

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

June 27, 2011

Volume 15 Number 13

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## EDITORIAL

# A teachable moment

DICK BENNER  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

**H**ave we learned anything about resolving church conflict in the past 50 years?

After reading the painful account of the German/English language dissension resulting in several congregational splits ("Changing the language of worship is a test of love," page 4), our faith community should take a contemplative look at how to redeem this blot on our past.

The language conflict of yesterday, arousing deep passions and inflamed tongues, is not a pretty picture. Professed fellow Christians, abandoning any semblance of "brotherly love," hurled such insulting charges as, "those who are ashamed of their origin and of German or Low German . . . of course, are beneath contempt."

Or worse, those young people who refuse to speak the language of their parents and lack respect for their elders "are truly the most despicably egotistic and false creatures on earth." Or characterizing those abandoning the German language as "mentally deficient" and "intellectually lazy."

Did we really say these cruel things to each other? Apparently we did; the record doesn't lie.

In this instance, in an otherwise biblically driven faith community, some members didn't take seriously the writer of Proverbs, who asserts that the tongue has the power of life and death. It is not a stretch to say, in prophetic hindsight, that a certain spiritual death occurred in some

of our circles over this conflict.

Is there any lesson for us in 2011, any redemption for this dark spot in our history? Yes, if we frame it as a teachable moment for our life together today.

Conflict over many issues has not gone away. The complexities of living out our faith have only increased the chances of fracturing our communities by persons taking sides in controversial issues with careless words and demonization of the "other."

We are divided over sexuality issues, over evangelism versus a social gospel, over worship styles, over political involvement, over a host of social issues involving right to life, religion in public schools—the list goes on.

Are we going to repeat the mistakes of the past by throwing thoughtless words at each other in these debates, levelling charges of faithlessness and posturing a kind of self-righteous anger with those who "don't get it"?

Or will we, keeping the sins of our fathers and mothers of the past in perspective, engage in thoughtful, considerate and prayerful discourse on these matters, allowing that the person with whom we disagree is also on a spiritual journey and seeking to do God's will?

While we have made remarkable progress in communication over the past 20 years with the help of mediators and other professionals in the social sciences, even yet we are tempted too often to resort to the old destructive tactics. Here



is a set of guidelines, created by these professionals, that is applicable for our ongoing discussions at the national, area church and local levels. It would be helpful for each of us to take this pledge to:

- Treat each other respectfully so as to build trust, believing that we all desire to be faithful to Jesus the Christ, keeping our conversations open for candid and forthright exchanges. We will not ask questions or make statements in a way that will intimidate or judge others.
- Share our concerns directly with individuals or groups with whom we have disagreements in a spirit of love and respect in keeping with Jesus' teaching.
- Critique ideas and suggestions, instead of people's motives, intelligence or integrity, refraining from name-calling or labelling during or after the discussion.
- Learn about various positions on the topic that we disagree on.
- Indicate where we agree with those of other viewpoints, as well as where we disagree.
- Seek to stay in community with each other although the discussion may be vigorous and full of tension.
- Urge persons of various points of view to speak, and promise to listen to these positions seriously.
- Seek conclusions informed by our points of agreement.
- Be sensitive to the feelings and concerns of those who do not agree with the majority and respect their rights of conscience.
- Abide by the decision of the majority, and if we disagree with it and wish to change it, work for change in ways consistent with these guidelines.
- Include our disagreements in our prayers, not praying for the triumph of our viewpoints, but seeking God's grace and remaining open to the vision God has for all of us.

## ABOUT THE COVER:

**Young Linus Neufeld clutches a balloon creation made for him at the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Saskatchewan Relief Sale. The sale netted \$73,000 for MCC work around the world, according to coordinator Armin Krahn, who noted that there was more of an effort made to advertise the sale in order to 'spread MCC's purpose and image further.'**

PHOTO: KARIN FEHDERAU, CANADIAN MENNONITE

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**Guiding values:**

-Hebrews 10:23-25

-Accuracy, fairness, balance

-Editorial freedom

-Seeking and speaking the truth in love

-Open hearts and minds in discerning God's will

-Covenantal relationships and mutual accountability

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**EMILY LOEWEN, YOUNG VOICES EDITOR**



*Altona Mennonite Church, Man., began meeting in 1962 as an English-language congregation following a split from Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church.*

# Changing the language of worship

BY BARB DRAPER  
Editorial Assistant

*In his description of this language struggle in *The History of Grace Mennonite Church*, published in 1981, Randolph Lepp explains that, for some Mennonites, their beliefs were virtually merged with the German language.*

Faith Mennonite Church, Leamington, Ont., is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, but its memories are tinged with sorrow as the new congregation grew out of a painful church split. In the late 1950s, Leamington United Mennonite Church, like many other Mennonite congregations, was experiencing deep division about whether the language of worship should continue to be German or switch to English. After years of bitter debate, the families who believed that English was crucial for the faith development of their children began a separate congregation in 1961.

For many German-speaking “Russian Mennonite” churches, the 1950s and early ’60s were very turbulent years, as both sides passionately believed that the church would crumble if their language of choice did not predominate. Although some congregations managed to manoeuvre their way through difficult waters, many congregations divided. In most cases, the new congregations used English as their primary language for worship.

St. Catharines United Mennonite Church, Ont., began an English-language Sunday school class in 1954,

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MENNONITE ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO (THE CANADIAN MENNONITE COLLECTION)



*Faith Mennonite Church, Leamington, Ont., grew out of a painful split from Leamington United Mennonite Church in the late 1950s over whether to continue holding services in German or switch to English.*

# a test of love

scheduled after the worship time. But a significant number of members were opposed to the use of any English—even in Sunday school—and a vote at the subsequent annual meeting in January 1955 determined that the class would be closed down.

Those who had longed for at least some English at church were exasperated and soon began meeting as a new English-worshipping congregation, subsequently known as Grace Mennonite Church. In his description of this language struggle in *The History of Grace Mennonite Church*, published in 1981, Randolph Lepp explains that, for some Mennonites, their beliefs were virtually merged with the German language.

## **Language divided families**

In many families, the older generation believed the use of English meant

abandoning the faith, while the younger generation believed that insisting on German would cause the church to wither.

In 1953, when 24-year-old Frank H. Epp began as editor of a new English-language newspaper, *The Canadian Mennonite*, his father was very displeased. At the time, Heinrich Epp, a minister at West Abbotsford Mennonite Church, B.C., believed an English paper was unnecessary and felt that his son was abandoning his German heritage. In *Side by Side: A Memoir of Parents Anna Enns & Heinrich M. Epp*, 2010, Heinrich's daughter, Linda Epp Sawatzky, writes, "Dad was convinced that rejecting the German language is akin to rejecting one's faith and culture."

On the other hand, Frank believed so strongly in the need for good English-language material for Mennonites that he

was ready to disoblige his father. As quoted in the book, Frank wrote to his sister that if Mennonite young people are not served in English, "we as a Mennonite people cannot continue to exist."

Six years later, a heated debate over the language issue appeared in *The Canadian Mennonite*. An opinion piece by J. D. Neufeld on April 10, 1959, advocated that all Mennonites be bilingual so that German could continue to be used in worship. He suggested that those agitating for use of English are too indifferent and lethargic to teach their children German; they are "ashamed" and have "contempt for the 'mother tongue' and all tradition in general."

Many responding letters to the editor were printed over the next several months. Two weeks after the original piece, Reinhard Vogt argued in favour of the use of English because "the area

around each of our churches, whether in Japan, the Belgian Congo, Paraguay or Canada, is in the mission field and if we are to communicate we must adopt the language which is used around us, and we must adopt it most vigorously in our worship service because here we wish to communicate that which is most important to us."

Typical of the arguments against accepting English were those of Ingrid Schroeder of Winnipeg, Man., who wrote in the May 15, 1959, issue, "A person who does not have the willpower to master his mother tongue will seldom have the strength to hold on to his convictions as a Christian. His attitude towards the Christian faith will tend to be lukewarm, and what kind of asset is such a member to any church organization?"

Her response to the argument that spreading the gospel could be done much better using the language of the surrounding culture was scathing: "It is certainly not to the credit of young people of today that we refuse to speak the language of our parents, but when

we attempt to justify our sloth and lack of respect for our elders by pointing out our duty towards our neighbours, we are truly the most despicably egotistic and false creatures on earth."

Ted Schaefer declared, "I should like to point out to the [Mennonite] Christians under 30 that their knowledge of English does not speak in their favour. If they could not speak English they would be mentally deficient. . . . Those who can preach a sermon in English but not in German demonstrate intellectual laziness and doubt if their God looks favourably on this. And then there are those who are ashamed of their origin and of German or Low German. They, of course, are

beneath contempt."

If comments like these were expressed in the congregations, it is not surprising that painful church divisions ensued.

### **Generational divide deepens**

Many of the older-generation "Russian" Mennonites had arrived in Canada in the 1920s. By the 1950s, their children and grandchildren were often more comfortable in English than German, and they were pushing for at least some English for worship and Sunday school. The older generation resisted strongly and their position was reinforced by German-speaking immigrants arriving throughout the late 1940s and '50s. For generations

*The first generation in Canada after the 1920s also found that the German language helped to maintain a segregated Mennonite religion and culture. It was for this reason that the idea of abandoning the German language felt not only like a rejection of the faith, but virtually sacrilegious.*

## **'New' Mennonite congregations face same issues decades later**

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

**I**n the late 1950s and early '60s, the Conference of Mennonites in Canada saw the inauguration of English-only churches across the country. These were often difficult transitions, as those left behind in the "mother" congregations felt that the new congregations were leaving behind something of the faith as they left behind language and culture.

Today, Mennonite Church Canada has many congregations made up of new Mennonites, immigrants and their descendants who are not from German, Swiss or Dutch stock, including Chinese, Hispanic, Lao, Hmong, Ethiopian, Sri Lankan, Korean and Somali.

These new Mennonite congregations aren't dividing, but they are finding a similar set of feelings as youths and young adults are opting to become Canadian,

responding in English when spoken to in their traditional language, marrying Canadians of different ethnicities, and not practising cultural traditions in their new homes.

Brian Quan of Toronto (Ont.) Taiwanese Mennonite Church's English congregation feels that the church has made the transition to a mature congregation with the advent of an English-only worship service. Quan, who came to the church as a youth, left for a few years after studying at Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, and pastoring an Alliance church, has now returned to pastor the English congregation. He believes that in the earliest stage new congregations worship in the language of their land of



**Quan**

in Russia (Ukraine), the Mennonites had lived in closed communities where their German language kept them separate from the broader culture.

The Mennonites who migrated to Manitoba in the 1870s maintained a German-language culture.

The first generation in Canada after the 1920s also found that the German language helped to maintain a segregated Mennonite religion and culture. It was for this reason that the idea of abandoning the German language felt not only like a rejection of the faith, but virtually sacrilegious.

Meanwhile, the younger generation grew increasingly frustrated by the resistance to adopting English. The experience of the church in St. Catharines was repeated many times across the country. Among the many new congregations that began as churches split over this issue were Grace Mennonite, Brandon, Man. (1954); Grace Mennonite, Steinbach, Man. (1959); Grace Mennonite, Winkler, Man. (1961); Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont. (1961); Altona

Mennonite, Man. (1962); and Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont. (1964).

