

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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THE
HOLY
BIBLE,
Conteyning the Old Testament,
AND THE NEW:

*Newly Translated out of the Originall
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diligently compared and reuised, by his
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EDITORIAL

What about proof-texting?

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

An Ontario pastor raised the question of not defining proof-texting and challenged my guideline of wanting only “new information” when calling for a “reasoned discussion” on sexuality, in his letter to the editor, “Let the Bible speak on sexual matters,” Nov. 28, page 13.

While I assumed that informed readers were both familiar with the term “proof-texting” of Scripture and had likely heard all the old arguments on the subject, I will, at the request of others, probe the subject of proof-texting. Space doesn’t allow for a rehashing of all the pros and cons of the ongoing debate, so I’ll forgo addressing his second challenge.

Since I am not a theologian, I turn to Walter Brueggemann, an Old Testament professor at Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia; William Placher, a humanities professor at a small liberal arts college for men in Crawfordsville, Ind.; and Brian Blount, a New Testament professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, who have co-authored *Struggling with Scripture*, that covers the topic of proof-texting.

I called for a “reasoned discussion” because there is nothing like sexuality—particularly homosexuality—that sets off a fiery storm about proof-texting. Those of a conservative bent whip out their

six “clobber passages” and bang them with “hysterical certainty,” as one writer puts it. The liberals whip out their “historical-critical” method and read the passages “in context,” dismissing the literal interpretation of the text. Neither side really listens to the other; hence, a stand-off.

What we have not yet learned, or accepted, is that each of us comes to the Bible from a different perspective and background, and with a different agenda. Acknowledging this, Brueggemann says, “There is no interpretation of Scripture . . . that is unaffected by the passions, convictions and perceptions of the interpreter.”

He appeals to us, then, to acknowledge this up front as we seek ancient Scriptures for God’s will for our lives today. We must acknowledge that none of us has the final authority to say that the Bible says anything definitely because the God revealed by the text is a “living, breathing, constantly changing God.”

This means we must struggle with the text and look not only at the context in which the authors found themselves, but at our context as well, because, as Blount writes, “ethical biblical authority is contextual biblical authority.” To read our own beliefs and convictions into the text (proof-texting) does as much disservice to the text as when we take it at face value.

Blount, who insists believers need to struggle with the hard parts of our faith and tradition, and characterizes those who opt for pat answers as bringing stagnation, says that the latter are like “Paul’s babes in the faith who need the suckling security of a milk bottle filled with authoritative assurances about what we should do and how we should live in any and every time for any and every circumstance.”

The brouhaha over the sexuality issue is puzzling to Placher, who believes homosexuality isn’t a very important subject within the pages of Scripture, given its limited mentions. “So, why has it come to be such an important issue in the life of the church?” he asks. “Some would answer that people are claiming the right to engage in same-sex intercourse without having that count as sin at all. Yet are there not many in our culture who pursue greed and injustice unapologetically? The Bible condemns such sins much more often. Why is our focus not on them?”

The answer, Placher says, is rooted in the power structure of society that has pushed GLBT (gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered) people to the margins. It is still “socially acceptable to treat [them] with contempt,” while biblical admonitions against wealth and power are routinely ignored because it might offend those who have risen to great wealth and power within the church.

As a way to bridge the gaping chasm between liberals and conservatives, Brueggemann proposes an “interpretive rule” that requires both sides to “make our best, most insistent claims, but then with some regularity, relinquish our pet interpretations and, together with our partners in dispute, fall back in joy into the inherent apostolic claims that outdistance all our too-familiar and too-partisan interpretations.”



ABOUT THE COVER:

A frontispiece from an original 1611 printing of the King James Bible. In our feature beginning on page 4, Christine Longhurst examines the impact of this most beautiful of translations on its 400th anniversary.

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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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A Bible meant to be

*Celebrating the 400th anniversary
of the King James Version*

BY CHRISTINE LONGHURST

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

Have you heard the Bible recently? Not read it, but listened to it—heard the words of Scripture, not just seen them on the page. We don't hear the Word of God much anymore. The public reading of multiple texts and longer passages of Scripture is not a key part of many worship services these days. This is a big change from how Christians in earlier times interacted with Scripture—and a big change from the world of the King James Version of the Bible.

'It lives on the ear'

This year (2011) marks the 400th anniversary of the first printing of the King James Version—the most widely published text in the English language, and one of the most influential Bible translations ever undertaken.

Superlatives for the KJV, as it's known, abound: “The greatest work of prose ever written in English,” “The most beautiful book in the world,” “The most important book in English religion and culture,” one of the “books of the millennium.” It's considered by many to be a literary classic.

What gave the KJV its longevity and memorability? It's not the quality of biblical scholarship or the accuracy of translation. Later Bible translators not only had far better access to source manuscripts than their 17th-century counterparts, but also a better grasp of the vocabulary and grammar of ancient languages.

The reason the KJV still lives on for so many today lies in the elegance and beauty of its language—the way it sounds.

“It lives on the ear, like music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church bells, which the convert hardly knows how he can forgo,” wrote 19th-century theologian F.W. Faber.

It has a “rhythm, balance, dignity and force of style that is unparalleled in any other translation,” adds Daniel B. Wallace, professor of New Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary, Tex.

Adam Nicolson, the author of *God's Secretaries: The Making of the King James Bible*, points to its “grandeur of phrasing and the deep slow music of its rhythms.”

The beauty and elegance of language in that translation was not accidental. It was, in fact, one of the primary goals: to produce a Bible with the appropriate dignity, majesty and resonance required for the public proclamation of Scripture.



Superlatives for the KJV, as it's known, abound: 'The greatest work of prose ever written in English,' 'The most beautiful book in the world,' 'The most important book in English religion and culture,' one of the 'books of the millennium.'

read with your ears

Given a choice between the absolute accuracy of the translation or the elegance and beauty of the language, the translators unfailingly chose elegance and beauty.

Hearing the Word

The public reading of Scripture has been an essential part of worship from the earliest times. It goes back to the very first corporate worship service recorded in the Bible: the gathering of the people of Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai after their escape from Egypt. There, Moses read aloud the Word he had received from God, and invited the people's response: "All that the Lord has spoken, we will do," they said.

This was more than a service of worship. It was the beginning of the covenant relationship. And in the centuries that followed, the continued public proclamation of God's Word was an essential and ongoing feature of that relationship (see Deuteronomy 31, Joshua 8, II Kings 22-23 and Nehemiah 8).

The same was true later in the synagogue. There, the public recitation of Scripture was at the heart of every worship gathering. Great care was taken in how Scripture was presented. It was never just read in an ordinary voice, but chanted. The scrolls used in worship purposely contained no punctuation or musical cues, making careful advanced preparation by the readers essential.

Early Christian worship inherited this emphasis on the public reading of Scripture—both traditional Hebrew texts and, over time, uniquely Christian writings. The writers of the New Testament epistles assumed their letters would be read out loud in the congregation (see Colossians 4:16, I Thessalonians 5:27 and Revelation 1:3). And the readings were not brief. In the early second century, Justin Martyr wrote: "The memoirs of the

apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits."

Early believers were not readers of the Word. They were hearers. Their experience of the texts came through the ear, rather than the eye. Most would never have seen the biblical texts at all.

For one thing, many Christians were illiterate. It is estimated that less than 10 percent of first-century Christians would have known how to read. In addition, the biblical texts were hard to get; copies were rare and had to be re-written by



hand. For the vast majority of Christians, their only encounter with Scripture was through hearing it read aloud in worship.

Fortunately, reading written texts out loud was the usual practice of the day. Ancient texts were meant to be read aloud, whether one was reading publicly or privately. Silent reading was rare, and considered unusual and abnormal. This was true of many ancient civilizations, including the Greek, Roman and Jewish cultures. We see an example of this in Acts 8:30, where Philip overhears the eunuch reading the prophet Isaiah and

begins a conversation with him.

One of the reasons all reading was done aloud was that many ancient texts were not divided into separate paragraphs, sentences or even words as they are today. Lines of text might appear like this: THELORDISMYSHEPHERD ISHALLNOTWANT.

