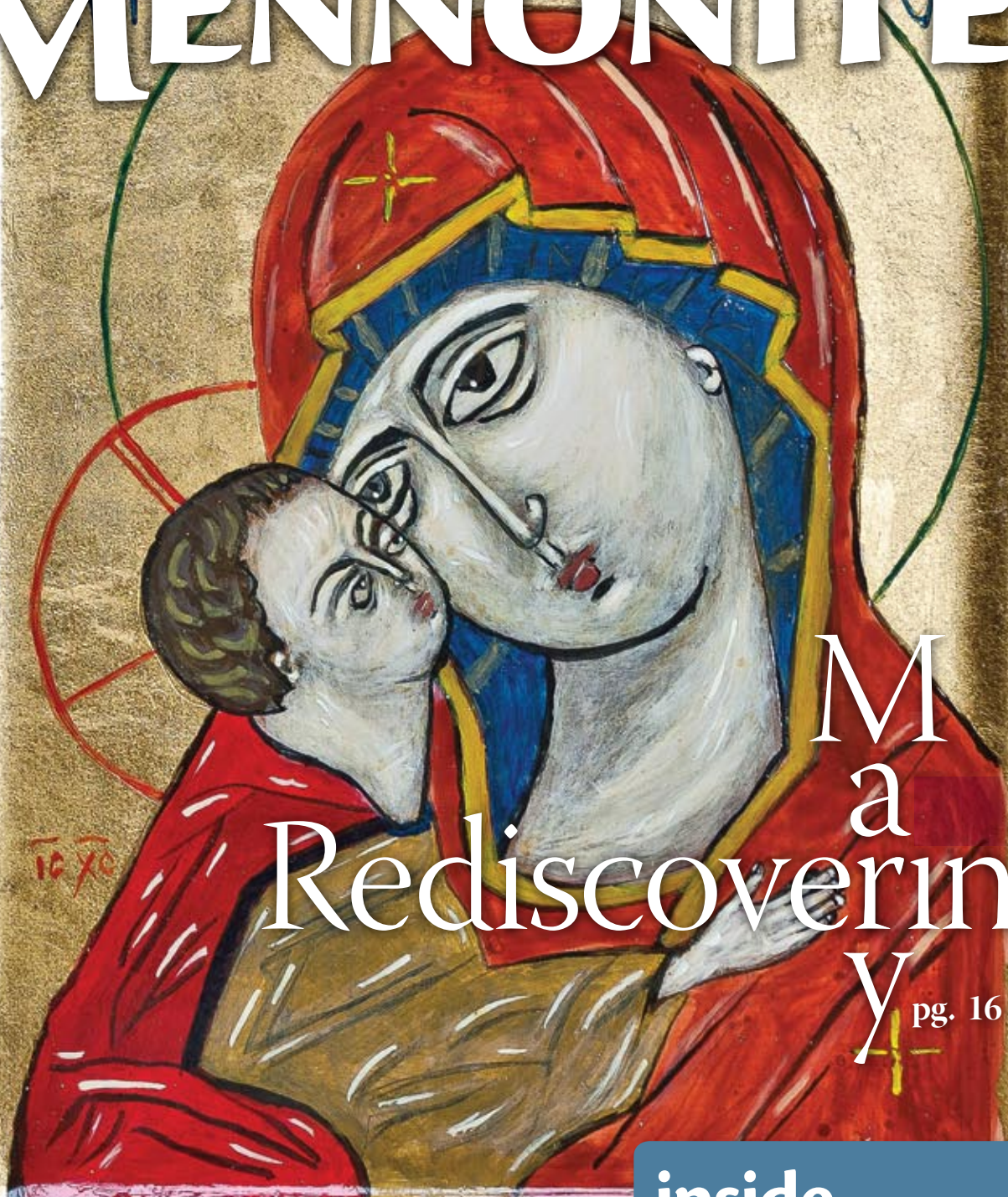


CANADIAN MENNONITE

April 18, 2011
Volume 15 Number 8



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EDITORIAL

Vote your core beliefs

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

While we won't endorse candidates of the five political parties in the upcoming May 2 election, or tell you how to vote, we do ask Mennonite voters to both examine the political views and voting records of candidates regarding our deeply held core beliefs in peacemaking, compassion for the poor and care for creation before placing your ballot in the ballot box.

With the rise in militarism as an unquestioned solution to increasing terrorism, with the economy too often built on the backs of the poor and most vulnerable, and with the corporate greed apparent in providing our never-satisfied hunger for fossil fuel-supplied energy, this is the opportune moment to ask the tough questions of those wanting our vote.

Much of the campaign rhetoric has bypassed many of these issues, but they should matter most for those of us who claim to follow Jesus, who came to bring peace, not a sword; who threw out the money-changers of the ancient Jerusalem temple because the religious establishment was exploiting the poor; and who told the rich young ruler to "sell all his goods and give the proceeds to the poor" if he wanted eternal life. In today's parlance that would be cut to, "Get a life!"

Historically, we have been far too quiet and passive on these matters. Our acculturation in recent years has dulled our consciences and silenced our witness. With a certain smugness we feel

more comfortable and authentic doing service assignments in far-off Kenya or Haiti, noble a calling as these creative acts of kindness are. We shy away from the public square because of its noise, its deception, its glamorous media mirages, its repetitive inability to walk the talk, its cyclical broken promises.

"It's all such a fraud," we say in disgust to ourselves and our friends. And then, wanting to be good citizens, we inadvertently fall in line with the partisan culture of our times, voting in the self-interests on which most candidates build their platforms.

There is an alternative to this. We appeal to you to rise above your cynicism, to take seriously the call to be, in this case, countercultural as the "salt" in an unjust world.

Fortunately, there are impatient voices calling us to action. In a recent letter to the editor (Jan. 24, page 14), peace advocate Gerhard Neufeld of Winnipeg, Man., called us to pay special attention to Bill C-447, which languished in Parliament after its first reading in March 2010 until the dissolution of Parliament last month. This Act, supported by Mennonite Church Canada, seeks to establish a Department of Peace with its own minister at the federal level. This proposed legislation needs a push from the grassroots to initiate ongoing discussions as a viable alternative to war.

Does your favourite candidate know about this and will he/she advocate its

formation?

There are 18 different bills dealing with issues aligned with our faith beliefs listed on the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ottawa website: Canada's immigration and refugee protection policies, criminal records, consumer protection, free trade between Canada and Colombia, corporate accountability for oil and gas mining, prevention of climate change, respect for conscientious objection to the use of taxes for military purposes, elimination of poverty in Canada, and regulation of corporate practices in the purchase of minerals from the Great Lakes Region of Africa.

Unfortunately, the political voices with a background in our core beliefs—such as Vic Toews, Canada's Public Security Minister who was born in Paraguay to a Mennonite refugee family—have succumbed to the fear-mongering of the present government by postponing Bill C-49, which would provide a safe haven for refugees and not return them to their country of origin. Instead, Toews has called the Tamils who came to our shores last year, "terrorists."

And in a recent hearing regarding the much-publicized ballyhoo of International Co-operation Minister Bev Oda's "not" funding of a \$7 million CIDA grant for Kairos, the church-based aid group of which MCC is a partner, Harold Albrecht, MP for Kitchener-Conestoga, Ont., went to some lengths to distance himself from Mennonites, clarifying that he was a member of the Brethren in Christ (BIC) denomination. Even though BICs are of the same communion, as members of Mennonite World Conference, it seemed more important for him to dissociate himself from our core beliefs than to come to grips with the political motives of denying the grant.



ABOUT THE COVER:

'Mother of Lovingkindness,' by Jerry Holsopple, 2011, acrylic and gold leaf on wood; based on the 15th-century Russian icon, 'Vladimir Mother of God.' 'The faces of Mary and Jesus touch, showing us the deep love between them,' says Holsopple, whose works were shown at the 'Mary in Anabaptist Dress' Conference at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, last month. See story on page 16.

PHOTO: JERRY HOLSOPPLE, EASTERN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

Circulation: Please contact Lisa Jacky toll-free at 1-800-378-2524 ext. 221 or by e-mail at office@canadianmennonite.org for subscriptions and address changes. Subscriptions can also be ordered at our web site. We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund for our publishing activities. ISSN 1480-042X

Canada

CANADIAN MENNONITE

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40063104 REGISTRATION NO. 09613

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE ITEMS TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

490 DUTTON DRIVE, UNIT C5

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Phone: 519-884-3810 Toll-free: 1-800-378-2524 Fax: 519-884-3331

Web site: canadianmennonite.org

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General submission address: submit@canadianmennonite.org

Readers Write: letters@canadianmennonite.org

Milestones announcements: milestones@canadianmennonite.org

Obituaries: obituaries@canadianmennonite.org

Calendar announcements: calendar@canadianmennonite.org

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Reprint requests: reprints@canadianmennonite.org

Mission statement: *Canadian Mennonite (CM)* is a bi-weekly Anabaptist/Mennonite-oriented periodical which seeks to promote covenantal relationships within the church (Hebrews 10:23-25). It provides channels for sharing accurate and fair information, faith profiles, inspirational/educational materials, and news and analyses of issues facing the church. In fulfilling its mission, the primary constituency of *CM* is the people and churches of Mennonite Church Canada and its five related area churches. *CM* also welcomes readers from the broader inter-Mennonite and inter-church scene. Editorial freedom is expressed through seeking and speaking the truth in love and by providing a balance of perspectives in news and commentary. *CM* will be a vehicle through which mutual accountability can be exercised within the community of believers; the paper also encourages its readers to have open hearts and minds in the process of discerning God's will.

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WILL BRAUN

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New book interprets church apologetics: **JENNIFER KONKLE**

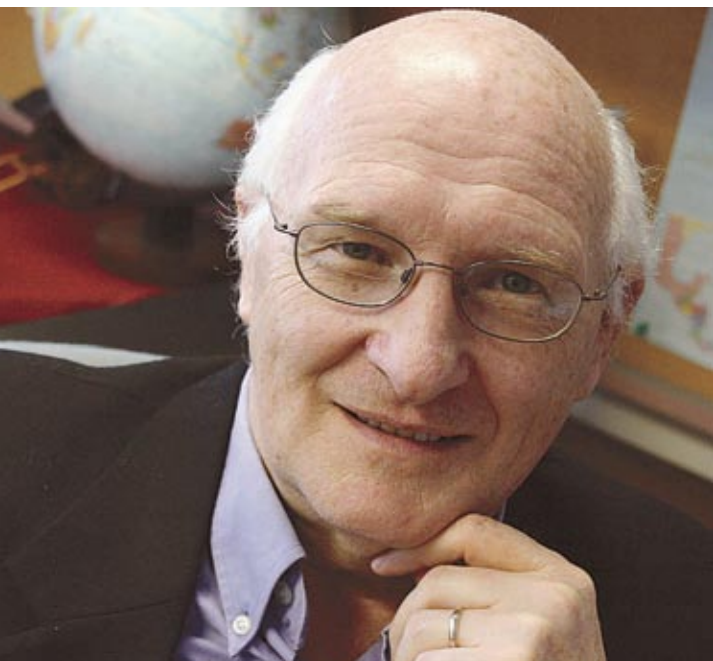
Election tools for your church: **DAN DYCK**

Blanket exercise (full version + video clip): **DICK BENNER**

IN DEFENCE OF MCC AND WINESKINS

'Readers deserve another perspective'

BY ROBERT J. SUDERMAN



[Will] Braun's assertion that the Wineskins process somehow disconnected MCC from the pews is unfounded. Indeed, the connection 'with people in the pew' is unprecedented.

C*anadian Mennonite* has dedicated significant analysis to the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Wineskins process (Dick Benner's Nov. 29, 2010 editorial, "Congregations, too, want 'new wineskins,'" page 2; and Will Braun's articles, "MCC centrality questioned," Nov. 29, 2010, page 4, and "MCC revisioning loses connection with people in the pew," Feb. 21, page 23).

The last article by Braun has convinced me that another perspective also needs to be heard. In that article Braun correctly suggests that "perhaps by focusing on larger issues, some of the internal matters would have fallen into place more easily." Unfortunately, the rest of his analysis does not reflect this insight. It is this disconnect that requires a second look; *Canadian Mennonite* readers deserve another perspective.

As one of the 34 members of the MCC New Wine/Wineskins task force, one of those who listened to the several thousand people who spoke on behalf of churches, partners, staff, and boards, I wish to respond.

Three larger issues

The Wineskins process responded to three larger issues that were repeatedly identified by the voices consulted:

- **ARE MCC'S STRATEGIC PROGRAMMING AND METHODOLOGICAL FOCI STILL NEEDED AND GOOD FOR THE WORLD OF THE 21ST CENTURY?**

By asking this question, the "urgent needs facing humanity" were considered, including many not mentioned by Braun. Indeed, the lion's share of the time was dedicated to discussing the urgent agenda facing the world. The answer to this question was resoundingly

positive: MCC's gifts continue to be urgently needed around the world.

This positive answer was not predictable. It is possible for large organizations to lose touch with their mission. In the case of MCC, the voices from all sectors unanimously confirmed the continuing important role of MCC in today's world.

• **SHOULD MCC MAINTAIN ITS CHRISTIAN/ANABAPTIST/ECCLESIAL IDENTITY, OWNERSHIP AND FOCUS?**

By asking this question, the summits talked at length about "new ways to apply the best of our faith traditions to the burning needs of the world." The answer to this question also was not predictable; indeed, there are admirable and tempting models that point to different preferences. These alternative models were alive and passionately articulated by some of the voices.

Clarifying this question was important and timely. There is no doubt that there had been erosion in other directions, and it was important to test this big-picture question at this time in MCC's history. These answers, too, were overwhelmingly positive.

Braun's assertion that the Wineskins process somehow disconnected MCC from the pews is unfounded. Indeed, the connection "with people in the pew" is unprecedented. The final Wineskins documents highlight this connection in a stronger way than ever before in MCC's history, according to some of the knowledgeable voices.

• **GIVEN THAT MCC'S PROGRAMMING IS LOCAL/GLOBAL, SHOULD ITS OWNERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE REFLECT THE LOCAL/GLOBAL REALITY OF MCC'S PROGRAM?**

Braun asserts that this question "happened largely via a parallel MWC [Mennonite World Conference] process." This is not accurate.

The question of whether and how ownership, accountability and governance of MCC could be shared beyond North American borders was front and centre in the Wineskins process from the very beginning. It was a legitimate and very important question to ask, given the

90-year history of MCC being a North American organization.

In a world in which ministry from North America is often characterized as colonial, imperialistic and culturally insensitive, this is surely critical agenda to investigate and consult about, important not only for existing and potential new

[Will Braun] does not give sufficient credit to the wealth of experience, and the positive and significant wisdom from around the world that was spoken and heard via the consultations.

partners, but perhaps more importantly for the existing and historic owners of MCC. The very fact that the question was so central was a clear signal of MCC's past successes in relating to churches and ministry partners in many countries around the world. Others wanted to be a part of a very good thing.

The Wineskins process heard preferences quite different from those of the MWC process, partly because of the different audiences that were consulted.

In the Wineskins process there was interest in broadening the governance of MCC via the potential formation of new national MCCs in other countries that would adhere to the MCC "brand." This very important outcome is not reflected in Braun's November article.

In the MWC process that took place in Ethiopia, existing agencies were consulted. They expressed no interest in becoming "little MCCs," but expressed a great deal of interest for an extended network of existing agencies for enhanced information-sharing, cooperation and potential partnerships.

So there were two answers to the question about globalization: The system should be open for other potential MCCs to join the existing governance structures; and a North American MCC should network and partner effectively with other sister agencies and MWC member-churches around the world.

MCC should be commended for the serious manner in which it engaged the world church via MWC. Taking seriously the preferences of the global church did

not make the process easier, but it did make it much better.