### **German usage ebbs and flows in churches**

Other congregations struggled on without dividing, as English slowly took over as the language of worship. By 1956, a survey of Canadian Mennonite churches showed that 55 percent were still using German Sunday school material, but across North America there was too little demand to print the material in German. German-speaking churches in Canada worked together to translate and print curricula in German, according to a front-page story in the April 27, 1956, issue of *The Canadian Mennonite*.

In some churches, English sermons were added to the service, with hymns in both languages. Other churches had separate English and German services at different times. Often, Sunday school classes were divided into German and English, but there were also discussions about whether Sunday school was a proper time to teach the German

language.

Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man., began introducing English in 1967, and 20 years later congregants divided into two separate worship services. As the number of German speakers declined, the church decided to end the German services and a final service was held in June 2009.

A few other churches, like Steinbach Mennonite, have had increasing numbers attending the German service due to recent immigrants from South America.

In B.C., West Abbotsford Mennonite Church was slowly adopting English, and so to accommodate German-speaking post-World War II immigrants, Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church began in 1963 as a German congregation. In 1980, Emmanuel Mennonite in Abbotsford began as an English-speaking daughter congregation of Eben-Ezer.

Springfield Heights in Winnipeg is also a congregation that began in 1964 as a German-speaking congregation. These divisions were more amicable than the difficult partings of the 1950s.

origin, eventually move to bilingual services, and finally “mature” into English congregations.

Quan credits founding pastor Winfred Soong’s leadership for the church’s successful transition. “He gave freedom to English growth, not too much direction or control,” he says. “Winfred trusted the youth, the counsellors given to the youth. He said that he didn’t understand the language or the contemporary culture,” which led him to not exert hierarchical leadership over the developing group.

Other models exist:

- First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., which styles itself as a multicultural congregation, has a Spanish worship service on Saturday night and Sunday morning services combining elements of Hispanic and English worship.
- Lao Canadian Evangelical Mennonite Church, Toronto, has two English-speaking preachers in its monthly rotation—Jason Martin and Dale Bauman—and has recently created an intern position as youth minister for Martin as he finishes his bachelor’s degree at Emmanuel Bible College, Kitchener.

- Congregations like Grace Lao Mennonite, Kitchener, are trying to involve their youths and young adults in leadership, worship and service projects to keep them interested.

A number of pastors believe that most of their members see the transition to English as “inevitable.” Their youths will become Canadians, speak mostly English and intermarry with people from other ethnic groups. For some, the grief of this loss of identity is very great, especially if their young adults drift from any church involvement at the same time as drifting from their cultural roots.

Sociologists suggest that these processes are normal for immigrant groups, and that the grief on one side and the feeling that things aren’t moving quickly enough on the other, are normal, too.

The growth in Quan’s congregation is coming from the neighbourhood around the church. He believes that when culture stops being an issue for parents, they no longer have as strong an urge to drive long distances to their cultural congregation, and, instead, look for church homes near where they live.



### **All Mennonites faced language transition**

The transition from German to English seems to have been especially traumatic for Russian Mennonite churches during this period, but all Mennonite migrations have resulted in similar challenges. Harold S. Bender, writing for *Mennonite Encyclopedia* in the 1950s, suggests that refusing to adopt the language of the surrounding area helps a group to maintain its solidarity and its sense of being different from the people around them, but when part of the group becomes assimilated, serious problems result, with at least two generations of confusion and turmoil.

The “Swiss” Mennonite churches first struggled with the language problem more than a century ago. When Mennonite settlers arrived in Ontario in the early 19th century, they worshipped in their Pennsylvania-German dialect, using High German for Bible reading and hymns. By the mid-1800s, Mennonite children were educated primarily in English and soon there were rumblings of dissent against the old-fashioned German-language ways of worship. Language was not the major issue in the Old Order split of 1889, but it was a contributing factor. The “Swiss” Mennonite churches of Ontario gradually adopted English for worship over a couple generations.

It is now more than 200 years since Mennonites settled in large numbers in Ontario. In the smaller communities of Markham and the Niagara Peninsula, the use of the Pennsylvania-German dialect has died out, but the Old Order horse-and-buggy Mennonites in the area northwest of Kitchener-Waterloo have continued to use the German language in their homes and for worship. Their language helps to keep them separate from the rest of society, but their dress, private schools, belief in the importance of tradition, and their strong sense of community also help to foster a distinctive Mennonite identity. It is interesting that the language of instruction in their schools is English and that reading the German Bible and hymnbooks is challenging for them. Their language of correspondence is English.

It is only in closed Mennonite

communities that emphasize tradition that the German language continues. But even the Markham-Waterloo Mennonite Conference, a group that broke from the Old Orders in 1939, is slowly losing the language battle. It began with a mixture of German and English hymns, but now uses only English. The present generation of children includes some who are not fluent in the Pennsylvania-German dialect. This group works together with the Old Orders in running private schools where there is some German language instruction, but it is a challenge to learn the German Gothic alphabet in order to read the old-fashioned German in the hymnbook.

Maintaining an old language for worship runs the serious risk of having people lose comprehension of the words of faith. The Old Order Mennonites have mostly avoided this trap by using the language of the people for preaching and using English for the many times they sing outside of church. They do not discourage the use of English for Bibles in the homes, devotional reading and at school. While fiercely holding on to their traditions, they have accommodated on some things and never categorically



*Grace Mennonite Church, Winkler, Man., first met as an English-language congregation at Winkler Bible School. This facility was built in 1962.*

made language a defining issue for faith.

When the language of worship does change, it is usually a process of many, many years because it means the loss of what is traditional and familiar. The hymns and Scripture passages lose some of their comfort and meaning when they are expressed in what feels like a foreign language. Changing the language of worship can be a real test of love, but 50 years later it is sometimes hard to remember what all the fuss was about. ❧

*Barb Draper is a member of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario and the author of The Mennonites of St. Jacobs and Elmira, Pandora Press, 2010.*

### /// For discussion

1. Have you ever attended a worship service where you didn't understand the language? What was your emotional response? For how many months or years would you be willing to worship in a setting that included a mixture of languages or simultaneous translation?
2. What language or cultural issues has your congregation struggled with? Has language ever divided your congregation along generational lines? Is it inevitable that young people will insist on using the language of the broader culture? How has greater openness to Canadian society influenced our congregations positively or negatively?
3. Why do you think our present Mennonite hymnbooks include songs from a variety of languages and cultures? What are the advantages and challenges of using other languages in worship?
4. How can churches work at helping everyone feel comfortable in worship? What advice would you give to a congregation struggling with an older generation that wants a traditional language and a younger generation that wants to use English?



## 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. Preference will be given to letters from MC Canada congregants.*

## ✉ Following the wrong drummer to Parliament Hill

**THE FIRST IN** Dick Benner’s elections editorials, “Vote your core beliefs,” April 18, page 2, should have spoken to our constituency clearly. It should have delineated the political issues relating to our faith.

“A political lament,” May 16, page 2, summarizes the tragedy of our Mennonite (Conservative) orientation as evidenced not only by the outcome of the recent election, but also by comments made by acquaintances.

We, the Canadian Mennonites, are extremely affected by the right-wing evangelicals in Canada and the United States. I suggest that we are more motivated by the political right than by Jesus. In other words, we follow the wrong drummer.

WALTER QUIRING, SURREY, B.C.

## ✉ Editorial topics violate magazine’s mission statement

**RE:** “A POLITICAL lament,” May 16, page 2.

Your latest editorial has shocked and saddened me. The two events you write about—the recent election of a majority Conservative government and the assassination of Osama bin Laden—are very personal and both are not covered in the mission statement of this magazine. Nothing in this editorial shares the good news of Jesus as mandated in the mission statement.

The other point is that you condemn Prime Minister Stephen Harper for lining up with Jewish groups, but I thank God for giving him the courage to stand with Israel.

The Jewish people today occupy less of the land which God promised them and they are being asked to give up more land. (Maybe God went overboard when he promised them the land that they should occupy.) This will all change during the final war when God takes command and defeats the armies of the whole world, gives the Jews their land back and then punishes the nations and individuals that were hostile to Israel. Peace will finally be upon the earth. Woe to those who did not support Israel.

G. HEINRICHS, CHRISTOPHER LAKE, SASK.

## ✉ Election results leading to erosion of honorable Canadian traditions

**RE:** “A POLITICAL lament” editorial and “Aiming at evil” column, May 16, pages 2 and 13, respectively.

I wish to offer thanks to Dick Benner and Will Braun for their useful and possibly courageous comments regarding the recent Canadian election and Osama bin Laden’s death.

I share Benner’s sadness at Canada’s increasing militarism and shortsighted Middle East policies. For years, Canadians have smugly looked south and pointed fingers at the Americans’ “either you’re with us or you are for the terrorists” Texas-style worldview. How the tables seem to have turned. Now the U.S. has a president that clearly sees the world as complex and nuanced, and Canada now has a prime minister who is prepared to see his—and, it seems, our—world through a lens which seems to have completely forgotten the honorable Canadian traditions of peacekeeping and consensus-building. We are prepared to spend billions on worthless fighter planes and we re-elect with a resounding majority a cabinet minister who openly is contemptuous of Parliament . . . and who is then promptly re-appointed to Cabinet.

I wonder with Braun and Benner where this will end.

Benner correctly points out that the current policies of security and balance of power are out of touch. It’s a pity that neither he nor Braun did not go a bit further in their analysis. Perhaps they were too kind. For those of us who have spent time in other parts of the world, we are aware of the bubble we in North America live in. We create a “reality” that is convenient, self-satisfying and self-justifying. It’s no wonder that we have no clue why people out there hate us when we are so clearly the “good guys.”

For many years, we, as Canadian Anabaptists, rightly or wrongly, took some comfort in being citizens of a country that defined itself outside of the U.S. traditions of expansion and a strong dependence on the military. Seems pretty clear to me, those days are over.

PETER R. ANDRES, CHILLIWACK, B.C.

## ✉ Editorial 'lament' expresses reader's feelings

**THANK YOU FOR** your editorial entitled "A political lament" in the May 16 issue.

I, too, was saddened by the take-out of Osama bin Laden and the celebrations that followed, but have been careful to whom I expressed these thoughts, as I am a Canadian and have not lived through, nor suffered, what Americans have at his hand. I believe that further violence is not the answer, though.

I am an Albertan and this province voted Tory blue almost exclusively. I was not one of those who voted for this government, as I have concerns about the leadership of Stephen Harper as prime minister and his staunch defence of ministers who bend, if not break, parliamentary rules, or who make changes to contracts or agreements after all parties have already signed these documents.

I encourage you to continue to express your concerns about our country, and yours, as you feel led.  
**SYLVIA LAUBER, CAMROSE, ALTA.**

### FAMILY TIES

# Drawing a line

MELISSA MILLER

**T**he decisions we make as parents have long-term implications.

This obvious reality made itself even more clear to me one night recently when we hosted our young adult son and several of his friends. The topic under discussion was wrestling, the made-for-arena-over-the-top-kind, that drives fans to squeal and non-fans to ridicule or bemusement.

One young man gleefully defended such wrestling as playful entertainment, a farce-like re-enactment of the big themes of life: good and evil; struggle, defeat and victory; sex and all its drama. He acknowledged that his parents did not share his passion. Our son agreed with him, to my surprise, saying, "My parents wouldn't let me watch wrestling when I was young." Immediately conscious of the audience—and wanting to appear cool in their eyes—I protested, "Yes, you were."