The most effective way for readers to decipher the text was to sound out the various syllables aloud as they went along. Even the act of writing was done aloud. It was common practice to speak out loud as one composed. This was true whether writing alone or using a secretary.

For these reasons, good writers wrote for the ear, rather than for the eye.

Biblical scholar Harry Gamble has suggested that, "no ancient text is now read as it was intended to be unless it is also heard, that is, read aloud."

Writing for the ear

The scholars who worked on the King James Version of the Bible understood this. They had a keen concern for how the biblical text would sound as it was read aloud in public worship, choosing their words with care, selecting them not only for their clarity but also for their suggestiveness and richness of meaning.

They worked carefully to produce an exact English replica of the original text, while at the same time infusing it with grace and beauty. Simplicity and clarity were important considerations—the entire translation uses less than 8,000 root-words—but translators were not willing to sacrifice the overall majesty and musicality of the text.

Creation history of the King James Version

BY CHRISTINE LONGHURST

The King James Version was not the first attempt at an English translation of the Bible. John Wycliffe, together with others, had already published a complete English Bible by 1382, prompting the Roman Catholic Church to decree that the translation of Scripture was heresy and punishable by death.

The next major attempt was by William Tyndale in the early 16th century. Tyndale's English New Testament was published in 1526, and was, by all accounts, a masterpiece. Together with Myles Coverdale, he continued to work at a translation of the Old Testament until his arrest and execution for heresy by King Henry VIII in 1536.

Just three years later, everything had changed. England had split with Rome, and the political and religious climate was dramatically different.

Between 1539 and 1611, many different attempts were made to translate the Bible into English, among them The Great Bible (published in 1539 by Coverdale at the

request of Henry VIII); the Geneva Bible (published in 1560 by the church in Switzerland for English-speaking exiles in Europe, but which was also very popular in England); the Bishop's Bible (published in 1568 by the Church of England); and even the Douay-Rheims Bible (published in 1582/1609 by the Roman Catholic Church itself).

When King James I came to power in 1603, leaders in the Church of England approached him about the possibility of making one official translation of the Bible, suitable for both public reading and private devotions. James I agreed, and in 1604 work on the King James Version began. Fifty biblical scholars and linguists were appointed to serve in six different companies: three to work on the Old Testament, two for the New Testament, and one for the Apocrypha. By the end of 1608, an initial draft was completed.

After a final editing process, the book was finally published in 1611.

Given a choice between the absolute accuracy of the translation or the elegance and beauty of the language, the translators unflinchingly chose elegance and beauty. They avoided the use of contemporary expressions and idioms, deliberately choosing slightly archaic words and phrases like "thee," "thou," "saith," "art," "verily," and "it came to pass," even though these expressions were already beginning to pass out of popular usage by the time of the KJV's publication.

It was more important to them, Nicholson suggests, "to make the English godly than to make the words of God into the sort of prose that any Englishmen would have written." The end result was a linguistic style that was slightly different from ordinary speech. They also made very intentional use of punctuation, adding commas and colons to enhance meaning and clarity, and to deliberately slow the pace of public reading.

Their concern for how the book would sound when read aloud was evident when 12 scholars met in 1608 to make final decisions about the text. While one read the verses out loud, the others sat

and listened, testing the translation by ear. The reading would continue until an objection was made, at which point there was discussion and debate.

On and on the final editing went, until the entire Bible had been read through. They were, as Nicolson writes, "the new book's first audience, not its readers but its hearers, participating in, and shaping, the ceremony of the word."

Hearing versus seeing

Is there a difference between hearing and seeing Scripture? Do we experience Scripture differently when it comes to us in spoken form—through our ears, rather than our eyes?

A study by Carnegie Mellon University in 2001 would suggest that we do. Psychology professor Marcel Just of the Center for Cognitive Brain Imaging discovered that we understand spoken and written language very differently: there are significant changes in brain activity patterns when participants are asked to either read or hear identical sentences.

Why is that? Since sound is temporary, the brain is forced to quickly process

and store what it hears in order to absorb what has been said. Written language, on the other hand, provides its own "external memory"; information can simply be re-read as necessary, so the brain doesn't need to deal with it in the same way. In other words, hearing and reading produce different memories.

Or, as Just puts it, "A newscast heard on the radio is processed differently from the same words read in a newspaper."

This is something poetry lovers have known for a long time. Poems are meant to be read aloud, and the sound of a poem is as important to its meaning as the printed words on the page. "My work is less to be read than heard," poet Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote, encouraging readers to "read with your ears." Robert Frost once suggested that "the ear is the best reader."

Whether it's the best reader or not, it's certainly true that the ear reads differently than the eye. I can attest to this personally. A number of years ago it was my practice to listen to audio recordings of Scripture—usually the gospels—as I took our dog out for her daily walk. Although

Few people read and study Scripture as they once did—something we see clearly in rising rates of biblical illiteracy.

I've read through the gospels many times, it was a rare walk when I didn't hear something that surprised me, something that sent me straight back to my Bible to check out if what I had heard was really there. I discovered that listening to Scripture is a very different experience from reading it.

Hearing the Bible today

What difference does this make in how we use Scripture in worship today?

We live at a time when print-based communication is giving way to oral and image-based forms of communication: television, radio, the Internet, and video and text messaging. Shane Hipps, a teaching pastor at Mars Hill Bible Church in Grand Rapids, Mich., suggests that this shift is literally changing the way our brains process information—from a reliance on left-brain skills (critical reasoning and abstract thinking) to right brain skills (intuition and emotion).

But along with this shift come some challenges. People today are far less likely to engage complex printed texts like the Bible in the same way they did 50 years ago. Few people read and study Scripture as they once did—something we see clearly in rising rates of biblical illiteracy.

As we move deeper into a culture increasingly dominated by oral and

visual forms of communication, perhaps it is time to take another look at the way in which we engage Scripture in worship—how we choose Scripture texts, and how we present those texts to the congregation.

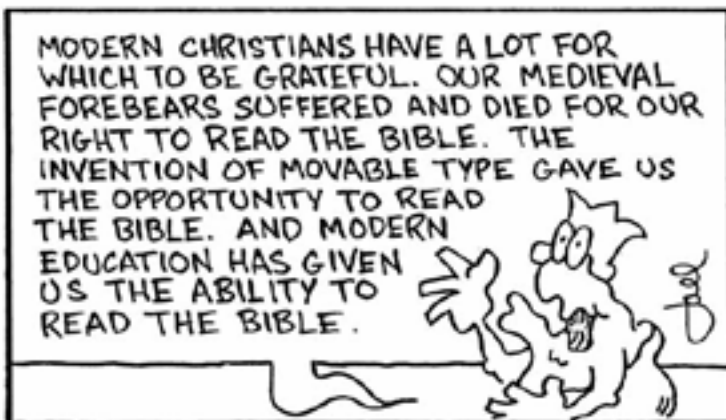
Perhaps even after 400 years, the old King James Version of the Bible still has something to teach us. ☞

Christine Longhurst is a sessional instructor at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Man., and regularly leads workshops on worship across Canada. Visit her blog for worship planners and leaders at re-worship.blogspot.com.

/// For discussion

1. What experience have you had with the King James Version? Historically, how was it used in your congregation? How familiar do the words of the KJV sound to you? How do you respond to them emotionally?
2. Christine Longhurst says that Scripture is experienced differently when it is heard, rather than read privately. In what settings do you hear Scripture read aloud? Do you find hearing Scripture as effective as reading it? Should we encourage more dramatic recitations? How important is it to have the best readers involved in reading from the Bible?
3. The earliest English translators of the Bible faced punishment for doing so. Why would Wycliffe and Tyndale have risked their lives to do the translation? Why would the pope have been so adamant that it not be translated? Has a proliferation of Bibles made it less valuable to us?
4. When you choose a translation of the Bible, are you more concerned with what is pleasing to the ear, or do you search for an accurate translation? Which versions are easier to read? In what settings do you use a paraphrased version? Has the King James Version outlived its usefulness?
5. If we are moving towards a culture that is dominated by oral and image-based communication, how can we teach the next generation to know the Bible?

Poncius' Puddle



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.