Inaccuracies exposed

In his February article, Braun contends that the Wineskins process was "grafted onto the internal restructuring" of MCC. This, too, is inaccurate.

The larger issues of program priorities, strategic methodologies, ecclesial identity and global accountability were front and centre, and were dealt with seriously. They should not be brushed aside by Braun's focus and critique of "internal" dynamics.

Contrary to Braun, I would suggest that the consequent focus on internal reorganization, cross-border dynamics and internal tensions does not indicate that these have taken over the "large issues," but that, indeed, "internal matters [are falling] into place more easily," just as he hopes for.

Implementing relevant strategic ministry initiatives to address the complexities of the world as an expression of the body of Christ broken for the world, with a commitment to share power, authority and resources on a global scale, are very significant outcomes of the Wineskins process. Given the history and present realities of MCC, none of these could be taken for granted. It is a gross misunderstanding of the Wineskins process to characterize it as a facade for internal tensions and cross-border bickering.

Braun suggests that the process does not "show robust links between the grassroots consultations and Wineskins outcomes." This, too, is inaccurate. Not only are the outcomes closely linked to the consultations, but they will also serve to reconnect the people in the pews to authentic and integral global ministry, perhaps as never before.

The internal administrative complexities and the cross-border tensions of

MCC should be acknowledged and not under-estimated. Braun does us a favour by identifying them as critical agenda for Wineskins. His preference that the Wineskins process should have focused on “larger issues, and to allow the smaller details to fall more easily into place” is also laudable.

This is indeed what happened, and what is now happening in the attempt to restructure MCC based on the Wineskins outcomes. And it is here that Braun’s analysis goes off track: He now highlights the “smaller details” as though they have become the “larger issues.” This is unfortunate.

It weakens his analysis substantially, making it incomplete/narrow (it does not do justice to the depth and breadth of the

consultations), and partial/parochial (it reduces the outcomes to internal North American concerns). He does not give sufficient credit to the wealth of experience, and the positive and significant wisdom from around the world that was spoken and heard via the consultations.

The Wineskins process has not only reaffirmed the critical connection between the pew and MCC, it has also extended the tent in terms of where these pews can be situated and what their contribution can be. The Wineskins process has assured that the “pew” will also be integral in providing guidance, direction and governance to MCC. These outcomes are critically important. They cannot be taken for granted, and they call for our support. ☿

the former Soviet Union and Western Europe to Canada, the United States, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Now reflecting back on MCC and my years of close involvement in it from 1969-98, with some understanding of MCC before and since my involvement, I’d like to share some attributes that seem to me to have been integral to the MCC story.

As a constituency organization, MCC is part of a church movement that includes mission agencies, educational institutions, mutual aid, mental hospitals, local welfare activities, vital congregations and conferences. Their collective achievements have a lot to do with any MCC successes. Yet it is difficult not to take great satisfaction in the recognition MCC has received for good work.

One of the nicest compliments came from the evangelical historian, Mark Noll, who, a decade ago, wrote: “The best evangelicalism is the tireless, unpretentious, but absolutely stunning achievements of the Salvation Army and the [MCC].”

I’m pleased he included another agency in his assessment; others could be named.

Indeed, MCC is part of a larger church and public commitment to human well-being at home and abroad. MCC benefits from the imagination of other church traditions, international Mennonite interests, and a variety of support mechanisms from the Canadian and American governments, United Nations agencies and numerous host governments.

Whatever MCC’s achievements, it is not as an independent agency. Rather, it is a participant in a widely based and widely supported movement to assist refugees; provide food, water and clothing for suffering people; bear witness for social justice; and work for peace among nations and peoples.

Top 20 list

In the mode of list-making, here are 20 keys that come to mind for the achievements of MCC:

1. Being explicitly Christian always and everywhere ministering “in the name of Christ.”
2. Being explicitly inter-Mennonite—MCC is a deliberately cooperative effort, locally and globally addressing human

A REFLECTION ON 90 YEARS OF SERVICE

What has made MCC work well?

BY JOHN A. LAPP

MCC Executive Secretary Emeritus

I grew up with the admonition, “self-praise stinks,” a phrase best expressed in the Pennsylvania-German dialect. During my years as executive secretary of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) from 1985-96, I was reluctant to be too overtly enthusiastic about this well-regarded service ministry. I also believe in the imperative of personal and organizational self-criticism. However, after 90 years it may be appropriate to consider what has made MCC work well.

My long-time predecessor at MCC, William T. Snyder, may have had fewer qualms about speaking well about MCC. He told a number of people in the 1970s—if not in a public statement—that MCC, without a doubt, was the best church-sponsored service and relief agency, although I don’t recall asking him



for evidence of this observation. I hope he could make the same assessment today.

I suspect Snyder made this positive judgment based on the deep and wide spiritual and financial support of MCC from the Mennonite, Brethren in Christ and Amish constitu-

encies in the U.S. and Canada, and the extraordinary talent, dedication, practicality and discipleship commitments of MCC workers frequently placed in difficult and isolated situations.

He surely included the risks MCC took to embark on major programs in conflicted regions such as post-war Europe; with Palestinian refugees in the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq after 1948; early involvements in warring South Korea and South Vietnam; helping to facilitate movements of refugees from

suffering and injustice.

3. Being both a Canadian and American church organization transcending the pervasiveness of national identities.

4. Utilizing a large committed base of workers, mostly younger people, and involving thousands more in supportive fundraising activities. Material resources have been a significant ingredient in MCC ministries.

5. While rooted in the Brethren in Christ and Mennonite ethos, including numerous volunteers from other religious traditions who share the Mennonite conscience and concern, and find MCC a congenial agency for Christian service.

6. MCC is not a specialist organization, but develops programs appropriate to time, place and local interests and needs. MCC is a service, not a solution, believing that process is as essential as product.

7. MCC refuses to be simply a financial resource, believing that people involvement is an imperative in all its activities.

8. MCC rightly has a reputation for stretching dollars, careful expenditures and open books, with a smaller spread in salaries than many peer organizations.

9. MCC majors in supporting indigenous activities, rather than organizing and managing its own programs. MCC strives to listen carefully to local voices and nurture local strengths.

10. MCC highlights cooperation, exchange, interchange with local bodies—often churches that are frequently other than Mennonite, Amish or Brethren in Christ. MCC is accustomed to ecumenical involvement, but strongly believes that programs should have integrity for supportive peoplehood.

11. While MCC may profess few achievements, it is rich with stories and testimonies of workers taking up residence in a variety of situations for the cause of Christ.

12. MCC is not impressed by the size of programs or media hype; rather, by the quiet voice of the Holy Spirit and relationships with churches and communities that share common concerns.

13. MCC, with its deeply held convictions and practices, includes a remarkably diverse group of volunteers. Some workers challenge MCC to make even better things happen. Most workers serve under

'The best evangelicalism is the tireless, unpretentious, but absolutely stunning achievements of the Salvation Army and the Mennonite Central Committee.'

(Mark Noll, evangelical historian)

the direction and supervision of local organizations and churches. More and more, MCC work is done by local workers.

14. MCC is prepared to go to difficult places, imagine unconventional programs, and act in a sensitive, respectful, prophetic manner. MCC work includes specific development projects and long-term relationships reaching over many decades.

15. MCC is a growing organization that adapts to time and place. Since 1930, it has strongly supported Mennonite World Conference while also listening to other church voices.

16. MCC is not prepared to be the formal agent of governmental policy, but it has pioneered projects that governments on occasion later adopt. MCC is apprehensive of much government funding.

17. MCC prefers the role of bearing witness, rather than being a strategy for the church or society.

18. MCC finds it peer community among similar agencies—American Friends

Service Committee, Christian Reformed Relief and Development, Church World Service, Lutheran World Relief, and on-location church and action groups—but it also strives to make a unique contribution in a unique manner.

19. MCC work is centred on such themes as church, peace, emergency relief, reconciliation, presence, community rooted, and pioneer.

20. MCC is noteworthy as a church agency in using lay—non-ordained—females and males in its executive offices.

This is obviously one person's list. It would benefit from the insights of others and may be dated. Its greatest value may be in stimulating other thoughts and refinements, above all in encouraging new labourers in the energizing work of God's kingdom. MCC is, above all, a ministry of dedicated people incarnating good news amidst the strains and stresses of the constantly changing world situation. ❧

/// For discussion

1. What aid agencies do the people of your congregation support? Do Mennonites in Canada see Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) as primary or just one of many agencies? How strong is the connection between MCC and the people in the pew? Does your congregation distinguish between the work of your provincial organization and the national or international parts of MCC?

2. Robert J. Suderman argues that the Wineskins process clarified some important questions about how MCC operates. How important is it for Mennonite institutions to clarify these types of questions? How concerned are you that "internal administrative complexities" and "cross-border tensions" remain in MCC? Can sharp differences in opinion be interpreted as passionate concern?

3. Is this generation of Mennonites more critical of Mennonite institutions than the former generation? What are the advantages and disadvantages of large church institutions?

4. What would you list as the top achievements of MCC? What are its strengths and weaknesses? Should MCC Canada continue to work with multi-denominational organizations such as Canadian Foodgrains Bank and Kairos? What should the relationship be between MCC and Mennonite World Conference?

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

We welcome your comments and publish most letters sent by subscribers intended for publication. This section is largely an open forum for the sharing of views. Letters are the opinion of the writer only—publication does not mean endorsement by the magazine or the church. Keep letters to 400 words or less and address issues rather than individuals. We do not countenance rancour or animosity. Personal attacks are inappropriate and will not see the light of print. Please send letters to be considered for publication to letters@canadianmennonite.org or by postal mail or fax, marked "Attn: Readers Write" (our address is on page 3). Letters should include the author's contact information and mailing address. Letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines.

✉ Former MCC director laments 'big failure' of Wineskins process

RE: "MCC 'DIVORCE' a cause for confession, remorse," March 21, page 12.

I, too, am saddened and indeed angered with the result of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Wineskins process.

In his Feb. 21 article, "MCC revisioning loses connection with people in the pew," page 23, I think Will Braun did a fine, spot-on analysis of what has happened to MCC as a result of the Wineskins revisioning process.

During the long, drawn-out process, they asked for constituency input, but in the end they dealt mainly with cross-border internal management problems, "which did not need constituency input."

I think the cost has been astronomical and, in the end, they have eroded a sense of ownership, dynamic voluntarism and general interest in the constituency.

I, too, would like to join Kreider's request. Are there others who would wish to join now in an event of gratitude for an MCC past, contrition for an MCC divided, and hope for an MCC renewed?

I would hope that Mennonite Church Canada administration would initiate a process and actually ask for a reconsideration of the result.

In my opinion, the Wineskins process has been a big failure on the part of fellow Canadians on the board.

PETER H. PETERS, WINNIPEG, MAN.

Peter H. Peters is a former executive director of MCC Manitoba.

✉ Election priorities for the Canadian Council of Churches

The following letter was sent to the leaders of the five political parties contesting the May 2 federal election by Karen Hamilton, general secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches, of which Mennonite Church Canada is a member.

IN VIEW OF the current federal election campaign, I would like to take this opportunity to put before you the top priorities of the Canadian Council of Churches.

Poverty in Canada

The recent Interfaith Forum on Faith and Poverty on Parliament Hill ended with a commitment by all participants to work towards making ending poverty in Canada the No. 1 issue during this election.

- What action will your party take to pass an historic Federal Anti-Poverty Act that ensures enduring federal commitment and accountability for results with measurable goals and timelines, publicly comprehensible indicators, and a means for monitoring and evaluating progress to reduce poverty?

Global poverty

Canada's record on meeting the 0.7 percent target for overseas development assistance (ODA) has been disappointing, and, despite some recent gains, ODA is currently frozen under 0.3 percent.

- What commitment will your party make to take all necessary steps to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, invest 0.7 percent of gross national income in development assistance in a transparent and accountable manner, and cancel debts of poor countries without regressive conditions?

Climate change

The Earth, our home, is a gift from the Creator. The impacts of climate change adversely affect the most vulnerable, who are least responsible for it. The strategy of promoting endless economic growth and high consumption lifestyles that contribute to increased greenhouse gas emissions must be challenged and constrained. Wealthy countries like Canada must come to a more profound understanding of the interdependence of life and take courageous steps to care for the planet.

- In the realm of climate change, what concrete plans will your party implement to ensure global average temperatures do not exceed a two-degree C increase from pre-industrial levels?

Canada's role in Afghanistan

We believe God desires peace in Afghanistan as well as in Canada. In terms of political commitment and dollars spent, Canada's military investment in Afghanistan dwarfs our support for diplomatic solutions to the conflict, community reconciliation, and promoting human rights and development.

Non-military solutions to resolving the conflict are out of balance with military approaches pursued so far. Meanwhile, excellent principles to ground new and important non-military efforts are available in the most recent consensus report of the House of Commons Special Committee on Afghanistan.

- How will your party work for peace in Afghanistan, supporting Afghans in implementing reconciliation

programs, and responsive governance at local and district levels, as well as urging the international community to pursue diplomatic efforts to end the war?

A world without nuclear weapons

In a recent letter from church leaders on the topic, they wrote, "We cannot conceive how the use of nuclear weapons could be justified and consistent with the will of God, and we must, therefore, conclude that nuclear weapons must also be rejected as a means of threat or deterrence."

- How will your party work towards achieving the vision of a world without nuclear weapons, and publicly and prominently recommit Canada to the energetic pursuit of the early elimination of all nuclear weapons?

FROM OUR LEADERS

Some 'last things'

JIM SHANTZ

With 34 years of ministry, including almost nine years as conference minister for Mennonite Church Alberta, behind me, I am poignantly reminded that each public event is my last, having announced retirement for this summer.

At our Alberta annual meeting last month, I reflected on both the energizing and challenging times. It has not been hard for me to name what energizes.

Perhaps it's my love of driving and geography, but road trips are by far the most energizing, as they have been

my "life line" to our pastors, leaders and congregations.

My view from the conference minister's seat has highlighted the crucial role pastors play in the health of a congregation. Congregational leaders and councils are strategically positioned to effect change and some are making new and innovative changes.

I like to say our congregations are a wild, wooly and wonderful bunch—mostly wonderful—but on a few rare occasions, I scratch my head in wonder.

The variety of the Alberta landscape is a great metaphor for our churches!

For all the good will and harmony we enjoyed over the past several years, the challenges remain daunting. While a handful of congregations are growing, the majority remain on a plateau or are in decline. Some are caught in sociological factors beyond their control.

Our pastor's circle enjoys good energy, but I wonder how we will fare as we face



Our pastor's circle enjoys good energy, but I wonder how we will fare as we face the sexuality question in the next years.

the sexuality question in the next years. (See "Being a faithful church," April 4, page 12.) Our core Anabaptist values get tested especially around transitions and congregational conflicts. This is ironic at a time when many other evangelical and mainline groups are discovering our theology as a gift for these perilous times.

Perhaps the answer lies in how well we adapt to the giant "sea change" that has been happening in our culture the past several decades. Call it the "500-year rummage sale," the "great emergence" or

the "new age of the Spirit," as some prominent authors and church statesmen have put it, our feet are getting wet and we will either swim or drown!

There are some great training manuals out there to help us swim with the tide: Gabe Lyons' *The Next Christians*, Brian McLaren's *A New Kind of Christianity*, and Stuart Murray's *Naked Anabaptist*.

As the final months move across the calendar, I found guest columnist Andy Atkins article in the last *Faith Today* issue helpful. He says, "I am a 'finisher' with a twist. Finisher is the term being used in mission circles for people who finish their careers and decide against just kicking back. Instead, they immerse

themselves, their life lessons, their skills and their expertise into some sort of ministry."

I resonate with his sentiments. I am looking for ways to discern what has gone before to shape a new direction for myself, possibly in writing, speaking or life-coaching, with an emphasis on peacemaking.

