

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

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## EDITORIAL

# In solidarity with the 99 percent?

DICK BENNER  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

**W**hat are we to make of the Occupy Wall Street movement gathering steam in North American cities and around the globe?

At a gut level, our Anabaptist instincts have us identifying with the protests of the 99 percent in their efforts to form a movement that addresses the widening gap between the rich and poor, and the favouring of political systems of the corporate barons over the middle and lower classes.

As citizens first of God's reign in the world and then citizens of our homeland, we have always kept a healthy distance from the centres of power and influence because of our core beliefs that place higher value on justice, peace, community and discipleship over patriotism and allegiance to the powers that use force, fear and punishment to keep order in society.

On the other hand, we are not sure that the institutions that undergird a functioning economy are the collective culprits being portrayed in this movement. The signs and chants may be a bit too sweeping for us, a little too un-nuanced for us to be convinced that the problem is as simplistic as a battle between the 1 percent who are wealthy and the 99 percent who are disadvantaged.

After all, without being self-righteous, we take some pride in the work of such denominational service institutions as

Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Economic Development Associates, which have proactively found channels for our wealth and the idealistic vision of our young people through their many assistance and self-help programs here and around the globe.



With a goal of narrowing the gap between the rich and poor, these agencies have worked creatively and with a great deal of passion at such things as sand dams in Africa to improve water resources and quality, and the provision of micro-financing, especially to women in underdeveloped countries, in an attempt to improve their standard of living.

So while we acknowledge that injustice and inequality still abound, and that corporate North America deserves to be challenged for its greed and consolidating political power to protect its sometimes ill-gotten gains, we are a little hesitant to pack our bags and head for New York City, N.Y., as Lyndon Froese of Manitoba did (see page 34). But we bless him for it.

Still, at a deeper, subconscious level, we are more complicit with the 1 percent than we might want to acknowledge. With our tax dollars and political votes, we keep in power a government that favours and protects corporations in the name of a strong economy, without equal attention to distribution of the wealth; that puts a higher priority on punishment

than restorative justice by building more prisons; that uses fear to sustain and build up military might; and is often biased and bigoted in understanding cultural differences in a world of religious extremism.

There is, of course, nothing new about this classic struggle. It is hundreds of years old and we shouldn't be surprised. Already back in 1890 it was populist orator Mary Elizabeth Lease who exclaimed: "Wall Street owns the country. . . . Our laws are the output of a system which clothes rascals in robes and honesty in rags. The [political] parties lie to us and the political speakers mislead us. . . . Money rules."

And Bill Moyers, that venerable journalist who still speaks truth to power, has updated this 19th century outburst with his own observation: "Let's name this for what it is: Democratic deviancy defined further downward. Our politicians are little more than money launderers in the trafficking of power and policy—fewer than six degrees of separation from the spirit and tactics of [TV mobster] Tony Soprano."

The cultural disruption that has resulted from this scenario is now being named primarily by our young people. But it is not as superfluous and frivolous a movement as it might appear. It should not be written off as a flash-in-the-pan, where a fringe group of visionaries clamours for its 15 minutes—or 15 days or 15 months—of fame. Yes, these young people, growing up in an entertainment culture, have learned well how to use the tools of social media and theatre, but they should not be written off as illusionary and out of touch.

They have identified what we, as Anabaptist Mennonites, have always stood for. Are we in solidarity with the 99 percent?

## ABOUT THE COVER:

**People pack Wall Street to protest corporate greed and economic inequality. For story and more photos of the Occupy movement's activities in New York, N.Y., and Winnipeg, Man., see page 34.**

PHOTO: LYNDON FROESE

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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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# Learning from diverse faiths

BY PALMER BECKER

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

*In our increasingly multicultural and multi-faith society, can we learn from belief systems other than our own? I believe so, and offer what I have learned from two faiths—Mormonism and Islam—that have very diverse beliefs from each other and also from my own Mennonite faith. This has called for risk-taking, relationship-building and honest self-reflection.*



*I have discovered that Mennonites and Mormons have a number of things in common. We both have a heritage that includes intense suffering for our faith. We both have a strong concern for family, high moral standards and missions.*

## **What I've learned from Mormons**

Some time ago I wrote to the headquarters of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS)—the Mormon Church—in Salt Lake City, Utah, saying, “I am the pastor of a Mennonite church interested in how your church nurtures children and sends your young people into mission.”

We received a quick affirmative reply that a visit would be welcomed. When we arrived, a retired medical doctor and his wife graciously took us out to lunch and then on a tour of a large LDS relief program, the church's educational supply centre and film studio. We enjoyed the day and noted how our host couple shared their faith in Christ's atonement for their sin, in the Book of Mormon, and in the empowerment of the Holy Spirit for moral living.

A couple with four children invited us for their evening meal and the night. Before the meal, one of the children prayed a spontaneous prayer of thanks, after which the parents led the family in a lively conversation. After dinner, a church elder with an apprentice came to share a short lesson on prayer and to interact with the family. Before retiring, we gathered around the piano to sing several hymns followed by a reading from the Bible. Then we knelt in a circle for a time of prayer.

The children were each anticipating two years of mission service when their time came. The mother had trained as a lawyer and was now finding fulfillment in



*A group of Muslim men gather for prayer at a mosque in Israel/Palestine. Palmer Becker wonders if Mennonites, through their example and witness, might eventually help both male and female Muslim believers to pray and worship side by side.*

her roles as mother and president of the welfare society of their ward. She proudly showed us their food pantry, which had sufficient food to last their family and neighbours through a year of famine if needed.

Since that time, I have discovered that Mennonites and Mormons have a number of things in common. We both have a heritage that includes intense suffering for our faith. We both have a strong concern for family, high moral standards and missions.

It is also obvious that Mennonites and Mormons differ widely in theology. LDS members believe that God the Father exists in physical form, that the Book of Mormon is inspired scripture, and that restoration of the church was brought about through Joseph Smith. Mormons allow themselves to be baptized on behalf of the dead, believe that marriages performed in one of their temples will last eternally and that humans have the potential to become gods.

Do our strong and divergent doctrinal differences mean that we have nothing to learn from them and they from

us? While I am at 180-degree odds with much of Mormon theology, let me share four things that I have learned from their practices:

♦ **ANOTHER WAY OF DOING PASTORAL CARE**

In many Mennonite churches the pastors do most of the pastoral care. In my own ministry I championed small groups as the basic pastoral structure of the church. Mormons, however, have neither paid pastors nor small groups. Instead, elder teams visit each household once a month.

“What do you do during a home visit?” I asked an elder.

“We go prepared to teach one of our gospel principles,” came the response. “But even more important, we go prepared to do whatever is needed in that home. Sometimes that might be trimming a tree while at another time it is helping a family make a difficult decision.”

“They sometimes shoot hoops with me,” said one teenager with appreciation. “They take interest in my school and

friends,” said another.

At the end of a visit to our home, an elder team offered pastoral care to me by asking, “Is there anything we can do to help you?” I had just purchased a printer and was having difficulty getting it set up properly. “Let’s take a look,” they offered with eager excitement. They helped me interpret the directions, crawled under my desk to connect the wires and within a short time had my problem solved.

♦ **ANOTHER WAY TO SHARE OUR FAITH**

Mormons and Mennonites both believe that the Reformation was inadequate. Our forebears believed, although differently, that, instead of mere reformation, the church needed to be restored to the model that Jesus Christ intended. Mormons believe that their church was restored through Joseph Smith and that it contains the organization and fullness of the gospel that Jesus intended. Mennonites look to the New Testament church for guidance and see the fullness of the gospel in terms of discipleship made possible by the Holy Spirit.

Through interaction with Mormons

I have gained a new zeal for sharing my faith and have learned anew how important and strengthening it is to work in teams. Mormons send each other out in teams of two, as Jesus sent out the 70 in Luke 10 to witness. Through the witness of these teams—which is done very differently than Jehovah’s Witnesses do it—they have grown very rapidly.

Might we also develop stronger practices of visiting, teaching and working in teams of two?

◆ **ADDITIONAL WAYS TO SHARE WHAT HAS BEEN REVEALED**

Mormons strongly affirm that revelation did not cease with the prophets or with the closing of the biblical canon. They see the Book of Mormon as “another testament of Jesus Christ,” and look to the presidents of their denomination as living prophets on earth. Mormons also practise a special ordinance after baptism that they believe enables each new believer to receive the Holy Spirit and be empowered to share revelations from God. Each Sunday, instead of a sermon, a youth and two lay speakers are invited to share what has been revealed to them. In time, everyone gets to share their faith in public.

While I do not agree that the Book of Mormon is an equally revealed word from God, I do believe that God is still speaking and revealing his will to us. I have been challenged to look for new opportunities and creative ways for our youth and adult members to share what God is revealing in their lives and doing in the world.

◆ **ANOTHER WAY TO EDUCATE OUR YOUTH**

While I attended three Mennonite schools and am strongly committed to them, I have learned that there are other ways to educate our youth. Every weekday morning, about two-thirds of LDS high school students gather at one of their churches from 6:30 to 7:15 for a time of fellowship, study and prayer. Strong peer relationships develop over the four years, which help them to sustain a high level of moral living. Students who attend 80 percent of the classes



*An instructor at the Kitchener, Ont., LDS church explains the consequences of trying to follow both the way of the world and the way of the Lord to a group of high school students who meet each weekday morning for 45 minutes of ‘seminary’ instruction over the course of four years. Do Mennonites have church communities where we might convene our youth for 45 minutes of fellowship, study and prayer before they go to their public schools, Palmer Becker wonders.*

are honoured with a special graduation exercise.

What might we learn from this? Do we have church communities where we might convene our youth for 45 minutes of fellowship, study and prayer before they go to their public schools?

**What I’ve learned from Muslims**

Another opportunity to learn from a different belief system came three years ago while I was teaching at Bethlehem Bible College in Palestine/Israel. Five times a day I heard calls to prayer from the local mosque. Finally I decided to respond to one of the calls by going for evening prayers. War was raging in Gaza and tensions were running unusually high, so I went with fear and trembling, not knowing what to expect.

After a series of questions, I was welcomed. Twice weekly thereafter I joined Muslim believers for prayers in their mosque. I did not join them in the recitation of the Qur’an or in their bowing towards Mecca. I took a place in the back of the mosque and during their 15-minute prayer time, I prayed quietly but fervently to God through Jesus Christ.

I differ sharply with much of Muslim theology. Our perceptions of God are very different. Our understanding of how we achieve peace and salvation diverge.

We also differ in our understanding of Jesus, angels, heaven and eternal life. Does this mean that we have nothing to learn from this faith tradition and that they have nothing to learn from us? Let me share what I have learned:

◆ **I LEARNED GREATER APPRECIATION FOR REVERENCE IN WORSHIP**

When Muslim believers worship, they shed their shoes at the door, wash their feet and stand barefoot in the presence of a holy God. They cup their hands to their ears to remind them that they are there to hear from God. Together, they face God [Mecca] and bow in humility and reverence. At least three times during each prayer session, they place their foreheads to the ground in surrender to the One who will determine all things.

I have learned that posture does make a difference. Through engagement with Muslims I have been challenged to worship our holy God with greater awe and reverence through standing, kneeling and holding my hands open to receive. Also by adopting more regular times for prayer and worship, my spiritual life has been strengthened.

Might we dare to take off our shoes in worship? Might we challenge Muslims to wash each other’s feet?

#### ♦ I LEARNED NEW EXPRESSIONS OF EQUALITY

To stress their equality before a righteous, judging God, Muslim believers, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, young and aged—although not men and women—stand shoulder to shoulder across the mosque as they pray. After prayers, each turns to the man on his left and right to pass the peace and to express acceptance.

During the *haj*—a pilgrimage to Mecca—all are required to wear the same clothes. It removes physical differences between the wealthiest and the poorest. Seeing millions of Muslims from all over the world dressed identically and worshipping together makes a powerful impression.

Do we have something to learn from the Muslims that will help us to express more powerfully our unity in Christ? Also, through our example and witness might we eventually help both male and female Muslim believers to pray and worship side by side?

#### ♦ I LEARNED THE BENEFITS OF FASTING

Both Mormons and Muslims strongly affirm the physical, spiritual and practical benefits of fasting. On the first Sunday of each month, Mormons forgo two meals, spend the extra time in prayer and give the proceeds from the skipped meals to the poor and hungry. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims fast from before sunrise until after sundown each day. As they gather in family settings after sundown to break the fast, it becomes a time to strengthen community.

Fasting is a way to turn away from daily distractions and to focus on God and the inner spirit. Jesus expected his followers to fast.

Traditionally, I have fasted from evening on Maundy Thursday until 3 p.m. on Good Friday. It has been a meaningful experience. After observing these two divergent traditions, I am challenged to give a greater place to the discipline of fasting. During Easter week I want to fast through the day until the evening meal. Breaking this pattern of fasting on Easter Sunday will most certainly enhance the joy of that celebration.

#### What might be our approach to learning?

Is it appropriate to learn from belief systems like these that are very different from our own? If it is, how might we proceed? Let me make three observations:

#### ♦ WE LEARN BEST THROUGH PERSONAL DIALOGUE IN WHICH WE SEE EACH OTHER AS FRIENDS, RATHER THAN AS ENEMIES.

Dialogue requires that we know our own core values and beliefs, and also the core values and beliefs of those with whom we interact. This helps us to be stronger in our own faith and more understanding of theirs.

#### ♦ WE LEARN BEST BY ASKING QUESTIONS AND TELLING STORIES.

When Muslims ask me, “Do you believe in Mohammed?” rather than responding with an immediate negative, I respond by saying, “I believe God used Mohammed to turn people from the worship of idols to the worship of our one true God. He also helped his followers to break patterns of immorality.” Then I go on to ask, “Do you believe in Jesus?” After hearing their responses, I seek to share stories of how Jesus has touched and transformed my life. We can be confident in the promise of Jesus: “You will know

*the truth and the truth will make you free.”*

#### ♦ WE LEARN BEST BY BEING POSITIVE.

A team of Mormon elders modelled a positive style of sharing when they came saying, “We have come not to find fault with you or to criticize you. We have not come here to berate you because of things you have not done, but we have come here as your brethren and to say to you, ‘Keep all the good that you have, and let us bring to you more good, in order that you may be happier and in order that you may be prepared to enter into the presence of our Heavenly Father.’”