✉ Letters in response to sexuality issues

RE: "THERE IS hope for those who want to leave the gay lifestyle" letter, Oct. 17, pg. 7.

Yes, there is hope for gay persons, just as there is hope for heterosexual persons. We appreciate that there have been some who have found help in attending Exodus International and Living Waters. We acknowledge that there are persons who have felt God's grace and power, and have left what Selma Pauls calls the "gay lifestyle," and are now living as practising heterosexuals. But we believe that sexual orientation exists along a continuum that ranges from exclusively heterosexual to exclusively homosexual, including bisexuality, and, in our opinion, it is persons in this middle range that may be influenced by a change ministry.

We rejoice that many gay persons have come to know the peace of God's love. They have an authentic relationship with Christ, they are honest and authentic with themselves, and have accepted Christ's love unconditionally. They, too, have wonderful stories to tell.

We believe that being gay is an intrinsic part of a person's being, not a behaviour that can be repented of. The former leader of Exodus International, who resigned as executive director of Love in Action in 2008, says that you can't repent of homosexuality, and now, after 22 years in the organization, publicly admits that he himself is gay—and always has been.

We are saddened for the hundreds of gay persons who have spent years in change ministries and have come away as broken individuals. We rejoice with the many who have come to know God's transforming

power to live lives as gay Christians, who want to be part of the church, just as heterosexual persons are.

When we think of the hundreds of persons whose talents have been lost to the Mennonite church because they are not accepted as gay, we are very concerned. Some have, thankfully, joined "accepting churches," but the majority have left the established church permanently. May we all be able to rise to Christ's call to love one another in spite of our differing opinions.

**PAUL AND MARTHA SNYDER,
KITCHENER, ONT.**

RE: "UNWRAPPING SEXUALITY," Oct. 31, page 4.

Thank you for printing Keith Graber Miller's article. It is the first time that we have seen the topic discussed openly in a church context. The article was candid, presented with a light touch, and helpful for all ages.

**BARBARA AND JAKE ENS,
SASKATOON, SASK.**

THANK YOU FOR encouraging "a reasoned discussion" (Oct. 31, page 2) on topics of sexuality, diversity and biblical proof-texting. I strongly agree with your comment that we have "a moral obligation to question the ways the Bible has been used in the past to defend the indefensible and promote the unacceptable." This misuse of the Bible has occurred repeatedly.

One family, who upon hearing their son tell them that he was gay, used the Bible to show him that he was sinning. The family decided not to have anything to do with him. They shunned him and treated him as if he did not exist.

Some time later, one member of the family noticed a light on in the garage. The mother sent her sons out to check and they found their brother lying peacefully on the garage floor, hands over his chest, with his face directly under the exhaust pipe of his idling car. The boy who had been treated as if he didn't exist now really didn't exist.

Other events come to mind related to the inhumanity that has been shown towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) people in our society. In the school where I was a counsellor, high school boys abused their effeminate male classmates. The cruel "joke" was to hang these unfortunate boys by their belts from the coat hooks behind the bathroom doors. It was heart breaking to listen to the crying victims asking what they had done to warrant such mistreatment.

And there is no such thing as a homosexual "cure." The most popular method used to try to change gays and lesbians is reparative therapy, a combination of behaviour modification, psychoanalysis and prayer, which is opposed by the American Psychological

Association. This approach has little long-term effect for change, tends to lower self-esteem, and has been linked to suicide and depression.

I was involved in writing the principles for ethical decision-making for the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association. Briefly the principles are:

being proactive in helping others; refraining from actions that risk harm to others; respecting the equal treatment of all persons; respecting the need to be responsible to all of society; honouring commitments; and respecting people's right to freedom of choice.

Maybe a more detailed, closer examination of these

NEW ORDER VOICE

Five thoughts on queers and messy church

WILL BRAUN

1. THE CHURCH is wounding people deeply based on sexual orientation. This is not what God wants. We must do better.

2. AS A university student in 1993, I attended a meeting about gay theatre, or gay something, I don't remember exactly. I had never met an openly gay person and I thought I should. I treat people more graciously if I've been face-to-face with them. I encourage straight readers who have not taken this step to do so.

To be clear, I have since worked, worshipped and lived with people who are "queer." I prefer this term to the clunky acronyms for people who don't fit the heterosexual mould.



3. WITHOUT DIMINISHING

No. 1, I think people on both sides of the queer-inclusion issue should ask why this matter evokes more passion than inclusion of people who are poor, have criminal records or have intellectual disabilities.

Garret Keizer, a former Episcopalian minister, goes further. In *Harper's Magazine* he wrote about the split in the Episcopalian church over the ordination of Gene Robinson, a gay priest. Keizer finds fault not with either side, but with the "bourgeois" nature of the debate itself. He says that instead of talking about

issues that implicate all middle-class people—like global economic disparity—we distract ourselves with sexual morality. Both sides engage in a "quest for moral rectitude in the face of [their] collusion in an economic system of gross inequality."

"How does a Christian population implicated in militarism, usury, sweatshop labour and environmental rape find a way to sleep at night?" Keizer asks. "Apparently, by making a very big deal out of not sleeping with Gene Robinson. Or, on the flip side, by making approval of Gene Robinson the litmus test of progressive integrity."

What would happen if we all focused on helping one another connect with God and love our neighbours...?

4. IF THE discussion focused on welcome as a broad, truly inclusive spiritual practice—not a theological position on one issue—the discussion might go more smoothly.

5. MAYBE WE Christians over-emphasize the importance of being right. Often, the starting point for people on both sides is that they are right and others must be convinced of this. This leads to battle lines in the sand, defensiveness and enmity.

But is there something just as important as being right?

I spoke recently to a pastor from an evangelical denomination that believes homosexuality is wrong. But his church lets queer people—and others who wouldn't measure up in most Mennonite churches—partake in communion and get behind the pulpit. The pastor said his role is not to draw lines between who is right and wrong, but to nurture anyone's desire to draw near to God. "The grace of God is poured out freely to all," he said.

By focusing on something other than right and wrong, this church has partially transcended denominational rules and provided a welcome to many. It sounds like a messy, challenging, healing form of church.

What would happen if we all focused on helping one another connect with God and love our neighbours, rather than on changing each others' positions? Could we put aside our eagerness to hate other people's sin and our enlightened scorn of the other? Could we accept theological

messiness with the "grace upon grace" that Jesus freely offers? Difficult decisions would remain (see No. 1), but perhaps theological stalemate could be avoided.

Maybe the God who put us all here together is not waiting for the right side to win, so much as for humble, loving people to offer a broad welcome even to people who are totally "wrong." I see promising glimmers of this impulse on both sides.

Will Braun is a Winnipeg, Man., writer. He can be reached at wbraun@inbox.com.

principles could be helpful to the members of the Mennonite church in their dealings with all people, and particularly LGBT people, in society.

BILL SCHULZ, WINNIPEG, MAN.

THE RECENT SPOTLIGHT on homosexuality in Mennonite Church Canada has tended to sidestep the question of where this discussion is taking us with

regard to a theology of the Bible. The matter-of-fact approach is that the Bible is uniformly opposed to homosexuality as a lifestyle choice.

This being the case, those who favour a fuller acceptance of homosexuality in the church have deconstructed every relevant biblical passage with the intention of showing that they are all fragments which relate only to certain historical/cultural situations

OUTSIDE THE BOX

The church is like plastic wrap

PHIL WAGLER

Ever been pulled like plastic wrap over a warm roast pan? I was cleaning up after a great meal prepared by my beautiful wife. The roast pan had some leftovers, well, left over, and so out came the plastic wrap. The warmth of the pan gathered the clear plastic to itself, enabling me to pull the wrap so tight I could see my reflection staring back at me. Scary sight to be sure. It reminded me I needed a haircut. And in this most common, everyday task, a metaphor for the journey I've been on emerged.

I've been stretched tight lately. This church stuff is wearing me thin. This life of being a servant of the King is a humble privilege and a royal pain in the nether regions. I'm not being trite or disrespectful. Truth is, being the church can be deeply painful. That pain can find places best left undisturbed. At least that's the way we see it. Not surprisingly, this is not necessarily God's perspective.