Jim Shantz completes his term as conference minister of MC Alberta at the end of June.

Convention on Cluster Munitions

- When and under what conditions will Canada become a full state party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions by ratifying it?

Human trafficking in Canada

Human trafficking is a growing worldwide and Canadian phenomenon that exploits and dehumanizes women. The issue is complex, multifaceted and stretches across different levels of jurisdiction.

- What federal legislation will your party introduce to better prevent, protect, prosecute and partner to end

human trafficking in Canada?

Prisons and corrections

Many faith leaders have expressed concern that, in this time of financial cuts to important federal services, a significant increase in investment in the building of new prisons is proposed. Increasing levels of incarceration of marginalized people is counter-productive and undermines human dignity.

- What commitments will your party make to enhance public safety through healthy communities that support individuals and families; that consider the impact

OUTSIDE THE BOX

Relax

PHIL WAGLER

I was handed a paper that I shoved in my pocket unread. But, later, the title caught my attention as I was about to drop it in recycling: “Relax.” That word thrust me back to a “Teen-dom” ruled by mullets and neon, where “relax” was used to call people back from hysterics because of some youthful limit-pushing.

The article must have been written with that in mind. Here’s a snippet: “Everyone now take a step backwards and a quick, deep breath, and remember, before it begins, what this is supposed to be about. It is supposed to be about kids and too often we—the adults—lose perspective and get caught up in our own . . . ambitions.”

This caution was for parents in my son’s baseball league: A written notice for adults to cease the vein-popping, hernia-inducing stupidity that comes with believing your kid is the next Jose Bautista. It is plain talk: Relax and remember

what it’s supposed to be about. Baseball is about enjoying leather and laughter, bat and ball, sunshine and sweat. Adults, not kids, turn it into ambition and agendas.

This relaxation primer should be given to some people in the church. When once we first believed—when the wonder of grace, the love and justice of God, the

passion of the cross, the depth of our sin, the glory of resurrection, the transformative power of the Holy Spirit and Jesus-centred community first startled us awake—did we not pour from our depths the words of that peculiar band of my youth, “Send me, take me, use me, spend me, I am not my own”? These are the self-abandoned sentiments of first love.

Then, slowly, stealthily, we succumb to agendas and discontent. Someone lets us down. A decision we don’t like is made. Something is called “foul” that we’re convinced is “fair” (or vice versa). Someone else is given a responsibility we covet. We suddenly forget what this is all about. We make the kingdom about me or about those who think like me. We lose perspective. We turn on each other.



And you! You have been made alive in Christ by faith. You have been set free by the gracious act of God.

We get caught up by ambition or trapped by past pain. It’s as if we need a note that says, “Relax.”

This world is a broken place inhabited by broken people. Abortions of baby girls in India are staggeringly rampant. AIDS is producing a generation of fatherless and motherless kids. Folks in Japan and

Haiti would simply be glad for a house. Your neighbours drown in a sea of debt as their marriage crumbles. That awkward kid on your child’s team is being abused. Loneliness is pandemic. Countless many are heading towards eternity bound by sin and blinded by idolatry.

And you! You have been made alive in Christ by faith. You have been set free by the gracious act of God. You are following a new master and are a citizen of a new land. You are part of an amazing community of saints in heaven and on earth who carry a treasure in jars of clay. Have you lost the plot? Have you placed your ambition ahead of your Lord’s?

Relax. Step back before you start another parking lot conversation, letter campaign or Facebook defriending. Take a breath before you make some political play rather than gospel move. Remember who this is for and what it’s all about

before you ruin it for the kids, before tarnishing both your name and his.

Phil Wagler (phil_wagler@yahoo.ca) is a pastor and baseball dad who takes joy in his son’s fun and seeks to build meaningful relationships with those who need to relax in the bleachers.

corrections policies have on the most disadvantaged in society; and that rely on the most effective ways to restore human dignity for individuals, families and the communities they live in?

Please be assured of our prayers for you and your members in this time of campaigning and elections.

May your efforts help strengthen the common good of all.

KAREN HAMILTON, TORONTO, ONT.

Read Henry Rempel's letter, "On being a conscientious objector during an election campaign," at canadianmennonite.org.

NEW ORDER VOICE

Humble labour, profound obscurity

WILL BRAUN

Charles de Foucauld was humble. You don't often hear people described that way. Humility is a fading art. In our age, Christian organizations shout their good works from rooftops, many Christian leaders seek all the attention they can get, philanthropy glorifies ostentatious wealth, and more Christians seek self-fulfillment than self-denial.

All this makes the story of de Foucauld—who devoted himself to “humble labour and profound obscurity”—both bizarre and instructive. Born into an aristocratic family in 1858, he was a French army officer and explorer in North Africa before becoming a monk. He felt called to imitate the “hidden life” of Jesus as a common labourer in backwater Nazareth before his public ministry began.

In pursuit of this calling, de Foucauld worked at a convent in Nazareth, a “poor servant to poor nuns,” as he put it in his personal writings, which were compiled into the 1966 book, *The Spiritual Autobiography of Charles de Foucauld*. In Nazareth, he was “unknown, inordinately poor, lowly.” He imagined that people would take him for a “labourer of the lowest kind,” an “outcast,” or perhaps the “son of a criminal.”

It all sounds so odd now, in a time

when Christians commonly try to make as big a “difference” as possible and then tell as many people as possible about it.

Brother Charles, as he was known, resolved “to embrace humility, poverty, abandonment.” He resolved “to reckon as nothing human greatness . . . and to give equal honour to the poorest man as to the richest, . . . to seek always the very lowest place.” He lived out Jesus’ teachings about serving others, denying oneself and not taking the seat of honour.

He eventually retreated to the Sahara to live among the Tuareg people. His vision was to start an order of monks that would lead humble, obscure lives.



Brother Charles, as he was known, resolved 'to embrace humility, poverty, abandonment.'

Fittingly, perhaps, that when he died a martyr in 1916 no one had joined him in the desert to pursue this mission. Today, though, hundreds of Little Brothers of Jesus and Little Sisters of Jesus, inspired by Brother Charles, live in small groups in the forgotten corners of the world, common labourers exemplifying the humble servanthood of Jesus.

I am drawn by the story of Brother Charles and the example of the Little Brothers and Little Sisters, one of whom my wife and I visited in Mexico City in

2008.

But, alas, I am also drawn by the allure of achievement, accolades and upward mobility. I like getting e-mails from “important” people, I like winning awards for writing, and I treat intellectually engaging people differently than uneducated people.

That's why I try to let stories like de Foucauld's seep into my soul. I think we, as churches, need to hold such stories before us. I think we can further nurture humility by celebrating people more than achievements—not everyone graduates, gets married or wins awards, but everyone has a birthday—by refraining from public acknowledgment of donations. Jesus said not to let our left hand know what the right is doing, let alone put up plaques and publish smiley photos of donors. Or, in the words of de Foucauld, “[Have] infinite regard for the most unimportant, humble and unsophisticated people.”

Humility has long been an Anabaptist strength. Last fall, when I was speaking with an Amish bishop, he talked with great enthusiasm about his neighbours from a more conservative Amish group. “They're so humble,” he said with amazement. It sounded so unusual, but it made me think that it's the only accolade for which I should ever strive.

Will Braun attends Hope Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man. He can be reached at wbraun@inbox.com.

✉ Better ways to deal with our fears

RE: "WHAT ARE we afraid of?" Feb 21, page 13.

While I agree with Jerry Buhler that fear is probably the basis of unkind behaviour, as well as clouding our ability to see hope and possibility both personally and corporately, I am not sure I can accept his approach to dealing with fears. I see a danger in giving our fear "lower status."

First, I have difficulty imagining how we would go about doing this. When we respond to something real or imaginary with fear, it is very difficult to simply say, "My fear is not very important," and be done with it.

Second, does he mean that we ought to deny our fears and hope that they will then stop having an influence, often negative, on our lives? I think that it is probably healthier to name our fears to ourselves, admitting what we are struggling with, and also learn to share our fears with others, rather than trying to cope with them on our own. But this means leaving them on the front burner of our hearts and minds, rather than sliding them to a back burner.

Third, the suggestion to "practise letting go of fear" may well be on the right track, but without some hints as to how we might go about doing this, we are left entirely to our own devices. How do we let go of fears that clamour for attention every day? How do congregations practise letting go of the fears that immobilize us and keep us from being courageously faithful?

Rather than giving a lower status to his fears, the psalmist admitted fear and said, "*When I am afraid I put my trust in you*" (Psalm 56:1-2).

I agree that the Bible repeatedly urges us, "Do not be afraid," "Be courageous," and, "Fear not," but I can't think of any passages that actually elaborate on how we go about "not fearing." Even Jesus, who told his disciples, "*Let not your hearts be troubled*," was himself deeply troubled and fearful in the Garden of Gethsemane.

I would suggest naming our fears, sharing them, paying attention to fear as mentioned in a number of hymns, and immersing ourselves in the biblical story as better options than trying to give fear a lower status.
JOHN H. NEUFELD, WINNIPEG, MAN.

✉ 'Priesthood of all believers' really a Lutheran idea

RE: "PRIESTHOOD: A work in progress," March 7, page 2.

In his recent editorial, Dick Benner spent considerable time exploring our current failure to appropriately use the so-called Anabaptist concept of the

priesthood of all believers. Given its public identification as an Anabaptist idea over the last 50 years, he can be forgiven.

However, it is probably time we Mennonites stopped this kind of use. The priesthood of all believers is historically a Lutheran doctrine, not Anabaptist, and was never used by significant Anabaptists with the exception of Menno Simons, for whom it was a reference only to the purity of the church, Menno's driving concern. There is also, as Marlin Miller pointed out in his research, no consistent use of the term among contemporary Mennonites.

If we wish to use the concept, we need to explore its historic Lutheran origins and define more clearly what it means to us in our contemporary world. I am sure there are many Lutherans who could help us in this task.

I think it is time we started recognizing that, while Mennonites have roots in the rich diversity of historic Anabaptism, not everything we value is Anabaptist, nor are we the only ones to value Anabaptism and claim it.

As well, we have adopted many ideas from other Christians over the past 500 years, including the priesthood of all believers since it was popularized by the World Council of Churches in 1954.

Perhaps it is time we set aside the "Anabaptist Vision" project and begin to explore what it means to be a people of peace rooted in Christian discipleship in a changing world.

BRUCE HIEBERT, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

✉ Stirling pastor hired with 'overwhelming enthusiasm'

RE: "I DON'T have anything to prove," March 7, page 10.

Concerning Martha Smith's interview for the pastoral position at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., it should be made clear that she was hired as Stirling's pastor with overwhelming enthusiasm. Her short period of leadership was interrupted when she met and married Gerald Good, and soon thereafter found that she had to curtail her ministry at Stirling because of more urgent family needs at home. Her services at Stirling were always appreciated and the congregation saw her leave with reluctance.

All of this is amply described in *Risk and Endurance: A History of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church* by Lauren Harder-Gissing, curator of the Mennonite Archives of Ontario located at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.

ANNE MILLAR, KITCHENER, ONT.

VIEWPOINT

Worship changes ... or does it?

BY DAVE BERGEN

Like it or not, the face of worship continues to grow and change. So it has always been. What has always been is the fact that the church, or at least some in the church, resist and react negatively to the changes we experience in worship. Especially in the area of music.

Reference this letter received from a concerned church member regarding the music used in a worship service: "I'm no music scholar, but I feel I know appropriate church music when I hear it. Last Sunday's new song, if you can call it that, sounded like a sentimental love ballad, one you'd expect to have crooned in a bar. If you insist on exposing us to rubbish like this in God's house, don't be surprised if many of the faithful look for a new place to worship. The hymns we grew up with are all we need!"

These are strong sentiments, of the kind that might be expressed in any number of Mennonite congregations. What's particularly interesting and illuminating is that this letter was not written in 2011, but in 1863, in reference to the now well-loved hymn, "Just As I Am."

Clearly the challenges surrounding the music we use in worship are ongoing. The beloved songs and hymns of one generation, safely preserved on the pages of a worn hymnal, are experienced as tired tunes of the past by a succeeding generation. Conversely, the fresh, new, contextualized spiritual songs of new

generations of Christians are often perceived as a great threat to faithfulness, the potential destroyer of all that is deemed churchly and good by a previous generation.

As the 1863 quotation aptly illustrates, the tension we experience is not new at all. Yet it is lived over and over, as if for the very first time, by each successive generation of believers. In light of this, what becomes clear to me is that how we worship is primarily cultural and, therefore, endlessly changeable.

The kinds of songs we sing, whether we choose to stand, sit or dance, whether we hear brief homilies or extended expositional sermons, are cultural constructs. Neither the Bible nor Jesus leave instructions on the correct form of worship for God's people. That we are called to worship God—and God alone—is obvious. That we are to worship with integrity and congruity of word and deed is unmistakable. That we are created to worship with our whole being—heart, mind and soul—is absolutely clear. But whether we are to sing in six parts or in unison, whether we offer praise with or without instruments, in baroque, reggae, hip-hop or jazz styles, is all immaterial.

Worship is an offering of the people of God, to God. In praise and gratitude for God's goodness to us and God's steadfast love for all creation, we offer what we have, what we are, what we know, from within the places we live, work and

The kinds of songs we sing, whether we choose to stand, sit or dance, whether we hear brief homilies or extended expositional sermons, are cultural constructs. Neither the Bible nor Jesus leave instructions on the correct form of worship for God's people.

MC CANADA PHOTO BY DAN DYCK



When Dave Bergen isn't writing about worship, he is thinking about his ministry as executive secretary of Christian Formation at Mennonite Church Canada. He also enjoys arranging traditional hymns for the guitar.

play. This cultural framework is the only vehicle we have to carry our expressions of worship.

From generation to generation, this cultural framework changes. And in keeping with this, what is a meaningful, culturally fitting, heartfelt expression of worship for one generation risks being simplistically misconstrued by another as wrong, immature or inadequate.

Rather than defaulting to warring over worship styles and personal preferences, this strikes me as a unique opportunity to recognize that the Spirit of God remains faithful in stirring up in all people the desire to worship. And that the creative work of God that moves God's people, and creation itself, to find ever new, culturally apt ways to express our longing for, and assurance of, our relationship to God, continues among us even now.

I believe our energies in worship are most helpfully spent as we learn to name and bless what God is doing so creatively—and sometimes perhaps disturbingly—in our worship, as the Spirit of God continues to make, mould and recreate the church to be a fitting instrument for God's mission in this world. ❧

VIEWPOINT

The truth shall set you free

BY JOHN LONGHURST

When we look back on our student days, many of us remember certain professors who, through their teaching ability or personal character, left an indelible and formative impression that lasted a lifetime. For me, one of those professors was Henry Krahn, president of Winnipeg's Mennonite Brethren Bible College from 1974-82.

Krahn, who passed away in 1985, taught history when I was a student. His approach to intellectual inquiry shaped my thinking—and still shapes it today. For Krahn, one of the highest values for university education was freedom of thought. He was committed to John 8:32: *"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."*

Of him, it was written: "No student could sit through his courses without being caught up with his infectious zeal for truth. Narrow sectarianism and dogmatic assumptions were foreign to him. He constantly exhibited a rare combination of biblical piety with a fearless openness to new theological concepts."

Last summer, a number of college alumni attended a 30-year reunion in Winnipeg. At the event, Krahn's daughter, Valerie, shared a reflection about her father. She noted that some people worried that the kind of serious intellectual study he championed might lead students away from faith. "My dad thought just the opposite way," she said. "He was not afraid to take his students' doubts or fears seriously. He challenged them to work through to a new understanding of God and their life purpose."

Thoughts about Krahn come back to me these days as I read about how the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) has accused some Canadian Christian universities—Trinity Western in Langley, B.C.; Crandall in

Moncton, N.B.; Redeemer in Ancaster, Ont.; and Krahn's old school, now called Canadian Mennonite University (CMU)—with putting limits on academic freedom.

