Joint Council, met in Saskatoon on May 5 to 7. In a briefing for *Canadian Mennonite*, moderator Geraldine Balzer expressed optimism. "Life is coming back into churches," she said. At the meeting, Joint Council approved the development of a unified, nationwide fundraising approach.

It also approved establishment of the Emissions Reduction Grant by which congregations can access money to make their buildings more energy efficient.

In relation to International Witness work in the Philippines, Joint Council approved a major grant to the Malipayon Peace Hub. This is part of a plan to transition the work of Dann and Joji Pantoja to a younger, Indigenous generation.

**Journey**  
A Missional Leadership Development Program

- Cultivate your spiritual formation.
- Nurture your leadership abilities.
- Deepen your theological perspectives.

Available globally. **Apply by July 11 to save \$100 USD!**

Learn more: [ambs.ca/journey](http://ambs.ca/journey)

 **Anabaptist Mennonite  
Biblical Seminary**

## VIEWPOINT

# Who determines who you are?

*Gospel, culture and the source of identity*

By Roland De Vries, *Christian Courier*

The relationship between the church and surrounding culture is a complicated one. Many questions arise as we relate to the world. What good can we affirm in the wider culture? What is potentially dehumanizing about our society? Are we entangled with our culture in unhelpful ways? What has our culture gotten right about human flourishing that we have missed?

These are complicated questions, and questions we often approach with insufficient care.

Over the past few months I have been thinking about a particular cultural question: the idea that each person is the foremost authority on their identity. This seems to be a commonplace conviction within our culture, that I am the only one who can speak the truth of who I am. No one else has the right to tell me who I am or to define my life and identity.

A long series of developments in philosophy, theology and culture brought us to this moment and to these convictions. Which is also to say that there is nothing inevitable about the idea that individuals are the best placed to define their own lives or identities. Importantly, there are also communal and religious traditions, past and present, that resist this idea.

We can perhaps appreciate that this insistence on self-definition provides a kind of protection. It can protect against certain dysfunctional ways that we humans relate to each other—we love to tell others who they are. History tells the dark tale of what has happened when those with power got in on the act of defining others.

Yet there remains a significant tension here for those who hold to the gospel. The good news is that a gracious and loving God has created and redeemed us



PHOTO BY ANDREY KUZMAN, SHUTTERSTOCK

through his beloved Son, Jesus. Among other things, this good news means that we have been set free from our death-dealing ways and set free for joy and service together. We are those who find fulfillment in and with a first century Jewish man, crucified, risen and ascended.

It is just here that we come up against the cultural challenge I've mentioned. On one side is our society, insisting that

each person shall define their own life, identity and purpose. On the other side is the treasure of the gospel, which declares: the most important thing about you is that you have been created and redeemed in Christ; that living into this reality with others is your calling.

These two claims are in tension: only I can define my true identity vs. the gospel proclaims your true identity. How does a Christian live with this tension in relation to those around us?

Perhaps with a realization that not all relationships may be able to bear the weight of this cultural tension. With the knowledge that conversations about our identity can only unfold within relationships of trust, where there is genuine care for one another. With confidence we can still love one another when we hold different ideas about human identity. With an awareness that I betray my true identity daily. With a certainty that Christ, by his grace and in his time, is bringing our world to a deep and abiding knowledge that our identity is in him—and it's not on me to bring anyone to this realization

It's safe to say that this column is an instance of sinning boldly. In a page I'm offering an account of a complex cultural question. I trust I have done so with more than a modicum of care. ☞

*Roland De Vries is principal of The Presbyterian College in Montreal, and a lecturer in the School of Religious Studies at McGill University. This article first appeared in Christian Courier. Reprinted with permission.*



# Women walk through the wilderness

By Amy Rinner Waddell  
B.C. Correspondent  
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

**B**etween conversation and quiche, B.C. women were inspired, touched and encouraged as they heard one another's stories at this year's Women's Day. The Mennonite Church B.C. annual event took place at Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford on May 6.

Organizer Janette Thiessen said she chose this year's theme—Triumph over Trials—in order “to encourage us that we are not alone . . . we can triumph over our trials.”