This is my recent experience. This is my church's journey. We're learning the challenge of being a fellowship, the earthquake of shattered assumptions, the threadbare-ness of the end of a rope.

But what if this is where I discover what it means to be shaped by grace? What if this is the only way we become

people with anything remotely meaningful to offer our world? What if God is simply disinterested in making me happy? In this culture, where my happiness is apparently the purpose of virtually everything, what shall I do with such a thought?

I checked, and "Blessed are the smugly satisfied" has been unhelpfully edited out of Jesus' sermon on the mount. Perhaps a newer paraphrase will replace it. Barring that unforeseen extra-canonical rescue, what if the happiness God intends for me, for a church like mine and yours, is really the blessedness of the poor, the mourning, the meek, the merciful . . . and the peacemakers?

That will mean, will it not, that we have to be led—yes, led—into the admission



[W]e talk nobly about it, so long as it doesn't involve the suicide of the selfishness of numero uno.

that we simply can't do it anymore. We must learn lament. We may need to discover that all we have to offer is mercy, because mercy is all we can hope for ourselves. We may have to be sent to the frontlines of conflict when it would be easier to just golf, grumble about what's wrong with the world, and watch another

movie that steals a couple of hours we can never get back.

Don't mock me. If you haven't felt this way at some point about the cost of discipleship, about the cost of becoming the community of the King, you've probably not yet considered the awesomeness of the call of Jesus to follow him. Seriously, have you tried dying to self? Yeah, we talk nobly about it, so long as it doesn't involve the suicide of the selfishness of numero uno. However, the opportunities at the end of our rope, the blessedness of being possessed by the kingdom of heaven, will only be realized when we become pliable in the hands of someone doing clean-up in "aisle me."

So I stand there looking at my reflection in plastic pulled taught over noodles. My life and the life of my church is like this wrap, I think to myself. Only when we're stretched, only when the heat grabs hold, only then do we begin to reflect his

glory, his beauty, his blessedness. Only then do we taste the joy of leftovers.

Phil Wagler (phil_wagler@yahoo.ca) serves as an interim lead pastor in Surrey, B.C., and will keep doing the dishes if valuable life lessons are involved. Just don't tell his wife.

and, therefore, have no general bearing on the issue. Of course, this also means that none of these passages can be used in any way to support an acceptance of homosexuality.

The point of this deconstruction then seems to be chiefly to invalidate the use of the Bible for matters of faith and life. And we have seen how this has progressed in some of our sister denominations. Homosexuality then becomes a non-biblical, non-spiritual matter, thus raising the question as to why it is on the church's agenda at all.

I am somewhat sympathetic to Keith Graber Miller's approach in "Unwrapping sexuality," Oct. 31, page 4, which takes a larger overview of all lifestyle issues. However, here, too, there needs to be some particular understanding of what role the Bible plays, if any, in directing our understanding.

Recently, former MC Canada general secretary Jack

Suderman has referred to Mennonites as a "biblically grounded people," a perception that seems to be at odds with the current situation.

I would respectfully suggest that it is impossible to address these lifestyle issues intelligently until we first decide on how we evaluate the Bible as informing our understanding of faith and life. Exactly what weight does it have in our discussions: very much, quite a lot, some, a little, or none at all?

KEVIN MCCABE, ST. CATHARINES, ONT.

I HAVE READ with interest the exchange of letters between Joyce Gladwell and her sister Elaine Linton, and it has prompted me to make the following observation.

We had the pleasure of attending the ordination of a young Mennonite woman into the United Church of Canada ministry. She was raised Mennonite, would have loved to serve in the Mennonite church, but,

FROM OUR LEADERS

No transformation without God

KEN WARKENTIN

Recently, our small group embarked on a series entitled "Exploring spirituality through powerlessness." The intent of this group is to take a look at a 12-step program—designed originally to be used with folks who struggle with substance addictions—as a way for any person to experience and understand the transforming power of God.

At the core of the 12-step program is the fundamental belief and understanding that all of us need the transforming power of God to save us from self-destruction. This transforming power is accessed, not through intellectual assent, but rather through the gut-wrenching epiphany that without God there is no transformation possible.

My imagination has been captured by the fourth step, which asks us to "make a searching and fearless moral inventory

of ourselves." Make a list . . . but do it without fear. Make a list of your defects without trying to justify them. Make a list of your shortcomings without trying to explain how you have come to this point.



Make a list of your shortcomings without trying to explain how you have come to this point.

Just make a list.

This is not easy work. This is the kind of work that often deeply offends our pride (our ego) and our sense of righteousness, and yet the necessary inventory is to be taken without fear, knowing that in our quest we will be aided and abetted by angels.

How in the world do we search the depth of our character without fear? How do we acknowledge our own brokenness without dread?

This year I have found the story of the

holy family whose preparation for the coming of Jesus was fraught with fear and yet the angels who came to Mary, Joseph, Zechariah and the shepherds began each visit with the words, "Be not afraid." This was not an admonition to "buck up and be braver"; rather, it was the revelation that the transforming power of a loving and gracious God was about to become very real in their lives. The appropriate response to God breaking into life was not to be one of fear, but it was to be joyful and filled with wonder.

As we approach 2012 I am hopeful that

I will find opportunities to continue to take a searching, fearless moral inventory of my life and that this will inform my participation in my corporate life with others in the body of Christ. In the ongoing graceful process of "Being a Faithful Church," we have the opportunity to fearlessly read, study and journey together. And I long to do it with the angels' voices ringing in our ears: "Be not afraid."

Ken Warkentin is executive director of Mennonite Church Manitoba.

because she is lesbian, she could not, so, instead, she became a minister in the United Church. She is a wonderfully talented woman, committed to Christ, and I can't help but think we, the Mennonite church, are the big losers.

How long will it take before we accept gays and lesbians into our church leadership? Will it be in her lifetime?

HENRY PAULS, WATERLOO, ONT.

WHEN I READ the Oct. 31 editorial, "A reasoned discussion," I was encouraged and deeply moved.

I want to encourage and support *Canadian Mennonite* in its attempt, as I understand it, to face what to some has become a difficult issue, and to move to a place where we can complement each other and learn together, rather than polarize.

I appreciate also your sensitivity to the Mennonite Church Canada officials. I want to try to understand their concern for proper process, but I wonder if the Holy Spirit is not well ahead of us on this, as with Cornelius and Peter over the gentile issue (Acts 10-11).

I believe we received a real gift when some of our brothers and sisters gave us the Post Card Project in 2008. Unfortunately, it did not fit into our assembly guidelines. It is interesting how that same project was a real blessing to many people when it was made available at the Saskatoon assembly in 2009.

I believe the same was evidenced this summer at the MC Canada assembly in Waterloo, Ont. The Holy Spirit is still at work among us.

In 1986, we made a clear statement about homosexual behaviour for heterosexual people with the Saskatoon Resolution. We also recognized that we have members among us with a different orientation that we needed to learn more about. There are many stories of the persons and churches that have come to a new understanding, stories we need to hear.

I believe, as you indicate in the editorial, we still have much to learn about sexuality in general. As I am getting to know gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and queer (GLBTQ) people—my brothers and sisters in the faith—I am learning a lot more about my own being as a heterosexual man. I have been blessed. There is a great variation among our heterosexual world as well, where labelling has often not been very helpful.

EGON ENNS, WINNIPEG, MAN.

✉ **A wonderful coincidence?**

WHAT A WONDERFUL coincidence—or was it—to have Keith Graber Miller's "Unwrapping sexuality" feature followed by Troy Watson's "Faith beyond belief" column in the Oct. 31 issue? These two articles

must be read together!

Miller argues that, "I'm not convinced that traditional marriage—and even the sacred authority of the biblical text—are unduly endangered by gay and lesbian people loving each other and committing themselves to each other." But traditional marriage and biblical authority are being threatened in the opinion of many faithful Christians.

Thankfully, Watson comes to the rescue by offering two insightful questions:

- "Why has Christian faith been reduced to a list of tenets we need to believe in?" and
- "How did believing the 'right' things become the measuring stick of authentic Christian faith?"