The schools dispute the charge.

"What CAUT has done is misguided," says Earl Davey, CMU's vice-president for academics. "The notion one can't do serious intellectual work in a religious institution is naïve."

Trinity Western president Jonathan Raymond criticized CAUT for pre-judging his school before investigators showed up on campus. "It appears that they failed to take into account evidence that was contrary to the conclusions," he notes.

"In our 28 years of existence, we have not had a single instance of a faculty member alleging that their academic freedom has been infringed in any way," says Redeemer president Hubert Krygsman. "We respectfully disagree with the way that CAUT, in our view, narrowly defines academic freedom."

And that, really, is the big question: Who gets to define academic freedom, anyway?

CAUT, which represents 65,000 academics across the country—although none of the faculty at the four schools—is one group that can do so. But so can the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada (AUCC), the closest thing Canadians have to a credentialing body for higher education.

To become a member of AUCC, schools must, promote and protect "the honest search for knowledge without fear of reprisal by the institution or third parties," among other things.

Belonging to AUCC has been defined like getting a gold seal of approval from the rest of Canada's universities. Three of the four schools on the CAUT

list—CMU, Trinity Western and Redeemer—are members of AUCC.

Not surprisingly, the four schools aren't issuing press releases or defending themselves in public. They don't need the hassle and, besides, they have lots of other issues to keep them busy. But now support is coming from an unexpected quarter: CAUT members themselves.

In January, Paul Allen, an associate professor of theology at Concordia University, Montreal, Que., launched a petition accusing CAUT of "bullying" the four Christian schools, and calling on it to "cease its harassment of these institutions, for which there is no mandate from the membership at large."

"What we have here is an academic union ganging up on these smaller Christian universities," says Allen. "It bothered me that this is anti-religious ideology masked as supposedly an academic freedom issue. . . . I thought it was high time that people from the public universities take a stand."

The petition notes that questions of academic freedom could equally be asked of non-religious schools, which "may also have their assumed ideologies, even if no statement of faith must be signed." So far, 211 academics have signed the petition.

I suspect that Krahn would have found this situation amusing; the last thing he would have expected to see was the school he helped shape be accused of limiting academic freedom. But he also would have eagerly anticipated a chance to participate in the debate, arguing that religious faith is not incompatible with serious, critical and thoughtful intellectual inquiry.

Krahn was forever encouraging his students to "talk, debate, wrestle with issues," his daughter shared at the reunion. "Express the incongruities you see; they will lead you to a higher way. . . . [T]hese were the beliefs that my dad hoped his students would appropriate for their lives."

That's a good motto for any student, no matter what or where they are studying. ✎

John Longhurst is a freelance columnist whose work appears in various forums, including the Winnipeg Free Press, Man., where this piece was originally published on Feb. 19.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Coyle—Robin James (b. Jan. 30, 2011), to Richard and Joanna Coyle, Waters Mennonite, Lively, Ont.
Fast—Elliot Sophia (b. March 11, 2011), to Anne Whitford and Reynold Fast, Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.
Leis—Madeline Emma (b. Dec. 20, 2010), to Brandon and Bethany Leis, Stirling Avenue Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.
Poettcker—Alina Ruth (b. March 5, 2011), to Grant and Rosalyn Poettcker, Hamilton Mennonite, Ont.
Schellenberg—Tyler Laveren (b. March 22, 2011), to Harold and Shannon Schellenberg, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.
Yantzi—Colton Tye (b. March 24, 2011), to Jessica and Tyler Yantzi, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Baptisms

Mason Wohlgemut—Rosenfeld Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., March 13, 2011.
Emily Hunsberger, Derek Kropf—Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont., May 9, 2010.

Marriages

Derksen/Wiebe—Erin Derksen and Kent Wiebe, Hague Mennonite, Sask., Feb. 5, 2011.
Johnstone/Wagler—Damon Johnstone and Tanya Wagler, at Wellesley Mennonite, Ont., Feb. 26, 2011.

Deaths

Braul—Walter, 82 (b. April 3, 1928; d. Feb. 16, 2011), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.
Enns—Mary (nee Dyck), 89 (b. June 30, 1921; d. March 19, 2011), Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.
Friesen—Nicholas George, 87 (b. Nov. 11, 1923; d. Feb. 16, 2011), Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.

Haryung—Judith (nee Bassingthwaite), 59 (b. March 11, 1951; d. Jan. 7, 2011), Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite, Rabbit Lake, Sask.

Martens—Lydia, 100 (b. Dec. 9, 1910; d. March 13, 2011), First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Nordemann—Fred, 79 (b. Dec. 27, 1931; d. Jan. 16, 2011), Petitcodiac Mennonite, N.B.

Passchier—Anton, 86 (b. Nov. 16, 1924; d. March 23, 2011), Brussels Mennonite, Ont.

Pauls—Jacob, 92 (b. Sept. 4, 1918; d. March 18, 2011), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

Peters—Frieda (nee Falk), 81 (b. March 31, 1929; d. March 17, 2011), First Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Peters—John, 96 (b. Oct. 1, 1914; d. March 25, 2011), Level Ground Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Phoon—Shiu Shum, 87 (b. Nov. 18, 1923; d. March 5, 2011), Markham Chinese Mennonite, Ont.

Porter—Kenneth, 85 (b. Dec. 19, 1925; d. Dec. 28, 2010), Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite, Mayfair, Sask.

Porter—Lucille, 89 (nee Wilson), (b. Nov. 1, 1921; d. Feb. 21, 2011), Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite, Mayfair, Sask.

Rempel—Maria (nee Kasdorf), 84 (b. Feb. 20, 1927; d. March 15, 2011), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Sawatzky—Katharina (Katie) (nee Kornelsen), 102 (b. Dec. 28, 1908; d. Jan. 20, 2011), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Schultz—Henry, 84 (b. Aug. 20, 1926; d. Feb. 25, 2011), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

Unrau—Gertrude (Trudie) (nee Giesbrecht), 91 (b. April 17, 1919; d. March 19, 2011), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

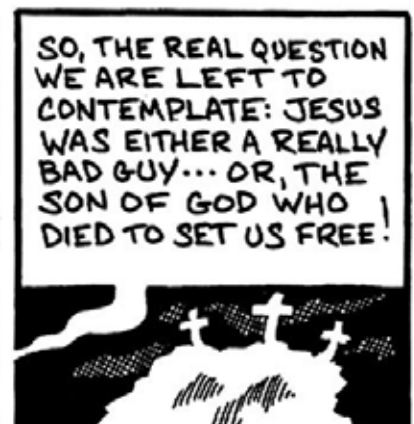
Wall—Agnes, 91 (b. March 23, 1919; d. Sept. 14, 2010), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

Wei—Sheng He, 48 (b. July 10, 1962; d. March 14, 2011), Markham Chinese Mennonite, Ont.

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



Pontius' Pilgrimage



COVER STORY

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

'Mary With Tears,' a sculpture of Mary, the mother of Jesus, by Vilius Orvidas, who did most of his work under the Soviet occupation of Lithuania. He died in the early 1990s. Photographed by Jerry Holsopple, a visual and communication arts professor at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., who studied with a Russian Orthodox priest while on sabbatical in Lithuania last year.



Rediscovering Mary

What might the mother of Jesus mean for Mennonites today?

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MARY E. KLASSEN

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
ELKHART, IND.

After two days of singing, discussing, pondering images and praying last month, questions continued to swirl around Mary, the mother of Jesus, and what she might mean for Mennonites and Anabaptists today.

The “My Soul Rejoices in God, my Saviour: Mary in Anabaptist Dress” Conference at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary brought together approximately 100 pastors, artists, musicians, storytellers, spiritual directors and scholars to begin conversations about the place Mary has had in Mennonite and Anabaptist faith and how that might be changing.

AMBS president Sara Wenger Shenk opened the event with the declaration: “I am grateful to be part of a learning community belonging to MC U.S.A. and MC Canada that has the courage to invite us back into our own history, and into the Scriptures, for a fresh look at the treasure that is there in Mary’s story.”

Mary H. Schertz, AMBS professor of New Testament, presented a biblical survey of Mary. “We hear a longing for Mary,” she said. “We need to attend more carefully to this enigmatic woman. We begin, as Anabaptists do, with the Mary we encounter in the Scriptures.”

Biblical accounts, particularly those in Luke, depict Mary as a woman of courage. She accepted God’s invitation to be the mother of Jesus, acting against the expectations of her betrothed, her family and her culture. “Mary said ‘yes’ boldly and with confidence,” Schertz explained.

However, it is the Magnificat, Mary’s song in Luke 1, that is the most revolutionary. It is, in fact, so revolutionary that it is viewed as dangerous by some oppressive governments, Schertz pointed out. Mary is a poor young woman caught in a quandary not of her own making, but she sees her out-of-wedlock pregnancy as good news, not only for herself but for all people.

John Rempel, AMBS professor of theology and Anabaptist studies, next examined how the Reformers of the 16th century viewed Mary. Affection for Mary carried forward into most Anabaptists’ faith, Rempel pointed out, but “first-generation Protestants were concerned to think of Mary in her relationship to Christ, rather

than as co-mediator of salvation.”

One area in which Rempel called for further exploration is belief in the communion of the saints. “The saints in God’s presence are now so at one with God’s will that they pray with us for God’s purposes to be realized in our lives,” he said. “The saints pray with us, not because we appeal to them, but because they now unreservedly will what God wills.”

Re-examination of this teaching is a necessary theological starting point for a reappraisal of Mary’s place in the Mennonite church, Rempel said.

Wendy Wright, professor of theology at the University of Creighton, Omaha, Neb., looked for commonalities between the Catholic devotion to Mary and significant elements of Mennonite and Anabaptist faith. Three of these are:

- **DISCIPLESHIP**—the free acceptance of the invitation to do God’s will;
- **MARTYRDOM**—seeing the love of God and the cross of Christ as connected; and
- **THE CORPORATE NATURE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**—sharing God’s love with others after experiencing it personally.

Wright emphasized that a template of discipleship is present in Mary, who said “yes” to God and was moved to go to visit Elizabeth, sharing her news. “When we are open to God—open to the ‘yes’—we intrinsically



In the concluding session, panelist Irma Fast Dueck of Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Man., right, said, “We have only a few biblical accounts of Mary. That’s a blessing. We have to use our imaginations to shape our image of Mary that has an Anabaptist-Mennonite sensibility.” Other panelists included Adam Tice, associate pastor of Hyattsville Mennonite Church, Md., left.

visit” others, Wright pointed out.

Elizabeth Soto, ordained minister in the Colombian Mennonite Church, reflected in a more personal way on how Mary has been important in her spiritual journey, beginning in her early life as a Catholic. She recognized that in Mennonite congregations today there may be little room for an appreciation of Mary.

However, Soto confessed that she sees a

need for more female images in the church to nurture Mennonite spirituality. “We have thrown out the basin with the bathwater,” she said. “We have kept Jesus,” but not the womb that bore him, the woman who created with God. By so doing, the church lost valuable perspectives that can help it to know and follow Jesus.

The last session of the conference gave a panel of four participants an opportunity to continue questioning what Mary might mean for Mennonites. Irma Fast Dueck, professor at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Man., said, “The conference has given evidence to our yearning and thirsting for the gifts that Mary has given the church over the centuries—her understanding of suffering and love.” But Fast Dueck asked how the Mennonite church can separate Mary from the ways it has come to see her in Catholic settings in order to connect with her in ways that are meaningful and fit with Mennonite faith.

In the discussion that followed, several participants called for a new appreciation of the communion of the saints, recognizing that those who have died are companions on the journeys of those still living. A step for Mennonites toward appreciating Mary might be placing her in this context of people who can be seen as models for faith. ❧



Singing was a significant element of the two-day ‘Mary in Anabaptist Dress’ Conference. Paul Dueck, pastor of Windsor Mennonite Fellowship, Ont., acted as song-leader.

MC SASKATCHEWAN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Plowing the way for peace

STORY AND PHOTO BY KARIN FEHDERAU

Saskatchewan Correspondent
NORTH BATTLEFORD, SASK.

A public stand for peace, peace between believers and peace with their neighbours all came to the fore during the Mennonite Church Saskatchewan

annual delegate sessions last month in North Battleford.

Since Saskatchewan Mennonites have been involved with public acts of peace, the Ad hoc Committee on Peace and Justice took the opportunity in its report to push further and to challenge the churches to do more.

Gordon Allaby spoke about the need to communicate clearly to others what

Blanket exercise plumbs the depth of injustice to aboriginals

STORY AND PHOTO BY DICK BENNER

Editor/Publisher

Early relationships between European settlers and aboriginals were characterized by cooperation and interdependence, John Bartel, a farmer from Drake, Sask., and a member of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan's Ministries Commission, told a crowd of 75 huddled on 12 blankets representing Turtle Island—an aboriginal term for North America—during a session leading up to the area church's annual general meeting in North Battleford.

But that amicable feeling didn't last long. In 1493, an edict from Pope Alexander VI established Christian dominion and subjugation of non-Christian "pagan" peoples. Non-Christians could no longer own the lands and indigenous people were to be placed under the tutelage and guardianship of those Christian nations that "discovered" their lands.

The two-hour exercise developed by Kairos, and covering five centuries of Canadian history, was planned by the Ministries Commission to sensitize delegates to the specifics of the historical narrative that often eludes well-meaning but sometimes uninformed "white" Christians today, said commission chair Gordon Nesdoly. "Many of us know in vague terms the injustices of the past, but the more brutal forms of subjugation are not well known."

Some of the historical events recounted came uncomfortably close to home. The land belonging to the band known as the Young Chippewyan, as agreed in Treaty

No. 6 (1876) was assigned for settlement by Mennonite farmers in 1897.

"For aboriginal people," Bartel continued, "all of this was more than just a taking of lands. Because of their intimate connection to their traditional territories, for many it also meant a loss of ways of life, cultures, hope and, in some cases, a reason to live."

Subsequent political manoeuvres, such as the British North America Act, provided policy "teeth" for Prime Minister John A. Macdonald's announcement that Canada's goal was to "do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the inhabitants of the Dominion." Later, the Indian Act, pertaining only to First Nations and not the Métis or Inuit, was designed to transform independent aboriginal communities into physically marginalized and economically impoverished bands, and individuals into "wards of the state."

"Through this act," delegates were told, "First Nations people were denied the basic rights that most Canadians take for granted."

While some report having positive experiences, the residential schools era resulted in many aboriginals suffering from disease, hunger and overcrowding, as well as from emotional, physical and sexual abuse. Many lost family connections and the opportunity to learn their culture and traditions from their elders. Raised in institutions, many lost parenting skills. Some students—reportedly from 15-24 percent—died in these schools. Many survivors never returned to their home communities or were shunned if they did.

Following the exercise, delegates were divided into small discussion groups to process what they had just experienced as a white majority trying to cope with just how complicit they were in this long, brutal history of systemic injustice. It proved to be a sobering experience for many. ❧



Hilda Epp holds a blanket symbolizing the exposure to new diseases (small pox, tuberculosis, measles) that arrived with the European settlers on Turtle Island—an aboriginal term for North America—as Diane Tiessen looks on.

Mennonites believe, rather than just let their actions speak for themselves. “When a church states, ‘We are a Live For Peace church,’ they are projecting a message that states action is part of our belief system. And it suggests that it is a journey, a whole-life journey.” While acknowledging the move may take some soul searching, Allaby encouraged all area church congregations to proclaim that message using signs.

He also put forth a call to other provinces: “We are issuing a challenge to all congregations in Mennonite Church Canada to publicly declare that they are a ‘Live for Peace’ church. . . . And the challenge is that we . . . from lowly and humble Saskatchewan will have more churches signed up and declaring to be ‘Live for Peace’ churches than any other province.”