Two speakers shared how God had been present during life-changing experiences. Cyndi Nickerson told how she came close to serious injury when a house deck fell on her, nearly paralyzing her. Later she was diagnosed with an aggressive form of breast cancer, with surgery followed by painful treatments. Through both, she said, “The triumph in the story is that God showed up.”

Nickerson emphasized the importance of leaning on others. “Make sure you have your tribe,” Nickerson said. “I was never alone; I had support. If you enter wilderness, don't go without a blessing.”

For Marie Haak, losing her firstborn to severe complications after a long battle with medical treatments brought untold agony. Haak shared her journey of grief, saying she, “used every Scripture in the Bible to claim healing,” but healing didn't happen. That led to a crisis of faith she had to work through. “We all carry stories that deeply impact each one of us,” she said. “All are held in the hands of our Lord with equal care and tenderness.”

In response to what they'd heard, women shared their own life struggles with each other as they enjoyed brunch.

An offering of \$1,387.55 will be divided equally among Camp Squeah, Myanmar emergency relief through Mennonite Church Canada, and Sardis Doorway,



Cyndi Nickerson



Marie Haak

a weekly support group for single and high-risk mothers.

“I think resourcing women is always an important ministry,” commented Thiessen after the event. “For the 53 women who attended, I believe it was a worthwhile

time of being encouraged in their faith journey with God and a reminder of the need to keep our ‘tribe’ involved in our lives. We need each other.” ❧



## Invite AMBS

faculty and staff  
to speak at your  
church or event!

Virtual presentations  
are available.

[Learn more](#)



Anabaptist Mennonite  
Biblical Seminary

## News about Mennonites in Canada and beyond

SIGN UP FREE  
[canadianmennonite.org/subscribe/cmnow](http://canadianmennonite.org/subscribe/cmnow)



Promotional Supplement

**MENNONITE COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE**  
 EDUCATION *rooted* IN FAITH.  
 MCIBLUES.NET

CMU | CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY  
**Where faith and relationships matter**

**Small university Big opportunities**  
 cmu.ca/admissions

RJC High School | rjcsk.ca | 306.232.4222  
 IMAGINE | THRIVE | EXPLORE | BELONG

Integrating sound academic learning with growth in character, faith and service to God.  
**MSCS**  
 MENNO SIMONS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL  
**— AN EDUCATION 4LIFE —**

THE COLLABORATIVE **MBA**  
 Leadership for the common good  
 Apply now for fall 2023  
 CMU | CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY | cmu.ca/mba

# Community garage sale to support charity

Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary and Middle Schools  
 WINNIPEG, MAN.



PHOTO BY AARON EPP

A group of teachers at Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary & Middle Schools (WMEMS) are heading up a community garage sale to raise money for two local organizations. Sara Litz, the grade 4 teacher at WMEMS Bedson School, held a book sale earlier in the year at the school. With a number of books left over, she wondered if she could get the community involved; this is where the idea of a garage sale came from.

“We thought a front yard garage sale was a great way to involve students, families, and members of the community,” Litz says. Along with the grade 2 teacher Chelsea Rivard and

administrative assistant Lyndsay Ross, Litz is planning to host the sale on Saturday, May 27, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Students, along with members of the school community, will be running the tables. A number of classes are baking for a bake sale.

All proceeds are being donated to two organizations, including Literacy for Life. “We chose Literacy for Life because this all started as a book sale,” Litz said. Siloam Mission will also receive part of the proceeds.

Family, friends and the entire community are invited to shop and visit the WMEMS Bedson School front lawn on May 27.

28<sup>TH</sup> Annual **ROCKWAY** MENNONITE COLLEGIATE  
**GOLF CLASSIC**  
 Monday, May 29, 2023  
 Grey Silo Golf Club  
 Visit us to register:  
 rockway.ca/golf

**MDiv Connect**  
 Complete your **Master of Divinity** degree right where you live.  
 ambs.ca/MDivConnect  
 Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary

### Schools Directory featuring RJC High School & WMEMS

# New ways of seeing God

*RJC students connect with youth at Calgary Chin Christian Church*

**RJC High School**  
ROSTHERN, SASK.

When they first arrived at Calgary Chin Christian Church, Wendell Manuzon (grad 2022) was overwhelmed by the hospitality he and his classmates received. "The people were so welcoming and made me feel at home."