The point, I think, is that if we could treat faith and truth as equals, we would increase our capacity to accept a wider range of tenets and would find it less important to be right about some of these divisive issues. Look at Menno Simons; by faith he moved marginally on matters of accepted truth and left us with the legacy of pacifism and service.

PETER A. DUECK, VANCOUVER, B.C.

✉ **Promote the gospel, not protest or homosexuality**

I WAS DISTURBED to see that the cover of the Nov. 14 issue was promoting protesting ("Young Mennos 'occupy' Wall Street and Winnipeg"). It is also disturbing to see that homosexuality is once again becoming a prime focus of your magazine (Oct. 31 issue). We have had so many years of that topic. Can't we move on?

What is happening is that your magazine is coming into homes, but not being read. Let us get on with what we have been called to do: Promote the gospel!

ALICE UNRAU, CALGARY, ALTA.

✉ **The decision to hate is a personal choice**

RE: "CAN 'FREE' speech be 'hate' speech?," Oct. 31, page 21.

Might we look at this hate speech issue from a theological perspective? It is my understanding that Canada's hate speech laws are in place not so much to silence individuals, but to prevent the proliferation of hatred. But if mankind has been bestowed by God with the gift of free will, how can it be said that one might, through his words, incite another to hate? Similarly, if someone reads this letter and agrees with its premise, I may have helped him reach that decision, but the decision itself would be ultimately his and his alone.

BENJAMIN P. WEBER, KITCHENER, ONT.

✉ Abandonment is a marriage covenant-breaker too

IN “A **DOUBLE** edged sword,” May 30, page 10, Melissa Miller so clearly articulates my experience as a divorced person. Having added abandonment to Miller’s list of covenant-breakers may help others in similar situations recognize that a lifetime of guilt over a marriage ending is not warranted if one has already been abandoned for decades.

In “Who gets the church when a couple divorces?” June 13, page 4, Donita Wiebe-Neufeld raises a very real question.

My own experience was that the pastor provided personal support during my decades of abandonment. Without that support and his prayers with and for me, I would have felt even more isolated. At no time did I consider the church as an avenue to address my marriage dysfunction, nor was such intercession offered. Belatedly, after all secular alternatives were exhausted, there was a discussion about options, but everyone recognized it was too late. However, the subsequent strength, support and understanding of the pastor and ministerial were crucial for my continuing relationship to the church, although I was no longer attending worship services.

Wiebe-Neufeld assumes that lawyers have a major role in divorce settlements, but I completed the process myself. At my request, all discussions between myself and my separated spouse were conducted in the pastor’s study in his presence and that of a deacon of the opposite gender. All separation agreements, asset divisions and the petition for divorce were similarly signed within the church. Divorce was not the solution of the church, but rather a recognition on its part of the failure of two members, and that my desire for non-adversarial ending of a life-destroying situation was perhaps the lesser pain.

The pastor arranged a very meaningful and, for me, liberating, service to recognize the divorce, confess sin and failure, and hear assurances of pardon through God’s grace.

Throughout this period of non-attendance, the pastor and fellow members unfailingly invited me to return, and were most welcoming when I finally felt comfortable enough to enter the sanctuary. Since then, I have attended several services and, most importantly, after a decade of non-participation, a communion service at which my former spouse was also present. This latter service was essential in my journey of forgiving her. The church can indeed be a “healing place.”

It is still unclear to me as to what future relationship I will have with the church, but its custody is not in question. It is there for me, it is there for my former spouse, it is there for everyone who chooses to accept

its welcome. The pastoral support and progressive leadership I have experienced can be a model for churches striving to be faithful to God in the midst of a marriage ending.

NAME WITHHELD BY REQUEST

✉ Look for a ‘not’ on the government cheque

RE: “**FEDS FUND** Foodgrains Bank with \$125 million,” Nov. 14, page 24.

Canadian Foodgrains Bank executive director Jim Cornelius had better scrutinize that cheque he received from Bev Oda, federal minister of international cooperation, to ensure that there is no “not” above the indicated amount, as she has a demonstrated ability to tamper with financial documents.

VERN RATZLAFF, SASKATOON, SASK.

✉ Beat fighter jet planes into peace symbols

RE: “**SAY NO** to the logo,” Oct. 3, pages 1 and 4 to 7.

Yes, it is a picture of a fighter jet. Our Winnipeg Jets have always been fighters, in my estimation. The old Jets, and now the new Jets, including the players, have made great effort and progress in doing away with goon hockey: deliberate injury, attempt to injure, dangerous fisticuffs, etc.

Fight for peace on and off the ice. Who is to say that we cannot apply that principle and effort to our fighter jet airplanes? Make them a peacekeeping symbol and machine. Isaiah 4:3 states: “*They will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.*”

WALLY REMPEL, STEINBACH, MAN.

✉ Jets’ logo owned in part by the air force

I’VE READ WITH a bit of dismay the many letters posted regarding the logo of the Winnipeg Jets (“Say NO to the logo,” Oct. 3, page 4). While many of them raise valid points, I feel they are, in the end, beside the point.

Yes, the critique that there are bigger issues in the world to address is valid, but we also need to be encouraged to examine our daily routines and mundane choices, and the implications that they have. Yes, it is possible to cheer on a team without approving of its logo. Yes, it is possible to respect the good work that members of the military do while still rejecting the

idea of an organization whose fundamental purpose is war. Yes, we can acknowledge that Don Cherry has a generous spirit while not approving of his military boosterism or other views.

The issue is that, when we wear clothing with logos or name brands on them, we are agreeing to advertise for that team or company. The roundel part of the Jets' logo is an air force emblem that is owned by the Department of National Defence. The Winnipeg Jets can use it only by permission of the Department of Defence, according to a Nov. 19 Canadian Press story. If I wear clothing with the Jets' logo on it, I have agreed to be an advertiser for, and therefore an implicit supporter of, the Royal Canadian Air Force.

The issue is not whether we should feel bad for cheering for a sports team or not. The issue is whether we choose to be an advertiser for the military, and, if so, is this consistent with our beliefs?

DOUG DURKSEN, WINNIPEG, MAN.

Managing editor's note: The Canadian Press article also notes that the Jets' contract with the air force requires the team to use the logo "in such manner as to protect and preserve the reputation and integrity of Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, as

represented by the Minister of National Defence, and the Canadian Forces," and that, "True North Sports and Entertainment, which owns the Jets, has also promised to give \$1 million to military charities over the next decade." Will that money come out of the sale of merchandise with the new logo, one is left to wonder.

✉ 'It may be easy to be smug'

THE COVER OF the Nov. 14 *Canadian Mennonite* is a little misleading. It is not just young people who are part of the Occupy protests, but rather individuals of all ages have taken to the streets. On the other hand, it may be easy to be smug.

Canada does not spend trillions of dollars on military exploits around the world. Furthermore, did not Canada's former finance minister, Paul Martin, eliminate the federal deficit several years ago?

Aren't poor management by countries like Greece, Italy and maybe France, and the poor themselves clearly at fault for our present crisis? The "invisible hand" of the market is always right.

MYRON STEINMAN, KITCHENER, ONT.

/// Corrections

- Henry Regier is a member of Bloor Street United Church, Toronto, Ont. Incorrect information was published with his reflection, "Blue forget-me-nots on Remembrance Day," Nov. 14, page 14.
- Through the sales of her harp-based CDs, Virginia Bethune has donated around \$5,000 to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Incorrect information appeared in the news brief, "American harpist donates \$8,000 to cancer research," that appeared in the Nov. 14 issue, page 33.

Canadian Mennonite regrets the errors.

/// Clarifications

- In the "Remember the blood" reflection by Brandi Friesen, Oct. 17, page 25, Canadian and American forces were mentioned as helping to liberate France on D-Day. Also taking part in this Allied offensive—but not mentioned—were forces from Great Britain, Australia, Belgium and Poland, a reader points out.
- Joyce Gladwell, one of the "Letters to my sister" authors, reports that her statement in the Oct. 31 exchange—"We do know that all human fetuses begin development in the womb as female"—has been challenged by a family doctor, who points out that it would be more accurate to say that fetuses are gender-neutral for the first few weeks after conception, after which the sex organs begin to develop.