"No, Mom," my son replied. "I was watching TV with Craig one day. You came into the room and saw it was wrestling and made me turn it off."

A memory clicked into place and I explained, with some energy, "It was that guy who carried the life-size head of a female doll into the ring with him! I was protesting violence against women!"

"It wasn't really violence against

women," the wrestling fan defended. "It was just a gimmick."

For the most part, his friends disagreed with him. For them, the gimmick was too extreme and seemed to promote negative attitudes toward women. The conversation moved on, and I was left to ponder the awesome responsibility of raising children.

Parenting is not for the faint of heart. Along the way we need to make a multitude of decisions, often without the simplistic clarity of a wrestling world, where right and wrong are neatly defined by the cheers of the crowd. (As an aside, I learned there is actually a Christian Wrestling League, based in Georgia, drawing on biblical themes. At the end of a match, God and Jesus are portrayed as making harsh decisions on Judgment Day, with



*The wisdom . . . to 'train children in the right way' is not always readily discerned.*

only one righteous soul making the trip to heaven.) The wisdom of Proverbs 22:6, to "train children in the right way," is not always readily discerned.

We want our children to grow into responsible, mature adults with the values that we hold: Christian faith, compassion, kindness, respect for others

and peaceful responses to conflict. We raise our children in a culture that does not always share these same values. Entertainment—movies, sports and music—is often the flashpoint where the values clash and parents find themselves unsure where to draw the line and where to bend.

My parenting decisions were certainly shaped by my parents. My father, for example, insisted that the volume on the television be muted whenever a beer commercial came on. He wanted to send a cautionary message to his children of the dangers of alcohol. No doubt he took this stance because of his brother's death in a car accident caused by a drunk driver. As a youngster, I thought his prohibition was a little odd and likely ineffective. (Probably similar to how my son viewed the wrestling ban.)

I learned to respect my father's boundary. I was glad that he took a stand, that he communicated his values, that he declared, "Some things aren't right." It's important for children to hear and see

their parents' values, even if it leads to an awkward dinner conversation down the road.

*Melissa Miller (familyties@mts.net) lives in Winnipeg, Man., where she ponders family relationships as a pastor, counselor and author.*

## ✉ Churches need to consider new needs and commitments

RE: “THE SIGNS are clear” column by Willard Metzger, April 4, page 18.

In my 50 years of service in General Conference, national and provincial church leadership structures, I have noticed that often structures grow and multiply on their own merits. Our past tells that conferences began because of the need in local congregations. They joined for clearly defined purposes that couldn't be handled singularly.

These original needs have well been met, but pressing new ones have come up since. I think it would make sense now to have the congregations seriously involved in revising existing structures. The Anabaptist movement certainly was a grassroots movement. Is it expecting too much of our congregations to think deeply in formulating today's real needs and come up with solid commitments of support?

I love the Lord, our church and its heritage. There is no reason for despair if we let God lead us in our congregations and area and national churches.

ERWIN CORNELSEN, VANCOUVER, B.C.

### GOD, MONEY AND ME

# Peace of mind money can't buy

KEVIN DAVIDSON

**Y**ou and Mary run a lemonade stand as 50/50 owners. You opened for business on a handshake. Mary dies. Do you still have a business?

Mary's husband or child may be your new business partner. Do you have the opportunity, obligation or resources to buy them out? If so, at what price and what are the terms?

Are you better off starting your own lemonade stand, or sticking with the challenges of the old one?

What if you die instead of Mary?

Without proper business planning, surviving family members may have to become active in your business, or it may be liquidated or sold to outside parties. Are you okay with this?

Buy-sell agreements can be used by nearly any type of business: corporations, limited liability companies (LLCs) or partnerships. They are not a one-size-fits-all solution. Please consult with your family, tax advisor and lawyer in preparing an agreement before any decision is made. Be sure this arrangement meets

your current and long-term goals.

A buy-sell agreement is a document that determines the value of the shares or business interest, and the process involved, in cases such as:

- Death of a co-owner.
- Disability of a co-owner.
- Retirement of a co-owner.
- Divorce of a co-owner.
- Departure of a co-owner.
- Bankruptcy of a co-owner.



*You opened for business on a handshake. Mary dies. Do you still have a business?*

- A falling out between co-owners.
- Desired sale of shares to a third party.

The method used to value the shares or business interest is the most important part of a buy-sell agreement. No one enjoys over-paying for a business. On the other hand, it is in the owner's best interest to ensure he or she—or a successor—receives fair market value for his or her business interest.

You should get regular independent appraisals of the value of your business interests, especially if family members are

involved. Accurate and fair valuation also fixes the value in the deceased's estate for federal and provincial tax purposes. Some of the ways to purchase a business interest are with:

- An owner's personal funds.
- A company cash flow.
- A sinking fund (business money set aside over time).
- A bank loan.
- Installment payments.
- Life insurance.

The choice is yours: Plan ahead, or take a chance and figure it out when disaster strikes. Please seek professional advice to minimize your potential personal and tax liabilities, and for assistance with finding a cost-effective means to fund the agreement. Business is personal. Don't

wait to discover the cost of failing to plan when you find yourself in business with someone you never chose.

A fully funded buy-sell agreement provides peace of mind money can't buy.

*Kevin Davidson is a stewardship consultant at the Calgary, Alta., office of the Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC). For stewardship education and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit [MennoFoundation.ca](http://MennoFoundation.ca).*



## ✉ 'Sexual inclusivity' article stirs readers, leaders to write

Re: "Sexual inclusivity motion to be presented at national assembly," May 30, page 15.

**HOW DOES IT** happen that the Saskatoon Resolution is "used as a tool to make non-heterosexual people feel excluded," as Ben Borne claims, rather than simply to provide guidance? Society and everyone in our communities need direction; the church serves as "salt" and "light" for that very purpose.

The church's role is to love people into the kingdom and into good behaviour. This was my very first impression of what the church was, and what it did in 1986 (when the resolution was passed). It is so sad that our government has taken a detour from full love

and acceptance by implying that bad or pathological behaviour is acceptable.

It is obvious that same-sex-attracted people are looking for love and acceptance, for a place to carry out the living of their lives. The church, as hospital for sick people, needs to include all of us; we all need to experience the hospitality of God.

**EUNICE YANTZI, TORONTO, ONT.**

**WE ARE ALL** born with an orientation to sin. We all need to deal with our own orientation to sin by repenting of it and bringing it to Christ for forgiveness and deliverance.

I agree with dialoguing, but not fully embracing, because same-sex relationships are sin. I would suggest that all delegates study Romans 1:18-32 and I Corinthians 5 and 6 before the delegate sessions.

### FROM OUR LEADERS

# Life lessons in a garden

HILDA A. HILDEBRAND

**W**hen I was asked to reflect on the joy of serving the church, the word "joy" stuck in my throat. My thoughts immediately turned to the recent challenging conversations and difficult decisions those of us who serve on the General Board of Mennonite Church Canada had to make this year. Instead of "joy," words like "pain" and "loss" came to mind.

Serving always comes more easily when there is a sense of being present for new birth or growth. Yet we all recognize that when serving there can be times of deep sorrow, misunderstanding and a sense of woeful inadequacy. In spite of prayerful discernment and careful processing, individuals are bruised, things are overlooked and outcomes often fall short of what was planned for or desired.

Perhaps, in my longing for joy during these times of drought, I found myself retreating into the garden, a place for all the senses God gave us to be fully engaged:

- A place of stimulation and a place of retreat.

- A place for contemplation and a place of tedious, back-aching labour.
- A place to experience the annual cycle of growth and a place to live with death.
- A place of abundance and a place of disappointment.
- A place to enjoy the scent of lilacs and a place to smell manure.
- A place for the brilliance of wild colours



*Serving, for me, is something like working in a garden, with all its beauty and travail.*

- and a place for quiet sorrows.
- A place to hear birds sing and a place to feel the sting of hail.
- A place to climb trees and a place to hide.
- A place of first fruits and a place of barren ground.
- A place to drink from the well and a place to feel parched.
- A place where the path is evident and a place where the next steps seem uncertain.

In my grandmothers' gardens, there

was much beauty in spring and great abundance in summer; as the autumn leaves fell, the long days of harvest marked a shift that was both sweet and sorrowful. And as winter approached and all was stripped away, only the solid skeletal framework of the garden remained, standing out majestically as the first snow fell. There was a place for all seasons in my grandmothers' gardens.

Serving, for me, is something like working in a garden, with all its beauty and travail. Yes, there are moments of joy and exhilaration at the awesomeness of the Creator's ways. But, mostly, service is

about putting on work clothes and getting messy in the rain or sunshine, heat or snow, working in whatever season we are in. Alongside others on the path, we seek to discern both who God is calling us to become in the soil where we have been planted and what the next steps might be. It's about living in the hope and anticipation of the season of God's promise.

*Hilda A. Hildebrand is the assistant moderator of Mennonite Church Canada and a member of the General Board.*

I am sure we will all find in them different things we all need to repent of. Hebrews 12:1b says, *“Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”*

The church is not meant to make sinners comfortable, but to bring them to forgiveness and deliverance from sin. I know from experience that Christ is able to set the vilest of sinners free. He did it for me.

**JIM MULLET, DRAKE, SASK.**

**WHAT A GREAT** God we have. And this great God loves us, sinners that we are, but hates sin. We, too, should love the sinner, but hate the sin, whether it is cheating, lying, killing, dishonesty, adultery, etc.

As for the Saskatoon Resolution, it is right on. Don't even think about changing it. I am sure that my father-in-law, the late I.P. Friesen, a General Conference (GC) evangelist, and his son, the late Isaac I. Friesen who passed into eternity at the annual GC conference in Steinbach, Man., in 1974, would walk out on your denomination if this subject were to be brought up for discussion.

This motion will divide the church, I am sure. But if you, corporately or individually, endorse the ways of lesbians, gays, bisexuals or transgendered people, your argument is not with the church, but with God.

**JACK W. FRIESEN, ABBOTSFORD, B.C.**

**I VERY MUCH** believe in being a faithful church. But I am at a total loss to understand why we would want to go back to all the pain, anger, separation and churches leaving the conference during our last sexuality discussion and misunderstanding. Are we willing to risk all that again during the proposed discussion on sexuality between September 2012 and March 2013?

As a church, we have a clear statement on sexuality. Marriage is between one man and one women. Can we not just leave it at that? Does this mean that we need to have compassion for those who struggle with sexual issues? Of, course, in the same way we need to have compassion for those who struggle with any issue.

**DICK HILDEBRANDT,  
CAMPBELL RIVER, B.C.**

**MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA'S** leadership body is well aware of the challenges of this and other difficult conversations the church is called to have. That is why the Being a Faithful Church (Parts 1-3) process document was developed: to provide a scriptural and godly guide to help us all undertake a healthy discernment process.

We do, however, take issue with the stated assumption that “[MC] Canada and area church leaders have made a move that points to a shift in values regarding

sexuality within the denomination.”

MC Canada leaders' participation at the Harmony Group meeting does not indicate a shift in values, but rather re-affirms our commitment to remain in “loving dialogue” as promised in the 1986 Saskatoon Resolution. Leaders have put much energy and effort into the Being a Faithful Church Pt. 3 document. On behalf of all leadership, we commit ourselves to listening to as many voices as possible as we begin the four-year process outlined in the document.