Wendell was there with a group of students for a visit during RJC's Alternative Learning and Service Opportunities Week. The two groups of youth from RJC and Calgary Chin Christian Church, a member of Mennonite Church Alberta, came together for an evening of sharing food, singing and storytelling.

"We want our students to be able to have a wide understanding of what church can look and feel like," says Alex Tiessen, director of development for RJC, who planned the visit together with Peter Sang, general secretary at the church. RJC students had a chance to share about their experience of Christian education and what it's like to be a student

at the school. And Peter shared about the Chin people, including some of his own story of fleeing Myanmar (Burma) at the age of 18, living in India before coming to Canada.

From that one meeting some of the youth started following each other on social media and they have kept in touch. For youth from the Chin church, getting together was a nice reminder that they're not alone as young people in the church.

"They realize we are part of the same community as RJC," says Peter.

While the diverse student body at RJC means students have friends from different backgrounds, this event was also a meaningful opportunity to build more connections with youth from a different community, helping to expand students' worldviews.

"I think going to the Chin church helped us see a new way of living, and experiencing God," says Wendell.



RJC PHOTO



**CIMU** GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY

**Master of Arts**  
Concentration in Christian Ministry  
Concentration in Theological Studies

**Master of Divinity**  
**Graduate Certificate in Christian Studies**

**CIMU** | CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY **Apply now: cmu.ca/gstm**



**Kindergarten Registration NOW OPEN**

**WINNIPEG Mennonite**  
Elementary & Middle Schools

**APPLY ONLINE**  
WMEMS.CA/APPLY

# FOCUS ON

## Mental Health

### Author addresses collective trauma in new book

*Lament, storytelling and blessing can nurture resilience*

By Aaron Epp  
Senior Writer

A new book aims to help Christians process collective traumas.

In *All Our Grievs to Bear*, seminary professor Joni S. Sancken suggests practices that church leaders and members can use to nurture resilience and compassion as they work through the traumas they face, including the pandemic.

The book, published last November by Herald Press, is a follow-up to *Words That Heal*, a 2019 book in which Sancken explores preaching as a way to engage with trauma. That book was inspired in part by the death of her sister-in-law, who died unexpectedly at the age of 34 following a brain aneurysm.

Sancken, an ordained pastor in Mennonite Church USA, decided to write *All Our Grievs to Bear* following a series of traumatic events in Dayton, Ohio, where she teaches at United Theological Seminary. These events included 19 tornados, a Ku Klux Klan rally and a mass shooting that claimed the lives of nine

people.

The pandemic provided additional impetus.

“Now we have a situation where everyone, to some extent, has experienced traumatic stress,” Sancken tells *Canadian Mennonite*. “What does that mean for society and for our congregations? How do we begin to instill practices that will help to build resilient communities?”

In the book, Sancken defines trauma as “circumstances in which one’s own life or the life of a loved one is under threat, where one loses a loved one suddenly, or when the ability to process the experience is exceeded by the magnitude of the experience itself.”

Put another way, trauma is “too much, too fast, too soon.”

“It really is a full experience,” Sancken says. “It impacts you spiritually, mentally, socially, physically—all parts are touched by the traumatic experience.”

The good news, she adds, is that most

people are able to nurture resilience and move forward in a healthy way. It’s the folks who get stuck following traumatic experiences who need extra care.

Racial trauma and economic insecurity are two of the griefs Sancken touches on.

“When I was writing this book, it was like a parade of horrible trauma,” she says, pointing to numerous mass shootings in the U.S., the discovery of unmarked graves at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School and the war in Ukraine as examples. “We have to find ways to work through that.”

To that end, Sancken suggests three practices to use in processing trauma: lament, storytelling and blessing.

The practices arose during her training with the Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience through the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Va.

Sancken defines lament, storytelling and blessing, explores the cultural baggage surrounding each practice, and gives concrete examples of how Christians can practice them during worship and in everyday life.