Canadian Mennonite regrets any confusion that may have been caused by the original statements.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

- Bartel**—Jaxson John (Nov. 18, 2011), to Bryce (North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.) and Danica Bartel.
- Entz**—Isaac Zachary (b. Nov. 20, 2011), to Robin Heppner Entz and Zachariah Entz, Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., in Bamako, Mali.
- Fransen**—Ryan Sawyer Briggs (b. Nov. 18, 2011), to Shelley and Aaron Fransen, Toronto United Mennonite, Ont.
- Lowndes**—Madelyn Anne (b. Oct. 22, 2011), to Brendan and Sarah Lowndes, Trinity Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.
- McKie**—Jack Harrison James (b. Nov. 10, 2011), to Jed McKie and Tara Gingrich, Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.
- Moore**—Paxton Steven (b. Nov. 9, 2011), to Jeremy Moore and Charlene Ramer, Erb Street Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.
- Nickerson**—Mia Eve (b. Nov. 22, 2011), to Kristin and Nathan Nickerson, Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man.
- Regier**—Charlie John (b. Nov. 14, 2011), to Ben and Andrea Regier, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, Man., in Newton, Kan.
- Rempel**—Grayson Allan Reginald (b. Nov. 16, 2011), to Allan (Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.) and Stephanie Rempel, in Victoria, B.C.
- Roes**—Alexander Rudy (b. Nov. 18, 2011), to Tom and Lynette Roes, Zurich Mennonite, Ont.
- Shantz**—Henry Christopher (b. Nov. 5, 2011), to Jeff and Kim (Wideman) Shantz, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., in London, Ont.

Baptisms

Jason Andres—Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont., Nov. 13, 2011.

Erin Rose Thorleifson, Greg Loeppky, Margaret Loeppky, Cory Heide, Troy Klassen, Reed Peters, Kersti-Jade Bergman, Brendan Klassen, Jaclyn Klassen, Helen Letkeman, Rose Blatz—Morden Mennonite, Man., May 30, 2011.

Kristin Friesen, Andrea Klassen, Skye Thorleifson, Staci Siemens, Sophie Schlegel—Morden Mennonite, June 12, 2011.

Marriages

Brenneman/Wynette—Julie Brenneman (Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.) and Kyle Wynette, at Tavistock Mennonite, Oct. 29, 2011.

Rempel/Sandberg—Allan Rempel (Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.) and Stephanie Sandberg, at Starling Lane Winery, Saanich, B.C., July 9, 2011.

Deaths

Baerg—Katharine (nee Warkentin), 82 (b. Nov. 15, 1928; d. July 12, 2011), Eden Mennonite, Chilliwack, B.C.

Broll—Justina (nee Riediger), 89 (b. Feb. 21, 1922; d. Oct. 22, 2011), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Claassen—Trudy Louise (nee Nickel), 73 (b. May 1, 1938; d. Nov. 15, 2011), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Clausius—Irene (nee Gerber), 89 (b. Sept. 11, 1922; d. Nov. 16, 2011), Zurich Mennonite, Ont.

Dick—Agatha (nee Reimer), 91 (b. March 10, 1920; d. Nov. 3, 2011), Eden Mennonite, Chilliwack, B.C.

Dyck—Elfriede, 84 (b. June 6, 1927; d. Nov. 14, 2011), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Enns—Nettie (nee Shroeder), 85 (b. April 26, 1926; d. Sept. 17, 2011), Trinity Mennonite, Calgary, Alta.

Fehr—Helene (nee Hiebert), 95 (b. Feb. 1, 1916; d. May 28, 2011), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Konrad—Margaret (nee Warkentin), 96 (b. April 8, 1915; d. Nov. 28, 2011), Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Nickel—Hilda (nee Rempel), 82 (b. June 17, 1929; d. Sept. 7, 2011), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask. (Correction to notice in Oct. 17 issue.)

Nickel—Jacob A., 81 (b. May 16, 1930; d. Nov. 21, 2011), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Sask.

Petkau—Sadie (nee Froese), (b. Jan. 13, 1922; d. May 19, 2011), Morden Mennonite, Man.

Regier—Jacob, 97 (b. April 26, 1914; d. Nov. 23, 2011), Nith Valley Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont.

Reimer—Helen (nee Janzen), 89 (b. June 24, 1922; d. July 18, 2011), Eden Mennonite, Chilliwack, B.C.

Rese—Mary, 86 (d. Oct. 6, 2011), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

Sudermann—Katie (nee Penner), 83 (b. March 16, 1928; d. Aug. 24, 2011), Eden Mennonite, Chilliwack, B.C.

Snider—Elaine, 84 (b. Jan. 5, 1927; d. Oct. 29, 2011), First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Swinnard—Edna (nee Janzen), 87 (b. July 19, 1924; d. Nov. 12, 2011), Eden Mennonite, Chilliwack, B.C.

Thiessen—Conrad, 85 (d. Sept. 26, 2011), St. Catharines United Mennonite, Ont.

Tilitzky—Abram, 91 (b. Sept. 9, 1920; d. Oct. 4, 2011), Level Ground Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.


Unger—Peter, 93 (b. April 4, 1918; d. June 26, 2011), Eden Mennonite, Chilliwack, B.C.

Witmer—Lauretta, 99 (b. May 17, 1912; d. Aug. 26, 2011), First Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones

announcements within four months of the event.

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



Pontius' Puddle



GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Midwives of a new era

Think tank ponders postmodern church in post-Christian context

STORY AND PHOTO

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

John Borthwick is calling on church leaders to see themselves as midwives and chaplains.

One of three presenters at the Oct. 22 think tank workshop, “Leading the church in a post-Christian, postmodern world,” and a Presbyterian Church of Canada minister, Borthwick spoke to the “already/not yet” of the postmodern church in a post-Christian context.

With many congregants still “modern” in their thinking about church, the Bible and culture, they will need ministers to care for them as they age, what he called a form of chaplaincy. On the other hand, he said that current ministers will by-and-large not be postmodern ministers themselves, and no leaders alive now may see the full bloom of the nascent postmodern church.

But Borthwick and two other presenters—John Lawson, a United Church of Canada minister, and Derek Suderman, assistant professor of religious studies at Conrad Grebel University College—trusts that God will not abandon God’s people and that a church will exist in the aftermath of the cultural changes now taking place in Canada. But all three were adamant that it isn’t known yet what the church will ultimately look like in the future.

Suderman focused on the Bible as the book of the reading community, which both needs a community to exist and forms that community. He painted the picture of the post-Christian and postmodern context as one of pluralism, where faith groups are in the minority in a globalized world in which Christians live in the shadow of empire amidst rapid technological change, and who must deal with disorientation, fear and despair.

He sees this as parallel with Jesus’ day,

and the times when the Bible was formed: post-exilic Israel and the pre-Constantinian Roman Empire. He believes the Bible is a book for a time such as this, and encouraged faith communities to wrestle with the Bible, neither accepting old

interpretations as normative, nor doing away with Scripture as outdated.

At least one participant wondered afterward if Suderman’s views were truly post-modern or were still infused with ideas from modernity.

The final exercise of the day was to spell out some concrete steps for the church now. They included:

- Forming pastors who are vulnerable and who are wrestling with their own questions;
- Training pastors to look after themselves as they deal with the chaplaincy/midwife dichotomy; and
- Connecting the church to the spiritual life and opening it to the mystery of God’s Spirit at work, as opposed to only dealing rationally with issues. ☿

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



Jeremy Bergen, left, assistant professor of religious studies at Conrad Grebel University College, spoke about public apologies by churches, such as the one by the Lutheran World Federation to Mennonites in 2010, at the annual Grebel pastors breakfast on Nov. 8. A key point in his presentation, which raised significant discussion afterward, was the suggestion that ‘the church in 2060 will be repenting for our [current] best intentions.’ While church members and leaders can now see repenting for exclusionary practices based on gender, orientation, race or culture, or for the church’s sublimation into Canada’s economic and cultural practices, the church in 50 years may be repenting for things held as true now. Bergen discouraged either resignation or “go and sin boldly” as appropriate responses. Instead, quoting from the Evangelical Reformed Church of Zurich’s 2004 statement, he said, “We belong to Jesus Christ, who reconciles us with God through his death on the cross and has committed us to the ministry of reconciliation,” suggesting that the church live humbly and fervently. Also pictured are Muriel Bechtel, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada conference minister, and Al Rempel, MC Eastern Canada regional minister.