‘Our shared path’

For some time now, MC Saskatchewan has been trying to build friendships with aboriginals in the province. But the topic of bringing the cultures together was never addressed in depth until this year’s annual general meeting, which had the theme, “Our shared path.”

Mennonites and First Nations people have had a somewhat unsettled history, and keynote speaker Ray Funk’s approach to explain the issues of treaty from a biblical perspective—using the story of Isaac’s treaty with Abimelech in Genesis 26—brought a new understanding to the story. “The Bible is fundamentally a political book, a story of God’s people interacting with empires through covenantal relationships,” he said, adding, “Covenants are meant to create just relationships.”

Pointing to Mennonite history, he spoke about *privilegia*, the arrangements that Mennonites made with governments to live according to their faith. From Poland to Russia to Canada, he said there were 14 places where Mennonites made such deals. When Mennonites came to Saskatchewan in the late 1800s, they were given a tract of land called the Hague-Osler Reserve by the government of the day.

Funk, who has been involved with First Nations issues for many years, including a stint as Member of Parliament for the northern riding of Desnethe’-Missinippi-Churchill, asked, “So how do we convince people that

this is important today?” If people want to bury this under the carpet, or claim that they are not responsible for what happened in the past, it doesn’t work, he argued.

“Every community inherits a story,” he said. One of the stories Saskatchewan is grappling with is the unfair treatment of the Young Chippewyan First Nation, whose land was given to Mennonite settlers without their permission in 1897 and which became part of the Hague-Osler Reserve.

Grace Mennonite Church, Prince Albert, and Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan came together last summer to help raise funds for a genealogical search that would help the current members of the Young Chippewyan First Nation with their push for fair compensation. A similar event is planned for this summer.

Two proposals passed

Despite some expressed concern, delegates unanimously endorsed a proposal to move the former Eigenheim Mennonite Church building to the Youth Farm Bible Camp, where it will be used for the growing needs of the summer camping program.

An effort to bring some order and structure to the finance commission resulted in passage of a new financial policy that



Area church youth minister Anna Rehan and area church minister Jerry Buhler light candles during the memorial service at this year’s annual general meeting in North Battleford.

will help MC Saskatchewan to manage the many monetary dips and spikes that occur over time. It will also be useful to set guidelines to help new committee members coming on board. ☺



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Learning to be 'radiant witnesses' of Jesus

New academy seeks to bridge gap between Sunday school and seminary

By JOHN LONGHURST
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

People in Saskatoon, Sask., who want something more intense than Sunday school but less focused than a seminary or university course, now have another option: the Academy of Discipleship.

The academy, which was created by a group of Christians in that city, including some Mennonite Church Saskatchewan members, seeks to “fill the gap between conventional church-based Christian education and formal college or seminary training,” according to its website (AcademyOfDiscipleship.org).

The idea for the academy, which is billed

as being “non-denominational, modestly priced, taught by experienced mentors with an emphasis on dialogue and fellowship,” started with Melody Neufeld-Rocheleau of Breath of Life Mennonite Church Inc. The goal, she says, is to provide people with an “informal, grassroots, non-institutional

The first course was held in 2008. . . . The class met in a home around a dining room table.

group of Christians getting together to dig deeper into Scripture. I thought that maybe smaller forums like this might be one way to bring higher learning to the church.”

The first course was held in 2008, when five students studied the book *Sabbath Economics*, and its companion, *Household Sabbath Economics*. The class met in a home around a dining room table.

The idea lay dormant until last year, when Neufeld-Rocheleau talked to Walter Klaassen, a local professor and author of a number of books on Anabaptism, including *Marpeck: A Life of Dissent and Conformity*.

“I spoke with Walter about the academy, and how talking about Anabaptism might be a good fit,” she says. “He agreed it was worth pursuing.”

So did others. In addition to Neufeld-Rocheleau and Klaassen, other leaders are Ruth Klaassen of All Saints Anglican Church; Vern Ratzlaff, pastor of Aberdeen Mennonite Church and a faculty member at Lutheran Theological Seminary; John Dyck of Breath of Life; and Leighton Tebay, a leader of the SeedLife Network, a house church organization in Saskatoon.

In February, the academy offered a new course on Anabaptism, using *The Naked Anabaptist* as a textbook. A total of 16 students are studying the book in two seven-week classes. Classes are held in a local office building, and students sit at round tables.

“Our goal is to make the classes accessible to all, and for the leaders of the groups to be facilitators, rather than lecturers,” says Neufeld-Rocheleau, adding that each class begins with prayer and ends with a brief worship time. “The goal is for open, honest discussion about how we, as followers of Jesus, can be radiant witnesses to him,” she says. ☸



PHOTO BY MELODY NEUFELD-ROCHELEAU

A lively discussion is held at the Academy of Discipleship in Saskatoon, Sask.

/// Briefly noted

Swartzendruber appointed to third presidential term at AMBS

HARRISONBURG, VA.—Loren Swartzendruber will serve another four-year term as president of Eastern Mennonite University (EMU). Andrew Dula, chair of the EMU board of trustees, announced at the opening convocation of second semester that Swartzendruber had “gratefully accepted” an appointment to serve a third term that begins on July 1 and ends on June 30, 2015. Major accomplishments during Swartzendruber’s second term include: a successful re-accreditation for another 10 years by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the Association of Theological Schools, and leading the institution through a difficult economic environment while balancing the budget.

“The EMU board of trustees looks forward to our continuing work with president Swartzendruber,” Dula said. Swartzendruber became EMU’s eighth president on Jan. 1, 2004. He came to EMU from Hesston College, Kan., a two-year Mennonite school where he served as president beginning in 1994. Before that, he was associate executive secretary of the former Mennonite Board of Education in Elkhart, Ind., for 10 years.

—Eastern Mennonite University



Loren Swartzendruber, left, receives congratulations from EMU board of trustees chair Andrew Dula following the announcement of Swartzendruber’s appointment to another four-year term as president earlier this year.

'A long obedience in the same direction'

MC Eastern Canada's Annual School for Ministers tackles 'worship as spiritual formation'

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada's Annual School for Ministers, held in late February at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, was the third event this winter focused on spiritual formation. The events were designed to get pastors and other leaders thinking about their work as forming individuals and congregations as Christians and as Christian organizations.

From Feb. 22 to 24, Irma Fast Dueck, associate professor of practical theology at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Man., spoke to the need to create worship in which people have the opportunity to encounter God. "There is something more at work" than planning and leading, she said. Pastors and church leaders need to come to worship planning and leading with humility, as "something difficult to name, a mystery," meets the congregation in worship.

"Worship is a waste of time; it's useless," she said, meaning that worship should not try to do anything other than provide an opportunity to meet God. "We are created for companionship with our Creator," she said, adding, "Worship is good in and of itself."

The early Anabaptists knew this, Fast Dueck said, as they yielded themselves (*gelassenheit*) to God in their worship. As such, worship is an experience that changes and forms people. She described early 20th-century Mennonite worship as orientation, disorientation and re-orientation:

- **ORIENTATION**—solidifying Mennonites' intellectual self-understanding as they moved out of their communities into the world. H.S. Bender's "Anabaptist Vision" was part of this.

- From the 1960s on, **DISORIENTATION**

became the norm—a fixation on innovation and creativity in worship, that tended to be music-driven, intimate in nature, casual and informal.

- Now **RE-ORIENTATION**, or renewal, is taking place with worship again being seen as the place to renew the congregation's relationship with God and experience God anew. The assumption is that people are longing for a relationship with God and that worship can provide a place to meet God with body, mind and emotions.

Fast Dueck's second presentation focused on the use of ritual, embodied worship. In her final presentation, almost negating her earlier comments about worship not getting things done, she focused on "10

spiritual practices of public worship," a list of things that worship does for the congregation, including teaching about generosity, justice, mercy and the universality of the church.

The three-day event also included worship, and workshops on lament, preaching, rituals, storytelling and prayer. ☿

PHOTO BY LINDSEY KOLB



Marianne Mellinger, right, who organized the 2011 Mennonite Church Eastern Canada School for Ministers in her dual roles as MC Eastern Canada's coordinator of leadership formation and Conrad Grebel University College's supervisor of the master of theological studies-ministry option program, chats with keynote speaker Irma Fast Dueck, associate professor of practical theology at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Man.

Establishing uncommon ground

Bechtel Lecturer says 'we are all treaty people'

STORY AND PHOTO BY SUSAN FISH

Special to Canadian Mennonite
WATERLOO, ONT.

Roger Epp, Ph.D., founding dean of the University of Alberta's Augustana campus and professor of political studies, delivered the 2011 Bechtel Lectures at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

Epp, whose research and writing probe the meaning of place in Canada's rural

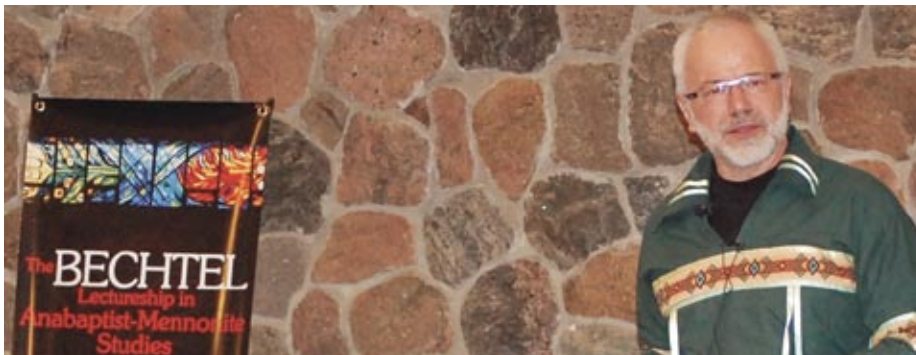
west, spoke on the theme, "We are all treaty people," exploring relationships between Canada's Aboriginal Peoples and settlers in new ways, with the goal of helping all people to live well in their particular landscape.

Referring to McMaster professor Daniel Coleman's ideas of creating "uncommon

ground,” a place of dialogue rather than ignoring or fearing human differences, Epp gave two recent examples of establishing uncommon ground: the 2006 Stony Knoll declaration of harmony and justice between aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities in Laird, Sask., and the January 2011 Centennial Round Dance held at Epp’s Augustana College, where aboriginal graduates were honoured for their hard work in succeeding academically while living in two cultures.

Rather than seeking a policy-oriented national solution, Epp encouraged direct human encounters. “Be a neighbour, not an advocate,” he said, noting that when people relate to each other, rather than seeking solutions, they learn and might even enjoy the process.

Epp’s goal in his lectures was not to “stand on a prophetic soapbox,” but to “encourage” those assembled to consider their relationship with aboriginals in their area. Calling for a “practical hermeneutic,” he suggested the need to recognize the two cultures’ enduring differences, the unavoidability of face-to-face encounters, and



Roger Epp, founding dean of the University of Alberta's Augustana campus and professor of political studies, was this year's Bechtel Lecturer at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.

the importance of understanding—rather than defeating or dismissing—in order to live together well. Rather than seeing themselves as inheritors of a new land, he said that non-aboriginals should see themselves as being part of a country “founded on an act of sharing almost incomprehensible in its generosity.”

To Mennonites in particular, Epp sees author Rudy Wiebe’s experience as exemplary as he accepted the invitation of Yvonne Johnson, an aboriginal woman,

to co-write her story, respecting their differences while, at the same time, listening in order to understand. Mennonites, Epp said, do not have a special role in reconciliation, but Mennonites do have resources in their stories of being outsiders and people attracted by a land that offered peaceful co-existence. These stories are ones they can share with their aboriginal neighbours even as they first listen to their stories. ❧

❧ Staff change

MWC appoints new director of finance and administration

Len Rempel has been appointed the new director of finance and administration for Mennonite World Conference (MWC). On March 14, he began working out of MWC’s North American office in Kitchener, Ont. Rempel comes to the position after 10 years in senior management at Ten Thousand Villages (TTV); most recently he was director of operations at TTV’s Canadian headquarters in New Hamburg, Ont. Rempel is no stranger to MWC. “I had been to the [1990] assembly in Winnipeg [Man.] and attended the [2006] General Council meetings in Pasadena [Calif.], so when I saw this opening, I knew this was something that I had skills for, and I felt a close connection with the purpose of the organization,” he says. Rempel replaces Karen Martin Schiedel, who served in the MWC office for six years.

—Mennonite World Conference

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Vietnam Mennonite Institute successfully completes first year

BY JEWEL SHOWALTER

Eastern Mennonite Missions
HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM

Early in 2009, Pastor Trung, a Vietnam Mennonite Church (VMC) leader, shared the church's vision for launching a training program comparable to a bachelor's degree in theology, to train Mennonite and other denominational leaders. So last year, stepping out in faith, VMC boldly agreed to sponsor the new training program along with support from Pastor Lim, a Presbyterian from Korea, and Eastern Mennonite Missions (EMM).

Recognizing the potential as well as the challenge of such a vision, Gerry Keener, a non-residential missionary to Vietnam and chief operating officer at EMM, raised pointed questions about educational standards, curriculum, qualified teachers and the need for adequate facilities. Trung and the organizing committee were willing to make adjustments to ensure the quality and practicality of the program, so Keener introduced the idea to EMM leadership and to Mennonite educators and administrators in North America.

The initial response from Keener's North American colleagues was, "This is impossible to pull off! But if you move ahead,

here are some suggestions for curriculum and qualified professors."

Last March, the first class of 14 Vietnam Mennonite Institute in Theology and Renewal students quietly opened with "Bible survey: Old Testament" taught by Palmer Becker of Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont., a retired pastor and former director of pastoral studies at Hesston College, Kan.

On two separate visits over the course of the year, Keener taught three courses: "Bible survey: New Testament," "Church history: First to 15th centuries," and "The Synoptic Gospels."

Tuyen Nguyen, a Vietnamese Mennonite leader from Philadelphia, Pa., and a Lancaster Mennonite Conference bishop, taught the "Gospel of John." Tom Finger, a retired theology professor from Eastern Mennonite Seminary, taught "Church history: Reformation to present." Qualified teachers from Vietnam and Korea taught other courses.

"I'm delighted by the tenacity of the students to study," Keener says. "I'm blessed by the dedication of the teachers

who committed their time to training Vietnamese church leaders. And I'm gratified by the leadership the VMC demonstrates in their attentiveness to operating the institute in a consistent manner. God has been providing and guiding each step of the way."

Second-year classes began earlier this spring with Keener teaching "Anabaptist history," and his wife Donna will provide training in "Learning strategies and life skills." As in the first year, several North American professors will assist with the teaching. ❧

Staff change

Rudy-Froese appointed Christian proclamation prof

ELKHART, IND.—Allan Rudy-Froese, Ph.D. candidate at Emmanuel College, Toronto, Ont., and former *Canadian Mennonite* "This Pastor has 22 Minutes" columnist, has been appointed professor



Rudy-Froese

of Christian proclamation at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), beginning July 1. In this position, he will teach preaching and public communication, including biblical storytelling and missional preaching. He will develop courses that address speaking and writing about faith in the public sphere; communication and media; spiritual disciplines; and the congregational practices of listening and speaking. He also will serve as the resource person for the AMBS Preaching Institute, a continuing education program for pastors who wish to continue developing their skills. Rudy-Froese is currently completing his dissertation on "Grace and ethics in preaching," examining the relationship between Lutheran understanding of proclamation as a means of God's grace and Anabaptist-Mennonite ethical teaching in the preached sermon. He received a master of divinity degree from AMBS in 1992.

—AMBS



Palmer Becker of Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont., gathers in a circle with his students following communion during the first-ever class at the Vietnam Mennonite Institute in Theology and Renewal last year.

HOPE FOR JAPAN

Churches unite to help Japan victims

Nearly \$6,000 raised for disaster relief

STORY AND PHOTO
BY AMY DUECKMAN
B.C. Correspondent
SURREY, B.C.