It is my observation that for mutual learning to take place we need to engage in honest risk-taking, joyful relationship-building and humble interaction that allows for laughing and crying together. May God help us to that place. ❧

*Palmer Becker, a retired pastor now living in Kitchener, Ont., and worshipping at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont., has led many workshops on small groups, and served as director of the Hesston (Kan.) College Pastoral Ministries Program. He currently travels extensively on teaching assignments to various international locations.*

### /// For discussion

1. Why might the idea of learning from other faiths make us uncomfortable or fearful? What are the risks and benefits of honest dialogue with other faiths? What are the faith groups in your community with whom you could build relationships?
2. What does Palmer Becker say he has learned from Mormons about pastoral care, sharing faith and educating youth? Are these ideas something that your congregation could use?
3. What has been your experience with fasting? Do you agree that fasting before feasting can enhance a celebration? What is the purpose of fasting? Should the Mennonite church encourage more fasting?
4. Do you agree that Muslims show more awe and reverence for God than Christians do when they worship? How much difference does posture—such as kneeling or bowing—make? Does a schedule of regular prayers show that Muslims are more devout than Christians?
5. How important is it to develop relationships with other faith groups?

## 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.*

## ✉ Should governments fund spiritual care?

RE: "FINANCIAL CRISIS looms," Sept 19, page 22.

Part of my professional responsibility as corporate services vice-president/chief financial officer for South Eastman Health Inc. is the negotiating of funding agreements with faith-based personal care homes in rural Manitoba on behalf of a regional health authority.

Reading about the struggles of the Bethania Group to fund its spiritual care program resonates with me. Several years ago, facilities in our region struggled with accumulated operating debts that threatened the viability of their operations. In some cases, these debts included several years of accounts receivable from "supporting constituencies" for their non-publicly funded spiritual-care programs. Recognizing spiritual care as a key determinant of health, the regional health authority board decided to step in and support development of a funding model that subsidized the cost of the facilities programs.

While I admire the board for its vision and commitment to the residents of these important facilities, as a member of a constituent church, it still grieves me that this was necessary.

Evelyn Rempel-Petkau's opening question is apropos: "What makes a Mennonite personal care home Mennonite?" It's a question the regional health authority board now asks itself with regularity. If a home cannot rally the support of its faith-based constituency for its spiritual-care program, what exactly would generate support? Would boards of faith-based personal care homes accept the provincial government

subsidizing the salaries of their respective congregational pastors? If not, why is it acceptable for their personal care homes?

RON JANZEN, STEINBACH, MAN.

## ✉ Column provides corrective to editorial question

AMONG THE MANY good articles found in *Canadian Mennonite*, Dan Graber's From Our Leaders column, "What shapes us?," Sept. 19, page 10, was timely and well written. It provided a much-needed corrective to a question raised in the Sept. 5 editorial, "Food as faith formation": "Do some of us wish the cultural ornaments would just disappear so that we could focus on more substantive issues—like justice, peace, the good news of Jesus, and creation care?" The wording of this question supports the misunderstanding that justice, peace, etc., are not part of the good news of Jesus, but at best fit somewhere outside of what Jesus is really all about. This was a poorly worded sentence in an otherwise good editorial.

CLARENCE EPP, WINNIPEG, MAN.

## ✉ Putting Young Voices in their proper place

IT'S A GOOD thing that I read *Canadian Mennonite* from the back to front because it puts Young Voices where I believe they should be: front and centre. I suppose for those who read the magazine from front to back, they can take solace that Young Voices are getting the last word!

PAM BARTEL, ELMIRA, ONT.

## ✉ Church needs to hear from 'young voices'

I WAS IMMEDIATELY "hooked in" to the Oct. 3 issue when I read Dick Benner's editorial ("Hearing young voices," page 2) about the church's role in encouraging and mentoring younger generations to become the leadership segment of the church. As Benner aptly put it, "[W]e should gradually let go of the levers of power in the congregation and intentionally position our sons and daughters . . . to take over responsibility as we counsel them toward goals—dreams—that we haven't brought to fruition despite our best efforts."

In our Wanner Mennonite congregation in Cambridge, Ont., the mentorship program is being revived. Being a part of such a program gives us, as older members, the opportunity for precious personal



time with our youths.

I am pleased to see the new Young Voices section in this publication. These pages can encourage our young adults to express their goals and dreams, and in so doing will help us to be supportive of them. It is so important to bring new ideas and vision to our congregations in order to keep us vibrant and current in expressing our faith.

MARGE UNGER, CAMBRIDGE, ONT.

## ✉ Biblical signs of the last days

RE: "I'M A human being," Sept. 5, page 12.

We must be living in the last days of grace according to two biblical signs: strange teachings and the rapid spread of the gospel.

Life in the Postmodern Shift columnist Troy Watson writes, "God isn't a Christian and he didn't create us to be Christian either." What next!

While the church in the wealthy West is getting more worldly, the poor, persecuted underground

### OUTSIDE THE BOX

# Rethinking Jerusalem

PHIL WAGLER

I recall watching footage of the 1994 Rwandan genocide from the comfort of my living room. Images of machete-wielding young people have staying power in the personal video recorder that is my brain. Almost one in seven people perished in just over three horrible months. Most troubling was the sad fact that the vast majority of Rwandans at the time of the genocide would have identified themselves as Christians. How could this be?

A few weeks ago, our church hosted three Rwandan guests. Their ministry to young people and women with HIV/AIDS is making a difference in the small African country. Facing daunting realities, these servants have acted with vision, rather than wallow or run for sanctuary elsewhere. They took their Jerusalem seriously.

One team member, Luke, had never visited a western nation before. He was like most of us who travel somewhere new, bringing as he did many stereotypes with him. Those assumptions of Canada were shattered as he roamed Vancouver's Lower East Side, Canada's "poorest postal code." He was deeply disturbed. The shock of what he saw on our streets messed with him as much as the jetlag from which he was recovering.



When the group's leader spoke to our church family on Sunday morning, he gave a powerful challenge. Coming to our Jerusalem from the ends of the earth, he spoke of how hope in Rwanda is replacing despair after almost 20 years of reconciliation and repair. He spoke of spiritual renewal and signs of life, and of the persistent need for transformation and healing. He invited our people, so ably fitting Luke's stereotypes, to join in financially supporting their important work. But he also brought things back to our Jerusalem. "Don't come and help us if you won't look after your Jerusalem first,"

*The shock of what he saw on our streets messed with him as much as the jetlag from which he was recovering.*

he said with straightforward clarity. That arrow of truth sunk deep.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you," said Jesus in Acts 1:8, "and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." The world everywhere is a goulash of the beauty and the broken. There is no end of worthy projects to support; of places to send eager servants; and of people who need the wholeness of the gospel that saves sinners, restores dignity and rights

wrongs.

All of our churches in some way participate in this immense task in creative and generous ways. Like Luke, some of us will go where our stereotypes will be evaporated and others of us will say our part is to help Luke get there. All this is important, but what are we doing with our Jerusalem? How is our witness of the wholeness of the gospel going there?

So easily do we live with the mess of our own backyard. We can be emotionally moved by stories from far, far away, while the brokenness we pass by in our own Jerusalem is ignored. The familiar is seen with a critical eye. The Sunday morning prophet's challenge sounds deep, like sonar for the soul: We must rethink Jerusalem or our witness to the ends of the earth will ring hollow.

Our Rwandan friends knew firsthand what can happen if the witness in Jerusalem is neglected. These brothers were not outside consultants, but spoke from the credibility gained by enduring the worst and working towards a different future in their Jerusalem. And that was precisely what gave heavenly weight to their message.

*Phil Wagler (phil\_wagler@yahoo.ca) is rethinking life in Surrey, BC as a husband, father, neighbour and pastor.*

church in China is growing at the rate of 15,000 new members every day, as reported by the Canadian Bible Society.

In the book *Back to Jerusalem: Called to Complete the Great Commission*, written by three Chinese

church leaders with Paul Hattaway, the authors write of their spiritual vision to send 100,000 missionaries across China's borders to evangelize the 10-40 latitude zone in this generation.

God is building his kingdom not with glass

## NEW ORDER VOICE

# Yet another outspoken white man

AIDEN ENNS

I wonder if it's enough to be an outspoken white man.

In my early years of Christian zeal, I learned from radio host and author James Dobson that men and women were different but equal, and that it was actually gracious of me to recognize them as the weaker sex. (I still strive to be gracious—to James Dobson and the people who introduced me to him.)

Tony Campolo, my hero when I was a church youth worker, taught Christian discipleship and selflessness through cassette tapes and youth conventions.

Ron Sider, in *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, talked about "God's identification with the weak, oppressed and poor." With phrases such as "structural evil and world hunger," he introduced me to a social dimension of the gospel.

John Howard Yoder added intellectual rigour to my Bible study. His *Politics of Jesus* and other ecumenical writings gave me confidence in confidence. I learned that leaders can be articulate and highly regarded, even elevated. Along with this, I also discovered, came the risk of abuse of power.

After some disillusionment, I found Matthew Fox and his *Original Blessing*. With his "creation-centred spirituality," he outlined a credible alternative to the fall-redemption paradigm.



Thomas Merton, with his writing in *Contemplative Prayer* and elsewhere, gave me permission to embrace a new and more barren experience of God.

Brian McLaren, and other Christian writers on postmodernity such as Brian Walsh and Stanley Grenz, put into words my discomfort with traditional frameworks of interpretation.

Paul Kivel, in his book *Men's Work: How to Stop the Violence that Tears our Lives Apart*, encouraged me to be a softer male and to speak out against violence against women.

Shane Claiborne, a youth by comparison to the others, brought together an evangelical zeal and social justice fervour that still inspires me. His writing, in *The Irresistible Revolution*, for example, has had a tremendous impact for Bible-oriented young people looking for fresh ways to implement the radical call of the

*Arthur Boers and Albert Borgmann have helped me see a positive way out of our entanglement with technology.*

gospel. And "radical" here often means living in community or shunning the pursuit of wealth.

Richard Rohr, through his recordings, books and Center for Action and Contemplation, helped my spirit find peace in the practices of the Christian mystics.

Ched Myers, in his activist reading of the Gospel of Mark (*Binding the Strong Man*), and Walter Brueggemann, in his depiction of Jesus as one who inspired the downtrodden, re-activated my youthful zeal for following in the way of Christ, challenging empire and crossing boundaries set by the establishment.

And significantly, Arthur Boers and Albert Borgmann have helped me see a positive way out of our entanglement with technology. In the elevation of "focal things and practices," which are very loaded terms, we can rediscover a new sense of vitality, fortitude, community and hope.

I could mention others—Walter Wink, Jean Vanier, Marcus Borg, Darrin Barney, Douglas Coupland and Wade Davis come to mind, all for different reasons—who have shared many valuable words with the wider community.

Many valuable words from many important men. I wonder, is it enough for me to be another outspoken white man? It seems something is missing. As a columnist for *Canadian Mennonite*, what more can I contribute without reinforcing our tendency to favour the words of whites and males? I'm not sure.

Fortunately, I have another two months to think about it.

*Aiden Enns welcomes your feedback and ideas. He is a member of Hope Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man., and the editor of Geez magazine. He can be reached at [aiden@geezmagazine.org](mailto:aiden@geezmagazine.org).*

cathedrals, but by born-again, spirit-filled lives that cannot get enough of God's Word and are willing to risk all to serve their Lord.

C. NEIL KLASSEN, ROSEMARY, ALTA.

### ✉ **Too much made of Jets' logo**

A BIG "THUMBS down" to Dan Swartzentruber and the decision-makers at *Canadian Mennonite* for publishing his article, "Should Mennos cheer for fighter Jets?"; along with giving this topic front-cover status. There are so many other global issues that we should concentrate on and read about in this magazine. This was very disappointing, to say the least.

To all Menno Jets' fans in Winnipeg: Let's enjoy the return of NHL hockey without worrying about being chastised by Menno Leafs' fans. Go, Jets, go!

DOUG FAST, WINNIPEG, MAN.

### ✉ **Canadian Mennonite gives in to sensationalism, disrespect**

I WAS PERPLEXED by the choice of cover for the Oct. 3 issue of *Canadian Mennonite* and the ensuing articles related to the Winnipeg Jets' logo. To be clear, the current logo would not have been my choice.

But the display and discussion of the logo was sensationalist at best and paralleling fundamentalism at worst. The return of the Jets to Winnipeg, Man., created enormous hype in the city and among hockey enthusiasts throughout the country. Many people are genuinely happy for Winnipeg.

It appears that *Canadian Mennonite* has simply piggy-backed on this hype and focused on the symbol instead of the content. It is reminiscent of the fundamentalist who uses any excuse to go on a rant about a pet topic, but regularly misses the larger context.

Should Mennonite Jets fans all feel guilty or sheepish for cheering for their hockey team? The subtle implication on the cover is, yes. "Should Mennos cheer for fighter Jets?" What a ridiculous question!

Should the players on the ice not receive the support of fans because of the marketing department's choice of logo?

What about the Toronto Maple Leafs? Are Mennos who cheer for the Leafs trumpeting patriotism and buying into nationalist fervour because the Leafs' symbol is Canada's national symbol?

Or should we equate support for the Edmonton Oilers as a quiet disregard for the environmental impact of the petroleum industry?

Have the Buffalo Sabres been excessively violent because they have swords in their logo?

Will Winnipeg's players really be more violent because of the fighter jets in their logo?

As David Driedger suggests, a logo simply attempts to capture the imagination and market share.

*Canadian Mennonite* similarly tried to capture the imagination of the reader with sensationalism, but did so with disrespect, holding up a straw man and heaping it with judgment.

As a frequent reader of *Canadian Mennonite*, I expect more.

ABE G. BERGEN, WINNIPEG, MAN.

### ✉ **The RCAF exists so 'that others may live'**

RE: "SAY NO to the logo," Oct. 3, page 4.

Symbols can mean what you want them to mean—peace or violence—like the crucifix over the course of history. At the Royal Canadian Air Force base where I work as a civilian mechanic on search and rescue helicopters, the caption under the large RCAF logo reads: "That others may live."

I've come to appreciate some of the positive aspects of the Canadian air force. Many lives are saved day and night by the RCAF, often in severe weather conditions that put service-men and -women, many of whom have family values and beliefs much like ours, at great risk.

Not only do aircraft patrol the coastline for submarines, they also work with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The crews spend long hours over the ocean looking for illegal fishing, migrant and drug smuggling, and polluters. They also perform rescue missions using air-droppable survival pods.

Should Mennos cheer for the Jets? If not, what about the New Jersey Devils? But I guess that's a whole other hockey game.

ALVIN WERNER, COMOX, B.C.

### ✉ **Don't stop teaching our children**

RE: "SUNDAY IS not a day for school," Oct. 17, page 9.