Share save spend

MC Eastern Canada uses Fall Equipping Day to teach stewardship lessons

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
MARKHAM, ONT.

The average North American is bombarded with more than 5,000 marketing messages every day, which got Nathan Dungan wondering how the church could counteract such a burden of cultural messages focused on spending with its counter-cultural message of “share, save, spend.”

For more than 20 years, Dungan, founder and president of Share Save Spend (sharesavespend.com), has energetically brought his message to adults and youths, “linking their money decisions to their values.” Recently, he spoke at Mennonite Church Eastern Canada’s Fall Equipping

Day event in Markham.

In introducing Dungan, David Martin, MC Eastern Canada’s executive minister, told the story of the baptism of Ivan the Great and his troops. As they passed through the river, everyone held his sword above the water to keep them from rusting, in effect stating that their faith and their warfare were disconnected. Martin wondered if today’s Mennonites would hold their wallets above the water.

People generally fall into the categories of sharers, savers or spenders, he said, and what is needed is a non-judgmental



Nathan Dungan of Share Save Spend discusses his presentation on ‘money sanity’ with Tobi Thiessen of Toronto United Mennonite Church at the Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Fall Equipping Day event in Markham, Ont.

conversation about money and how it is used. A key part of this conversation is the tendency in advertising to create a sense of scarcity, getting consumers to think they need something that is really just a want.

An exercise that asked whether eating out, car ownership or having a cell phone were needs or wants led to spirited discussion around the tables. There were no right or wrong answers, Duggan said; the key was conversation and consideration.

Dungan’s organization provides a curriculum that helps churches teach “money sanity” to congregants of all ages. Money Sanity Solutions: Linking Money and Meaning was made available to each congregation at the seminar through the help of the day’s sponsors, the Mennonite Foundation of Canada and the Mennonite Savings and Credit Union.

The material has been in use for some time. A study of 100 parent-child pairs showed that, after 18 months, youths were spending less, saving more and sharing more, while the adults reported an increase in conversations between the generations about money, together with less stress. Youths who had previously been more oriented to spending than saving or sharing also showed an improvement in their self-esteem.

One congregation that has been using the material for some time reported that twice as many people came out to learn about “money sanity” than expected, proving to leaders that congregants want to be faithful with their money. ☸

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



Erb St. Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont., celebrated its 160th anniversary in November. Joanne Bender, far right in black, wrote a cantata for the event. Built around the theme of a growing tree, the choir of adults and children was accompanied by a mixed ensemble of piano, strings, oboe, guitars and percussion. Keeping with the changes that have taken place in the congregation over the years, four-part singing was mixed with folk, rock, African, Hispanic, Asian, Taizé and contemporary styles of music. In the instrumental piece, “Intertwining,” Christian, Jewish and Muslim music was woven together. In closing, the congregation and choir blessed each other with “Old 606,” “Praise God from Whom.”

'Hard numbers to consider'

Tough financial decisions ahead for MC Manitoba, Camps with Meaning

STORY AND PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent
CARMAN, MAN.

At this fall's gathering of Mennonite Church Manitoba, held on Nov. 3 at Carman Mennonite Church, treasurer Tom Seals presented the proposed 2012 budget, which plans for a decrease in congregational donations from \$691,779 in 2011 to \$670,000. Factored into this budget is a 2 percent cost of living allowance adjustment, a reduction of the full-time administrative assistant position to half-time, additional revenue from camp fees and a reduction in other expenses.

Board chair Hans Werner noted that, although giving this year is running ahead of last year at this time, "we did a bit of a study on congregational giving trends and, over

the long term, the pattern of congregational giving for core budget areas has been declining. There is a shift to more dollars going to local and other programs."

"You come to break points," said Werner, "and there is a genuine concern at board level that if we keep on demanding the same from our staff, but give them less to work with, we can come to a break point."

The proposed budget was approved and will be voted on in February 2012.

Justin Zacharias, who assumed his 18-month role as interim director of Camping Ministries in July, reported that MC Manitoba's three camps involved nearly 1,200 campers and more than 260

staff and volunteers this summer.

Zacharias will be studying the long-term sustainability of the camping ministry, and he told the 104 delegates that "we have some hard numbers to consider. It was a hard year at Camp Assiniboia, especially with the flooding and unexpected expenses that go along with that. We are also doing an occupancy study of Moose Lake and Koinonia, which is indicating that we are at well below the break-even point. There are incredibly positive things happening at the camps, but there are also some hard realities that we are facing."

Delegates were also apprised of two constitutional changes that will be brought to the 2012 annual meeting. These changes address the issues of quorum and reference groups.

"We are proposing loosening the quorum requirements somewhat," explained executive director Ken Warkentin.

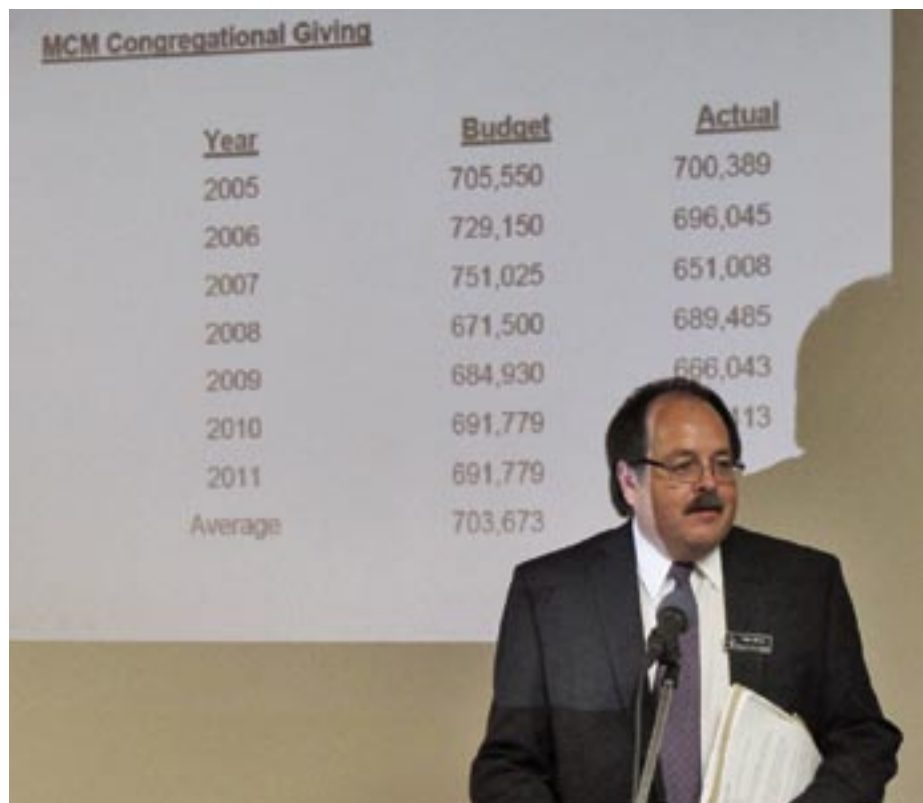
The other proposed change will give the board of directors the authority to appoint up to three additional members as needed to provide specific expertise as it pertains to the work of the camp committees or other ministries.

Henry Kliewer, director of Leadership Ministries, introduced two documents that are being tested with pastors and MC Manitoba's credentialing committee. These documents were developed out of a need to better equip churches and leadership when situations of conflict arise.

"This past year several of our congregations went through difficult issues in leadership and our office was invited to help deal with these conflicts," explained Kliewer. "We painfully acknowledge insufficient tools to offer in these situations."

"Continuum for Intervention Steps" and "Justice Making: The church responds to ethical misconduct" are meant to assist in providing "help in the midst of difficult situations and, even more so, to provide health to our pastors so that the congregations can also be healthy," Kliewer said.