The leadership of MC Canada asks readers to pray in love for openness and the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we engage these challenging matters with joy, for it is with joy that the church is called into the service of difficult dialogue.

**WILLARD METZGER / KEN WARKENTIN,  
WINNIPEG, MAN.**

*Willard Metzger is general secretary of MC Canada.  
Ken Warkentin is executive director of MC Manitoba.*

**THE LEADERSHIP OF** the Harmony Group is well aware of the challenges of this and other difficult conversations the church is called to have. That is why the Harmony Group endorses the Being a Faithful Church document (Parts 1-3). We welcome guidance from our national church to help us all undertake a healthy discernment process. We anticipate that our conversations will be bathed in prayer, humility and openness to the Holy Spirit.

We do, however, share Mennonite Church Canada and MC Manitoba's concerns about a statement in this article that “[MC] Canada and area church leaders have made a move that points to a shift in values regarding sexuality within the denomination.”

We welcome MC Canada leaders' participation in the Harmony Group, and see such participation as less a shift in values than a shift in attitude—an attitude that legitimately reflects the “loving dialogue” that is called for in the 1986 Saskatoon Resolution. We are committed to the discernment process as detailed in the Being A Faithful Church Pt. 3 document, and we hope that as broad a spectrum of MC Canada as possible will be involved in this discernment—area churches, congregations, study groups, families and individuals. The leaders in MC Canada and the Harmony Group encourage readers to delve deeply into the Being a Faithful Church process.

**BEN BORNE, SASKATOON, SASK. /  
ERWIN WARKENTIN, WINNIPEG, MAN.**

*Ben Borne is a member of Wildwood Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, and Erwin Warkentin is a member of Bethel Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. Both are members of the Harmony Group.*

## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Bosma**—Sebastian Ezekiel (b. May 26, 2011), to Jessica Morrison and Broek Bosma, Toronto United Mennonite, Ont.

**Gingerich**—Maeva Rae (b. May 31, 2011), to Ben and Bri Gingerich, Zurich Mennonite, Ont.

**Jansen**—Arlo Rudolf (b. May 1, 2011), to Aldin Jansen (North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.) and Lisa (Krahn) Jansen (Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.), in Yellowknife, N.W.T.

**Schmidt**—Quintin James Robert and Evelyn Suzanne (b. May 4, 2011), to Greg Schmidt and Nicole Allison-Schmidt, North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

**Sportack**—Susannah Wren Helen (b. April 26, 2011), to Diedre and Aaron Sportack, Toronto United Mennonite, Ont.

### Baptisms

**Stacy Peters, Alex Heidebrecht**—Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta., June 12, 2011.

**Brendan Cornies, Taylor Hamm**—North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont., May 29, 2011.

**Mark Fisher, Stephanie Kuepfer, Trevor Kuepfer**—Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.

**Madeleine Justina Wichert**—Toronto United Mennonite, May 29, 2011.

### Marriages

**Ashworth/Niemeyer**—John David Ashworth and Trisha Niemeyer, at Rouge Valley Mennonite, Markham, Ont., June 11, 2011.

**Carter/Kropf**—Christina Carter (The Gathering, Kitchener, Ont.) and Darren Kropf (Breslau Mennonite, Ont.), at Breslau Mennonite, April 30, 2011.

**Drinkwalter/Lebold**—Alexandra Drinkwalter and Jonathan Lebold, at Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont., May 28, 2011.

**Keller/Reesor**—Luke Keller and Leah Reesor, at Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont., April 16, 2011.

### Deaths

**Bender**—Gerald, 76 (d. May 27, 2011), Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.

**Braun**—George, 75 (b. March 24, 1936; d. May 8, 2011), First Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

**Friesen**—Cornie P, 78 (b. Dec. 8, 1932; d. May 15, 2011), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

**Friesen**—George, 85 (b. Oct. 25, 1925; d. May 28, 2011), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

**Gingerich**—Paul Kenneth, 46 (b. June 17, 1964; d. May 7, 2011), Zurich Mennonite, Ont.

**Krause**—Jacob, 84 (b. June 2, 1926; d. April 29, 2011), First Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

**Peters**—Elisabeth (nee Dyck), 95 (b. Nov. 13, 1915; d. April 7, 2011), First Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

**Sawatzky**—Gerhard (George), 81 (b. May 10, 1930; d. May 26, 2011), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

**Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones announcements within four months of the event.**

**Please send Milestones announcements by e-mail to [milestones@canadianmennonite.org](mailto: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' Puddle





## LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

# Why I joined the Anabaptist tribe

BY TROY WATSON



A growing number of theologians and emerging faith leaders believe Anabaptists have an important role to play in shaping the future of Christian faith in the new paradigm. With the risk of swelling the tacit denominational pride of all my dear Mennonite friends, I want to share some of the reasons I believe Anabaptist spirituality will increasingly appeal to more and more seekers looking for a faith tribe to journey with in the near future:

- The quiet of the land let their walking do the talking, which is a very refreshing contrast to the more popular, powerful and preachy brands of Christianity.
- Anabaptists value genuine community, healthy relationships and conflict resolution above doctrinal and ideological consensus.
- Mennonite Central Committee.
- Anabaptists do not serve and care for others as a means to an end—evangelizing opportunities—but because serving and caring for others is the right thing to do.
- Anabaptists continue to produce faith and culture pioneers like Edna Ruth Byler, Ernie Regehr and Gene Stoltzfus, to name a few.
- Anabaptists process, discern and make decisions via a community hermeneutic, as opposed to church hierarchy, putting into practice the “priesthood of all believers.”
- Jesus is the centre of Anabaptist faith, as opposed to the cross of Jesus.
- Our academic institutions honour the sincere pursuit of greater understanding over allegiance to official church positions and conventional Christian theology.
- Anabaptists have upheld their peace and justice position from inception

and dared to actually live out the call of Jesus to love our enemies and do good to those who hate, hurt or even kill us.

- Anabaptists view the way of Jesus as a path of practice to live out, more than a set of beliefs to adhere to.

These are some of the reasons I chose to align myself with the Anabaptist tribe, and I am convinced others will find them compelling as well. However, it is the relationships I have developed with the Anabaptist community that have transformed my life, renewed my faith and released me to serve God in a way that is uniquely authentic to the man I am. How I came to journey with Anabaptists is primarily a story about relationships.

*Anabaptists value genuine community, healthy relationships and conflict resolution above doctrinal and ideological consensus.*

I was raised a fundamentalist Baptist, the kind of Baptist that thought other Baptists were going to hell! Shockingly enough, I began questioning things at a young age, and eventually contemplated giving up my faith and sense of call altogether.

When I was 25, my brother Scott told me about Mennonite professors like Tom Yoder Neufeld and Conrad Brunk, whom he had taken courses with at the University of Waterloo, Ont., and who really impressed him. Although he had lost interest in religion, he thought I would resonate with these humble, intelligent, compassionate Christians, and he encouraged me to check out Conrad Grebel College.

I ended up enrolling in Grebel’s master

of theological studies program and found a safe community there to think and explore faith with. I met brilliant theologians like Jim Reimer, who stretched my mind and nurtured my faith.

I recall him approaching me after class one day to encourage me to take a student ministry position at a rural Mennonite church just outside of Waterloo. I thought he was joking, as I was a rebel hippy with hair halfway down my back, piercings and a shaggy beard, and I reeked of cigarette smoke (at the time). I was even more baffled when the Riverdale Mennonite congregation in Millbank offered me the position! I assumed I was the kind of person churches were trying to save—not employ!

At Riverdale, I found my faith and sense of call again. I became part of a loving, healthy community, where I met and married an amazing young woman from a great family who embodied genuine Christian values and practices. People like Glenn Zehr, Brice Balmer, Brian Bauman and many from Bethany Mennonite Church, Virgil, walked with me, encouraged me and disciplined me. There are so many others who have profoundly blessed and shaped my life that I

would love to mention, but this article is already getting too long and sentimental.

My point is, it is the relationships and sense of community I have developed with the Anabaptist tribe that have most profoundly shaped my life and faith. I believe there are many more spiritual seekers looking to journey with people like you, too.

Yet I also believe there are a few things we need to address in order to be the future faith-shapers we are called and expected to be. This will be the topic of my next article. ☸

*Troy Watson is the spiritual leader of the Quest Community, a Mennonite Church Eastern Canada church plant in St. Catharines, Ont.*

## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

## More MC Canada staff changes

*Tim Froese replaces Janet Plenert as head of Witness*

BY DICK BENNER

Editor/Publisher

**T**im Froese, former executive director of Mennonite Church Canada's International Ministries program, has assumed the position of executive secretary of Witness, filling the post vacated by Janet Plenert, who resigned on April 21. Froese's former position has been phased out as part of MC Canada downsizing, and his responsibilities as Mission Partnership facilitator for Latin America have been transferred to colleague Hippolyto Tshimanga.

With his assumption of those responsibilities, Tshimanga's position as Mission Partnership facilitator for Europe, Africa and Latin America will become full-time. He will share the European portfolio with Gordon Janzen, Mission Partnership facilitator for Asia and the Middle East.

Plenert succeeded Robert J. Suderman as executive secretary of Witness, when he became general secretary of MC Canada in 2005. With prior international ministry experience in what is



Plenert

now the Democratic Republic of Congo and Brazil, she received "wide affirmation," according to a staff news release, as she provided overall leadership to Native Ministry, International Ministries and Multicultural Ministry, and worked with area churches in regards to evangelism and church planting.

Plenert also oversaw numerous MC Canada relationships to organizations such as Mennonite Central Committee, Christian Peacemaker Teams, Mennonite Disaster Service, Mennonite Women Canada, Mennonite Men, Mennonite Voluntary Service Adventure and the Global Mission Fellowship of Mennonite World Conference (MWC). Her appointment as MWC vice-president continues.

Some staff in discontinued positions

have accepted alternate or altered roles, and some have declined those offers and will end their employment:

- Vic Thiessen will step into an altered position combining the responsibilities of executive secretary of Church Engagement and the newly created chief administrative officer role. The position of chief operating officer previously held by Thiessen has been eliminated.
- Elsie Rempel's position as director of Christian Nurture will end on July 31. She has accepted a newly created part-time position as Christian formation consultant.
- Norm Dyck completes his role as executive secretary of Church Engagement on June 30.
- Samson Lo will conclude his half-time position as director of Multicultural

Ministry on July 31.

- Anna Rehan will conclude her position as Youth Ministry Facilitator on July 31.
- Val Pankratz, executive assistant of Witness, has declined an altered position, creating a vacancy after July 31.
- Lois Friesen Wiebe, executive assistant to the chief operating officer and general secretary, has declined an altered role. This position will be filled by existing staff.

In addition to these changes, several additional full-time staff have accepted increased responsibilities in their job descriptions, and some staff will increase their time to take on added responsibilities. Unrelated to these reductions, Neill and Edith von Gunten, co-directors of Native Ministries, have retired.

Of these changes, general secretary Willard Metzger says, "We recognize the human impact this has had. I invite prayers for those experiencing unexpected job changes. Despite these changes, our calling as a church remains the same. We will continue to grow leaders for the church, become a global church, and form a people of God." ❧

*From MC Canada staff reports.*

CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY PHOTO



**Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) president Gerald Gerbrandt presents the inaugural President's Gold Medal Awards to Erin Weaver, left, and Rebecca Reesor, right, at this spring's convocation ceremonies. Both graduates achieved a grade point average of 4.0 or more. Weaver, of Red Lake, Ont., graduated with a four-year bachelor of arts degree in international development studies with a minor in biblical and theological studies. Reesor, of Bluevale, Ont., graduated with a bachelor of music degree, with concentrations in performance and music ministry.**

# From Irish Catholic to Mennonite grandmother

*Marg Nally recounts her spiritual path at Waterloo MEDA breakfast*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY  
Eastern Canada Correspondent  
ST. JACOB'S, ONT.