Origami, the ancient Japanese art of paper folding, entertained several generations at the 'Hope for Japan' fundraiser, held April 2 at Living Hope Christian Fellowship, Surrey. Pictured from left to right: Jay Neufeld, Rena Neufeld, Sadako Takeda and Hisako Takashima.

Asking "What can we do?" for victims of the recent Japanese earthquake, tsunami and nuclear reactor breach, church and community came together at Living Hope Christian Fellowship on April 2 for a fundraising evening called "Hope for Japan." The event raised \$5,650 that evening, with final numbers yet to be tallied as of April 4.

Living Hope pastor Lorin Bergen said that members of his congregation wanted to help when they heard of the devastating events in Japan on March 11. "We said, 'Let's get together; let's make a difference,'"

he told *Canadian Mennonite*. The idea for a family-friendly fundraising event was born, and three other Mennonite Church B.C. congregations in the area quickly came on board: Surrey Mennonite Church,

What to pack in the event of an earthquake or tsunami

BY AMY DUECKMAN
B.C. Correspondent

A display on disaster preparedness at the Hope for Japan fundraising event reminded many that British Columbia is also in an area with the high probability of an earthquake, although surveys show that few are fully prepared. The Surrey Emergency Program suggests these contents for an Emergency Grab and Go Bag:

- 4-litre labelled water container and stacking cups
- Water pouches (three-day supply)
- Water purifier tablets
- Three days worth of food bars
- Infant supplies
- Medicine (including prescriptions)
- Dry pet food supplies
- First aid kit
- Safety pins
- Clothing, walking shoes
- Work gloves
- Hand sanitizer
- Light sticks

- Dust mask/eye protectors
- Emergency poncho/blanket
- Goggles
- Hatchet
- Multi-purpose knife
- Battery-operated radio
- Flashlight
- Batteries (stored separately)
- Sportsman's saw/folding shovel
- Rope
- Shelter survival bag
- Whistle (for attracting attention)
- Pouch and money, including coins
- Games (deck of cards)
- For family: favourite toy, picture of family, etc.
- Personal toiletries
- Pad and pencil for leaving notes, medical information
- Address book with important telephone numbers
- Large garbage bags
- String
- Duct tape

HOPE FOR JAPAN

Mennonite Japanese Christian Fellowship of Surrey, and White Rock Mennonite Christian Fellowship.

Although most of those attending had connections with MC B.C., including several former missionaries to Japan, some neighbourhood residents came as the result of flyers advertising the event being distributed in the area around the church.

The event had something for everyone. Participants could sample and purchase Japanese food, some homemade and some donated by a Japanese restaurant in Coquitlam. Origami paper folding kept the children occupied, while adults bid on some 60 donated silent auction items ranging from sushi and authentic Japanese clothing to a weekend at a Whistler, B.C., ski resort and Vancouver Canucks play-off tickets.

"We had so many generous, wonderful sponsors," Bergen said with gratitude.

Cash donations were also received throughout the evening. Because all costs of "Hope for Japan" were carried by the participating churches, 100 percent of funds raised were to be channelled directly through Samaritan's Purse, which has an established program in Japan.

Several times throughout the evening, a short program was presented in the sanctuary, including video depicting the devastating effects of the earthquake and tsunami, and music on the *koto* (Japanese stringed instrument) by Gerald Neufeld, pastor of Mennonite Japanese Christian Fellowship.

Masako Moriyama of Abbotsford, who has maintained contact with friends in the affected area of Miyagi, reported how the Japanese people were coping. She told of a water shortage that meant those in the area could bathe only once every 10 days, and spoke of a friend's Kindergarten-aged daughter who had lost classmates the afternoon the tsunami hit when the school bus they were riding was washed away.

It was reported that Mennonite Educational Institute in Abbotsford has offered to host several Japanese students, tuition-free, to help some of those in need get back on their feet. However, Moriyama explained that many Japanese people are reluctant to relocate elsewhere and leave their fellow citizens behind. "Japan is a close-knit country," she said. ❧

Worldwide prayer and long-term response needed for Japan

Mennonite World Conference

Mennonite World Conference (MWC) is making plans to walk and work alongside Japanese Anabaptists in the wake of the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear radiation leak devastating the northeast region of Japan.

An intercontinental teleconference on March 16 brought together MWC officials and representatives from Mennonite, Mennonite Brethren and Brethren in Christ churches and agencies, including Mennonite Central Committee.

A global call to prayer for the people of Japan is first on the agenda; a brief worship resource for churches, including a map that locates Anabaptist churches in Japan, is available on the MWC website (mwc-cmm.org).

Responses from both MWC and service agencies are likely to focus on long-term

efforts and relationships, rather than emergency relief, which is available locally.

A working group led by Deacons Commission chair Cynthia Peacock of India and secretary Bert Lobe of Canada, and including representatives from churches and service agencies in the MWC community, will take further steps and provide updates as plans develop. The MWC Deacons Commission will consult with Japanese leaders about a possible solidarity visit later this year.

While Mennonite Church Canada no longer has any direct presence in Japan, MC U.S.A.'s Mennonite Mission Network does. To keep abreast of news from Japan, visit mennonitemission.net and follow the "Messages from Japan" link. ❧

With files from MC Canada.

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- ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR JAMIE GERBER
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- EXPLORE the WORLD of PAUL with TOM YODER NEUFELD
(May 4 - 20)
- LEGENDARY RHINE & MOSELLE RIVER CRUISE (May 11 - 24)
- ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 7 - 18)
- ICELAND COUNTRY TOUR (June 13 - 22)
- EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (June 23 - July 6)
- WILLIAM PENN, THE POETS & MORE... (ENGLAND & SCOTLAND)
(July 22 - August 4)
- MENNONITE STORY in POLAND (August 9 - 17)
- VISIT UKRAINE with EDGAR STOESZ (September 19 - 28)
- A PILGRIMAGE to PORTUGAL (September 20 - 30)
- EXPERIENCE IRELAND with the LEDERACHS
(September 22 - October 3)
- ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR GARRY JANZEN
(October 14 - 23)
- From NAZARETH to ROME (November 10 - 22)
- BEHIND the VEIL-EXPERIENCING EGYPT with MEDA
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- OBERAMMERGAU CHRISTMAS MARKET (December 7 - 11)

2012 TOURS

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- TOUR TO GUATEMALA (February 24 - March 4)
- VISIT MEXICO & its COPPER CANYON (March 9 - 18)
- EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 18 - 31)
- FOLLOWING the STEPS of MOSES (April 16 - 27)
- EUROPEAN HERITAGE with PAUL ZEHR (May 3 - 16)
- ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 7 - 18)
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MDS STORIES

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

'A light in the darkness'

MDS begins work in remote B.C. First Nation community

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PHIL HOOD

Mennonite Disaster Service
KINGCOME, B.C.

On the weekend of Sept. 25-26, 2010, the Kingcome River raged through the remote First Nation community of Kingcome. Floodwaters forced lifelong residents of the Pacific coastal village to flee from their homes with only a few minutes notice. As the waters quickly rose, villagers gathered at the school and waited to be airlifted out by helicopter. Nearly four metres of water rushed through the community, leaving most homes uninhabitable.

Volunteers from the British Columbia unit of Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) began assisting the Kingcome community in March. The first volunteer crew worked in the community for two weeks; drywall,

flooring, painting and mechanical repairs were begun on two homes. Additional crews will work in Kingcome this spring, and MDS plans to send summer youth crews to work on clean-up and site restoration beginning in June.

The flood—probably caused by clear-cut logging and a receding glacier—was unlike anything seen in recent memory. Even though the community was designed to withstand flooding, the downpour was so severe—and the river came up so quickly—that most of the community was wiped out.

Immediately after the waters receded, engineers and health representatives



Destruction path left over from the devastating flood in Kingcome, B.C.

travelled to the community to conduct a damage assessment. Many levels of community and government agencies responded to this natural disaster. But seven months after the flood, many homes are still uninhabitable and the community is overwhelmed by the sheer volume of remaining debris.

Uncertainty with few options is adding tension to an already-stressed community. More than a half-dozen homes that were not eligible for any help are the target for the first MDS crews.

Getting volunteers and supplies to the community is a logistical challenge. All people and supplies must be brought across the Queen Charlotte Strait from Port McNeill on a 43-passenger boat to the entrance of the Kingcome River. Everything and everyone then have to be transferred up-river in a smaller jet boat. From the jet boat, people and supplies are transferred to the beach, and supplies are then carried up to the village. Rubber boots and strong arms are essential.

Dawn Nicolson, Kingcome community volunteer coordinator, expresses the appreciation felt for the first group of MDS volunteers. "You have no idea how much your guys' help has meant to us. It has been a light in the darkness," she says. ❧



MDS volunteers Dave Friesen and Eric Penner examine the drywall finishing work they are completing.

MDS STORIES

MDS PHOTO BY GERALD EPP



Soil is dumped into the containers that will both protect property along the Louisiana Gulf Coast from storm surges and act as raised-bed gardens.

‘Military fortifications’ now used for peaceful purpose

BY BRIAN K. PIPKIN
Mennonite Disaster Service

Cage-like baskets used for military fortification during warfare are now being used by residents to help sustain their way of life on the marshes of the Grand Bayou, La. The British-made baskets are being used to create elevated gardens.

“Our native plants are dying due to salt water intrusion,” says Rosina Philippe, a Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) homeowner. “It is important for our community to preserve and protect our future, and we believe these raised bed gardens will accomplish that.”

During the 2010 oil spill that severely impacted the Gulf Coast, MDS asked local residents, “How can we help?” They

responded with a project their community independently initiated and designed prior to the oil spill—the raised bed project.

Prior to the oil spill, coastal erosion and soil pollution already limited the coastal people’s ability to grow healthy gardens. The oil spill, however, made the issue of food vulnerability and sustainability an ever-increasing priority.

Many residents are now looking to substitute their seafood diet with plant food. Not knowing the extent of the damage to the local fishery and the health dangers it presents, many in the fishing community are proactively looking for healthy alternative food sources. Raised bed gardens are

one way to improve their food quality and help them move toward self-sustainability.

“If our seafood diminishes, we can’t provide for our community and we will need an alternative food source,” says Philippe. Their inability to provide for their families and neighbours is not acceptable to Philippe. “We don’t want to go outside our community for food. We want to be self-sufficient and self-sustaining,” she says.

Ruby Ancar, a long-term resident of the Grand Bayou community, decided to stay away from local seafood. “I am not eating the seafood,” she says. “I don’t know what the long-term effects will be, but I am not willing to take that risk.”

Ancar hopes the gardens will reduce her monthly grocery expenses. “The raised-bed gardens that surround my house will help me with my grocery bill, especially since our seafood quality has been threatened.”

Ancar’s home, the first house repaired by MDS following 2005’s Hurricane Katrina, is serving as the pilot project for the elevated gardens. “So far I’ve planted mustard seeds

MDS STORIES

and after winter my goal is to grow tomatoes, bell peppers and eggplants,” she says. “I’m looking forward to spring when I can start planting my vegetables and fruit trees.”

The baskets—that each hold a cubic

metre of soil and are fastened together by a chain-link fence—have two primary functions: to act as self-sustaining gardens and to protect Ancar’s land from debris build-up during storm surges. ❧

MDS ‘rebuilding families’ in Central Tennessee

STORY AND PHOTO BY SCOTT SUNDBERG

Mennonite Disaster Service

Homeowner Andy Plank has described several times to Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) volunteers serving in and around Lyles, Tenn., how flooding took over everything in his family home: “The water rose rapidly. When we opened the back door, water rushed in—knee deep!” The water took away an old desk once owned by Billy Graham, as well as virtually everything else the Planks owned.

“But,” Plank interjects, “it’s a Godsend to see people come into our county to help people. Because of you all, we’re going to come home soon.”

MDS started working in Lyles last November and is currently working on nine properties. People whose homes were never before considered to be in a flood zone were still greatly impacted.

“The Planks lost everything in their house due to the floods, and the insurance

was not enough to repair their house,” says Peter Schroeder of Saskatoon, Sask., the current MDS project director in Lyles.

MDS is coordinating with a local contractor on the Plank house, as it was the only financially feasible way to undertake the project. “It’s been a good fit,” Schroeder notes as he tours the house and talks with the contractor.

Over coffee on a snowy morning, MDS project leaders discuss the finer points of insulation as volunteers prepare to work on four houses. One of the houses belongs to Dennis Farris, a disabled Army veteran.

For Farris, MDS was the only way he could get his house repaired. “I don’t have no family at all—period,” Farris says as he helps as best he can the volunteers crawling under his house adjusting and strengthening the floor supports. “I had flood insurance, but the insurance company said I

didn’t have any damage.”

But later, when the local long-term recovery committee came to inspect his house, the damage to the floors, flooring and supports was evident.

“The flood raised a lot of the pre-existing building issues,” Schroeder explains.

To stretch their dollars, MDS is using some surplus materials left over from another job. Despite the widespread impact on central Tennessee, MDS has only received a little over \$4,000 for this project and 33 cases remain open.

“The work is plentiful and so is the supply of volunteers, but the money needed to keep the project going is short,” says Kevin King, MDS executive director. “It is another one of those disasters that got overshadowed in the news.” ❧

/// Briefly noted

MDS cuts budget to reflect new realities, original vision

LITITZ, PA.—Reflecting shifts in disaster response needs, budget challenges and a renewed emphasis on the organization’s original vision, Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) has eliminated four staff positions in the Lititz binational headquarters as part of overall budget cuts. Four staff positions in Manitoba and one in B.C. continue, although the position of one staff person in Manitoba is not being filled while on a one-year maternity leave. The organization is also cutting back on expenses in the field. Executive director Kevin King says MDS will engage local partners to share some on-site disaster response project costs, reflecting a traditional pattern for MDS work, where the local community provides the support and MDS provides the volunteers. MDS will also increase efforts to invite churches and other donors to give. King says he is optimistic for MDS’s future, and also feels deeply for the people affected by the job-cutting decisions. “Each person’s contribution to MDS has been important,” King stresses.

—Mennonite Disaster Service



Insurance companies did not recognize the flood damage to the Lyle, Tenn., home of Dennis Farris, a disabled Army veteran.

Sand dams mitigate against climate change

MCC supports practical approaches to stop desertification in Africa

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

Climate change is being felt in sub-Saharan Africa as torrential rains give way to long periods of drought. Compounded by over-grazing, desertification is rampant

/// Briefly noted

Hope Mennonite at work in the community

NORTH BATTLEFORD, SASK.— Hope Mennonite Fellowship in North Battleford recently became involved with a local drop-in centre, Cornerstone Outreach, that uses the collaborative efforts of five different churches in the city. Several people from Hope Fellowship serve lunch at the centre three days a week. “We’re up to about 40 people now,” says Gerhard Luitjens, pastor of Hope Fellowship, speaking of the people who come to eat at Cornerstone. Hope Mennonite has set up a board to help with donations to the drop-in centre, since the church is able to issue tax receipts. The money goes through the church’s books, explains Luitjens. The church, with an average Sunday attendance of 25 to 30 people, also helps at the local thrift store that is co-owned together with the Hoffnungsfelder churches from Mayfair, Glenbush and Rabbit Lake. The dedicated small congregation is also involved with refugees; it recently welcomed a second Colombian family, adding three more refugees to the family of five that arrived last October.

—BY KARIN FEHDERAU

in countries like Kenya.

Enter Joshua Mukusya of the Utooni Development Organization. For 33 years he has been helping communities of farmers and tribes of Masai herders to stop the relentless destruction of their lands. Begun with the encouragement of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), his work is now independent, unfettered by co-dependency. While MCC continues to add funding for materials, the education, work and upkeep are all in the hands of Kenyans.