One of the biggest things Sancken has learned from working with trauma is that when anything in the world is hurting, it is OK to feel distressed.

“That is not something that I should purposefully numb out or squelch or avoid, but rather I should allow myself to feel that and then do something with intention toward that,” she says.

It could be something symbolic like lighting a candle, or it could be saying a prayer, making a donation or going into the street and protesting. “[Traumatic] things happen all the time. All the time we experience these kinds of reverberations of the suffering of creation.”

Sancken stresses that *All Our Grievs to Bear* is not a one-size-fits-all road map. Lament, storytelling and blessing can be practiced in any order, and there are no “shoulds” when responding to trauma.

“I’m interested to see how churches will adapt and build on this material,” she says. “If people find anything that is beneficial to their own healing and resilience journey, then ... [the book] will have mattered.”



AMBS PHOTO BY KAYLA HOLDREAD

Joni S. Sancken speaks at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary earlier this year.

## FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH

# From the dark depths of concussion come three albums about the Psalms

By Aaron Epp  
Senior Writer

If Mike Janzen hadn't been thirsty one night seven years ago, it's possible he wouldn't have recorded his three most recent albums.

In 2021, the Toronto singer-songwriter released the first two volumes of *The Psalms Project*—19 songs he composed while recovering from a debilitating concussion. Janzen got up in the middle of the night in April 2016 to get a drink of water and blacked out, falling face first onto the floor. A few moments later his wife was by his side, helping him back to bed. When he awoke the next day, he knew something was wrong.

In the weeks that followed, Janzen began to feel worse. He lay in his basement, dizzy, nauseous and unable to move. He couldn't read, listen to podcasts or talk to people. He also couldn't continue his work as a self-employed musician, which included fronting a jazz trio and composing orchestral scores for acclaimed singer-songwriters like Steve Bell and Sarah Slean.

One thing Janzen could do was turn to scripture. He opened the Bible app on his phone each day and, because he couldn't look at screens for very long, read the Psalms for 30 to 60 seconds so that he would have something to think about.

"The Psalms became a real lifeline for me during those days," the 51-year-old says by phone from his backyard studio. "[They] gave me thoughts and prayers and words to express the emotions I was feeling during those days."

It wasn't long before Janzen started writing melodies inspired by the words, which he would record on his iPhone. Over the next two years, he collected thousands of musical ideas. When he started feeling better, he began fleshing them out into songs. Along the way, he revisited the Psalms that had inspired the initial musical ideas.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MIKE JANZEN

"Before my injury I would read through the Psalms and think of other people who were going through hard times, and this time I could see myself on every page," says Janzen, who grew up near Steinbach, Manitoba. "When it was talking about [people] going through suffering or trauma, really difficult things, suddenly that was directly spoken to me. So I found these Psalms very moving and liberating."

Janzen started recording *The Psalms Project* in 2020. The first volume, *The Carried Words*, has a folk-pop sound, while the second volume, *The Lifted Songs*, is more meditative in nature and features a 14-piece string orchestra.

In early 2020, Janzen wasn't sure how songs he had written in solitude based on his personal experience would resonate with listeners.

"[Then] the pandemic hit and the whole world was thrust into solitude, dealing with anxiety and mental health issues," he says. "People feeling down, discouraged, depressed. Suddenly this project that came out of a lot of those things [was] being released."

Part of what makes the Psalms amazing, Janzen says, is that all kinds of people can see their stories and experiences reflected in the words. "They remind you that you're not forgotten, that God thinks of you, and

## FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH

they also remind you who God is; that he's near to the brokenhearted and that he lifts up the fallen."

His recovery from the concussion has been slow. "The first four years were pretty bad," says Janzen, who is married with

two daughters. "Year five I started to feel like a dad again. Year six I started to feel I could be giggling again. . . . I'm in year seven and I feel I can do everything now, but every now and then I don't feel like I'm [completely recovered]."

Janzen is putting the finishing touches on a third volume, *Songs from the Canyon*, which he says is different from the first two albums. "It's more cinematic ... more muscular and big, [with] more upbeat songs as well."