Marg Nally, chair of Mennonite Central Committee Ontario and chaplain at Mary's Place, the Kitchener YWCA's women's shelter, shared her life story at the Mennonite Economic Development Associates breakfast on May 19, wondering how an Irish Catholic became a Mennonite grandmother.

Growing up under the shadow of a convent in Ireland, she learned the daily rhythms of prayer, hearing the bells calling the sisters to pray. The sound of a motorcycle driven by a young red-haired entrepreneur called her to a life in this world.

Nally and her husband Bob eventually travelled to Canada, leaving Ireland's troubles behind them. Settling in southern Ontario, their desires for peace and

justice soon put them into contact with Mennonites.

Drinking from the wells of Vatican II and Latin American liberation theology, Nally appreciated that Mennonites worked with an embedded faith, and so began "a slow and deliberate conversion to Anabaptism," she shared.

In various organizations in and out of the Mennonite Church, Nally has been active in working at a biblical vision of hope. But it was as she preached about this topic one day that she realized her own well had run dry, that she was close to burnout. She returned to the disciplines of her childhood; looking to fill the well, she was drawn back into contemplative prayer, retreats and spiritual direction.

The two faiths continue in her, she said. Prayer and service lead her to work hard, but also to remember that she has "the servant's portion," and that it is God who is responsible for the parts she cannot do.

She closed with the words Augustine from 354 AD: "Sing with your voice and with your heart and with all your moral conviction, not only with your tongue, but with all your life." ❧

## /// Briefly noted

### Bethany seniors complex expansion still up in the air

SASKATOON, SASK.—Bethany Seniors Housing Complex, a large centre for seniors and retirees, continues to struggle forward with its expansion plans against seemingly endless resistance from certain members of the community. The complex, which needs to expand to serve the needs of its residents, held a second consultation for the community recently at a local civic centre, where more than 300 people showed up in a room designed for half that number. The main issue of contention revolves around the green space being presently used by those in the neighbourhood. "There will be no loss of [community] services, just relocation," said Teresa Isaac, executive director of Bethany Manor. In fact, the skateboard park and tennis courts will not be moved. Originally, the agreement with the city was that Bethany Manor would expand on city land with the proviso that it would donate the green space back to the community by incorporating that park into the overall design of the expansion. Then the city changed its mind and told Bethany Manor to buy the green space, instead. Isaac doesn't want Bethany Manor "to set a precedent" as the first group to buy green space from the city. In September, Saskatoon council will meet to hear the collected comments from citizens about Bethany's proposed expansion.

—BY KARIN FEHDERAU



Leonora Paetkau, left, chats with Marg Nally after Nally's presentation at the MEDA breakfast on May 19 in St. Jacobs, Ont.



# 'Intermarriage' leads to peaceful co-existence

*Southwestern Ontario Lutherans and Mennonites have long been reconciled*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY  
Eastern Canada Correspondent  
CASSEL, ONT.



*Jim Whitehead, pastor of Cassel Mennonite Church, foreground, leads the second of four reconciliation sessions with Trinity Lutheran Church. Steve Hoffard, Trinity's pastoral intern, is seated at left.*

The Mennonite groom was teased about his impending nuptials: "So a Mennonite is marrying a Lutheran?" "No," he replied. "A half-Mennonite/half-Lutheran is marrying a half-Lutheran/half-Mennonite." And it was true; his mother was Lutheran and hers was Mennonite.

Such intermarriage has been common among the former Western Ontario Mennonites—and yet more former Amish Mennonites—and their Lutheran neighbours in Perth, Waterloo and Oxford counties of southwestern Ontario.

This historical fact was held up at the second of four meetings between Cassel Mennonite Church and Trinity Lutheran Church, both near Tavistock, as proof that local Mennonites and Lutherans have been long reconciled.

But that fact didn't stop about 50 Lutherans and Mennonites from a number of local congregations gathering in late May and June to work through the "Healing Memories, Reconciling in Christ" materials jointly issued by Mennonite Church Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada last year to mark the occasion of official acceptance by Mennonites of an apology by Lutherans for their historical persecution of Anabaptists beginning in the 16th century.

The sessions were led alternately by Steve Hoffard, pastoral intern at Trinity Lutheran, and Jim Whitehead, Cassel's pastor.

At the June 1 session Whitehead selected a number of hymns from the Mennonite *Hymnal: A Worship Book* that were from

Lutheran, Mennonite and other backgrounds, showing how reconciliation had already taken place musically in the past. He then covered some of the history of the Reformation, and why the need for reconciliation continues.

It was a surprise to both Mennonites and Lutherans that negative comments about Anabaptists continue to be in the Lutheran Augsburg Confession. Whitehead and Hoffard spoke about the Lutheran doctrine of salvation by faith alone and how Anabaptist belief in discipleship seemed, to Martin Luther and other Reformation leaders, to negate this theology. Luther believed that Anabaptists were adding to the gospel and needed to be condemned for it.

Conversation in the room continued with Ruth Johnston of Cassel Mennonite noting that there were threats to Christians of all persuasions during that time, including for Lutherans in Catholic areas. But Al Skowby of Zion Lutheran in Stratford wondered, "Why has it taken [Lutherans] so long to apologize [to Mennonites]?"

Hoffard explained that last year's apology and the release of the joint Mennonite-Lutheran study guide was a long time in the making.

Suggesting that Mennonites and Lutherans are really not that far apart on their theologies these days, Howard Gerber of Cassel Mennonite said there is little difference between the intent and wording of Lutheran infant baptism and Mennonite parent-child dedication.

Locally, Cassel has a 50-year history of Lenten worship exchanges with the nearby St. Matthew's Lutheran Church and has also sponsored many other projects together with local Lutheran congregations. ❧

## /// Briefly noted

### 'Reconciliation' theme for pastors leadership training

RICHMOND, B.C.—To learn more about Anabaptist theology, 28 leaders from multicultural churches in B.C. and one from Alberta gathered at Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond, B.C., on May 28, for the concluding training day of the pastoral studies distance education program. Palmer Becker from Kitchener, Ont., a former pastor of Peace Mennonite, spoke on the topic of "Seven steps to reconciliation." The all-day event, sponsored jointly by Mennonite Church B.C. and MC Canada, combined lectures by Becker, video presentations, small group discussion and team-building exercises. MC B.C. conference minister Garry Janzen affirmed the value of Mennonite church leaders from other ethnic backgrounds coming together to feel a part of the broader church and not be categorized as a minority. "There was an openness [for multicultural leaders] to be able to feel free and equal partners in B.C., to give them a sense of ownership," said Janzen, who often finds it frustrating that members of ethnic congregations can feel like they are not on a level playing field with the rest of the area church. "All of a sudden the playing field was quite good. I felt in a good sense that this is Mennonite Church B.C."

—BY AMY DUECKMAN

# Becoming 'ordinary radicals'

American Christian activist Shane Claiborne speaks to ecumenical Winnipeg audience

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent  
WINNIPEG, MAN.

Two years ago, Shane Claiborne, speaker at the Mennonite Church Canada youth assembly in Saskatchewan, stirred the imaginations and energized the faith of many in attendance—so much so that they did not want to miss the opportunity to hear him again when he spoke to an ecumenical gathering in Winnipeg on May 24.

Hannah Burkholder, 20, a member of Home Street Mennonite Church, who has also read his book *Irresistible Revolution*, said, "I was interested to hear more of what Shane had to say because I knew his words would feed my spirit."

Claiborne, a Christian activist, author and speaker, is part of an intentional Christian community in Philadelphia, Pa. Describing the formation and vision of this community, Claiborne said, "There's a lot of hemorrhaging that we see in the church today. Young people are leaving at astronomical rates. The church has a bit of an image crisis."

Citing an American study, Claiborne said young people have three main beefs with the church: it is anti-homosexual, judgmental and hypocritical.

The authenticity with which Claiborne spoke the words of Romans 12 about "not conforming to the ways of world, but being transformed by the renewing of your minds," compelled his listeners to think more deliberately about what it means to be a Christian. "Loss of imagination on the part of the church is the biggest thing I lament," he told the crowd. "The real test of our faith is how it works itself out in compassion and love. Christianity has turned people off because it's lost the essence of what it was meant to be. The early church was different than the world around it."

"Sometimes as Christians we have been the biggest barriers to God because we have all this stuff to say with our mouths, but so little to show with our lives," he continued.

"What are some of those peculiar practices we need today? What would it look like to live in the way of the gospel and not conform to the patterns of the world today?"

Many Mennonite youths and adults in the ecumenical audience were abuzz with excitement as they spilled out of the church.

"One part of Shane's message which I hope to take away with me is his statement, 'Don't worry about whether you will be a doctor, a lawyer, a teacher. Rather worry about what kind of doctor, lawyer or teacher you will be,'" said Burkholder, adding, "I want to follow up on his message that we should use our imaginations to resist the

urge to blend in with the rest of the world"

Yvonne Stoesz, who came with some of the youths from Pembina Mennonite Fellowship in Morden, said she was really inspired by his message. "He speaks from the heart and challenges us to live out the gospel of Jesus," she said. "He speaks strongly of living simply and of pacifism. . . . He lives out what he preaches."

Stoesz's 15-year-old son, Jared, was struck by the choice of neighbourhood that Claiborne chose in Philadelphia, a neighbourhood, he said, "where it's easier to buy a gun than a salad."

Karla Froese, also of Pembina, brought her father Ken, who said, "One line that comes back to me is that Jesus did not just want believers, he wanted disciples. Faith needs to be active to come alive."

In response to Claiborne's claim that "we lack a holy anger with what is wrong in the world," Burkholder, Froese and Stoesz agreed that Mennonites need to employ more creative methods to respond to what is wrong in the world and to live more like "ordinary radicals." ❧

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## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

# Moving forward

*MCC Binational set to give way to revamped MCC Canada and MCC U.S. organizations in 2012*

STORY AND PHOTO BY HENRY NEUFELD

For Meetinghouse  
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

The last Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) annual meeting likely to be held in Canada addressed issues related to the implementation of the New Wineskins strategy, a three-year process nearing its end.

The restructuring will see MCC Binational replaced by MCC Canada and MCC U.S. Linking the two bodies will be a joint ministry council comprised of representatives from MCC Canada, MCC U.S. and Mennonite World Conference.

To complete this process, bylaws for the Canadian and American entities will need approval at a meeting this fall. If approval is given, MCC Binational will cease to exist at its final meeting in March 2012, making way for the two new country-based MCCs.

Responding to questions about how the two national groups will operate international programs, MCC Binational executive director Arli Klassen compared it to two parties owning one house. "Each one can furnish their room as they wish," she said, adding that there is some organizational uncertainty for staff as the changes draw near.

Speaking about the upcoming changes, Neil Janzen of MCC Canada said, "We're not entirely sure what awaits us around the corner. We're not fearful, but a little apprehensive."