Will Braun has helpfully opened the door to conversation about children's spirituality. There is growing consensus among those who study children's spirituality that young, pre-rational children have a strong intuitive sense of the supernatural. They also agree that children of this age resonate deeply with religious rituals and worship practices. Integrating children into these worship activities nurtures their spirituality and helps them develop sustaining habits at increasingly deeper levels as they grow older. That's why children belong in worship. Children are also shaped by

*There is growing consensus among those who study children's spirituality that young, pre-rational children have a strong intuitive sense of the supernatural.*

observing adults deeply engaged in worship, especially if worship includes movement and participation.

It is true that Sunday school in Mennonite churches has often placed greater emphasis on learning about God than on experiencing God, as Braun posits in his column. However, the Sunday school curriculum developed in the early 1990s began to correct that balance. Gather 'Round, introduced in 2006, places an even greater emphasis on framing all sessions in worship, and includes many suggested rituals to practise in a group setting.

Calling it Sunday school can be problematic,

especially for those who have negative associations with school. This perception persists among those who are not well acquainted with life in a contemporary elementary school setting. That's why many now prefer to call what happens in our congregations on a Sunday morning "children's ministry" or "children's church." Whatever you call it, though, let's not stop teaching our children!

I hope and pray our congregations and homes will increasingly grow as places where children encounter the holy and learn about God's big story, and that this will take place through age-appropriate nurture and in participatory, ritual-filled worship. And I hope we will one day soon have more places for passing on the rich insights of those who study children's spirituality.

**ELSIE REMPEL, WINNIPEG, MAN.**

*Elsie Rempel is a formation consultant for Mennonite Church Canada*

#### VIEWPOINT

## Letters to my sister

*In this second instalment of our three-part series of back-and-forth letters, elderly twin sisters Faith Elaine Linton and Joyce Gladwell continue their conversation on the topic of homosexuality.*

#### ELAINE:

Back to your presentation on human sexuality. You are clear in your mind that, based on Genesis 1 and 2, homosexuality is not part of God's original plan.

Let me take your position, and reason with you from there. Consider what I would call the "accidents" of the human condition, which we would both agree are almost certainly not part of God's original plan. The list is long and varied, and might include many things, ranging from dwarfism and Down's syndrome to cancer and schizophrenia. How do we treat people with these conditions, and what is our attitude to these people?

If homosexuality is also an "accident" of the human condition, and not what God intended, my concern is this: What is so different about homosexuality that we don't approach gays with the same compassionate care and understanding that we give to the others on the

"accident" list?

You would like all homosexuals to be "cured," to be changed into heterosexuals. What if they don't want to change, or if we don't have the therapies to cure them even if they do want to change? How do we accommodate unchanged gays in society? That's one of the questions I am interested in.

Thank you for the references you sent me, especially the study by the American psychiatrist, Robert Spitzer. I know you are excited about his study because it offers hope for a cure. However, I must point out the limitations of his results. Yes, his study does demonstrate that some [few] people, given psychotherapy, can make a major shift from a homosexual to a heterosexual lifestyle. However, there is a necessary condition for success: People must be strongly motivated to change.

All the gays in Spitzer's study had

reasons for change. For example, most were Christians who felt that the gay lifestyle conflicted with their religious convictions. Although all were motivated, only a few reported complete change. Most "still struggled occasionally with unwanted attractions." Spitzer also acknowledges that, apart from his study, "many people are evidently content with a gay identity and have no desire to change." I think that we will be sharing society with many unchanged gays for a while yet.

If gays are not to have the privilege of socially sanctioned unions, as heterosexuals do, what alternatives do you suggest? Would you impose celibacy on all gay persons? Is that realistic? If you don't want gays to marry, do you not care that they will be tempted to engage in casual promiscuous encounters? Isn't that what happens? Hence the spread of HIV/AIDS? Would you prefer that gays live their lives in isolation, without the stability of a socially accepted home life, subject to the risk of mental suffering, even suicide? Is that good for society, let alone gay persons?

If gays are asking for formal unions, what they are asking for is to live

*'I trust and believe that there will always be a remnant who will faithfully—and against all odds—work and pray assiduously towards the manifestation of God's compassion, redemption and healing power in every kind of sin-damage, including homosexuality.'*  
(Elaine Linton)

faithfully with one partner, to take part in the joys of family life, and to live with dignity and acceptance in society and the church. Gays in the church want understanding from the family group they cherish, their Christian community. What part of this list could you object to? Would you prefer what happens to some gays at the extreme end of the scale: promiscuity, disease, suffering and suicide?

Think, Elaine. Seek wisdom. Ask yourself: What does it mean to create policies for an imperfect world?

We are not yet in the promised new earth of God's kingdom, so, when we make policies in this life, we may have to settle for less than what we consider ideal. And since we ourselves are still imperfect, the policies we intend for the best may do harm, rather than good. Do you want to be responsible for policies that cause suffering and increase temptation for a significant group in society?

Sorry, I get hot under the collar about this. Let's change the subject.

The other question I am interested in is: How does homosexuality arise? The quote you gave sums it up nicely: "[W]hile genes play a part, so do socialization, conditioning and self will."

I am reminded of the single-sex environment of our boarding school days. Remember the teenage "crushes"—romantic attachments—we developed towards other girls. There wasn't a boy in sight. But we grew up to find heterosexual partners, and we left those same-sex feelings behind once we were out of the hot house of the same-sex boarding school. Could it be that some young people today, who fear they are gay, just need to be reassured that this will pass?

In today's culture of gay activism, some young people may feel pressured to declare themselves to be gay and to take

on a gay lifestyle unnecessarily. Perhaps the staff at our school were wiser than we gave them credit for. They never used labels such as "gay" or "lesbian." They were wise, in that they tolerated the "crush" behaviour—the jostling for attention, the scraps of romantic poetry—as harmless, temporary and commonplace in a same-gender boarding school.

At the same time, they took stern measures to make sure that those feelings did not translate into homosexual activity. Remember the rules we found so ludicrous: No holding hands, no "mauling or pawing" allowed: no two girls to be in the same cubicle. The prefects were like hawks, making sure the rules were not broken. That way, "socialization and conditioning" to become homosexual did not happen. I am guessing about the other girls, but it was certainly true for us.

I imagine you are beginning to realize how complex this whole area is. Enough for now. Thank you for those references you sent me. They have given me more to think about.

Did you notice that quote in the *Scripture Union* reading this week, and how well it applies to us? "Together in fellowship we can help each other to avoid being too naïve or too overbearing."  
**YOUR EVER-LEARNING SISTER, JOYCE**

### **Elaine's response**

**DEAR SISTER:**

Your second letter was gratifying, in that you really seem to have considered seriously the responses I sent you. Moreover, you have articulated very clearly some of the practical implications of being gay. You actually stand in the shoes of non-heterosexual people, and think and feel like them and for them. I have never done that.

I am as puzzled as you are that we don't approach gays with compassion, care and understanding. It seems so clear to me that, from God's point of view, all deviations from his original plan are the result of sin. He hates every kind of sin . . . as well as every instance of willful disobedience. At the same time, he feels an enormous pain and compassion for the persons so afflicted—persons he originally designed for intimate relationship with himself. Hence, the unbelievable act of redemption through Jesus.

Of course, I would like all homosexuals to be cured. Anything less would mean denying the power of God and the efficacy of Jesus' work of redemption. But obviously the sovereign Lord is not about to wave a magic wand and heal everybody just like that. Lots of sin-damaged persons of all kinds have no desire to change.

What affirms my conviction, and gives me hope, is Spitzer's finding that the ones strongly motivated to change from being gay were mostly Christians. The fact that not all of them were completely changed is in keeping with Christian experience with various forms of sin-damage all down through the ages. We don't fully understand why yet. We only know that there is sufficient grace for every situation.

About permitting gay marriage, I can see that this might eventually become the solution adopted by many in the church worldwide. But I trust and believe that there will always be a remnant who will faithfully—and against all odds—work and pray assiduously towards the manifestation of God's compassion, redemption and healing power in every kind of sin-damage, including homosexuality.

Incidentally, remaining celibate has often been a choice made by Christians and non-Christians, for various reasons and because of strong conviction. It is a viable option. Moreover, there is plenty of evidence that that kind of radical choice, which goes against our natural tendencies and desires, can prove enormously productive and fulfilling, morally and spiritually, for those who are called to such a life experience.

**LOVE, ELAINE**

## VIEWPOINT

# Blue forget-me-nots on Remembrance Day

BY HENRY REGIER

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

**O**n Remembrance Day, many people wear red poppies and some wear white poppies. I would prefer blue forget-me-nots.

My heritage for the last four to five centuries has been mostly Christian-pacifistic-communitarian-pragmatic Mennonite, where I use the hyphenated complex of four words that precede “Mennonite” loosely. With my particular lineage, walking the walk seems to have been more important than talking the

of no formal army. A Russian colleague, who had been a fellow student in a technical college and did not know about Dad’s role in the *Selbstschutz*, urged Dad to join the Bolshevik Party, but he declined. Eventually, Dad was put in charge of the third train of Mennonite refugees who left Russia for Canada in 1923, with his young family and younger brother, Peter.

- During the civil war following the revolution, my mother’s brother, Gerhard,

*There have been occasions when my ancestors and more recent kinfolk have deviated from an idealistic Mennonite way, to put it gently.*

talk. There have been occasions when my ancestors and more recent kinfolk have deviated from an idealistic Mennonite way, to put it gently:

- In South Russia, now Ukraine, my father was conscripted into the Czarist Imperial Army in 1916 and served on the Romanian front in World War I as an officer in that army’s non-combatant medical corps, which was denoted by a Red Cross. Officers of that army were treated as minor nobility in their home communities.

During and after the 1917 Russian Revolution, Dad served for several years as an elected official of the regional government, such as it was. He played a part in mobilizing his community to participate in the major famine-relief program by the then new Mennonite Central Committee.

Earlier, he had helped to mobilize a secret local constabulary, the *Selbstschutz*, to protect the community against bands of criminal marauders who were part

who had been part of the *Selbstschutz*, enlisted in the White army to combat the Red army and Nestor Makhno’s anarchist forces. Gerhard died in a typhus epidemic in the Crimea in 1919 while serving with the White army.

- Ernie, a young Mennonite Canadian who would subsequently marry my sister, enlisted in the Canadian army early in World War II. He fought in bloody battles in Italy, suffered post-traumatic stress disorder and died many years ago.

- Shortly after the start of World War II, my father’s brother, Peter, enlisted with the Canadian army in about 1940, although he was then too old to be conscripted. He served in Africa, Italy and western Europe, and got through that war safely.

- While German forces occupied Ukraine in the early years of World War II, a little daughter of my cousin, who was married to a Jewish man, was taken away by the Nazis and never seen again. For decades, her grandmother nursed hopes that a

good German officer had adopted the girl.

- Two young Mennonite men who would subsequently marry my sisters served as conscientious objectors (COs) in Canada’s forestry camps. Two others worked on farms with almost all of their wages sent to the Red Cross.

- Peter, the son of one of my father’s sisters who had not migrated to Canada in the 1920s and who lived in exile in the eastern Soviet Union, was conscripted into the Red army during the Cold War and served as a radar technician with the Soviet forces monitoring U.S. naval activities in the Arctic. He has since emigrated to Canada with his parents.

So, in summary, in the 20th century a few of my kin volunteered for service in military forces and others were conscripted. Still others invoked CO status and served in civilian activities, an option that was only available in Canada.

As a 15-year-old in 1945, I was escorted by my father to register as a CO in Virgil, Ont., and I did so again in the U.S. in 1963 when we moved to Ithaca, N.Y., during the Vietnam War. In spite of my CO status, I was “recruited” by First Presbyterian Church in Ithaca to teach Sunday school to teenagers and to lead its scout troop.

When the veterans of combat in my extended family have connected over the decades of the 20th century, the fact that they served in different armed forces—even on opposing sides—has not been an issue of importance to them. So would it be fitting if I were to wear blue forget-me-nots on Remembrance Day for each of my kin who were caught up in some war’s unforgiving clutches? %



*Henry Regier is professor emeritus of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of Toronto, Ont., and was named a member of the Order of Canada in 2008. He is a member*

*of Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont.*

## VIEWPOINT

# Caught between sport and the spiritual

BY PHIL WAGLER

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

The hockey player is an iconic symbol of Canadiana and many boys and girls long to walk in the glamorous steps of Sidney Crosby or Hayley Wickenheiser.

In pursuit of the dream an uneasy tension can exist in churches between parents who feel guilty involving their kids in activities that create Sunday and church activity conflicts, while non-sporting types question priorities. An unhealthy dichotomy of the secular and sacred blinds us to the realities of our culture, how it shapes those within our faith communities, and how it has warped our understanding of discipleship and mission. To live on a mission with Jesus means living all of life—including what happens in the local rink—under the reign of God.

Jamie Ramer has served in Sweden and now Ontario with Hockey Ministries International, an organization serving the hockey subculture since 1977. Ordained with Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, Ramer calls churches to the arena not to heap guilt on those who seemingly live there. His life as a junior player was formed by those who guided him through the tension of his love for Jesus and a game. They helped him see his athletic gifts were from God and could be an avenue for kingdom impact. Ramer hopes local churches will also embrace that call in the cities and small towns where young dreams are being launched and lived.

One emerging star who knows this tale from the inside is James Reimer of the Toronto Maple Leafs. Reimer grew up in tiny Morweena, Man., fighting that tension between sport and the spiritual. Raised in an Evangelical Mennonite home, he rose to prominence in 2010 as



A 'wallpaper' image of Leafs goalie James Reimer from the [hfbboards.com](http://hfbboards.com) website.

the starting goalie of that team you either love or hate.

New big-dollar contract in hand, Reimer and his wife April, a pastor's daughter, now live their vibrant faith in the place of dreams. Or is it? At the end of *Hockey Night in Canada*, Reimer is still a 23-year-old facing the challenges of most his age, plus a few different ones as well. It can be perilous.

With every move scrutinized, Reimer says his greatest spiritual need is for a place of genuine Christian fellowship and friendship. This is what Hockey Ministries International provided at every level of his development and what he needs from his local church now. Whether battling the temptations of selfishness and pride over being hailed "the saviour" of the Leafs, as one newspaper did, can arouse the pull towards the destructive habits associated with the sport, Reimer says that the hockey ministry "was the greatest thing. There was a believer who looked out for you."

*With every move scrutinized, [Leafs goalie James] Reimer says his greatest spiritual need is for a place of genuine Christian fellowship and friendship.*

As important as this present support is, Reimer is still the fruit of his roots. His home community taught him to receive all he has been given as a gift from God, who is the source of all things and who trains people in their success and failure. That modelling of a hard-working, Christ-like community shaped him profoundly and prepared him to be a witness from the crease. The example and sometimes strict boundaries of his parents taught him that Christian community and corporate worship matter, and that "hockey's not the greatest thing. If it jeopardizes who you are in Christ, it's not worth it," he says.