As the interview winds down, Janzen reflects on the fact that many Psalms express individual and communal lament. Lament is beautiful, he says, because it encourages people to honestly express the deep ache they feel—their disillusionment, their doubt, their anger, their frustration—to God.

"It can be completely honest," he says. "At the same time, true lament reminds us that God is near, he can sustain us through hard times and he's promised to be with us."

Many churches are uncomfortable with lament, Janzen believes, likely because they are unfamiliar with it. It's a practice he hopes more faith communities start incorporating into their worship.

"There's something tremendously healing about articulating our pain before God," he says. "That's something with the Psalms we're really encouraged to do. When we're going through these dark valleys, he'll restore us." ❧

For more, see [mikejanzen trio.com](http://mikejanzen trio.com).



- Study participation includes an interview (2-4 hours) and a blood sample.
- Participants must be 18 or older and may be eligible if they have either a bipolar diagnosis or a family member with bipolar disorder.
- No travel necessary. No cost to participate. Financial compensation provided.

### Join A Study!

Call 1-866-644-4363 or TTY: 1-866-411-1010  
Email [bipolargenes@mail.nih.gov](mailto:bipolargenes@mail.nih.gov), [www.nimh.nih.gov/JoinAStudy](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/JoinAStudy)

Write to National Institute of Mental Health  
10 Center Drive, MSC 1264, Bethesda, Maryland 20892-1264

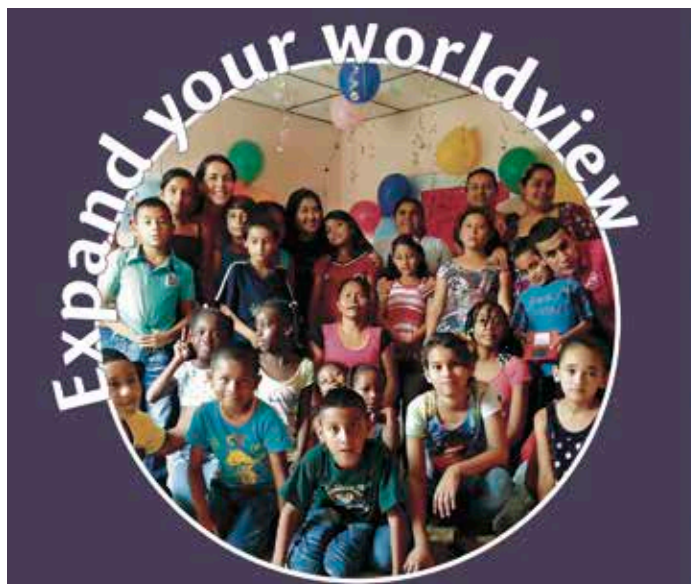


Department of Health & Human Services  
National Institutes of Health



National Institute  
of Mental Health

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



Canadian Mennonite is building a community where differences are celebrated, and people can hear each other openly. Your support will help us to change the conversation, broaden our reach, and bring in differing, and contrasting, voices.

Help us expand our worldview together.  
Donate today at [canadianmennonite.org](http://canadianmennonite.org).

**CANADIAN  
MENNONITE**

## Calendar

### British Columbia

**Oct. 20-22:** MC B.C. women's retreat.  
**March 11-14, 2024:** Mennonite Camping Association is hosting its bi-national gathering at Camp Squeah in Hope. More information to come.

### Alberta

**June 10-11:** Camp Valaqua hike-a-thon and garden party.

### Saskatchewan

**June 17:** MCC Saskatchewan relief sale, at Forest Grove Community Church, Saskatoon, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Activities for all ages.  
**June 22:** RJC High School presents the musical "Red Carpet Open House. RSVP to admissions@rjc.sk.ca  
**Sept. 17:** Shekinah Retreat Centre move-a-thon.

### Manitoba

**July 14-15:** The Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies and the University of Manitoba present "The Russlaender Mennonites: War dislocation and new beginnings" centenary conference to mark the arrival of Russlaender from the Soviet Union to Canada.  
**July 15:** "Singing our Journey: Sangerfest 2023," at the Manitoba Centennial Concert Hall. Sign up to sing in the mass choir celebrating the centenary of the Russlaender immigration to Canada. For more information, visit mhsc.ca/soj.