"Once there is no binational board, will we be able to maintain contacts?" Bontrager wondered.

Board members provided apprehensive affirmation for the changes, offering such comments as, "It's regenerative for the institution. . . . The iceberg is smaller than it was. . . . The process is like trying to drink water from a fire hose. . . . I've seen the hand of God in this process."

Bontrager paid tribute to the thousands

who participated in the Wineskins process, with special praise for the staff, calling them "a wonderful menagerie of gifted people." Of Klassen's role of creative leadership for an extremely complex and demanding task, he said, "Arli has more stamina than a Pennsylvania Dutch farmer."

The listening committee said MCC, at the age of 90, needs to move forward. "The train has left the station and we're not sure of its destination," said Waldo Neufeld. Concerns about constituency connections need more attention, as reflected in 96-year-old Siegfried Bartel's closing prayer that "the constituency stay with us."

## 'Not a para-church organization'

"MCC is an arm of the church. It is not a para-church organization," said binational chair Herman Bontrager at annual meeting. He acknowledged, though, that MCC has a weakness in how it relates to congregations. Bontrager made a plea for the organization to retain a high regard for diversity, to focus on compassion rather than professionalism, and to concentrate

more on deeds than on words.

Ron Flaming, international program director, reported that significant attention and resources were directed at disasters over the past year. MCC received more than \$19 million for Haiti relief following its devastating earthquake in early 2010.

Ken Langeman, director of financial services, reported a slight surplus in the past year and noted that proceeds from thrift shop sales have increased. Canada/U.S. joint income exceeded \$75 million, with donations from Canada continuing to be strong and donations from the U.S. showing a small increase.

## Interfaith dialogue

MCC worker Daryl Byler, a program representative for Iran, Iraq, Jordan and Palestine, identified four principles for interfaith discussions between MCC workers and those they work with and for around the world:

- The engagement must be characterized by humility;
- The basis for engagement is one common humanity;
- The power of our engagement is authentic witness; and
- The purpose of engagement is greater faithfulness.

"Don't shy away from the fact that our work is done in the name of Christ," he said, adding, "We are all on a journey." ❧

*Meetinghouse is an association of Mennonite, Mennonite Brethren and Brethren in Christ publications in North America.*



*MCC Binational chair Herman Bontrager, left, praises executive director Arli Klassen for her role in the New Wine/New Wineskins process.*



# Negative religion, toxic shame and addictions

*Brice Balmer urges churches to become havens of healing while ceasing to enable addictive behaviour*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
BADEN, ONT.

“Hi, I’m Denise and I’m a sinner.” Around the table at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, the others replied, “Hi, Denise.”

Approximating the standard procedure at a 12-step meeting, Brice Balmer was helping the participants at Shalom Counselling’s annual breakfast on May 7 to feel shame as well as love and acceptance. As each person around the table repeated the “I’m a sinner” line, and was greeted with equality, the shame drained out of the self-designation.

Balmer, a long-time poverty advocate, pastor and former chaplain at House of Friendship, Kitchener, Ont. spoke of how people in the church can help those who are addicted, or who know someone who is addicted. Statistics show “80 percent of Canadians have a family member, friend, co-worker, neighbour or other close relationship who struggles with an addiction,” he said.

He focused on addiction as a social, individual and spiritual issue. Since most people with an addiction have suffered abuse or trauma in their life, the root causes of addiction are often social, he said, adding that other social causes include poverty and living in hopeless situations where addictive behaviours are used and modelled by others around them.

Shame is another root cause of addictive behaviour, Balmer noted. “Somewhere there have been other people or a social situation which has destroyed the self-esteem, resilience and vitality of this human being,” he said. “The result is shame or toxic shame. The person defines the self as less than others, inferior, damaged, incapable, problematic, worthless.”

But addictions are also individual, as

people respond to abuse and trauma in their own individual ways, Balmer pointed out. In the same family, one person might take the addiction route while another gets the help needed to overcome the issues in his or her life.

Balmer noted that “[Alcoholics Anonymous] and various authors describe ‘addiction’ as ‘negative spirituality.’ While addicted, a person’s actions are destructive and are against personal beliefs and values. As faith communities, we believe in human dignity—created in the image of God. One of our spiritual tasks is to see

the image of God in every human being. How do we announce to the world that people with addictions have dignity? . . . How would our liturgy, prayers, sermon and other activities be heard by someone who is shamed, or wants to stop enabling, or is struggling with an addiction?”

Balmer said he believes deeply that faith communities can become havens of healing for those who feel so worthless that they use substances or activities to dull their thinking and memory. But he also sees that faith communities have created the potential for addictive behaviour, enabled such behaviour and rejected people for partaking in such behaviours. ❧



*Brice Balmer, left, visits with Wanda Wagler-Martin, Shalom Counselling’s executive director, and Gladys Bender, board chair.*

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ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR GARRY JANZEN (October 14-23)  
FROM NAZARETH to ROME (November 10-22)  
BEHIND the VEIL-EXPERIENCING EGYPT with MEDA (November 14-26)  
OBERAMMERGAU CHRISTMAS MARKET (Dec. 7-11)

### 2012 TOURS

AN ANTARCTIC EXPERIENCE (January 2-15)  
JAMAICA – ITS PEOPLE, NATURAL BEAUTY and FRUITS (January 20-29)  
GUATEMALA (February 24-March 4)  
VISIT MEXICO and ITS COPPER CANYON (March 9-18)  
EXPLORE SOUTH AMERICA (March 18-31)  
FOLLOWING the STEPS of MOSES (April 16-27)  
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with NELSON KRAYBILL (May 2-11)  
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with PAUL ZEHR (May 3-16)

ALASKA CRUISE TOUR (June 7-18)

GLORY of RUSSIA: MOSCOW & ST. PETERSBURG (July 3-13)  
EUROPEAN HERITAGE with JOHN RUTH (July 10-23)  
MENNONITE STORY in POLAND & UKRAINE (September 18-29)  
MEDA TOUR to ETHIOPIA & TANZANIA (Oct. 12-22)  
SERVICE TOUR to ISRAEL/PALESTINE with PASTOR JAMIE GERBER (Oct. 13-22)  
ISRAEL/PALESTINE with NELSON KRAYBILL (Nov. 12-21)  
VIETNAM and SINGAPORE (November 12-26)

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## GOD AT WORK IN US

# Helping 'the youth of today'

BY KARIN FEHDERAU  
Saskatchewan Correspondent  
SASKATOON, SASK.

## Across Generations

**D**ie Jugend von Heute. Meaning "the youth of today," this phrase used to be spoken with a sigh and a sorrowful shake of the head by German-speaking seniors in the church. At times, and certainly out of earshot, teens would teasingly mimic their grandparents. The phrase seemed innocent enough, but the underlying message went deeper: It felt like the church had just given up on its youths because the adults couldn't understand the culture of the younger generation.

"Not on my watch," said the leadership at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, to this attitude back in the early '90s. They have not shrugged their shoulders and walked away. Instead, they have worked to establish connections with the next generation and one of the ways they have done that is through a mentorship program. The program, which has been in existence for about 20 years, currently involves 27 of the 46 teens in the youth group, bringing them together with an adult in the congregation for friendship and support.

When a student reaches Grade 7, a mentor is chosen, explains Reece Retzlaff, Nutana Park's youth pastor, and the same adult continues to support the teen right through to the end of high school.

"The youth have input [on the desired adult]," says Retzlaff. "Two or three names of possible mentors are chosen." These typically would be adults in the congregation that the young person is comfortable with. Retzlaff then contacts the adults on behalf of the teen. Boys are paired with men and girls with women.

The mentor and mentored usually meet once every month or two.

Organizers plan three events a year for everyone involved, starting with a barbecue to begin the year. Another event is a crokinole tournament.

Although some youths may drop out of

the program, most stick it out until Grade 12, when the relationship between adult and teen is formally finished.

Lynn Driedger is in his fifth year as a mentor. He got involved for several reasons. "I believe in the program," he says. "It brings a connection to people of different age groups; it helps to strengthen the body [of Christ]."

The retired teacher and father of two watched his own children find friendship with another adult in the congregation. "It was a positive experience," he says. Having had a strong role model in his own teen years, Driedger also believes associations like this are important in a large church, where it is sometimes difficult to keep up with people's lives.

Driedger and Jamie Winder, the teen he mentors, attend sporting events and play golf together. Driedger also supports Winder by going to his school band concerts.

Trish St. Onge is another mentor at Nutana Park, who has been at it for 18 months. In reflecting on her role, she acknowledges she cares deeply for the teen she works with. "She's very special to me," says St. Onge, who works as executive director at Catholic Family Services in Saskatoon.

There are more Mennonite Church Saskatoon congregations establishing ties with their youths. According to Anna Rehan, the area church youth minister, both Zoar Mennonite in Langham and Rosthern Mennonite find the program helpful. And Osler Mennonite is considering it. "There are four mentor pairs right now [at Zoar]," Rehan notes.

According to Rehan, MC Saskatchewan churches have been working with the concept since the 1990s. Both of her daughters were helped by having a mentor and one daughter still keeps up the relationship with her former mentor. "It's been really

NUTANA PARK MENNONITE CHURCH PHOTO



*Nutana Park Mennonite Church member Lynn Driedger, left, has been mentoring Jamie Winder for about five years. They are pictured at a mentor/youth Halloween party in 2008.*

good for them," she says.

At Rosthern Mennonite, there are presently 10 youths paired up with mentors in the church. Craig Neufeld, youth pastor, is trying to extend the program to include those mentors even further in the lives of the young people. "We want to have the mentors involved with membership and catechism, and hopefully be the sponsor for the baptismal candidates," he says.

During the MC Saskatchewan delegate sessions in North Battleford this year, area church moderator Renata Klassen spoke in a workshop about the future of the area church. "Youth lives don't revolve around the church anymore," she said. "How are we going to adapt? Are we taking the time to talk to them, to find out how they're struggling?" she wondered.

Congregations pondering how youths fit in with the church today—and into the future—can contact Rehan to see if a mentorship program might be right for them. ☸

## OBITUARY

# A life of commitment and challenge

Aaron Klassen

Dec. 9, 1924 – April 18, 2011

BY RON REMPEL

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
KITCHENER, ONT.



Klassen

Farming and education were two lifelong passions for Aaron Klassen, according to his daughter Sherri, who shared parts of her father's life story and the "twists and turns" of his work life at his funeral in Kitchener on April 23. "Even more important than his work identity," she said, "was his life in the Mennonite church community."

His early years were shaped in the farm communities of Halbstadt and Homewood, Man. As the oldest son of David D. and Susan Klassen, he, along with some of his 14 siblings, had farm responsibilities from a young age since his minister father was often not at home. At 20, Klassen bought

two years, all the while managing the farm back in Homewood.

Education beckoned once again. This time it was two years of graduate studies in history at the University of Chicago. While there, he found his voice as an active and concerned lay person in the church by writing his elders to protest the firing of a teacher from Canadian Mennonite Bible College. Also while in Chicago he accepted the invitation from Frank H. Epp, then editor of the Manitoba-based *The Canadian Mennonite*, to serve as interim editor during Epp's study leave.

Klassen married Helen Heinrichs of Toronto in the summer of 1959, and they

*In both his wider church and congregational involvements, Klassen was a leader not only through the official positions he held, but in how he lived his faith and how he related to both young and old.*

his own farm, which provided a touchstone and a source of income over the next 20 years as he pursued a variety of educational and work interests.