And here, particularly, may be the lesson to be learned from someone who has reached the pinnacle of many people's dreams: The divide between the secular and sacred must be eliminated in our homes, arenas and churches.

For the believer, these are all together under the lordship of Christ! Our goal must be to make disciples who know their identity is in Christ and who live as Spirit-filled witnesses wherever they work or play, while being ready to lay down anything that may jeopardize this primary call and relationship. Those like Reimer, with gifts to share in the common or high-profile arenas of life, must be embraced so that they can stand strong.

Reimer reflects poignantly on the opportunity Christians have in a culture where the word of a masked Maple Leaf carries more weight than a homiletically profound preacher: "We are called to be missionaries and, no matter how 'secular' the position may seem, God wants people in those places to spread the Word. So broaden your horizon and go where the people will be."

That vision might just make hockey holy—and our arenas the locale of kingdom victories. ❧

*Phil Wagler is the author of Kingdom Culture: Growing the Missional Church, and, yes, a long-suffering Leafs fan.*

## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Bender**—Graycelyn Ann (b. Oct. 20, 2011), to Todd and Jeanette Bender, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

**Byblow**—Emmerie Rose (b. Oct. 27, 2011), to Denise and Adam Byblow, Hague Mennonite, Sask.

**Driedger**—Avery Marie (b. Oct. 4, 2011), to Grant and Allison Driedger, Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man.

**Friesen**—Felix James Klassen (b. July 21, 2011), to Jeff Friesen and Jess Klassen, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

**Loewen**—Nixon Andrew (b. Oct. 12, 2011), to Andrew and Jennifer Loewen, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

**Neufeld**—Wesley David N. (b. June 5, 2011), to Andrea and Justin Neufeld, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

**Pollard**—Edrie Mya Elizabeth (b. Oct. 25, 2011), to Chris and Lynn Pollard, North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask., in Whitehorse, Yukon.

**Sawatzky**—Leo Timothy Doke (b. July 27, 2011), to Katie and Glenn Sawatzky, Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.

**Schiedel**—Nathan Allen (b. Oct. 22, 2011), to Andrew and Karen Martin Schiedel, Waterloo North, Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**Schlegel**—Gavin Tobin Nicholas (b. Sept. 15, 2011), to Tobin and Erin Schlegel, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

**Wake**—Shyla May (b. Sept. 13, 2011), to Dean and Colleen Wake, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

### Baptisms

**Ed Belanger, Peter Thoman, Kirsten Unrau**—Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont., Oct. 2, 2011.

### Marriages

**Bates/Toews**—Lara Bates and Chris Loewen, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., Sept. 24, 2011.

**Bender/Witzel**—Zenon Bender and Stacey Witzel (East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.), at East Zorra Mennonite, Aug. 27, 2011.

**Cornelsen/Ortiz**—Benjamin Cornelsen and Raquel Ortiz, at Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, B.C., Oct. 8, 2011.

**Gruber/Unrau**—John Gruber and Kirsten Unrau (Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.), at Faith Mennonite, Oct. 15, 2011.

**Irwin/Sobie**—Alaina Irwin and Alan Sobie, at Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., July 1, 2011.

### Deaths

**Boese**—Helena, 93 (b. May 21, 1918; d. Oct. 13, 2011), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

**Cook**—Andrew Richard, 30 (b. Nov. 9, 1980; d. Oct. 7, 2011), Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

**Enns**—Nettie (nee Schroeder), 85 (b. April 24, 1926; d. Sept. 17, 2011), Trinity Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

**Pauls**—Hertha, 85 (b. Nov. 28, 1925; d. Oct. 6, 2011), Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta.

**Tilitzky**—Anne, 92 (b. Jan. 24, 1919; d. Oct. 10, 2011), Zion Mennonite, Swift Current, Sask.

**Wilms**—Katharina, 100 (d. Oct. 24, 2011), Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg, 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





## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

# CMU receives \$10 million in private, public funds

STORY AND PHOTO BY RACHEL BERGEN

National Correspondent  
WINNIPEG, MAN.

Over the course of a week in October, Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) came into a total of \$10 million for its new business school and a food security research project in South Asia.

On Oct. 19, the Redekop family of the Fraser Valley in British Columbia pledged a minimum of \$6.5 million—and potentially up to \$7.5 million—to fund the Redekop School of Business. This is the largest private donation that CMU has ever received.

The Redekop School of Business will use an inter-disciplinary approach in preparing graduates for a business environment that is ever-more global in nature. Students will become engaged in business and not-for-profit organizations with a worldview and character shaped within a Christian university community.

The school will offer a four-year bachelor of business administration degree (with a fifth-year co-op option) with majors in business management, not-for-profit management, accounting and human resources management; and three- and four-year bachelor of arts degrees with majors in business and organizational administration.

The Redekop family decided to invest in future business people and not-for-profit leaders because of their own experiences in business. They fled from the Soviet Union during World War II and established a farm and construction business when they arrived in B.C. These businesses have grown and have established the Redekops as business leaders in the community.

“The school will greatly enhance the university’s ability to prepare and educate a significant number of Christian business leaders who will provide a positive influence on society and the life of the church, and who will have the resources to fund the

church’s institution,” Peter Redekop said.

CMU president Gerald Gerbrandt agreed. “We [at CMU] are convinced that the Redekop School of Business will have a positive impact on our community and all those who will be served by our business graduates,” he said.

Six days earlier, Stephen Fletcher, the federal transportation minister, announced that the Canadian International Development Agency and the International Development Research Centre were providing \$3.5 million for a CMU project supported through the Canadian International Food Security Research Fund.

Kirit Patel, an assistant professor of international development studies at CMU’s sister school, Menno Simons College, is one of the principal investigators for the “Revalorizing minor millets in rain-fed regions of South Asia” project. His project addresses agricultural policy in South Asia that currently places the emphasis on cash crops that aren’t very nutritional, rather than on minor millets that are very nutritious.

This has led to severe under-nutrition, Patel said. “Under-nutrition of women and children in India and [other parts of South Asia] is worse than Sub-Saharan Africa.”

This project will take place in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Gerbrandt believes that the funding will not only help CMU be part of a global effort to end hunger, but also to pass on knowledge and wisdom so that students can understand the world better. “This funding will enable the research team to make significant progress in gaining understanding and knowledge in their field of research,” he said. ☛

*This is the largest private donation that CMU has ever received.*

PHOTO BY RACHEL BERGEN



*Stephen Fletcher, the federal transportation minister, centre, announces \$3.5 million in government funding for a project CMU professor Kirit Patel, right, will undertake in Asia. CMU president Gerald Gerbrandt looks on.*

## CHURCH ANNIVERSARIES

# Viability is no longer the question

*At 175, Mannheim Mennonite Church looks toward the future with hope*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
PETERSBURG, ONT.

First known as Latschar Mennonite Church, on land bought from Isaac Latschar in 1836, Mannheim Mennonite Church celebrated its 175th anniversary on Oct. 8 and 9. Founded by Swiss background Mennonites from Pennsylvania, the congregation—now a member of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada—first worshipped in homes for a few years and then built a church.

Years later, the congregation bought the Wilmot Township No. 9 schoolhouse up the hill from the church. In 1980, the church building was moved up the hill, turned 90 degrees and joined to the school; a new entrance and a large fellowship room were constructed at this time.

The celebration on Oct. 8 told the story of a congregation that has grown and shrunk through the years, welcoming many non-Mennonites as well as the congregants' own children.

Members Ed Spethman and Trish

Robinson remember moving near the church nearly 30 years ago. Land around the house they were renting was owned by a Mannheim member who invited them and their children to church, all the while giving low-key advice about the gardens they were planting. They came and, except for a short time of reconsidering, have been active at Mannheim ever since.

The church has often struggled with dissonance, particularly about leadership styles or a particular leader. At a low ebb again, due to demographics and geography, the congregation has struggled with its identity and viability over the past number of years.

Ferne Burkhardt wrote in Mannheim's 150-year church history, *Full Circles* (1986), that "the circle continues to change. Its arc is not fixed. It will continue to bend and surround. . . . As the circles of congregational life spiral into a new generation and a new century, will they form a vibrant

coil ready always to spring into action at the touch of the finger of God?"

Of a discernment process the church has undergone over the past year, Keith Moyer of the Ministry Leadership Team said at a meeting just two weeks before the anniversary, that it became perfectly clear that no business meeting would be necessary to decide whether the 50 people who still worship regularly at Mannheim Mennonite had questions about the congregation's viability. Prayer and contemplation, together and alone, throughout the summer had brought congregants to consensus: they would continue together. They don't know what all that will mean, but a slimmed down leadership structure will continue to ask the question of where God is leading them into the future, even though there are "tonnes of questions." ❧

## Bethel Mennonite celebrates 75 years

BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent  
LANGLEY, B.C.

Bethel Mennonite Church, Langley, celebrated its 75th anniversary on Oct. 1 and 2 with events for old-timers, current members and the community at large.

A "community day" on Oct. 1 in the church parking lot drew several hundred and focused on celebration and fun, with free food and entertainment for all. Musical performances, hockey and basketball games, and a children's bouncing castle and crafts kept all ages entertained, providing a non-threatening way to welcome neighbourhood residents.

The Oct. 2 worship service drew 350, including seven who had been present at the church's beginning in 1936. Lorin Bergen, pastor of Living Hope Christian Fellowship, spoke on the theme of "Passing



*In their traditional Swiss Mennonite garb, Grace Kuepfer Niezen, left, Merri Kraemer Slagell, Cathy Cressman Sebastian and Kevin Martin serve the traditional Swiss Mennonite dessert—pie—at Mannheim (Ont.) Mennonite Church's 175th anniversary on Oct. 8.*

## CHURCH ANNIVERSARIES

the torch,” illustrated further in a meaningful ceremony of older members of the church taking lit candles and passing them on to younger members.

Festivities concluded with a salmon and farmer’s sausage barbecue for the noon meal.

Pastor Phil Wheaton gave the weekend celebration a “two thumbs up,” saying he was glad the church could focus not only on itself, but also on the community that surrounds it. He noted that Bethel’s location makes it the only church in the immediate area, so many nearby residents consider it their church.

Wheaton said that a conversation he had with one of the older members afterwards affirmed what this congregation is all about: “She told me, ‘This is the type of event we should have every year. It shows we’re interested in [our community] and we want nothing from them.’”

Bethel, originally known as Cogan Mennonite Church, began in 1936 when eight Prairie transplant and immigrant families started a new church on the present site. ❧



*Peter Paetkau, lay minister at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont., explains to his grandsons Micah and Noah Janzen why the church erected a 25th-anniversary memory stone and why it buried a box of ‘spiritual commitments’ from the grown-ups.*

## Choose whom you will serve

*Waterloo North Mennonite Church commemorates 25 years of ministry, commits to the future*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DICK BENNER

Editor/Publisher  
WATERLOO, ONT.

As the ancient prophet Joshua challenged the Israelites to choose between Yahweh, the “God of your parents,” or the gods of their neighbours, so God is asking congregants at Waterloo North Mennonite Church to choose between serving him or the gods of consumerism, power, security, fear and money, Dan Nighswander said on the occasion of the congregation’s 25th anniversary on Oct. 23.

Nighswander, who recalled his pastoral ministry to the congregation 15 years ago, lamented the fact that in the post-Christian era, science has replaced history as the authority in people’s lives. “But the biblical view is one of history, because recounting

the events of history is how we come to know who God is, that he is eternal and unchanging,” he insisted. “It shows us how God intervenes in our story.”

Recalling the ruthlessness of the decision Joshua was calling God’s people to make, Nighswander, now pastor of Jubilee Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man., noted how Moses’ successor chided his people and told them that their glib promises to choose God over other gods was not enough, and that, as a people, not individually, they had to, as he did, resolve to serve the Lord. “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord,” is hard to apply today, though, he said, because “I don’t speak

for my household.”

The weekend goal of raising \$25,000 to mark the anniversary was exceeded by \$12,000. Four community charities will split the original amount: the new Chin Christian Church, Kitchener, Ont. (\$8,000); Bethlehem Bible College, Palestine/Israel (\$7,500); the Mennonite Coalition for Refugee Support (\$4,500); and the Kitchener-Waterloo Refugee Task Force (\$5,000). The church is still deciding how to disperse the excess funds.

A special choir was assembled for the occasion and a stone was erected on the grounds opposite the church’s entrance with a plaque commemorating the anniversary. Pledges of service and spiritual commitment made by members of the congregation were buried in a box next to the stone, symbolizing household promises to serve the Lord in the future.

The four original elders of the church, which first met in a gymnasium of a local Lutheran retirement community, included Ralph Lebold, Carol Shantz, Ron Flaming and Gloria Eby. ❧

# Learning from each other

*Pastors from Canada, Liberia pay each other reciprocal visits*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent  
EDMONTON, ALTA.

A visit to Edmonton was an answer to Elizabeth Mayah Sahr's prayers. From mid-September through October, the city's Holyrood Mennonite Church hosted the assistant pastor/pastor of women's ministry at God's Glory Free Pentecostal Church, Monrovia, Liberia, inviting her to teach and giving her the opportunity to reunite with her daughter and granddaughters who attend there.

The partnership between Holyrood Mennonite and God's Glory churches began through a series of blessed coincidences:

- Shortly after a number of Liberian refugees began attending Holyrood, pastors Werner and Joanne De Jong won a 2008 Mennonite Church Canada Witness draw for a trip to anywhere that Witness ministered.
- After visiting Werner's sister Margaret, a missionary in Senegal, they made a side trip to Liberia to see relatives of their new church members.
- In 2010, Werner was invited to Liberia as the keynote speaker for a peace conference.

Sahr hosted him and recalls his work as having a helpful impact. "What the gospel says is true," she says. "He [De Jong] didn't just teach peace, we saw it in him."

The Liberian and Canadian congregations share biological and faith family ties. They support each other in prayer, Holyrood helps support a school in Liberia, and the two learn from each other.

Joanne says that from the Liberian church Holyrood has learned "to praise God in suffering, to be grateful, and to let relationships be more important than money. . . . We have so much that sometimes we think we don't have needs."

Sahr was touched by the cooperation and respect she experienced between new and established Canadians at Holyrood, pointing out that in her own country classes and races of people do not mix so well. "Here, we are accepted with our traditions. It really touched me," she says, adding, "The same Jesus we know in Africa, I see here."