In a stop at Conrad Grebel University College last month while on a cross-Canada conversation sponsored by MCC, Mukusya described the simple technology. Cement and rebar dams are built on bedrock across rivers. In time, the area behind the dam is filled with run-off sand. This sand holds water and allows it to sink into the soil

around the sand dam, raising the water table, making for better crops, and allowing locals to take water from behind the dam for both human and agricultural uses.

After the dams, trenches and terraces are then dug along hillsides and river banks to hold more water from running into the river. These are planted with trees and gardens, both for local use and for sale in markets.

In 2010, more than a thousand kilometres of terraces were dug, he said, showing photographs of mostly women doing the work. Over the past 33 years, 1,440 sand dams have been built, protecting approximately 25 percent of the areas needing reclamation.

As Mukusya noted, better water and food supplies results in more girls being in school. While water is more available, the Utooni Development Organization is also encouraging the growth of drought-resistant crops that will hold the soil even during prolonged droughts. While he said that “Africa has enough water,” more of it comes in deluges than as run-off; each deluge can wash away up to 250 tonnes of soil per hectare.

In response, Lowell Ewert, director of the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies at Grebel, noted that this is good news on the climate-change front, pointing out that the people involved in these projects are independent, and have hope and a sense of community without needing continued foreign involvement or costly technologies. //



Joshua Mukusya of the Utooni Development Organization talks with Laura Dyck, an international development student at the University of Waterloo, about the role sand dams and drought-resistant crops play in stopping desertification in Africa.

'Go to the other's table'

A Muslim perspective on multicultural communities

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
BADEN, ONT.

The belief that Muslims have long been part of Canada's pluralistic society was central to an address given by Idrissa Pandit, founder and coordinator of Muslim Social Services of Kitchener-Waterloo, a member of Interfaith Grand River, to 150

people gathered at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, last month for the church's third annual Peace and Justice Community Breakfast.

Entitling her talk, "Building a multicultural community: A Muslim perspective," Pandit said she prefers the term "pluralistic" to "diversity," believing the former suggests an "active seeking of understanding across lines of difference." This is different than mere tolerance of the other, she said, which can easily turn to feeling threatened when the "others" increase in number or visibility.

CPT vigil draws attention to 'Islamophobia'

STORY AND PHOTO BY REBECCA JOHNSON

Christian Peacemaker Teams
TORONTO, ONT.

"We don't refer to the Ulster Unionists as Protestant terrorists, nor the Irish Republican Army as Catholic terrorists, but the media is full of reference to 'Islamic terrorists.' This rhetoric incites prejudice and violence against Muslims, and must stop!"

With these words, Annie Hyder, a Muslim student at Ryerson University, addressed an interfaith candlelight vigil in Toronto earlier this year. The vigil provided an alternative voice to a nearby support rally for the English Defence League (EDL), a British right-wing group responsible for a wave of violent anti-Islamic street protests in the United Kingdom since 2009. The EDL support rally, believed to be the first in Canada, was organized by the Jewish Defence League (JDL) Canada at the Toronto Zionist Centre.

In alliance with the 20-person vigil organized by members of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) and members of the CUPE Local 3903 First Nations Solidarity Working Group, approximately 50 members of Anti-Racist Action (ARA) Toronto demonstrated directly outside the Zionist centre.

Jewish voices were heard at both the vigil and the demonstration. Jason Kunin of Independent Jewish Voices said, "The JDL is a violent extremist group, and has no place in the Jewish community."

In addition to concern about the "Islamophobic" nature of the rally at the Zionist centre, CPTers expressed consternation about the police response to the Anti-Racist Action demonstration. "Without provocation on the part of the ARA, I saw eight mounted police charge and drive them to the opposite side of the road," reported demonstrator Julián Gutierrez Castano.

Police arrested four demonstrators, including two who were videotaping the demonstration. Police released both videographers without charge, and returned one of their cameras after erasing the contents.

With signs proclaiming "Yes! to our common humanity," and "No! to Islamophobia," the value of the vigil may lie most in bridgebuilding across racial, religious and ethnic identities, CPT believes.

To that end, five Muslim women passing by joined the vigil near its end. "Thank you for doing this," said one. "It's very compelling to see people here who are not even Muslim literally braving the elements for this cause." ❧



Christian Peacemaker Teams helped organize a vigil in downtown Toronto calling Torontonians to say "No! to Islamophobia."

Pluralism, on the other hand, “is an encounter of commitment with respect,” she said.

It is not “ghettoization,” or dialogue as an act of charity, that helps the majority feel better about themselves, Pandit said. Rather, it is dialogue and engagement, and an embrace of difference. She said she has found that an engaged dialogue has built compassion in her and strengthened her faith—as she learns about the faith of others—and helps her to celebrate a common humanity.

To engage in such dialogue, though, participants must acknowledge their own fear, see God’s creation in every human being, and embrace change, Pandit said. Quoting from the Qur’an, she claimed that Allah made humankind from a single male and female, and made humanity into many nations and tribes, but that humankind “is nothing but a single nation.”

Because of this, pluralism and mutual respect are inherent to Islam, she said.

Pandit told the story of Malcolm X, founder of the African-American-only Nation of Islam. Highly prejudiced against



Keynote speaker Idrissa Pandit, left, visits with Robert and Anne Thayler at Steinmann Mennonite Church’s Peace and Justice Breakfast last month. Pandit spoke on ‘Building a multicultural community: A Muslim perspective.’

any but his own race, he was converted to pluralism when he went to Mecca on pilgrimage, she said. There, mingling with Muslims from every nation and race, and

united in faith, he came to understand Allah’s desire for pluralism.

Pandit also reiterated the oft-made point that the Qur’an calls Jews and Christians “people of the book” and fellow followers of the same God, so Christians should not be troubled by Muslims.

But media stereotypes, accompanied by fearmongering on the part of some Christians and Muslims, has led to reason being crippled by fear, she said. She said that her desire is to create in the Waterloo Region a harmonious community through dialogue and working together.

Robert Thayler, a local retired United Church minister with cross-cultural experience working in Botswana, was asked to respond to Pandit’s presentation. He drew attention to the need for the majority in Canadian culture to give up their power and privilege, to “get up from their table and go to the other’s table.” Too often, he said, those in the dominant culture feel that they should not “bother” others. But he encouraged those present to get to know their neighbours, invite themselves to their homes, and get over their fear of “the other.”

Proceeds from the breakfast were divided between Muslim Social Services of Kitchener-Waterloo, Ont., and the inter-faith bridgebuilding program of Mennonite Central Committee Ontario. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Web hosting services getting greener

WINNIPEG, MAN.—Mennonite Church Canada just got a tiny bit greener, thanks to its Internet service provider, Peaceworks Computer Consulting of Waterloo, Ont. Peaceworks began investigating green energy options for the company’s Internet servers when clients, including MC Canada, began inquiring about alternatives, says Jason Hildebrand, Peaceworks’ remote services manager. Starting this year, the company will purchase one unit of certified renewable energy for every unit of energy its web and e-mail servers consume. Certified renewable energy is generated from renewable resources, and is injected back into the power grid. Peaceworks presently purchases Internet server space in Ontario, New Jersey and Missouri, where electrical energy sources include nuclear and fossil fuel. Under present market conditions, renewable energy costs more than energy from traditional sources, but those costs can have a pay-off. “By purchasing these credits, we are increasing demand for renewable energy,” says Hildebrand. “If lots of people vote with their money, we could increase green energy supply.” The increased cost for Peaceworks is anticipated to be about 0.75 percent, a cost it won’t be adding to customer invoices.

—Mennonite Church Canada



Jason Hildebrand, remote services manager for Peaceworks Computer Consulting.

GOD AT WORK IN US

More than making a profit

BY KARIN FEHDERAU

Saskatchewan Correspondent
SASKATOON, SASK.



Paul Tiessen answers the phone with a breathless rush of words. It's 8:30 on a Wednesday morning and already he's running to keep up.

Tiessen, 56, owns Action Office Interiors, an office supply store in Saskatoon that puts Staples to shame. It's where people go to shop when they want quality that will last. That's where First Mennonite Church went to buy an office chair for its pastor. Eight years later, it looks the same as the day it was purchased.

Having been in business for 27 years, Tiessen got his start as a teenager working in a family-owned enterprise. When one member of that family went out on his own, he invited Tiessen to partner up with him in selling used office furniture. "He had the money. I did the work," jokes Tiessen.

Still, there's more to the man than just making a profit. He strives to put feet to his faith and has put thought into what that means for him in a daily work environment. "I try to conduct business in a way that would be Christ-like; a reflection of my Christian values," he says.

But he doesn't make a point to push his beliefs on others. He says his employees



Tiessen

know where he attends church and what he believes, and he encourages them not to use Sundays for catch-up work. "Sometimes I struggle [with thinking] should I do more?" he admits. "Hopefully [my faith] comes out in how we treat our staff and suppliers."

Being a husband and father means knowing the importance of balancing business with family. It's also an idea he's given some thought to. "When you run a business, it's with you 24 hours a day," he says. "You can't get away from it."

But he made a point to spend quality time with his children while they were

Tiessen still made time to share his blessings with others. He put nine years into the Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) board and still believes strongly in the organization's mission. "For business people, professionals, it's a great organization," he says, adding that he got more out of it than what he put in.

Sometimes business owners face the stereotype of always being available to donate to the current cause. The church looks at them and sees an open wallet. Does that bother him? "I think that's natural," he says. "I don't take it personally."

Tiessen wonders aloud if business owners should take the approach that,

[Paul] Tiessen wonders aloud if business owners should take the approach that, since they have the wealth, they are almost obligated to give. 'I think its part of our responsibility,' he says.

growing up. "The reality is, a decision [between family and business] has to be made," he admits, but he felt the support of his family nonetheless, as he strove to stay connected to his wife and children through the busy years of raising kids.

Despite his multiple commitments,

since they have the wealth, they are almost obligated to give. "I think its part of our responsibility," he says.

Still, he struggles with the downside of business. "We've made lots of mistakes in business," he says, knowing that sometimes he has to make decisions that aren't popular.

When the local economy is booming, other business is attracted to the region. That adds up to more competition. "We're fighting imports now," he says. "It's cheap, and how do you deal with that?"

One gets the feeling after chatting with Tiessen, that he's not sure if he has succeeded in this walk. His doubts keep him humble and constantly pondering the truths he's been taught in order to apply them in his life every day. ☺

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A thousand cranes to inner peace

Pastor uses origami to help recover from concussion

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
NEW HAMBURG, ONT.

It began as a summer activity suggestion in Mennonite Publishing Network's Gather 'Round material in 2008, which Nith Valley Mennonite Church was using for intergenerational activities.

Inspired by the story of Sadako Sasaki, a Japanese girl who tried to stave off her death from leukemia—the result of

to pressure on the back of his head, varying levels of depression, agitation and irritability, along with an inability to concentrate.

Folding cranes became part of his coping and healing strategy. He would fold them at church when he wasn't on the podium, or in the morning when he came in to work, to reduce anxiety and agitation, and

While the cranes symbolize world peace, his prayer became, 'God, give me peace.'

radiation from the atomic bombing of Hiroshima during World War II—by making one thousand origami (folded paper) cranes, many people now fold a thousand cranes and send them to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum as a prayer for world peace. By the spring of 2010, the congregation had folded about 100 cranes.

Enter Pastor Matthew Isert-Bender. While playing baseball in the local church league last summer, he reached down to catch a ground ball hit along the baseline. The base runner's knee connected squarely with Isert-Bender's head, knocking him over.

He didn't lose consciousness, but suffered a low-grade concussion. A marathon runner, the fit Isert-Bender had recently finished two major races and noticed little long-term effects from the collision. Not until he began to ramp-up his training for his next race about four weeks after the injury did he notice that something was wrong. After a run, he had a panic attack, but wrote it off as having pushed himself too hard and on the humidity that afternoon.

Soon he tried running again, only to have repeated symptoms, including sensitivity

to focus and develop a peaceful centre.

Leaders in the congregation were made aware of his situation and supported him in his healing process. While the cranes symbolize world peace, his prayer became, "God, give me peace." Besides folding cranes, he also sought medical attention and the services of a masseuse, counsellor and spiritual director. Isert-Bender celebrates that he made it for 38 years without any more serious injuries, but he has also learned that he dare not push himself as hard as he used to do.

In retrospect, he now sees that pastoring, parenting and working as a counsellor, as well as running, were too much. He's come to appreciate his father's example more. "There was always time for another cup of coffee, even if there was hay to bale and rain in the forecast," he says of his dad.

He's trying to sit more, focus on one thing and enjoy the food he eats, and he



Matthew Isert-Bender sits in his office at Nith Valley Mennonite Church, New Hamburg, Ont., in February, with a thousand origami cranes, 900 of which he folded during his healing process following a concussion while playing church league baseball last summer.

has acquired a new depth of spiritual practice. It has been a long, slow climb back to his pre-concussion form, although at the end of February Isert-Bender wasn't sure if he was all the way back, despite the fact his doctor has given him the go-ahead to resume marathon racing.

His need to do origami has diminished, though, and he is sending the thousand cranes off to Japan, adding his hope for peace to the world's need for peace. ❧

ARTBEAT

FILM REVIEW

A clear statement about stuttering

The King's Speech.

Director: Tom Hooper. Writer: David Seidler. Starring Colin Firth, Geoffrey Rush and Helena Bonham Carter. A See Saw Films/Bedlam Production, 2010. Rated PG (coarse language).

DVD/ Blu-ray release date: April 29.

REVIEWED BY ERIN WEAVER

It is a hard thing to live with as much fear as Albert (Colin Firth) harbours. But it is especially difficult when you are a royal. For Prince Albert, later to become Great Britain's King George VI, the familiar fears of authority figures, childhood bullies and judgmental crowds are made all the worse by his debilitating stammer.

When the prince gives an especially embarrassing speech on behalf of his father, King George V, a speech comprised mostly of gulps and silence, he and his wife Elizabeth know they must take action. Elizabeth (Helena Bonham Carter) finds a speech therapist that may just do the trick. Lionel Logue (Geoffrey Rush), an eccentric has-been actor from Australia, is known for his "unorthodox and controversial" treatment of speech impediments. His odd manner and penchant for delving into the personal life of his patients pushes Albert's royal buttons.

With his older brother shrinking from his kingly calling and another world war brewing on the horizon, Albert may be forced to overcome his speech impediment and the fear beneath. As the "king's speech" draws nearer, it is Albert's friendship with Logue that brings the biggest transformation in the prince, transcending the royal divide and offering him support as he has never known before.

Director Tom Hooper manages to make what could have been a formulaic story of underdog triumph into an offbeat, tender study of responsibility, courage and friendship. Although set in the stiff, proper world of British royalty, filled with symbolism

and significance, *The King's Speech* shows a struggle familiar to "commoners" as well, and illustrates some simple but profound truths of what it takes to overcome human fear.

The script, written by David Seidler, who overcame his own stuttering as a young man, follows a feel-good Hollywood trajectory, in which the hero finds in himself the strength to beat the odds and attain the public's good graces. The story is reminiscent of many sports films, in that Logue acts as the wise and loyal coach pushing

Albert to greatness.

In the most crucial moments of the film, it is Albert's helplessness and utter dependence on Logue that stands out the most. For Christians, this message of dependence is a familiar, although important, one.

The respective quirks of the two main characters play off of each other beautifully, turning a movie mostly about two men talking into an enjoyable and intricate story filled with witty banter, humour and depth.

On the down side, the film resorts at times to the formulaic friendship narrative, with the token break-up/make-up plot device. The creators also could have made much more use of Bonham Carter's eccentric talents, giving her character more dimensions than the devoted wife role offers. On the whole, though, these flaws are as forgivable as a few stuttered words uttered by a reluctant king. ❧

Erin Weaver is a fourth-year student at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Man. The review was originally written for a film, faith and popular culture class assignment. The King's Speech won four Academy Awards for best picture, director, original screenplay and actor.