Although he had not completed high school, Klassen graduated from Canadian Mennonite Bible College, Winnipeg, Man., and from Bethel College, Kan., and then took several terms at Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Chicago, Ill.

Then, "in the spirit of trying anything reasonable once"—a phrase from his partially completed autobiography—he accepted calls to serve as a Bible school teacher and principal in Abbotsford, B.C., for a year, and as Mennonite Central Committee country director in Mexico for

then moved to Altona, Man., where they lived for several years. They then moved back to Toronto for five years, during which time Klassen taught high school and sold real estate.

In 1966, they moved to Kitchener and became active members of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church. For the next 40 years, Klassen's work included real estate in both the residential and farm sectors, managing Provident Bookstore, and running a group home together with his wife.

Woven through Klassen's work life were many wider church involvements. In 1971, he was part of a group that advocated for the formation of a new periodical when *The Canadian Mennonite* discontinued

publishing in February 1971. As a result, the *Mennonite Reporter*—precursor of the current *Canadian Mennonite* publication—was started in August of that year, with offices in Ontario.

As chair of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario board for eight years, he represented the provincial organization at both MCC Canada and MCC Binational meetings. He served on the Conrad Grebel College board for six years and for some years on the property and finance committees of both the former Conference of Mennonites in Canada and the former Mennonite Conference of Ontario and Quebec. And he was involved in supporting projects and attending the conventions of Mennonite Economic Development Associates.

In both his wider church and congregational involvements, Klassen was a leader not only through the official positions he held, but in how he lived his faith and how he related to both young and old. He resonated with the Franciscan benediction posted in his home office: "May God bless us with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, superficial relationships, so that we will live deep within our hearts. May God bless us with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people, so that we will work for justice, equity and peace . . ."

In a memorial tribute the Sunday after the funeral, a younger member of Stirling described Klassen as having "the curiosity of a two-year-old, the mischief of a 13-year-old, the adventure of a 20-year-old, but the wisdom of a 90-year-old." He reported that several individuals who crossed paths with Klassen through denominational work and other church-related activities described him as unconventional and on the edge. "This at times is threatening to others in the church. However, Aaron's commitment, humility and humour allowed him to challenge us," he said.

Klassen shared his faith story during one of this year's Lenten services at Stirling. A young person commented later: "It was so great to hear Aaron say he still hasn't figured it all out regarding his faith."

Less than a week before his death, he took great delight in joining his grandson for a walk around the farm that he had just bought. ☞

## ARTBEAT

# New cookbook sells out before its official release

*Second printing of Mennonite Girls Can Cook now on Herald Press shelves*

Herald Press

Three days before the official May 2 release date for *Mennonite Girls Can Cook*, Herald Press officials were already ordering a reprint. The cookbooks had arrived early from the printer, and workers at the Herald Press warehouses in Waterloo, Ont., and Scottdale, Pa., were filling 600 pre-orders and responding to nearly 3,000 new orders.

The title of the book comes from a comment made to a group of women of Russian-German Mennonite heritage in British Columbia: “You Mennonite girls sure can cook!”

First came a blog ([mennonitegirlscancook.blogspot.com](http://mennonitegirlscancook.blogspot.com)) that was started in 2008 by 10 women in their 50s and 60s. They shared thoughts, memories and recipes from their heritage. To date, their blog has attracted an astounding 2.4 million visitors.

“We never thought it would grow so big,” says Lovella Schellenberg, leader of the group, who lives with her husband on a farm in the coastal mountains near Abbotsford, B.C. “It has exceeded all our expectations.”

Their success caught the attention of Herald Press, whose editorial director Amy Gingerich contacted the women, who were open to the next step—a book deal.

“We decided that if we were supposed to publish a book, God would send us a publisher,” said Schellenberg. She and her group especially liked Herald Press’s connection with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) through projects like the *More-With-Less Cookbook*.

The blog and book emphasize hospitality, rather than entertaining. The goal of the authors is to give a blessing to guests, rather than trying to impress them.

“No matter which way you look at it,” says Charlotte Penner, one of the authors, “wonderful things happen when people are given the opportunity to gather around the table—a chance to nurture and build relationships, fellowship and encourage

one another, and create a place of refuge for those who have had a stressful day.”

Through their book, the authors are also honouring their Russian-German Mennonite past and the horrific story of famine and violence their grandparents endured during the aftermath of the Russian Revolution. To that end, their book royalties are being donated to MCC for the support of the Good Shepherd Shelter for orphans in Ukraine, where their ancestors lived. ✎



MENNONITE PUBLISHING NETWORK PHOTO BY WAYNE GEHMAN



**Anna Weaver, left, Kurt Ferdinand and Lois Priest prepare the first box of Herald Press books to be shipped from Harrisonburg, Va., on June 1. About 30 hours earlier, Weaver helped ship the last Herald Press books from Scottdale, Pa, where the organization has been based for 103 years. Then she and two other Scottdale staff packed up the postage meter and other equipment, and drove 354 kilometres south to the building that will be the headquarters of MennoMedia, a new agency being formed on July 1 from Scottdale-based Mennonite Publishing Network and Harrisonburg-based Third Way Media.**

**Herald Press will continue to ship books to Canadian customers from its warehouse in Waterloo, Ont. MennoMedia will serve both Mennonite Church Canada and MC U.S.A. The first shipment from Harrisonburg was a box of 24 biblical commentaries on Revelation that was sent by UPS to Messiah College, Grantham, Pa.**



# The leadership stalemate

*When young people don't volunteer and nobody asks them, what will happen to our church leadership?*

BY EMILY LOEWEN  
Young Voices Editor

The week after becoming a member in a new church, the calls start coming—"Would you be interested in teaching Sunday school?" "How would you like to lead music?"—the typical starter positions offered to young adults.

While they are valuable learning positions, shouldn't young people also use their skills in new roles like board member or mediator? Many young people don't fit the child-teaching, song-leading mould. But when they don't see other opportunities, and no one asks them to participate,

Fears of young adults abandoning the church aren't unique to this generation. The Mennonite Young People's Conference, which held meetings in the United States from 1919-23, sparked fears of a youth exodus. There was similar distress over Concern, a pamphlet-issuing group, at its height in the 1960s.

A resurgence of those fears wouldn't surprise someone like Jana Lepp. "I think I would lose interest in the church if I wasn't involved," she says, adding, though, that she would likely still come to church but

*'[I]f we are going to equip our youth and young adults to be leaders for tomorrow, we need to trust them with responsibilities.'*

*(Melanie Kampen)*

many feel left out by church leadership, and wonder, "When it's my time, how will I know what to do?"

Reece Retzlaff, youth pastor at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, Sask., says there are some congregations that are doing well, but developing young leaders needs to be taken seriously. "If we want future generations to actually lead," she says, "we need to teach them how."

Melanie Kampen, 21, of Springfield Heights Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man., would agree. Putting young people in leadership roles might feel risky, she says, "but if we are going to equip our youth and young adults to be leaders for tomorrow, we need to trust them with responsibilities." And if they aren't included, there is a chance young people will just leave.

feel less a part of the community.

Fortunately, Toronto United Mennonite Church, Ont., approached Lepp, now 31, to be board chair, an unusual role for someone her age. She finds that young people are usually asked to do certain jobs, and says it is "refreshing to believe that the chair of the board is not one of those positions you need a wealth of knowledge for." She sees facilitator skills as important for the job, rather than deep technical knowledge.

Lepp didn't imagine taking on the job until a discernment committee approached her, and she suggests the best way to bolster the ranks of young leaders is simply to ask them, because they won't often volunteer. She also speculates that more positions that allow introductory time would ease young people's fears; in this case, her



*At only 31, Jana Lepp is chair of the board at Toronto United Mennonite Church, a refreshing change to the traditional roles offered to young adults.*



*Reece Retzlaff, youth pastor at Nutana Park Mennonite Church, Saskatoon, Sask., knows that young people aren't just the future of the church, they're the church today.*



church's chair position includes one year as incoming chair with few responsibilities.

Michael Turman, who finishes his time as youth pastor at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., at the end of June, also believes the way the church focuses on committees, instead of gifts, "doesn't resonate with many young people." He says this is problematic because leaders need to be identified today in order to learn from people in those positions now. Young voices are also important, Turman says, because, like the early Anabaptist reformers, they often feel free to be bolder in their vision for the church, something challenging for those already working within the structure.

Having young adults in the wider church is something that Willard Metzger, Mennonite Church Canada general secretary, wants to increase. Although the General Board is not considering adding a young adult to its numbers, a program to mentor students at Mennonite schools is in the early stages of development. Metzger also stresses that if young people are interested in joining committees, they should speak up.

For now, it appears things are at an impasse. If, like Lepp says, the best way to involve young people is to ask them, but the people in charge assume that young adults who don't volunteer aren't interested, we're moving nowhere fast. ☼

#### PERSONAL REFLECTION

## Despite Egypt's turmoil, I am optimistic

*Young Egyptian Christian provides insights into her country's future after President Hosni Mubarak*

BY ANGIE ATEF

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE



I am optimistic! That is what I tell myself from time to time, but it seems sometimes that my brother is the only one who shares this optimism with me. What is happening in Egypt does not herald anything good for the moment, but, in my opinion, it is very promising for the future.

For now, it is very clear to everyone that there is much chaos. Robberies have increased and thugs are the heroes of the daily stories. They break into and seize houses, kidnap women, children and girls, and rape them. Traffic is not organized and there are many accidents because of high speed. There is lack of security, which makes everybody feel worried and uncomfortable. The police have lost the respect of the people.

I am optimistic, however, because now I can see that people have started

to rethink the value of their humanity and to consider the need to live bravely. It is not yet a mindset, but at least it has started. We have begun to include in our regular conversations considerations about how we need to feel and to show respect.

What we hear each day is very stressful and dangerous, but I think it will push the true person in us to come out and scream against killing, injustice and wrongful accusations, no matter what it will cost. We are not afraid of the cost anymore.

More than 50 cases of attacks on Coptic Christians in different forms occurred after the Jan. 25 revolution. There has been attacking, destroying and burning of churches, trumped-up accusations, fabricated fights, kidnapping girls, raping them, and demanding that people renounce Christianity.

However, I am optimistic because there are also good responses so far. For example, many violent deeds occurred over the construction of churches. Now we are about to have a draft law that unifies the conditions for the building of all places of worship. This is an awesome result we Christians could not gain before the revolution.

on increasing political awareness by discussing many current issues, like how can we select and elect a new president, why should people join certain political parties, and how we can deal with what we hear in the news. This helps a lot in identifying aims and where are we going as a society.

I am optimistic because, for the first

*Many movements emerged that aim to unify all Egyptians and to defend against the one real enemy: injustice. Many good and enlightened Muslims stand now on the same side as Christians.*

We Christians have also started to state our points of view, complaints, thoughts, needs and demands through the national media, not just foreign ones. Many movements emerged that aim to unify all Egyptians and to defend against the one real enemy: injustice. Many good and enlightened Muslims stand now on the same side as Christians.

We hear rumours, contradictory statements, wrong announcements and confused ideas. All these come from the same radical sources. Shocking reactions are heard and unexpected situations are created by some of those who are in authority and from leaders of political and religious parties.