Sahr was also impressed by the way Edmonton area Mennonite pastors meet to share and pray for each other, commenting



*Pastors Werner and Joanne De Jong pose with Liberian pastor Elizabeth Mayah Sahr outside of Holyrood Mennonite Church, Edmonton, Alta.*

that this is a practice she would like to introduce in Liberia.

Joanne feels that one of the greatest challenges to the church in Canada is "to have real community, to share our lives and possessions. There are many lonely people here." During her visits to Liberia, she found that community thrived among Christians there, something that Canadians could learn from.

Sahr, on the other hand, noticed that, in Canada, "the standard [for participation in worship leading] is too high, too professional. We do it in a more common way," she says of her Liberian church.

Sahr believes that the greatest challenges to her church are the limitations its members face because of war and poverty. There simply aren't funds, infrastructure or educated people to accomplish many needed projects, she says.

Of the problems in spreading the gospel in both countries, she says, "Sometimes because of our limitations they [our church people] don't understand us. Sometimes because of your high expectations, you don't understand the church words you are saying."

Besides her current pastoral duties, Sahr is a Bible teacher for the General Women's Missionary Council of Liberia, as well as a program manager for the Kendei Micro-Loan program of her congregation, which provides small loans to more than a hundred women to aid them in starting or expanding businesses. Previously, Sahr has served as national women's coordinator for the Free Pentecostal Mission of Liberia and as an advisor for the Dorcas Women of Liberia. ❧

## /// Staff changes

### Pastor, seniors worker begin at Emmanuel Mennonite

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.—Two new pastoral staff members have been hired at Emmanuel Mennonite Church:

- Chris Lenshyn began in October as associate pastor, with particular emphasis on youth and young adult ministry. Lenshyn, who grew up in Manitoba, attended Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Man., and recently served as assistant pastor at Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church there.
- Laura Loewen began as the seniors ministry coordinator this fall. She recently served four years as pastor to the elderly at Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, Abbotsford. Loewen studied at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C., and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. She has served as pastor of the Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal, as a country representative with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Zambia and as executive director of MCC B.C. from 2000-07.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN

## WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

# Lutherans, Mennonites break bread together

STORY AND PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent  
SPRINGSTEIN, MAN.

After celebrating World Communion Sunday around their own communion tables, Springstein Mennonite Church congregants gathered at a nearby restaurant on Oct. 2 to break bread together with their Starbuck Lutheran Church neighbours.

“Lutherans and Mennonites are living in a new spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness,” said Melissa Miller, pastor of Springstein Mennonite. “It is a different relationship than they had in the 1500s.”

In the Springstein and Starbuck communities, 13 kilometres apart, the Lutherans and Mennonites have lived and worked side by side for more than a century. Some of their families have intermarried. Both congregations, together with the local Catholic and United churches, have worked together on a Canadian Foodgrains Bank project for the past four years, raising more than \$200,000. Although they worship separately, they usually find themselves greeting each other on Sunday morning

as the Lutherans are leaving The Bridge Restaurant and the Mennonites are arriving for their after-church brunch.

But this World Communion Sunday, the Lutherans invited the Mennonites to join them for brunch. Since their service ends earlier, they waited patiently for the Mennonites to arrive.

Ron Vert, pastor of Starbuck Lutheran, explained to the gathered group, “In our history during the Medieval Period we were not nice people. The Lutherans misunderstood a lot of what the Anabaptist teachings were about. We have carried this through our history. In July 2010, the Lutheran World Federation met in Stuttgart [Germany] and asked for forgiveness of the Mennonites for our past history and misunderstandings. So, on behalf of our congregation, I ask forgiveness for what our forbears did to the Mennonites. We have lived in peace as brothers and sisters in Christ for a long time.”



*Melissa Miller presents Ron Vert with a talking stick on World Communion Sunday, Oct. 2.*

Miller, in turn, offered Vert a gift on behalf of Springstein Mennonite, saying, “One of our wise elders, Henry Neufeld, has made a talking stick of diamond willow with ribbons of four colours representing the different races. The talking stick is used in healing circles and is a symbol of reconciliation. May we ever walk in love and peace.”

Before brunch, both congregations stood and extended the hand of peace to each other. ❧

## Pauingassi shares bannock with Grace Mennonite

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent

“I have no words to describe what happened this weekend.”

Kyle Penner, associate pastor of Grace Mennonite Church, Steinbach, Man., heard this remark after the congregation celebrated World Communion Sunday together with members from the Pauingassi church. The two churches struck up a partnership a year ago and decided to celebrate it with communion.

Grace Mennonite invited five members from the remote northern Manitoba community to Steinbach for the weekend of Oct. 1 and 2. While Edna Keeper and Allan Owens, pastor of the Pauingassi church, attended the Partnership Circle meetings in Winnipeg on Oct. 1, Moses Owens, Matthew Keeper and Mike Keeper spent the day with a number of Grace Mennonite members touring the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach. Later that evening, the Pauingassi guests and 52 people

from Grace Mennonite gathered at the home of one of Grace’s deacons. Laughter and tears spilled out around a bonfire as stories were shared.

On Oct. 2, the Pauingassi pastor shared a message based on John 3:16 and the story of the Good Samaritan. With word and song, the Pauingassi guests shared thoughts and stories about their community and their faith.

The service culminated with communion as the two groups shared bannock (fried bread) together.

Henry Neufeld, who, together with his wife Elna, lived and worked in the Pauingassi community for many decades, participated in the service. “He presented us with a diamond willow talking stick,” Penner said. “It’s a symbol of the healing work being done for us and for Pauingassi. It’s symbolic of the healing of all nations,” explained Penner.

PHOTO BY ANNA REHAN

*Conrad Stoesz, archivist at the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Man., standing with clipboard, was the keynote speaker at this fall's Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization (SMYO) junior high retreat; his topic was "Stories to live by." The event, which includes teens from grades 7 to 9, was held at Youth Farm Bible Camp. The venue had special historical significance, according to Anna Rehan, Mennonite Church Saskatchewan area church minister, as the first SMYO retreat was held at Youth Farm 70 years ago.*



# God at work in the Church

TOFIELD MENNONITE CHURCH PHOTO BY SHARON BOESE



*On Oct. 16, Tofield Mennonite Church, Alta., burns the mortgage for its new sanctuary that was dedicated on May 27, 2007. Pictured from left to right: church chair Ernest Boese; deacons Brian Goerzen, Elaine Goerzen, Anne Ewert and Joan Branscomb; Gary Sawatzky of the Mennonite Foundation of Canada; and Pastor Ken Stumph.*

PHOTO BY DICK BENNER



*Lisa Carr-Pries cuts a cake made by her aunt, Jayne Brubacher, after Carr-Pries's ordination as associate minister of Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont., on Oct. 2., while Lee Shantz (right) looks on. Performing the ordination litany was Muriel Bechtel, conference minister for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. Heidi Miller, assistant professor of Christian worship at Perkins School of Theology, Dallas, Tex., preached the ordination sermon, "I have called you." Carr-Pries has served as associate pastor for the past four years after being interim pastor at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, Ont., and prior to that serving as associate pastor for youth and young adults at Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Man. In addition to her congregational duties, she is chair of MC Canada's Christian Formation Council and a member of the General Board. She holds a master of theological studies degree from Conrad Grebel University College and bachelor's degrees in theology and church music from Columbia Mennonite Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C. She is part of a ministry team comprised of Ardith Frey, lead pastor, and Ben Cassels, associate pastor of youth and young adults.*

# snapshots

*André Utkin, left, youth leader of Petershagen Mennonite Church, Ukraine, visits with Willard Martin at his Elmira, Ont., home during a recent trip to North America. The two met while Martin and his wife Karen were in Ukraine three years ago. Currently, the Petershagen congregation is building a new church in the nearby city of Molochansk since its ministries are mostly concentrated in the city, rather than in the countryside where the current building is located; its ministry to seniors, including some 'abandoned widows' who live in the church, will continue in Petershagen. Elmira Mennonite Church, where the Martins attend, is entering into a relationship with the Petershagen congregation, that includes mutual prayer and the possibility of sending a youth group to help run a camp in Ukraine, as well as support of the Petershagen church's building program.*



PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

# Feds fund Foodgrains Bank with \$125 million

*CIDA money will be used to assist people in developing world*

Canadian Foodgrains Bank

**M**ore assistance for more people in the developing world—that's what a new five-year \$125-million funding agreement from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) means for the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

"We are very grateful to the Government of Canada for once again providing us with funding to help people who don't have enough to eat," said Foodgrains Bank executive director Jim Cornelius. "Our member agencies, global partners and supporters across the country are deeply appreciative of this continued support."

The new agreement, which was announced on Oct. 26 in Ottawa, Ont., by Bev Oda, minister of international cooperation, will provide the Foodgrains Bank—a partnership of 15 churches and church agencies (including Mennonite Central Committee) working together to end global hunger—with \$25 million a year in matching funds for food assistance work in the developing world.

"We are proud to recognize the Canadian

Foodgrains Bank as Canada's biggest contributor to ending global hunger," said Oda. "It reflects the values of hard work and compassion shared by all Canadians. Thanks to the churches, community organizations, businesses and individuals who have made a commitment to [the Foodgrains Bank]. You are making a difference for millions of people suffering in emergency and chronic hunger situations worldwide."

Funding provided by the new agreement will enable the Foodgrains Bank to help people like Jam Joseph, whose farm in rural Pakistan was destroyed by recent severe flooding. "Everything has been lost," he said, pointing in the direction of his submerged village. "Three acres of my crops have been submerged in water, and we have lost the wheat we were saving. For Jam, his wife Mebhai, and their four children, things are bleak. "We need help until we can go

back to our normal life," he said.

Together with support from CIDA, the Foodgrains Bank is providing wheat flour, pulses, oil and salt for Jam, his family and 16,000 other flood-affected people in Pakistan.

"Our response in Pakistan is a great example of how the Foodgrains Bank and the Canadian government, through CIDA, are working together to help poor and vulnerable people in the developing world," said Cornelius, adding that the new funding will enable the Foodgrains Bank to "reach many more people with food and other assistance, and to do so in a timely way."

This includes continuing to respond in East Africa, Cornelius said, where the organization's long-standing partnership with CIDA "allowed us to respond to the food crisis long before it was in the news, and will enable us to continue providing assistance during the recovery process long after the news cameras are turned off."

This year, the Foodgrains Bank has committed to 64 projects in 26 countries worth \$21 million, including \$8.8 million for people suffering from drought in East Africa. In 2010, the Foodgrains Bank provided \$38 million worth of assistance for 2.3 million people in 35 countries. Since its founding in 1983, the Foodgrains Bank has provided more than a half-billion dollars worth of assistance for people in 80 countries, including 1.1 million tonnes of food assistance. ❧

CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK PHOTO



*Jim Cornelius, executive director of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, thanks Beverly J. Oda, minister of international cooperation, for providing a further \$125 million over the next five years to help feed the world's hungry people.*

## /// Briefly noted

### Manitoba thrift shops account for 37 percent of MCC contributions

The final count isn't in yet, but so far the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) thrift shop network in Canada has exceeded its projected goal of \$6 million in contributions. Manitoba's 16 thrift shops alone have brought in more than \$2.25 million between September 2010 and the end of July. This makes up more than 37 percent of the budgeted contributions for Canadian thrift shops. Of Manitoba's success, Agatha Fehr, MCC Manitoba thrift shop coordinator, says, "I think in part it is the green movement that has boosted sales. People are more conscious about their shopping." Approximately 2,000 volunteers help to keep the Manitoba thrift shops running. Some shops struggle with finding enough volunteers, Fehr acknowledges, saying, "Volunteers are getting older, but we are trying to get more young people involved." The effort is beginning to pay off. "Interest is being sparked among the younger people," she says. Across Canada, there are 54 MCC thrift shops.

—BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU





*New Order Voice columnist Aiden Enns washes the feet of Kenton Lobe in downtown Winnipeg, Man., on Sept. 24 during a protest against climate change brought about by the West's reliance on oil.*

## Foot washing ends climate change protest

STORY AND PHOTO BY TAMARA PETKAU

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
WINNIPEG, MAN.

As the sounds of hymns overpowered the hum of car engines revving at a red light, a city transit bus had passengers clamouring to open windows out of curiosity about the sights and sounds of worship on the sidewalk around them. It was an unusual sight for a September Saturday afternoon in front of Winnipeg's Canadian Revenue Agency building, where more than 50 people had gathered to pray for climate justice.

Following the global protests of 350.org, which bills itself as “a global grassroots movement to end the climate crisis,” participants went beyond the simple protest march and joined together in a worship service on the busy downtown streets for an hour of song, prayer and foot washing.

The event, which stemmed from discussions of peace and justice issues in Mennonite churches in Manitoba, was a response to North America's growing reliance on oil, including the proposed controversial Keystone Pipeline and Alberta Tar Sands, the latter of which is claimed to be the biggest environmental degradation in

North America and a strong contributor to climate change.

Moving worship from the confines and strictures of the church to the street served to blur the lines of distinction between church and society. “We gather today to worship God, Creator of heaven and earth. We have become aware that our reliance on oil has harmed God's good creation. We will confess our sin, lament the harm we have done and seek healing,” prayed worship leader Carolyne Epp-Fransen, a member of Charleswood Mennonite Church.

The event culminated in an act of foot washing. While some chose the safety of the sidewalk, others opted to step out onto the street, blocking one lane of traffic and violating the Highway Traffic Act.

Kenton Lobe, another Charleswood member and one of the protest's organizers, acknowledged the risk of arrest and the \$200 fine that accompanied it, but he was quick to put this into perspective: “A \$200 fine is a paltry outcome compared to the drought and to the suffering that climate change and, ultimately, our oil

### /// Briefly noted

#### MCC Ontario wins social media contest

KITCHENER, ONT.—All it took was an engaging video—and 5,000 clicks—to win solar panels valued at \$70,000. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario was announced as the winner of the Watts Next? video contest on Sept. 24, earning it the grand prize of a 10-kilowatt solar energy system. The winning video, entitled *Go Big or Go Small*, featured inspirational stories of environmental care in Waterloo Region, combining creative elements from the *Rick Mercer Report* and *The Story of Stuff*. Ken Ogasawara wrote and produced the video with Waterloo-based film-maker Jonathan Steckley. The Watts Next? competition was hosted by the Ontario Sustainable Energy Association; the contest invited Ontarians to share how green energy and conservation are transforming their communities and making them healthier and more prosperous places to live. The winning video was determined by which had the most online views.

—MCC Ontario

consumption has caused. Should we not be prepared to risk more than that?” he challenged.