### Ontario

**May 26-27:** New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale at the New Hamburg Fairgrounds and Arena. Join the fun and support MCC at the 57th annual New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale. Come along and bid on some quilts, furniture or even a tractor! Join us for the Voices Together Community Hymn Sing, buy a pie and enjoy some good old-fashioned Mennonite food. More info can be found at mcco.ca/events.  
**June 8:** "To Antoine": Conversation with Author E.J. Wiens, at Conrad

Grebel University College from 7:00–8:00 p.m. Hosted by the institute of Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies. Books will be available for purchase, at a discount, including other titles from Gelassenheit Publications. To learn more visit, [uwaterloo.ca/grebel/events/to-antoine-talk](http://uwaterloo.ca/grebel/events/to-antoine-talk).

**June 10:** "To Antoine": Conversation with author E.J. Wiens, 2:00-4:00 p.m. in the Simpson room at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Community Centre. Includes a 'readers theatre' performance of scenes from the novel and books available for purchase.

**June 14:** Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario annual meeting with Len Friesen speaking on "Questions asked and answered: On writing the history of Mennonites in Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union," at 7 p.m. at W-K United Mennonite Church, 16 George St., Waterloo.

**July 10:** "The Place of Memory: Reflections on the Russlaender Centenary," at Knox Presbyterian Church, Waterloo; at 7:30 p.m. The program of music, singing, reading and reflection features the premiere of "The Place of Memory" composed by Leonard Enns and performed by the DaCapo Choir. For more information, visit [uwaterloo.ca/grebel/place-of-memory](http://uwaterloo.ca/grebel/place-of-memory).

**July 14:** Cheryl Denise will read her plainspoken and often humorous poetry at RiverSong, on Hawkesville Road west of St. Jacobs, at 7 p.m. Her readings will be complemented with singing by Jim and Charlie Bauman. Doors open at 6 p.m. for food and beverages.

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

**For more Calendar listings visit, [canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar](http://canadianmennonite.org/churchcalendar).**



## UpComing

### Winnipeg schools partner with Athletes in Action

Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary & Middle Schools (WMEMS) will host multiple Athletes in Action (AIA) sports camps at both schools this summer.

"Athlete's in Action is a worldwide Christian organization that helps people to know Jesus and experience his power to change the world, through sport," says Steve Klassen, AIA regional camps director.

Every day, students are taught sport-specific skills, then coaches spend time sharing stories of God at work in their lives, allowing space for kids to engage by asking questions and sharing their own stories. The focus on sports allows AIA to attract both church and non-church participants.

"WMEMS is pleased to enter this partnership of mutual promotion and support with Athletes in Action," says WMEMS's CEO Steve Lawrie. "We look forward to working together to promote our high-quality Christian programs for children in our communities."

Dates and locations for the sports camps are as follows:

- **July 3-7:** Volleyball @ Katherine Friesen School;
- **July 10-13:** Basketball @ Katherine Friesen School;
- **July 17-21:** Volleyball and Soccer Camp @ Bedson School; and
- **Aug. 21-25:** Developmental Volleyball and Soccer Camp @ Katherine Friesen School.

Students between ages 7 and 16 are invited to join AIA this summer. To register, visit AIA's website at [bit.ly/3NwrcFY](http://bit.ly/3NwrcFY).



**—WINNIPEG MENNONITE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

### Upcoming Advertising Dates

Issue Date	Ads Due
June 2	May 18
June 16	June 5

### Advertising Information

Contact  
 1-800-378-2524 ext. 3  
[advert@canadianmennonite.org](mailto:advert@canadianmennonite.org)

SUPPLIED PHOTO



***Custodians: A Story of Ancient Echoes*** has been selected for the Montreal Independent Film Festival. The documentary, directed by Brad Leitch, tells the story of local landowners and volunteers who are protecting the many signs of historic Indigenous presence around Herschel, Saskatchewan. The film was commissioned by Walking the Path, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan's Indigenous-settler relations working group. Watch the trailer at [rebelskymedia.com](http://rebelskymedia.com).

FILM STILL PROVIDED BY BRAD LEITCH