Yet all political parties in Egypt have begun to state their real goals and intentions. This makes me very optimistic because it has produced a good result; the Egyptian media have started to work

time, Egyptians are participating in designing a new lifestyle for themselves. I'm optimistic because I see us trying to figure out what's going on, and it means we are trying to see our actual life and accept it.

Of course, this will lead us to the solutions. I am optimistic because I am holding onto the truth that "God didn't promise us an easy journey, but a safe arrival." It makes me feel comfortable because I am sure that God will help us in our Egyptian journey. I am optimistic because I am sure that God will accept all the prayers for giving Egypt a peaceful life. ☘

*Angie Atef lives in Elqussia, a city in Assiut Province in Upper (southern) Egypt. She has a degree in philosophy from the University of El-Minia and works as an office manager in Assiut.*

PHOTO BY AL HUSSAINY MOHAMED;  
POSTED ON FLICKR.COM



**On May 27, Egyptian protesters pressed their demands for a trial for former president Hosni Mubarak and members of his regime.**

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# Music outside the lines

*Columbia Bible College grad takes his musical training electronic*

BY EMILY LOEWEN  
Young Voices Editor



Cover for Teen Daze's new album, *A Silent Planet*, to be released this summer

When you think “Mennonite,” you think music, but lo-fi electro pop probably isn’t what you have in mind, even if you know what it might sound like. Yet musician Teen Daze embodies and embraces that contradiction. Steeped in Mennonite culture, he may not play traditional Menno music, but this 25-year-old’s electronic tracks are earning followers at home in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia and internationally.

and Teen Daze has played at major festivals in New York City, N.Y., and Austin, Tex.

When the Teen Daze project started picking up momentum online, he decided to keep his real name out of the media. While the artist tries to live holistically, not making distinctions between music, faith and life, he says, “I also didn’t want Teen Daze to define who I am. I didn’t want to just become an entity of the Internet.”

That may get harder this summer when

*While the artist tries to live holistically, not making distinctions between music, faith and life, he says, ‘I also didn’t want Teen Daze to define who I am. I didn’t want to just become an entity of the Internet.’*



On *A Silent Planet*, Teen Daze tries to communicate the beauty of the Fraser Valley’s Mount Cheam.

Growing up with the obligatory piano lessons many a child has endured, Teen Daze, who doesn’t use his real name with his music, says he never wanted to play notes as they existed on the page. “My lesson didn’t really work,” he says. “I liked to colour outside the lines.” From piano, he moved to percussion in high school and then to guitar, which became his primary instrument by the time he began studying music at Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C.

It was at Columbia that the name “Teen Daze” emerged. Although he had been making electronic music for seven years, “mostly the music stayed on my hard drive, or I would burn a CD for friends,” he says. That was until April 2010, when the Teen Daze sound began as a way to explore a slower, hazier tone. And although he made his first record as a musical photo album of his last year in college, filled with inside jokes and experiences, independent music powerhouse Pitchfork has since reviewed it

his new album, *A Silent Planet*, comes out. Based largely on C.S. Lewis’s science-fiction novel, *Out of the Silent Planet*, the album is heavy with ideas of adjusting to a new environment. While Lewis uses language to depict an experience on a new planet, the location in this case exists closer to home: Fraser Valley’s Mount Cheam. But both author and musician take on the same task of making an experience in their imagination accessible to their respective audiences. Teen Daze liked the way Lewis’s words created powerful visuals. “I tried to emulate that with this record,” he says, “taking an idea that is only in the imagination of most, and make it something we can all access.”

*A Silent Planet* will be released on Aug. 9 by Waaga Records. Teen Daze will tour British Columbia and Alberta this summer along with a few U.S. dates. ☘

To hear a single from *A Silent Planet*, visit [youngvoices.canadianmennonite.org](http://youngvoices.canadianmennonite.org).



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## Calendar

### Saskatchewan

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

**July 31:** Peace Mennonite Church, Regina, celebrates its 25th anniversary.

**Aug. 27:** Second annual Spruce River Folk Music Festival, at Spruce River

Farm, 20 kilometres north of Prince Albert on Highway 2; from 2 to 8 p.m.

**Sept. 16-18:** Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization junior youth retreat at Youth Farm Bible Camp.

**Oct. 4:** Youth Farm Bible Camp annual fundraiser at the camp, from 5 to 7 p.m.

**Oct. 22:** MC Saskatchewan Equipping Day.

### Manitoba

**July 13:** MCC Manitoba's ninth annual golf tournament fundraiser, at the Links at Quarry Oaks, Steinbach, in support of literacy and education in Afghanistan. Register online at [Manitoba.mcc.org/golf](http://Manitoba.mcc.org/golf). For more information, call Paul Friesen toll-free at 1-866-761-1046.

**July 15-17:** MCC alumni reunion for workers who served in Southern Africa. Visit [mcc.org/alumni/reunions](http://mcc.org/alumni/reunions).

**July 16:** Eden Foundation's "Visit the Villages Tractor Trek" from Reinland to Gretna, begins at 8 a.m. in Reinland.

**Aug. 23:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate fundraising golf tournament, at Bridge Golf Club, Winnipeg.

**Sept. 10:** Eden Foundation's "Head for the Hills" bike event begins at Colert Beach, Morden, at 8 a.m.

**Oct. 14:** Going Barefoot communicators conference, at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg. Keynote speaker: John Stackhouse, editor of *The Globe and Mail*. Topic: The future of media. Plus workshops on media, fundraising, marketing and design. For more information, e-mail John Longhurst at [jlonghurst@foodgrainsbank.ca](mailto:jlonghurst@foodgrainsbank.ca).

### Ontario

**July 4-8:** Assembly visitors are invited to drop in at TourMagination's Waterloo office from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily for refreshments and door prizes.

## UpComing

### Connecting people and places on Vancouver Island

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.—Learning about sustainable forestry practices, paddling in a canoe built by a First Nations artist, sharing faith experiences: these are just some of the possibilities that await participants in Connecting People and Place, a camping trip organized by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) B.C.'s Aboriginal Neighbours Program. This year's trip takes place from July 18 to 24. Connecting People and Place does exactly that: connects participants with those who live on Vancouver Island. The trip also includes opportunities to interact with members of the Kwagwiltz First Nation in Port Hardy. As well, participants have the opportunity to visit the Umista Cultural Centre in Alert Bay, which includes a stunning collection of masks that were traditionally used during potlatch ceremonies. For more information, or to register, e-mail Darryl Klassen at [abneighbours@mccbc.com](mailto:abneighbours@mccbc.com).

—Mennonite Central Committee B.C.



## If you don't know where you are going ...

The best advice is to get a map. Charting your financial plan sooner than later is also a good idea. Needs change throughout your life, and having a sound financial direction helps you meet those changes. From mortgage insurance to funding your children's education, from retirement planning to charitable giving, your plan prepares you to meet the changes successfully.

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**Aug. 8-12:** Peace Camp at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, for students who have just completed grades 6, 7 or 8. For more information, e-mail [pacs@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:pacs@uwaterloo.ca) or call 519-885-0220 ext. 24269. Register by July 29.

**Aug. 14-26:** Ontario Mennonite Music Camp at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo. For more information, visit [grebel.uwaterloo.ca/ommc](http://grebel.uwaterloo.ca/ommc).

**Sept. 2-5:** Silver Lake Mennonite Camp 50th anniversary camping weekend.

**Sept. 21:** Peace Day at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

**Nov. 18:** Spirituality and aging lecture at Conrad Grebel University College,

Waterloo. Speaker: Dr. Steven Sandage. Topic: "The role of forgiveness in psychological and spiritual well-being in late life." For more information, or to register, e-mail [infoquc@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:infoquc@uwaterloo.ca).

**Nov. 21:** MennoHomes' 10th anniversary celebration and annual general meeting, at Elmira Mennonite Church, at 7:30 p.m. Celebrate 10 years, 100 units and \$10 million of affordable housing.

**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](mailto:calendar@canadianmennonite.org).**

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## Employment Opportunities



### FACULTY POSITION IN PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

**Conrad Grebel University College**, a Mennonite College at the University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, invites applications for a full-time permanent faculty position in the undergraduate Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) program and the proposed graduate PACS program, with a teaching and research specialty in interdisciplinary and multisector approaches to peace studies. The appointment will begin July 1, 2012. The College will begin reviewing applications on August 1, 2011. For further information about the position and application procedures: [grebel.uwaterloo.ca/pacsfaculty](http://grebel.uwaterloo.ca/pacsfaculty).



**Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and Mennonite Church Canada** invite applications for the position of

### CHURCH ENGAGEMENT MINISTER

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and Mennonite Church Canada invite submissions for the position of Church Engagement Minister. This full-time position, located in Eastern Canada, participates in the mandate given to Church Engagement to inspire, invite, and resource the church in its journey of transformation as disciples of Jesus Christ in a broken world.

The Church Engagement Minister will develop coordinated missional formation processes for congregations and nurture financial support for MCEC and Mennonite Church Canada programs, ministries and mission. Frequent travel within the Mennonite Church Eastern Canada constituency is required.

All staff are expected to exhibit a personal faith commitment to Christ as Saviour and Lord, uphold the Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective, and the vision of Mennonite Church Canada as a missional church. For a list of qualifications and responsibilities for this position, see the job description posted at <http://www.mennonitechurch.ca/getinvolved/jobs/>.

A letter of intent and a resume, or any inquiries or nominations can be directed to David Martin, Executive Minister, MCEC, 4489 King St. E., Kitchener, ON, N2P 2G2 at 519-650-3806, 800-206-9356 or e-mail [dmartin@mcec.ca](mailto:dmartin@mcec.ca). Application processing will begin July 11th.

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SHEKINAH RETREAT CENTRE

Shekinah Retreat Centre invites applications for the full-time position of Executive Director, starting early January 2012.

The Executive Director manages all aspects of Shekinah Retreat Centre which includes the Summer Camping program and the Year-Round Program; builds relationships with Mennonite Church Saskatchewan constituents, communities, volunteers, employees, and related organizations; works with the Board of Directors and employees to establish and achieve set goals for the organization; as well as establishes and executes a long-term strategy for Shekinah Retreat Centre.

The successful candidate will possess: leadership experience in a camping environment; strong human resource and financial management skills; an appreciation for environmental issues; willingness to 'get their hands dirty'; and the ability to build and maintain effective relationships with a variety of related individuals and organizations. The successful candidate must uphold the vision and mission of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan.

Preference will be given to those applicants who possess excellent communication skills and those with supervision or management experience.

Job description and remuneration details are available from the Board of Directors. Please apply by September 30, 2011.

Direct resumes and inquiries to:

Paul Funk, Chairperson,  
Shekinah Retreat Centre Board of Directors  
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Or send resumes via email to: [jobsatshekinah@gmail.com](mailto:jobsatshekinah@gmail.com)

## Upcoming Advertising Date

Issue Date	Ads Due
Aug. 1	July 19



# God at work in the World snapshot

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



*This is the second year that Eric Wildfong, left, and his younger brother, Joe, have raised heirloom tomato plants from seed to sell in their Waterloo, Ont., community. The young entrepreneurs both point to Joe as the one with the idea to earn a bit of cash. Both plan to invest part of their earnings in charities in the community. Joe plans to spend his remaining share on a Penguin Club membership (an online children's game and community) and Pokémon cards, while Eric plans to save most of his after helping with the membership. Parents Sue Wahl and Bob Wildfong attend Erb St. Mennonite Church, Waterloo, with their sons.*