“It's very nice to see people put their voice out there, to see people coming together for a good cause,” said Dacia Christian, an observer and self-described atheist who enjoyed witnessing the public act of faith.

As the event drew to a close, police showed up and requested that the foot-washing station be removed from the roadway. “This protest is about oil, so we felt we needed a worship place that included the street,” Epp-Fransen explained to the officers.

With police joining the mingling crowd, Leah Klassen said she thought the protest had been effective. “To see others strengthened my conviction to live differently,” she said. “It was important to see protest in a peaceful and respectful way.” ///

# MCC calls on feds to seriously rethink Bill C-10

BY RACHEL BERGEN

National Correspondent

Everybody wants to feel safe and deserves to, but what about offenders?

The federal government is working towards passage of Bill C-10, formerly known as “The Safe Streets and Communities Act,” as a bundled bill in order to speed up the legislation. Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) believes this action is hasty and not thought through, as it focuses mainly on punishing offenders further and barely at all about the victim’s healing.

According to the MCC Ottawa website, four of the nine pieces of legislation propose longer or mandatory prison sentences, two would impose greater financial penalties on offenders, and two would create new obstacles for offenders reintegrating



Heidebrecht

into society. Only two directly address the needs of victims, and none of the initiatives propose new crime prevention or rehabilitation strategies.

MCC doesn’t believe these initiatives will make streets and communities safer. Instead, it advocates for community-based justice initiatives, including preventive and restorative justice, claiming they address the victim as well as the offender. Community-based justice programs are proven to work better than merely imprisoning people, according to the John Howard Society, which cites recidivism rates of 45 percent for people who have



Peters

been incarcerated without community-based justice programs, but only 15 percent or less for those who are involved in such programs.

“Justice varies for each community,” says Paul Heidebrecht, director of the MCC Ottawa Office. “It is not just a one-size-fits-all process of what will make everyone safe in Canada. We think the Government of Canada should be looking at the creative alternatives.”

Bundling bills is a fairly rare occurrence, according to Heidebrecht. It occurs occasionally, but usually the legislation requires that each separate initiative be processed three different times to ensure there are no faults. The Conservative’s election platform stated that Bill C-10 would be pushed

through within the first 100 sitting days of Parliament.

Don Peters, MCC Canada’s executive director, recently sent a letter to Rob Nicholson, the minister of justice and attorney general of Canada, advising the government to take due process to attend to the bill: “We affirm the Government of Canada’s interest in making our communities safe. . . . Our basic concern is that Bill C-10 will diminish the federal government’s capacity to fulfill this calling.”

Included among the omnibus Safe Streets and Communities Act’s nine pieces of legislation are: The Protecting Children from Sexual Predators Act, which proposes increased penalties for sexual offences against children and two new offences for facilitating or enabling the commission of such an act; The Penalties for Organized Drug Crime Act, which would target organized crime by imposing tougher sentences for the production and possession of illicit drugs; and The Eliminating Pardons for Serious Crimes Act, which would extend the ineligibility period of pardons to five years for summary conviction offences and 10 years for indictable offences.

According to the government, the crime bill will target crime and terrorism, and provide support and protection to victims of crime. Heidebrecht, on the other hand, believes the bill will primarily impact offenders and ex-offenders. ❧

*It is not just a one-size-fits-all process of what will make everyone safe in Canada. We think the Government of Canada should be looking at the creative alternatives.*

## /// Briefly noted

### Community meal raises funds for Kenyan orphanage

WINNIPEG, MAN.—In just under two hours, Mennonite Collegiate Institute (MCI) and the supporting community raised \$4,100 for Hope Community Centre, an orphanage in rural Kenya. Hosting its annual homecoming event, MCI student council executive was invited to take charge of a traditional Mennonite supper of noodles and sausage in an effort to raise money for the centre. After a few hours of cutting onions and peeling sausage, the majority of which was donated, the evening proved a great success. The money will be used to purchase food for the centre’s 150 students. It is expected that the gift will feed the entire community for more than a month. Through a Mennonite Central Committee work-and-learn tour called MCI for Hope, the school will be sending a group of students to Kenya for spring break next year. Says principal Darryl Loewen of the upcoming trip, “More than care or regard for issues of poverty, homelessness or loss due to HIV/AIDS, I trust that this visit to Hope will prompt students to passion for . . . the children of God. I pray that the Holy Spirit will cause us to embrace a broader understanding of the kingdom of Christ.”

—Mennonite Collegiate Institute

## GOD AT WORK IN US

# Four generations farm together to feed the world

STORY AND PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent  
GRETNA, MAN.

“I’m really thankful for the farm,” says Justin

Krahn, 13, great-great-grandson of Peter W. Rempel. He and his two siblings spend their free time playing in the century-old cottonwoods and willow trees planted by their great-great-grandfather, whose advice—“Before you cut down one tree, you plant three”—is still practised today by his descendants.

Susan Rempel, 85, knows her father-in-law would be grateful to see that his grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren are tending the same parcel of land he purchased more than a century ago and practising the faithful stewardship he exemplified.

In 1907, Rempel and his brother purchased 32 hectares of rich farmland along the Manitoba/Minnesota border near Gretna. This year, Jake Krahn (husband of Susan’s daughter Sharon), and their two sons, Kevin, 38, and Matthew, 32, harvested 1,011 hectares at the family’s Borderside Farm.

“Although there are probably a half-dozen family farms within a [160-kilometre] radius that are similar to this, our farm is

## ACROSS Generations

quite unique,” says Sharon, noting that the farm is the primary support for four generations of families who all live in very close proximity. “Due to the farm being in the family for over 100 years, our acres are all close together.”

For each one, this vocation and partnership has been a conscious choice.

“Farming isn’t really a job as much as a way of life that really compares to no other,” says Kevin. “But there are times, too, that I’ve found it has its negative points. I live on the main farm, so you can never really leave your job.”

“Sometimes there is a need to get away from each other when you spend six days a week working with each other,” says Matthew, who joined the farm operation just this year after leaving his long-time job at the Friesens Corp. But he has no regrets about the change. “This has always been a dream of mine and now it has become a reality,” he says, adding, “My fiancé is very supportive of me doing this.” Although he lives only a 10-minute drive away, he looks forward to moving closer.

Kevin and Matthew’s older sister,

Angela, lives with her family on property adjacent to the farm. Her children like to jump on the tractor or combine for a spin as it passes by.

Kevin’s children can’t think of any other way of life they would choose. “Right off the bat, I can’t think of any disadvantages,” says Justin after giving it some careful thought.

The grandchildren wander down the lane to their grandparents’ place frequently, even if it is just to jump on the trampoline or to take advantage of their grandmother’s “open freezer policy,” that permits everyone to take anything they want, but they must never put back an empty container. There has never been a cent spent on baby-sitting services for any of the generations.

“It takes a joint effort to run a farm like this,” says Kevin.

“I think farming as a whole really strengthens your faith because you are so dependent on the weather and none of that is in your hands,” adds his father Jake.

Jake, Kevin and Matthew meet at the beginning and end of every work day. As shareholders, Sharon and Kevin’s wife Helen join them for the bigger decision-making meetings several times a year. Praying together and a daily devotional life keep them each anchored in the faith they share.

Although they don’t all attend the same church, “we are all of the belief that this is all the Lord’s and that we are to be good stewards of that which is entrusted to us,” says Susan, who is a member of Gretna Bergthaler Mennonite Church.

“We agree to disagree and we check out to see what is best,” says Jake. “Everyone’s ideas are valuable, and give and take is very important.”

In the mid-1980s Susan took a memorable trip with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to India. The passion she brought home has been instilled in her family, whose members have been active for several years assisting with local growing projects.

“The reason why the farm is here is to feed the world,” says Jake.

Kevin, who lives with his family in the house his great-great-uncle built, treasures the history he has inherited. The walls of an old granary are etched with notations from his great-grandfather. “We look back quite regularly on this rich history,” he says with fondness. ❧



Posing under one of the trees Peter W. Rempel planted more than a century ago are nine extended family members: Jake and Sharon Krahn, Kevin Krahn, Susan Rempel, Helen Krahn, Cynthia Krahn, Shane Krahn, Matthew Krahn and Justin Krahn.

## OBITUARY

# A life devoted to God

Jeff Warkentin

Oct. 27, 1978 – Sept. 24, 2011

By DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada

Jeff Warkentin's passion for God shaped a life defined by service and relationships. As son, brother, husband, father, teacher, pastor, mission worker, musician and friend, he reflected God's grace and love to everyone he encountered.

Warkentin's skill in working with small groups played a key role in the ministry he shared with his wife Tany in Burkina Faso, where they served with Mennonite Church Canada Witness for six years. During that time the couple helped shape and nurture a congregation of university students in the capital city of Ouagadougou.

After a sudden and brief struggle with meningitis contracted after returning to Canada, Warkentin passed away on Sept. 24. He was 32.

At the funeral service held in Pincher Creek, Alta., on Sept 30, brother-in-law Topher Willms read from a reflection written by Warkentin's parents: "We cannot understand why Jeff should leave us so soon when we thought there were so many contributions left for him to make. . . . But we also know that many rich experiences were packed into the 32 years which God gave Jeff here on earth. We praise God for the joys and blessings that were ours to share with him during this short time."

Tany expressed a similar sentiment: "I find blessing in the fact that we met each other so early, that God called us quite clearly at a very early age, and that we were able to serve God so early. It strengthened our sense of identity as disciples, and our self-identity. . . . Even though he was young, it feels as though he lived fully."

During Warkentin's formative years, the family practice of daily devotions was sometimes forgotten in the hustle and



*Former Mennonite Church Canada Witness worker Jeff Warkentin passed away at the age of 32 following a brief struggle with meningitis.*

bustle of life, but he always remembered. During the visit of a non-Christian school friend, his parents purposely overlooked the practice to avoid being presumptuous. But their son felt the Word of God was meant to be shared. "Aren't we devoting tonight?" he asked.

Warkentin attracted a wide circle of school friends and proved to be a natural peacemaker. "His wry sense of humour and his knack for making people laugh with a short quip delivered at just the right moment, could diffuse a potentially tense situation in a moment," Willms read.

Warkentin was baptized at North Leamington Mennonite Church, Leamington, Ont., in May 1995. After high school, he enrolled at Canadian Mennonite Bible College (now Canadian Mennonite University), Winnipeg, Man., where he met his wife-to-be, Tany Willms. Together, they dreamed of serving abroad.

In the following years, the Alberta-based family grew to include daughter Danika and son Asher. In 2005, a call from MC

Canada drew them back to Winnipeg to prepare for ministry in Ouagadougou. They arrived in Burkina in February 2006. Son Kenani was born in 2008.

When the Warkentins announced that their ministry in Burkina Faso would draw to a close in 2011, Siaka Traoré, pastor and president of the Burkina Faso Mennonite

Church, wrote a letter of commendation describing their sensitivity towards others, their inclusiveness and hospitality. He also noted Warkentin's skill as a teacher: "Jeff, thank you for the good seed which you planted in so many hearts. I am convinced that if there is a treasure to leave with the others in this world, it is good education, good teaching."

"Together, we were so much more than we were separately," said Tany. "As a father, he was very loving and generous with his time, playing [with the children] fully with energy and love."

Warkentin had just begun teaching at St. Michael's

School, Pincher Creek, when he fell ill. On the morning before the funeral service, the extended Warkentin family visited the school. Students shared three African songs their late teacher had taught them, and showed the family the cafeteria they had papered with handwritten prayers.

"It was overwhelming," said Ruth Warkentin, Jeff's mother.

Nine-year-old Danika offered encouragement in a letter to her father's parents: "Don't be sad about my dad even though we miss him down here, but up in heaven he is happy with God. I always try to think of that when I get sad."

Wise and comforting words for all of those who loved Jeff Warkentin.

Countless prayers and condolences have been shared with the Warkentins from friends and supporters across Canada and Burkina Faso. In addition to the funeral service on Sept. 30, memorial services were held at North Leamington United Mennonite Church and at Home Street Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. ❧

MC CANADA PHOTO BY DAN DYCK

## ARTBEAT

## AUTHOR INTERVIEW

# Learning about peace from those 'who have gone before'

Herald Press

*Mennonite Church U.S.A. executive director Ervin Stutzman believes people today can learn from those who faced challenges over peace in the past, gaining perspective and humility as they study history. That's why he wrote From Nonresistance to Justice: The Transformation of Mennonite Church Peace Rhetoric, 1908-2008, published this year by Herald Press. In the interview below, he reflects on changes in the way the Mennonite church has approached the issue of peace over the past hundred years.*

**Q.** Why did you write this book?

**Stutzman:** I wrote this book because I care deeply about our peace witness. I believe that we have much to learn from the way that our spiritual forebears dealt with the challenges to their peace convictions.

**Q.** What has changed about the way Mennonites in the Mennonite church tradition have thought about, and spoken about, peace over the past 100 years?

**Stutzman:** There have been some dramatic shifts, such as the virtual abandonment of the use of nonconformity and nonresistance as the foundational biblical rationale for our peace witness.

Another major shift was the pursuit of justice as an essential part of peacemaking. Still another is the wide diversity of ways that peace convictions are expressed within the church.

**Q.** Why do you think the church moved from an emphasis on nonresistance and nonconformity to engage in advocacy for peace and justice?

**Stutzman:** One reason is that the church is no longer as separate from the rest of society. As we become more involved in our communities, as well as the political process, we gradually reflected the thinking of those outside our church. Sadly, we now also reflect the political divides that separate our neighbours.

Another reason is that we have developed new understandings of theology and Scripture; as peace movement leaders studied theology, they interpreted the

Scriptures in a more systematic and rational approach. They were also influenced by writers in the mainline churches who had a different understanding of the church and its responsibility in the world.

All of this helped to shape an evolving peace stance.

**Q.** What prompted that change or who led that change?

**Stutzman:** The forces of change came from both inside and outside the church.

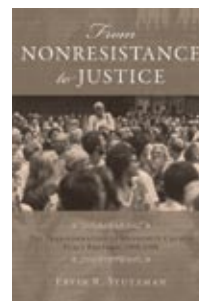
The church gradually changed as it modernized and took on more of the thinking patterns and habits of the surrounding society. The church also changed as greater numbers chose higher education and experienced the world more broadly.

Each international conflict or war . . . required the church to restate its peace convictions and find ways to be faithful to God's call to peace; this response looked very different, depending on the context. For example, [in the U.S.] in World War I there was a draft with no provision for conscientious objectors. This was a very different situation than the Gulf War, which had no draft and relied heavily on advanced technology.