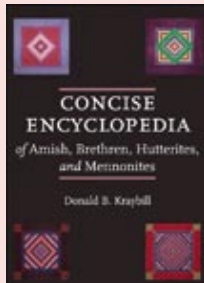


Colin Firth stars as Prince Albert/King George VI in the Academy Award-winning film, *The King's Speech*.

/// Briefly noted

New encyclopedia of N.A. Anabaptists released

ELIZABETHTOWN, PA.—Author Donald B. Kraybill illuminates the wide variety in the Anabaptist world in the newly released Concise Encyclopedia of Amish, Brethren, Hutterites and Mennonites. Published by Johns Hopkins University Press, the compilation is the only volume to provide a broad overview of Anabaptists in 17 North American countries. Containing 340 succinct entries, the encyclopedia covers topics of historical, social and religious significance, including martyrdom, *rumspringa* (a period of adolescence for some Amish groups at the end of which the youths either choose baptism and remain in the church, or leave the community), and gender roles. The entries are supplemented by tables, maps and diagrams, as well as a comprehensive bibliography—all designed to help students, journalists, scholars and general readers understand Anabaptist groups, and direct them to reliable, relevant sources of additional information. The book also presents the first-ever directory identifying and describing all North American Anabaptist groups. Totalling more than 1.3 million men, women and children, North American Anabaptists are found throughout Canada, Central America, Mexico and the U.S., and include more than 200 different groups with approximately 810,000 baptized members. Kraybill, senior fellow in the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown College, is an internationally recognized scholar on Anabaptist groups.



—Elizabethtown College

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MEDA PHOTO



An employee of the APPBOSA co-operative prepares bananas for shipping to customers in Europe and North America.

MEDA software goes bananas

BY WALLY KROEKER

Mennonite Economic Development Associates

If you buy a bunch of fair trade or organic bananas, you may get a product with a hidden stamp from Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA).

MEDA has helped co-operatives in Peru to streamline their certification procedures to maintain the rigorous requirements of fair trade and organic distributors, and thus gain a premium price.

One of the cooperatives, called APPBOSA, comprises 300 banana farmers, each with less than a hectare of land. It used to sell its bananas to a multinational fruit corporation, but decided to try a different route when the company couldn't use all of its fair trade production.

Now it sells directly to fair trade buyers in Europe and North America, and receives an additional premium of \$1 per box. Recent dividends brought APPBOSA more than \$600,000.

Members of the co-operative decided to use the money to upgrade equipment,

such as a conveyor system of cords and hooks that travels through the trees and reaches into all the small farms to bring the bananas back to the central packing shed. Some of the dividend also went for road improvements and a health-insurance system for the farmers and their families.

MEDA's role was to install its Agromonitor software, a tracking system to manage production and organic certification, and to train staff of the co-op. The system greatly simplifies the complex process of documenting the various logistical steps required to maintain certification standards required by the fair trade and organic industries.

In the past, says Jerry Quigley, director of MEDA's production-marketing linkages department, an auditor would visit the co-op on a regular basis and spend a week analyzing mounds of paper documents. "This program tries to get them into an easy-to-approve database," he says. ▄

Calendar

British Columbia

May 28,29: Columbia Bible College Library and the Mennonite Historical Society of B.C. present the Walter Ratliff film, *Through the Desert Goes Our Journey*; in the CBC chapel; (28) at 7 p.m.; (29) at 2 p.m.

Alberta

May 27-28: A theological studies event featuring David Miller of AMBS, at Sylvan Lake Pentecostal Retreat Centre. Hosted by the Congregational Leadership Committee of MC Alberta. For more information, call Jim Shantz, conference minister at 780-921-2420 or e-mail JimShantz@live.ca.

June 8: Heritage retreat at Camp Valaqua. Speaker: Abe Janzen, MCC Alberta director. Music by Corpus Christi Choir. For more information, call Kurt Janz at 403-271-7477.

June 11: Camp Valaqua hike-a-thon fundraiser. Location TBA. For more information, call 430-637-2510 or e-mail valaqua@xplornet.com.

Saskatchewan

May 19: Women in Ministry luncheon, at Wildwood Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

May 24-26: Continuing education course on missional preaching at Wildwood Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, with Allan Rudy-Froese.

June 10-11: MCC Relief Sale at Prairieland Park, Saskatoon.

June 24,25: RJC musical performances of Honk and alumni decade reunions.

July 17-22: Natural Building School, at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

Manitoba

May 12-14: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate senior high musical.

May 18: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate work day.

June 1: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Grade 7 to 9 spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

June 2: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Grade 10 to 12 spring concert, at Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

June 5: MCI Saengerfest; worship at 10:30 a.m.; concert at 2 p.m.

June 6-24: CMU's third annual Canadian School of Peacebuilding.

Ontario

May 7: Shalom Counselling Services fundraising breakfast at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, from 8:30 to 11 a.m. Keynote speaker: Brice Balmer. Topic: "Addictions are among us; what can we do?" To reserve tickets, call 519-886-9690 by May 2.

May 7: Grand Philharmonic Chamber Choir presents "Springtime Choral Potpourri: Food and music cabaret," at the Delta Hotel, Kitchener, 7:30 p.m. For more information, or to purchase tickets, call toll-free 1-800-265-8977.

May 7, 2001: DaCapo Chamber Choir presents "A World of Colour: Exploring and exploding the colour palette: tradition meets the present," at St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Kitchener; 8 p.m. Includes the premiere of a new commissioned piece by Gerard Yun. For more information, or for tickets, call 519-725-7549 or visit www.dacapochoir.ca.

May 9: Spring seniors retreat at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp and Retreat Centre. Theme: "Building relationships globally and locally." Keynote speaker: Allan Sauder of MEDA. Intergenerational panel discussion on "Integrating persons into the life of the church." Registration deadline: May 2. For more information, call 519-625-8602.

May 13: Canadian Bible Society, Kitchener-Waterloo Branch, annual banquet, featuring Vessels of Honour southern gospel quartet, at Waterloo North Presbyterian Church, Waterloo, at 5:30 p.m. For tickets, call 519-746-7341.

May 14: Maple View and Crosshill Literary/MYF Reunion for those born before 1951, at Maple View Mennonite Church, Wellesley. Fellowship at 4 p.m.; fundraising dinner for Maple View's building fund at 5 p.m. RSVP by April 30 to 519-656-2946 or mvmchurch@cyg.net.

May 14: Menno Singers present "Lift Every Voice and Sing" a fundraiser for Menno Homes, at Floradale Mennonite Church, at 7:30 p.m.

May 14: Third annual Paddle the Grand fundraiser for Silver Lake

The screenshot shows the website for Canadian Mennonite Magazine. The browser address bar displays <http://www.canadianmennonite.org>. The website header features the logo "CANADIAN MENNONITE" in large white letters on a dark blue background. To the right of the logo are navigation links: "About", "Contact", "Submissions", "Subscriptions", "Editorial/Ad Calendar", and "Donate". Below the logo is a search bar with a "Search" button. A secondary navigation bar contains links for "Articles", "Blogs", "Classifieds", "Yellow Pages", "Church Events Calendar", and "Past Issues". The main content area is mostly blank, with a large text overlay at the bottom that reads: "Check online for longer versions and video clips of stories that appear in print" followed by the website URL www.canadianmennonite.org.

Mennonite Camp, from 10 a.m. to noon.

May 14: Silver Lake Mennonite Camp 50th anniversary celebration, at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit slmc.ca.

May 14: The New England Youth Chamber Ensemble performs at the Waterloo Luther Village auditorium, at 7 p.m.

May 15: House of Friendship's Trek 4 Kids, starting at MCC Ontario office, Kent Ave., Kitchener, at 2:30 p.m. Hike and bike the Iron Horse Trail and raise money to send kids to summer camp. For more information, call House of Friendship at 519-742-8327.

May 15: The New England Youth Chamber Ensemble and storyteller Jack Dueck present a worship service of music, song and story, at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, at 9:45 a.m.

May 29: Ontario Mennonite Bible School and Institute Reunion, "Celebrating the vision through our memories," at Mannheim Mennonite Church, from 2 to 6 p.m. Bring a potluck lunch and lawn chair. For more information, call Lester Kehl at 519-669-0553.

May 24-27: St. Jacobs Mennonite Church "Quilts for the World" event with guest artist Elizabeth Schneider. Gift shop and appraisals. (24-26) 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; (27) 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Proceeds to MCC.

June 4: Annual "Rhubarb and Rhummage Sale" at Crosshill Mennonite Church, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., featuring "All Things Rhubarb" at the "Rhuby" Café, fresh baking and rhubarb, free children's activities and food, and more. Individuals and groups can also bring their own "rhummage" sale items to the sale, sell them and keep the profits.

June 9: Lebold endowment fundraising

banquet at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, at 6:30 p.m., with Rebecca Slough. For more information, e-mail clichti@uwaterloo.ca.

To ensure timely publication of upcoming events, please send Calendar announcements eight weeks in advance of the event date by e-mail to calendar@canadianmennonite.org.

Classifieds

Simply White Bridal in Edmonton, Alta., offers modest elegance for today's bride. New owner Heidi Jeannotte looks forward to meeting brides and

providing a beautiful dress-shopping experience. Contact 780-818-0274 or simplywhite@simplywhitebridal.ca or visit www.simplywhitebridal.ca.

Employment Opportunities

HOST/HOYESS - MENNONITE GUEST HOME IN CALGARY

Foothills Mennonite Church is seeking a Host/hostess for Guest Home which provides accommodation to adults and families coming into Calgary for health related matters. Living accommodations and food allowance provided. A minimum 2 month commitment is also required. For more information contact Darrel Heidebrecht at dgheidebrecht@shaw.ca or 403-274-4301.

Mennonite Collegiate Institute Gretna, MB

MCI is a provincially accredited independent Anabaptist Christian high school (Gr. 9-12). MCI emphasizes a strong academic program leading toward post-secondary studies, excellent athletic & fine arts programs and a residence program for approximately half of the student body.

MCI invites applications in anticipation of September '11

Residence Staff: Full-time positions (male & female) This is a six-member team whose duties include programming, supervision of resident students, student leadership development, personal mentoring & other co-curricular involvements including athletics & fine arts. Experience and training in youth ministry is an asset.

All candidates must have an active faith & declare commitment to the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*.

Please send a resume and cover letter to:

Darryl Loewen, Principal
Mennonite Collegiate Institute
Box 250 - Gretna, MB - R0G 0V0
principal@mciblues.net



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Celebrating the Vision Through Our Memories

May 29, 2011

2:00 – 6:00

Mannheim Mennonite Church
1494 Bleams Rd. N. Petersburg Ont. Canada

All former teachers and students are welcome to share our memories together.

Bring a potluck lunch and lawn chair. Spouses and Caregivers are welcome. (In case of rain the event will be inside.)

For more information contact:

Lester Kehl • lester_wanda@Boxbrite.com • 519-669-0553
Carol Martin • edmart@auracom.com • 519-846-5459



Rosthern Junior College invites applications for:

RESIDENCE STAFF - full-time positions for residence staff in boys and girls' dormitories beginning August 22, 2011.

For complete job description, please visit www.rjc.sk.ca. Qualified applicants should forward resumes to:

c/o Principal
Rosthern Junior College
Box 5020
Rosthern, SK S0K 3R0
Fax: 306-232-5250
E-mail: administration@rjc.sk.ca
www.rjc.sk.ca

Closing Date: May 13, 2011



SEEKING LONG AND SHORT-TERM MINISTRY WORKERS

In response to invitations by international church partners, Mennonite Church Canada is seeking workers for long-term ministry assignments in:

- Germany
- United Kingdom
- Botswana

Short-term assignments (12 months or less) are also available in various locations.

See www.mennonitechurch.ca/serve for details.

PASTORS

Lendrum MB church invites applications for two pastoral roles. Lendrum is a well-established church in Edmonton, Alberta with an average attendance of 180 people.

We are a diverse intergenerational congregation. We are looking for pastors who:

- are committed to an Anabaptist theology and practice
- have a seminary and/or university education
- support the Mennonite Brethren Confession of Faith and the Mennonite Brethren church polity
- welcome dialogue reflecting a diversity of opinions.

Specifically we are interested in receiving applications from individuals who are interested in two or more of these areas: 1) working with youth and young families, 2) small groups, 3) preaching, 4) adult teaching, 5) local outreach initiatives.

Salary is according to the MB conference guidelines along with generous benefits. For further information, or to apply, please call 780-434-4268 or e-mail to Pastoral Search Committee lmhc@compusmart.ab.ca. All communication and applications will be handled confidentially.



CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Director of Outtatown School of Discipleship

Canadian Mennonite University invites applications for the position of Director of the Outtatown School of Discipleship. The Outtatown program is an educational program of Canadian Mennonite University with a focus on faith formation and experiential and cross-cultural learning.

The Director of the Outtatown program is responsible for all aspects of the program including: the overall design and operation of the program; the development and delivery of instruction in various Canadian and international locations; the hiring and mentorship of team leaders; the cultivation of Canadian and international partnerships.

More information: <http://www.cmu.ca/employment.html>
Call 204.487.3300 Email hrdirector@cmu.ca

ENGLISH MINISTER / ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, located in Abbotsford, B.C., invites applications for a full-time salaried position as ENGLISH MINISTER / ASSOCIATE PASTOR.

Eben-Ezer is a bilingual multi-generational congregation located in the beautiful Fraser Valley. We are seeking an individual who will provide strong biblical, spiritual leadership and guidance for our English segment with a heart for C'n'Cs and young marrieds, who is not afraid to challenge these members to grow.

The successful candidate will have theological training in a Mennonite/Anabaptist perspective and be guided by the Mennonite Confession of Faith. This position is available immediately. Please submit your resume to, or if you require more information, please contact:

The Search Committee
Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church
2051 Windsor Street
Abbotsford, BC V2T 6L9
Phone: 604-850-8422
Fax: 604-850-8455
E-mail: eemc@telus.net



STUDENT INTERN

Summer intern to join the staff of Canadian Mennonite at its Waterloo, Ontario office.

Term: 16 weeks, beginning May 16 and ending September 2.

Compensation: Minimum wage based on 40-hour work week.

Applicant to be trained in basic writing and interpretive reporting with advanced computer skills in the Macintosh platform. Skilled, too, in digital photography and photo journalism, all to the end of developing a youth section in the bi-weekly Canadian Mennonite that references a specialized youth page on the magazine's website. Must be capable of navigating social media and setting up linkages to same. Personal requirements are social skills to develop key contacts with denominational youth leaders and engage in conversation on issues facing Mennonite young people. A team player who has knowledge of and respect for the Mennonite belief system and ethos. One-page written statement of faith required.

Submit resume and statement of faith to:

Dick Benner
editor@canadianmennonite.org
Deadline: May 6, 2011

PHOTO BY NANCY SABO



Four and a half years after Preston Menmonite Church, Cambridge, Ont., committed to a renovation campaign to partially replace the roof; install new auditorium windows, two new furnaces and air-conditioning; enlarge the stage; overhaul the organ; and replace some trees, the church's 90 congregants celebrated on March 20 the shredding of the congregation's \$100,000 mortgage held by the Menmonite Foundation of Canada. Pictured from left to right: Claire Osinkosky, pastor; Doug Martin, Property and Finance Committee chair; Dave Rorke, treasurer; Dave Bechtel, Church Council chair; Marg Martin; Nancy Kinsie and Charles Simmons.

God at work in the Church snapshots

PHOTO COURTESY OF KEVIN BARKOWSKY



Kevin Barkowsky, right, was installed as lead pastor of Kelowna First Menmonite Church, B.C., on March 13, with MC B.C. executive minister Garry Janzen officiating. Barkowsky's wife Deborah, left, and the couple's two daughters, Kadyn and Jana, were also welcomed to the congregation that morning.