**Q.** What have been the losses and the gains from making that change?

**Stutzman:** The church has lost much of its sense of separation or nonconformity to the world. We now reflect many of the values of our . . . society, even those that run counter to biblical values.

At the same time, we have gained a much



greater sense of responsibility to engage with society and to make a difference in the world around us. People from other faith communions now look to us as examples of biblical faithfulness to the way of justice and peace.

**Q.** You have said the church needs "a greater emphasis on the way that God's activity must guide our work in the world." What do you mean by that?

**Stutzman:** It means that we must be attentive to the signs of God at work among us. As a missional church, we believe that we are to look for God's activity in the world, and then follow that. We must be alert to the ways that God is at work in transforming situations of conflict among individuals, communities and nations.

**Q.** You also say there must be "a stronger link between God's grace, justice and peace." What do you mean by that?

**Stutzman:** I am calling our church to keep our peace convictions grounded in the biblical witness and Anabaptist theology. That means we need to maintain uniquely Anabaptist-Christian approaches to peacemaking, even as we join people of other Christian faiths or religions in developing a more peaceful world.

**Q.** How can the experiences of the past guide Christians today in this increasingly complex and frightening world?

**Stutzman:** There is much that we can learn from the peacemaking efforts of people who have gone before us. Many of them strove to follow God's way in the midst of overwhelming challenges. We can learn from their courage. ☸

# New from MennoMedia

## Waging Peace

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Airing this fall on ABC-TV stations, the documentary is now available for purchase on DVD. See interviews about the peacemaking traditions of Muslims and Christians and watch stories of how these faith groups work for peace, including Mennonites and Muslims in Ontario making quilts for refugees.

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Waterloo, ON office



An agency of Mennonite Church USA  
and Mennonite Church Canada

## /// Briefly noted

### MCC resource helps churches understand sexual abuse

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.—An updated booklet on sexual abuse in the church is now available to congregations, free of charge, from local Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)



**Goerzen**

offices across Canada. Sexual abuse by church leaders is a topic many would rather avoid, says Elsie Goerzen, program coordinator for MCC B.C.'s Abuse Response and Prevention Program. However, for those who have experienced abuse in this way, the effects can be devastating. Sexual abuse is often misunderstood and misnamed, she says, adding that, it is often the victims who are blamed, rather than the perpetrators. "Understanding sexual abuse by a church leader or caregiver" grew out of a desire to respond to the difficulties faced by survivors and churches in the aftermath of sexual abuse by a church leader. It was first published in 2003. The booklet starts with the biblical text as its foundation and provides a clear definition of what constitutes sexual abuse by a church leader or caregiver. It includes a composite story of actual abuse experiences, gives tools to help individuals and groups understand some of the dynamics of sexual abuse, and provides a list of suggested resources for further study.

—Mennonite Central Committee B.C.

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## FOCUS ON MUSIC

# Music for food

*About \$20,000 raised for Canadian Foodgrains Bank*

**STORY AND PHOTO**  
**BY JOHN LONGHURST**  
 Canadian Foodgrains Bank  
 WINNIPEG, MAN.

Great music was in the air on Oct. 15 and 16 in Winnipeg and Winkler, Man., for the inaugural Canadian Foodgrains Bank Musical Growing Project.

More than 700 people attended the two concerts, which raised about \$20,000 for the Foodgrains Bank.

Featured artists were the Canzona ensemble under the direction of Henry Engbrecht, the Central Manitoba Youth Choir under the direction of Liane Ouimet, and mezzo soprano Catherine Daniel.

For Harold Penner, Foodgrains Bank Manitoba regional coordinator, the concerts were a way for musicians to use their gifts to help raise funds for people in the developing world who don't have enough to eat. "Many people think of farmers when they think of the Foodgrains Bank," he says. "It's wonderful to see others, such as musicians, coming up with ideas and energy to support the cause of ending hunger."

Penner hopes that the concerts will be an annual event—just like the crops that farmers plant every year for the Foodgrains Bank. "Farmers don't take a break from farming, and hunger isn't going away," he says. "We hope the musical growing project can be a regular way for musicians and people who love good music to help people who don't have enough to eat."

In addition to the music, the concerts included stories about people in the developing world who have been assisted by the Foodgrains Bank. ☘



*The Central Manitoba Youth Choir under the direction of Liane Ouimet performs at the Oct. 15 Musical Growing Project at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, Man.*

## Sing the Christmas season

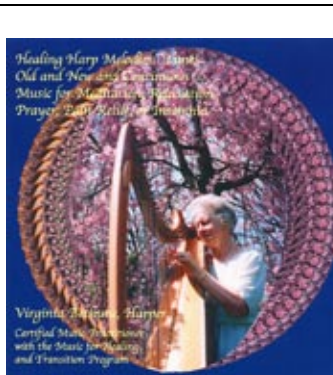
**BY MARK DILLER HARDER**  
 Menno Singers

Christmas is a time for telling stories, and there is no better story than the Christmas story itself. Throughout history, this story has been told and retold in countless variations, capturing hearts and minds as each version reveals fresh insights into the story.

Throughout the ages, composers have

tried to capture the magic of the Christmas story. There is more music for Christmas than for any other time of year and the Christmas season is filled with concerts and singing.

This Christmas, Menno Singers is telling the Christmas story on two consecutive Sundays in two very different ways:



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[www.healingharpmelodies.org](http://www.healingharpmelodies.org)

## FOCUS ON MUSIC

• On Dec. 11 at 3 p.m., *Brother Heinrich's Christmas* will be performed at St Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, Ont., as part of a concert entitled "Brother Heinrich's Christmas and Other Tales," that includes *A Little Advent Music* by Distler, *Ave Rex* by Mathias and audience carols.

*Brother Heinrich's Christmas* is a delightful and humorous Christmas fable set to music by John Rutter in 1982, with narrator, choir and small orchestra. It tells the story of a humble and reclusive 14th century

Dominican monk, Heinrich Suso, and his musically gifted donkey, Sigismund, who sings in the abbey choir. The archbishop is visiting for Christmas Day and Heinrich wants to make a good impression by composing an appropriate carol. He can't seem to get the right song, as the orchestra plays his failed efforts at several common carol melodies. Finally, on Christmas Eve, the monk and donkey hear a choir of angels sing "In Dulci Jubilo." Heinrich returns to transcribe the gift of this song, but can't

remember the final phrases. After several failed endings, the musical donkey comes through by resolutely singing the last two notes, thus saving the day and leaving the archbishop pleased.

• On Dec. 18 at 3 p.m., "Sing-along Messiah" will be performed at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church.

Simply bring a score—there will be some loaners on hand—and a sense of humour and adventure, and sing along with some of the favourite choruses and arias with absolutely no rehearsal whatsoever. Singers will be joined by a small orchestra and soloists. The event is a fundraiser for Menno Singers. ❧

## ❧ Music Calendar

## Saskatchewan

**Dec. 11:** RJC choir concert at Knox United Church, Saskatoon, at 7:30 p.m.

**Dec. 18:** RJC choir Christmas concert, at RJC, at 2:30 p.m.

**Dec. 17:** Buncha' Guys Christmas concert, at 7:30 p.m.

## Manitoba

**Nov. 26-27:** Christmas at CMU, featuring choirs, instrumental ensembles and storytellers.

**Dec. 5:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate Christmas concert, at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

**Dec. 10, 11:** Faith and Life Choirs present their Christmas concerts; (10) at Springfield Heights Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.; (11) at Grace Mennonite Church, Steinbach, at 3 p.m.

**Dec. 15-16:** MCI, Gretna, presents its annual Christmas concerts; at 7:30 p.m. both nights.

## Ontario

**Nov. 25-26:** 20th annual Spirit of Christmas music and craft show at Nairn Mennonite Church, Ailsa Craig, featuring live music, Ten Thousand Villages, crafts and tea room; (25) 7 to 9 p.m.; (26) 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call Barb at 519-232-4720.

**Dec. 3, 4:** Pax Christi Chorale—with Youth Choir, orchestra and soloists—presents Britten's *St. Nicolas* plus traditional Christmas carols, motets and the world premiere of a new composition by artistic director Stephanie Martin, at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto; (3) 7:30 p.m.; (4) 3 p.m.

**Dec. 4:** The Inter-Mennonite Children's Choir presents *Gaudeamus*, at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Kitchener, at 3 p.m. For more information, e-mail [imccconductor@rogers.com](mailto:imccconductor@rogers.com).

**Dec. 10:** Pax Christi Chorale presents "The Children's

**Menno Singers**  
Peter Nikiforuk, Director

Two Christmas events you won't want to miss!

## BROTHER HEINRICH'S CHRISTMAS AND OTHER TALES

A fable set to music with narrator, choir, and small orchestra

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St. Peter's Lutheran Church  
49 Queen St N, Kitchener

Also featuring:  
*A Little Advent Music* ~ Distler  
*Ave Rex* ~ Mathias  
and Audience Carols



## SINGALONG MESSIAH

with soloists and orchestra

Alison Clark, Organist  
Dale Mieske, Narrator

Sunday, December 18, 3pm  
St Jacobs Mennonite Church  
1310 King St. N, St Jacobs

Join us as we present our first ever Singalong Messiah fundraiser! Bring your donation and a score if you have one (we have some loaners) but your sense of humour is a must because we plan to run through favourite Choruses and Arias of Handel's *Messiah* with absolutely **NO REHEARSAL WHATSOEVER.**

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**FOCUS ON MUSIC**

Messiah," at Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Toronto, at 4 p.m.

**Dec. 11:** Menno Singers present "Brother Heinrich's Christmas and Other Tales," a fable set to music with narrator, choir and small orchestra; at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, at 3 p.m.

**Dec. 18:** Menno Singers present "Sing-along Messiah," a fundraiser for the choir; at St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, at 3 p.m.

**Dec. 31:** Milverton Mennonite Fellowship annual New Year's Eve event. New format with dessert extravaganza, featuring the Hilton Family and Triumphant Sound. For more information, call 519-595-8762.

**Briefly noted**

**American harpist donates \$8,000 to cancer research**

HARRISON - BURG, VA. — Virginia Bethune, a member of Park View Mennonite Church, began a project 10 years ago that has evolved into the Build-2-Habitat-Houses-With-Music initiative. Together with her husband Dick, a retired Presbyterian minister, and members of the choir at Blacksburg United Methodist Church, Va., where she was organist for 14 years, Bethune has produced seven CDs, most of which are entitled *Healing Harp Melodies*, whose gross sales have exceeded \$100,000. At age 60, she learned to play the harp, and for the past four years has been a musician-in-residence at the University of Virginia hospital in Charlottesville, where she plays therapeutic music at patients' bedsides; this music is not entertainment or performance, but is offered to provide a setting where healing may occur even when a cure is not possible. A year ago, Bethune produced *Healing Harp Melodies: Classical Tunes and Loveabies*, with a cellist and flutist; sales were \$8,000 in the six weeks after release, to fund research through the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

— BY DICK BENNER



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## Young Mennos 'occupy' Wall Street and Winnipeg

BY RACHEL BERGEN

National Correspondent

PHOTOS COURTESY OF LYNDON FROESE



*Lyndon Froese takes part in the Occupy Wall Street protests in New York, N.Y., in October.*

Mennonites have a legacy of resisting the violent, unjust ways of government and the world. Some have registered as conscientious objectors, others have protested against the justice system, and others are currently protesting the corporate greed and inequality of the world's financial systems.

This is exactly what Lyndon Froese has been doing for the past month—participating in the Occupy movement.

politics, Froese says he believes in Martin Luther King Jr.'s statement about the civil rights era: "History will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the strident clamour of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people."

Froese wanted to be part of "the good people" breaking through what the "appalling silence."

"There are 300 people who are choosing

*[Occupiers] are living very uncomfortably with the belief that 'you can and should take action on things you don't like that you're seeing in the world,' Froese says.*

Occupy Wall Street began in the financial district of New York, N.Y., earlier this year when a group of people began demonstrations in Zuccotti Park, a private park owned by a Canadian property developer. Occupiers are protesting social and economic inequality, corporate greed, corruption and the undue influence of the world's wealthiest over governments. This protest spurred similar Occupy protests worldwide.

Froese, a 26-year-old who grew up attending Springstein Mennonite Church, Man., spent a week in the middle of October in New York City sleeping on the sidewalk alongside 300 other Occupy Wall Street protesters that spend the night in the park.

Because Wall Street was where the Occupy movement started, Froese decided to go there to make the strongest statement of support he could.

Although he admits that he doesn't have a good understanding of economics or

to live on the street and they have no other plan other than to overhaul the entire political system," he says. "They are questioning everything."

And the Occupiers are not living comfortably, Froese notes from first-hand experience. The park has no toilets and tents are not allowed, according to Froese, who acknowledges that Occupiers sometimes relieve themselves in public, while others use the washroom in a nearby McDonald's. They sleep on the street in sleeping bags with tarps to protect themselves from the snow and rain. They are living very uncomfortably with the belief that "you can and should take action on things you don't like that you're seeing in the world," Froese says, all the while facing taunts from business people who work on Wall Street.

Froese was originally involved in Occupy Winnipeg, Man. He was there for the kick-off on Oct. 15 and even spoke, suggesting that the First Nations be involved in decision-making. He left for



*People pack Wall Street to protest corporate greed and social and economic inequality.*

New York the next day.

Froese is not the only Mennonite participating in the Occupy movement.

Stephanie Coughlan Enns and Tim Coughlan, her husband, who also attend Springstein Mennonite, participated in Occupy Winnipeg by marching with the Occupiers on the first day of the movement.

Stephanie works as a social worker for Nor'West Co-op Community Health Centre in a poor area of Winnipeg, where

she sees first-hand how the breakdown of democracy and the inequality of wealth has affected people there. "I am angered by the breakdown of democracy in this country," she says.

Although the movement has been criticized for its lack of clarity, the fact that so many people can come together to say that something is wrong is a great start, Stephanie says. "Community development requires community involvement," Tim adds. ❧

## Seeing a need and filling it

STORY AND PHOTO BY AARON EPP

Special to Young Voices  
WINNIPEG, MAN.

Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) made headlines earlier this month when it launched its new Redekop School of Business, made possible through a donation from the Redekop family of B.C.'s Fraser Valley. Brothers John and Peter, their nephew James and the extended family have pledged a minimum of \$6.5 million to found the school.

"We see the need to educate the next generation in commerce, marketing and finance, and to do this in a university that inspires and prepares future leaders with skills complemented by Christian ethics, integrity and service," Peter says in a news release.

For many young Mennonites with an entrepreneurial spirit, doing business—and asking what it means to do business as a Mennonite—is a daily reality.

his father. He is in the midst of earning his real estate licence. The 23-year-old attends Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, and says he was drawn to the real estate business because his father and grandfather work in the field, and because he likes the job's flexibility. "I don't have to clock in at a specific hour and clock out," he says. "I can work hard for a certain amount of time and then go on a vacation without any real repercussions."

"It's also nice that I don't have to sit in an office the whole time," he adds. "I usually go into the office in the morning, make some calls, then in the afternoon I'll go meet people or run errands as needed."

Ewert feels there is a tension in the Mennonite church when it comes to how people view business. "Honestly, sometimes it feels a little chilly," he says of the attitudes



*Entrepreneur Andrew Loewen says the church he grew up in was a positive environment in which to talk about business.*

*'I don't have to clock in at a specific hour and clock out. I can work hard for a certain amount of time and then go on a vacation without any real repercussions.'*

*(Nick Ewert)*

Nick Ewert, who graduated from CMU in 2010 with a bachelor of arts degree, majoring in business and organizational administration, works as an executive assistant at Remco Realty, a commercial real estate firm in Winnipeg owned by

some of his peers have demonstrated towards business. "It just seems that often occupations such as teaching, medical professions and trades, and those sort of things, are often seen to be at a higher moral level than, say, office-based business."

Andrew Loewen has not experienced that tension, and, in fact, feels the Mennonite church is open and welcoming to people who own their own businesses. The 29-year-old attends Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, and has founded, co-founded and managed three entrepreneurial start-ups. He is the co-founder and chief operating officer at Priceline Partner Network, an affiliate of Priceline, which helps Internet users obtain discount rates for travel-related purchases. The firm currently employs 16 people.

"I always thought [the church was] pretty open about business," says the married father of three. "[Growing up], there were a lot of self-employed, entrepreneurial people that were part of the community that I was involved with. . . . I feel like there was a positive environment in which to think about business."

However, Craig Martin, assistant professor of business and organizational administration at CMU, agrees with Ewert, that often there is a tension in the church when it comes to business. Business is a

part of life, though, and he states on CMU's website, "We can operate businesses and take our beliefs to work with us and still make a profit. A strong moral and ethical background is an important part of how we do business."

Unpacking those moral and ethical issues in the classroom is a key component of CMU's business program, he adds in an interview. Christian business people have a responsibility to their shareholders, employees, customers and suppliers, as well as the greater community. "Those people are made in the image of God and, therefore, are to be respected as such," he says.

Ewert says that as he moves forward with his real estate career, all he can do is live out his Mennonite beliefs to the best of his ability. That includes being honest and fair with everyone he deals with. He also believes that for some Christians, business is a calling. "Certain people see a need and they want to fulfil it," he says. "Really, that's what business is: it's seeing a need and filling it." ❧

#### PERSONAL REFLECTION

# Learning through serving

BY CHRIS FREY

SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES



Last year, during my last few months of university, I started thinking about what to do after graduation. Like many people my age, I wanted to travel and experience something different before settling down and joining the job market.

I decided to apply to the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Serving and Learning Together (SALT) program. My placement was at a computer lab in Kenya, where I helped with maintenance and teaching computer skills to young adults.

One of the unique aspects of this program is that MCC tries to have

participants live with a host family. This was a great experience. Being able to ask my host family questions about unfamiliar things was a great comfort throughout the year. I learned many things about Kenyan life from them that I wouldn't have picked up if I had lived on my own.

My host family's home was quite modern, with running water and electricity. The town I lived in was big enough that there was a supermarket where I could buy most things I needed. I remember being surprised by how popular cell phones were; even in the smallest towns I visited, it was possible to buy air time.

Living and working in a different culture provided several challenges. Most people I met spoke English, but there were many people I couldn't communicate with beyond a few greetings in Swahili. Being a minority was sometimes

I was more confident with my work when I left than after I arrived, and it is likely I could have made a greater impact if I had stayed longer. I think the work at the computer lab could have been done without me, but my being there made it

*The style of worship was mostly comfortable, although the sermons were fairly charismatic and more often than not were often focused on something a person needs to do in order to be saved.*

difficult, and after arriving I was soon tired of being called a *mzungu* (white person).

Working at a computer lab with slow Internet and unstable power also presented some challenges. Power outages were usually just a few minutes long, but about once a month the power would be gone all day.

Worshipping in a different church helped me develop my relationship with God in a different context. I attended English services at a church from the Africa Inland Church denomination. The style of worship was mostly comfortable, although the sermons were fairly charismatic and more often than not were often focused on something a person needs to do in order to be saved.

During my time in Kenya there were a number of questions I reflected on:

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of international service?
- Is my presence making a difference?
- Could I have saved some money and fossil fuel by serving in my home community instead?

easier. If nothing else, I think that my life and the lives of some others have been made richer by the relationships that were formed.

With regards to international service in general, I like MCC's model of trying to work with local partners as much as possible. What works for the goose doesn't always work for the gander, and there are many examples of well-meaning aid agencies that don't take enough time to understand local cultures, and make things worse.

At SALT orientation, there was a lot of emphasis on having humble expectations. I remember hearing from longer-term service workers that the first year can just be spent building relationships. The book *Ministering Cross Culturally* expresses the idea that Jesus took 30 years to learn about his culture before starting his ministry.

I am thankful for the many learning opportunities I had during my time in Kenya. As I begin my career, I hope that my experience with SALT will help me find ways to use my skills to serve others. ☺

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHRIS FREY



*Chris Frey teaches a lesson at the computer lab in Kenya, where he served with Mennonite Central Committee's Serving and Learning Together program.*

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

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## Canadian Mennonite is now on Facebook

 Like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/Canadian.Mennonite](https://facebook.com/Canadian.Mennonite)

## Calendar

### British Columbia

**Feb. 3-5, 2012:** Young adult retreat at Camp Squeah.

**March 2, 2012:** MC B.C. LEADership Conference at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford.

**March 3, 2012:** MC B.C. annual meeting and 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration and banquet.

### Alberta

**Jan. 20-22, 2012:** Junior high snow camp at Camp Valaqua. For more information, call Valaqua at 403-637-2510.

**Feb. 24-26, 2012:** Senior high snow camp at Camp Valaqua. For more information, call Valaqua at 403-637-2510.

### Saskatchewan

**Jan. 6-7, 2012:** RJC alumni Tournament of Memories.

**Jan. 20, 2012:** Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization/RJC coffee house.

**March 11, 2012:** RJC Guys and Pies fundraising event.

### Manitoba

**Nov. 24-26:** MCI, Gretna, presents

the play *Tom Sawyer* at Buhler Hall; all performances at 7:30 p.m. For tickets, call 204-327-5891.

**Nov. 28:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate annual general meeting, at Westgate, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.

**Dec. 1-3:** Senior high drama at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Winnipeg.

**Feb. 1, 2012:** Open house at Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Winnipeg.

**Feb. 9-10, 2012:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate junior high presents three one-act plays at the Franco-Manitoban Centre, Winnipeg.

**Feb. 22, 2012:** Adults with Disabilities Venture Camp at Camp Koinonia. For more information, call the Camps with

Meaning office at 204-895-2267.

**March 2, 2012:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate gala concert.

### Ontario

**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.

**Dec. 3:** Mennonite and Brethren Marriage Encounter annual meeting at Hawkesville Mennonite, at 11 a.m. For more information, e-mail JimRuthMartin@gmail.com.

**Jan. 13-15, 2012:** MC Eastern Canada youth retreat, at Silver Lake Mennonite

## UpComing

### Video project in the works for MC B.C. anniversary

Preparations are underway for the celebration of Mennonite Church B.C.'s 75th anniversary at 2012's annual delegate sessions next March. The last two decades have been full of changes for MC B.C. congregations. To honour and explore those changes, the church is interviewing 16 people who played a significant part in them, both those who stayed and those who left MC B.C. as a result. A video and print Pilgrimage Project, featuring the interviews, will be available some time in the new year. According to Bruce Hiebert, chair of the planning committee, "The last 20 years have been painful for us. We want to recognize how God has been leading us through the changes in a way that both past and future generations can see." The MC B.C. sessions, to take place at Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, will also feature Stuart Murray, author of *The Naked Anabaptist*, as keynote speaker.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN



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Camp.

**Jan. 21, 2012:** MC Eastern Canada event for pastors, chaplains and congregational leaders, "It only takes a spark: Engaging the word," with Derek Suderman and Rebecca Seiling; at Vineland United Mennonite Church, 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

**Jan. 27, 2012:** Pax Christi Chorale's 25th anniversary gala fundraiser featuring the world premier of *String Quartet No. 1* by artistic director Stephanie Martin, at the offices of Fasken Martineau DuMoulin LLP, 24th floor of the Bay Adelaide Centre,

Toronto; gourmet reception at 6:30 p.m.; premiere at 7:30 p.m.

**Feb. 22-24, 2012:** MC Eastern Canada School for Ministers, "Living into the future: Anabaptist convictions, the missional church and a post-Christian world," with Stuart Murray, author of *The Naked Anabaptist*; at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

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

## Classifieds

### For Rent

MCC Deer Trail **Guest House in Abbotsford** offers affordable short-term lodging and Christian hospitality, complimentary continental breakfast, laundry, and kitchen. [www.deertrailguesthouse.com](http://www.deertrailguesthouse.com). Phone: 604-850-6529.

### Travel

**Visit Europe the Mennonite Way!** Mennonite Heritage Tours 2012: 10-18 day Hotel Tours focussing on Mennonite heritage in Holland, Germany, Poland, Belgium and Switzerland. [www.mennoniteheritagetours.eu](http://www.mennoniteheritagetours.eu)

## Employment Opportunities



Mennonite Church Eastern Canada invites applications for

**AREA CHURCH MINISTER**  
(Formerly Conference Minister)

The Area Church Minister will be a leader of leaders, who oversees the credentialing, formation, and resourcing of pastors for effective missional leadership in MCEC congregations. The applicant for this full-time position will be an excellent communicator and team builder. He/she will work with the senior staff team to realize MCEC's mission of *Extending the peace of Jesus Christ*. Applicants will have previous pastoral experience, a commitment to Anabaptist theology, a familiarity with Mennonite denominational polity, and will demonstrate spiritual and emotional maturity. Ordination and a seminary degree are required. Preferred start date is Sept. 2012. Resume and current MLI are due by Dec. 31, 2011. For more information, a job description, or to submit an application contact:

David Martin, MCEC Executive Minister  
Phone: 519-650-3806 / 1-800-206-9356 Ext. 113  
E-mail: [dmartin@mceec.ca](mailto:dmartin@mceec.ca)  
[www.mceec.ca](http://www.mceec.ca)

## Advent devotional

### First Sunday of Advent: Nov. 27

*Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19; Isaiah 64:1-9; I Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13: 24-37*

Sometimes our lives feel very routine as we deal with the day-to-day issues of what our families will eat or what we will wear. Advent is a special time to express our longing for God to touch our lives and to feel God's presence. Although we may not see trembling mountains, as Moses did, we need to be ready and watching for the holy presence of God.

— BY BARB DRAPER



### CURRICULUM WRITERS

The Gather 'Round curriculum, produced by **MennoMedia and Brethren Press**, is accepting applications to write for Preschool, Primary, Middler, Multi-age, Junior Youth or Youth age groups for 2013-14. Writers produce well-written, age-appropriate and engaging material for teacher's guides, student books and resource packs. All writers will attend an orientation March 19-23, 2012, in Chicago, Ill. See Job Opportunities at [www.gatherround.org](http://www.gatherround.org). Application deadline: Jan. 9, 2012.

### PASTORAL OPPORTUNITIES OPORTUNIDADES PASTORALES

**First Mennonite Church / Primera Iglesia Menonita**  
Kitchener, Ont.

In 2013, our multicultural congregation will celebrate 200 years of witness in our community. We currently offer weekly services in English on Sunday morning and in Spanish on Saturday evening. Following the past two years of spiritual reflection and discussion, our 284 members are looking forward to the future with renewed focus and enthusiasm for God's leading. We anticipate a **three-person pastoral team (2.5 FTE)**, committed to an Anabaptist theology and practice, will guide us in the coming years in the following roles:

- Lead pastor (1 FTE)
- Hispanic ministry pastor (.75 FTE, bilingual in Spanish & English)
- Worship planning and music pastor (.5 FTE for Sunday service)
- Youth ministry (.25 FTE)

We invite applications for these roles and are open to various combinations of gifts. To explore these opportunities further, additional information and detailed job descriptions for each position can be found at <http://www.firstmennonitekitchener.ca>.

Inquiries and letters of intent may be sent to the **Pastoral Search Committee** at [pastoralsearch@firstmennonitekitchener.ca](mailto:pastoralsearch@firstmennonitekitchener.ca).

Interested candidates will be processed through:  
**Mennonite Church Eastern Canada**

4489 King St. E.  
Kitchener, ON N2P 2G2  
Tel: 519.650.3806/800.206.9356  
Fax: 519.650.3947  
E-mail: [mbechtel@mceec.ca](mailto:mbechtel@mceec.ca)

The Search Committee will begin reviewing applications in January 2012. / El Comité de Búsqueda iniciará la revisión de las solicitudes a partir de enero del 2012.

PHOTO BY JENNIFER KONKLE



*Lorraine Roth shares some memories from genealogies she wrote. The historian and genealogist was honoured at a dinner at Tavistock Mennonite Church, Ont., on Oct. 13. Family and friends paid tribute to Roth's research and generous support in researching family histories. Bruce Jantzi from the Fairhaven Amish Mennonite Church at Poole noted that Roth inspired him to explore his family history and appreciate his Anabaptist faith heritage more fully, while Fred Lichti, who wrote the history of the East Zorra Amish Mennonite Church, thanked her for her insights connecting personal experiences with the history of the congregation. The event was also held to help raise \$75,000 to name the Lorraine Roth Archive Reading Room in the expanded Mennonite Archives of Ontario building project at Conrad Grebel University College. More than \$45,000 has been raised towards this goal so far.*

# Conrad Grebel University College snapshots

CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE PHOTO



*Susan Schultz Huxman, centre, was inaugurated as the seventh president of Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., during a ceremony at Floradale Mennonite Church on Oct. 16. Taking part in the event were, from left to right: Willard Metzger, general secretary of Mennonite Church Canada; David Martin, executive minister of MC Eastern Canada; Hildi Froese Tiessen, professor of English and peace and conflict studies at Grebel; Schultz Huxman; Susan Taves, chair of Grebel's Board of Governors; Rosalind Andreas, professor emeritus, University of Vermont, and past-president of the Mennonite Education Agency Board of Directors; and Ed Diller, past-moderator of MC U.S.A.*