Warkentin reported that Darryl Neustaedter-Barg, former director of media ministries, is now MC Manitoba's director of communications; in that capacity, he is developing a new website to better link the 49 congregations and 10,000 members of the area church. ☿



Tom Seals, Mennonite Church Manitoba treasurer, explains to delegates at the fall meeting that, although giving is running ahead of last year at this time, 'we are budgeting for a decrease in congregational giving for 2012.'

SILVER LAKE CAMP PHOTO BY NATHAN WARKENTIN



Don Penner, Silver Lake Camp pastor at the end of this summer, leads in worship at a campfire on the Labour Day weekend. This year marked the camp's 50th anniversary.

Fires are rallying points for Silver Lake Mennonite Camp

MC Eastern Canada camp celebrates half-century

BY DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent

In 1961, Henry Pauls was a 22-year-old student at the University of Guelph, Ont., but he freely gave of his time working on the first building at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp, located near the shores of Lake Huron just below the Bruce Peninsula.

According to Pauls, chair of this year's 50th anniversary camp committee, the move to build a facility for youth retreats and summer children's camps was largely fuelled by youthful leaders like Ron Rempel, Peter Isaac, Vic Heinrichs, Henry Bergen, John Wiens, Rudy Willms, Bill Dick, Abe Epp and Dave Regier. Having met at nearby Chesley Lake for a few years, 30 hectares of pasture land were purchased.

At the third of three anniversary celebrations, held on the Labour Day weekend, Fred and Inge Neufeld spoke of laying out the camp using one of the few big trees on the property as a landmark. The purchase of an additional 30 hectares by a 'friend' of the camp, which was subsequently

bought by Silver Lake, gave the camp room to grow, run diverse programs and plant many trees which now buffer it from the cottage developments all around.

Both Pauls and current camp director Dave Erb cite the two dining room fires—one in 1967 and the other in February—as low points and rallying points for the camp. The new dining hall, used this summer but being added to this fall, will house volunteers, provide space for individual retreats, and include indoor washrooms.

The many "Friends of Silver Lake" have contributed generously to the work this year, both with time and money. The spring smorgasbord in Niagara, which had fallen dormant for a few years, was revived as the first 50th-anniversary celebration event, raising \$10,000. This was followed by a May 14 event in Waterloo, which was held in tandem with the camp's annual meeting. The "Paddle the Grand" event raised \$31,000 the same weekend, with an event

at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, which was more celebration than fundraiser.

While there had been some decline in connection with congregations, which led to a decrease in campers and support a few years ago, Erb reported that this year 60 percent of the 706 campers were from Mennonite congregations, a significant increase.

Looking forward, Pauls speaks of continuing "to develop leadership amongst Mennonite youth, people who will be leaders in the Mennonite community in all kinds of ways." He remembers the many personal testimonies from people about significant spiritual camping experiences, and he wants to "create an environment where campers and staff are free to explore faith in a supportive peer setting."

Erb, too, says he wants Silver Lake to be a place to "build lasting relationships with people with a shared faith background." He remembers his core group of friends that he made at Silver Lake. He has instituted a camp pastor program, in which pastors share their personal faith with staff.

On a practical level, he says he wants to "get camp reinvested in property and program, as it was 50 years ago." For him, that means "lots of campers coming, and strengthened relationships in churches." That and the solar electric installation going in at Silver Lake this fall. ☸

CMU attracting more students from other denominations

MC Canada students still form largest part of student body

BY RACHEL BERGEN

National Correspondent
WINNIPEG, MAN.

Although Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) is known as a Mennonite institution, its students represent a variety of different Christian denominations outside of Mennonite Church Canada and the Mennonite Brethren (MB) Church.

In a recent poll of students, CMU discovered that, of the 626 students registered at the Shaftesbury campus in undergraduate, graduate and Outtatown programs, 49.6 percent (311 students) are from a Mennonite background. Of these, 166 are from MC Canada congregations, 89 come from an MB background, and 56 are Evangelical Mennonites, Hutterites or international Mennonite students.

The other 50.4 percent (315 students) reflect a broad range of backgrounds: 170 students are from Baptist, non-denominational, Pentecostal, Alliance, Associated Gospel or Evangelical Free churches, while 82 claim a Roman Catholic, United, Anglican, Presbyterian, Lutheran or Reformed tradition, and 63 disclosed no church affiliation.

While some of these religious denominations have experienced tension in the past, the students don't appear to notice any in their relationships. In fact, most of the time, denominations have very little significance, aside from different perspectives in healthy dialogue. Tensions are not even present between MC Canada and MB students, even though there have been divisive conflicts between the two denominations in the past.

For Melanie Kampen, who identifies herself as from an MC Canada background, diversity is one of the things that she likes most about CMU. "Diversity fosters more interesting conversation and raises questions that don't normally come up in discussions," she says. "I hope CMU continues

to attract a diversity of religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds."

When Joshua Krueger, a fourth-year student from the MB faith tradition, first came to CMU, he was unaware of the

historical MB and MC Canada conflicts, or that he and his fellow MB students would be outnumbered nearly two to one. "Neither of these things proved to be problems," he says.

This is something that CMU sees as important for itself, the church and the world. According to Terry Schellenberg, CMU's external vice-president, "While CMU's formal ownership bodies are connected to Mennonite and Mennonite Brethren groups, the church which Jesus and Scripture invite us to imagine and live within is a wonderfully varied body with rich and diverse gifts to offer the world and its members." ☞

/// Briefly noted

Korean Mennonite congregation closes

According to Bock Ki Kim, the last pastor of Vision Mennonite Church, London, Ont., a key reason for many Koreans to emigrate to Canada is for their children's education. When the children graduate from high school, the family often follows them to their next place of study, which often means leaving London. Although Vision Mennonite Church grew in the first year after Kim began in 2008, it began declining significantly in 2009. When his contract was renewed in 2011, he moved from three-quarter- to quarter-time. The congregation had its final service on Oct. 2. Vision began as part of Valley View Mennonite Church in 2000, and after four years became an independent church, meeting in the same building as Valley View and Agape Fellowship. Although there are other Korean groups meeting with Mennonite churches in Canada, Vision was the only independent congregation. Since the church has closed, Kim has continued translating and editing books, but feels the need to take a break from leadership, both to maintain appropriate boundaries and for his own healing. Currently, some families from Vision continue to meet independently as a small group and some have joined another Korean congregation, while others are taking a break for re-evaluation.

—BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Wedler recommended for Christian Formation Council seat

ST. CATHARINES, ONT.—Adela Wedler of Edmonton, Alta., was recommended by Mennonite Church Canada's General Board to serve on the Christian Formation Council, replacing Gareth Brandt of Abbotsford, B.C. She would begin a three-year term after affirmation by delegates at the 2012 assembly. A member of First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, where she has been actively involved in music and worship, Wedler is a music teacher at Grandview Heights School. She is an accomplished pianist and composer of mostly choral music, according to Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, co-pastor at First. She has led many Sunday school and music workshops in various churches, and enjoys writing resources for worship. In the past, she has served with MC Alberta and Alberta Women in Mission; in 2005, she was the local organizer for the MC Canada assembly held in Edmonton.

—BY DICK BENNER



Wedler

'Historic meeting' looks at pastoral development

BY DICK BENNER

Editor/Publisher

ST. CATHARINES, ONT.

"It was an historic meeting," Karen Martens Zimmerly told Mennonite Church Canada General Board members last month who were meeting to hear, among other things, how plans for developing leadership for local congregations are progressing.

Zimmerly, MC Canada's denominational minister, who has been working with a task force on a strategic plan for leadership development, was referring to a first-time gathering of administrators of MC Canada post-secondary schools—Ron Penner and Doug Berg from Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C.; Gerald Gerbrandt and Karl Koop from Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Man.; Rebecca Slough from Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.; and Susan Schultz Huxman, Jim Pankratz and Marianne Mellinger from Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.

Together with the five area church ministers and representatives from MC Canada, they worked on how these three partners can intentionally work at new leadership development initiatives for the growing diversity of leadership needs within MC Canada.

While the partners have been working together in a variety of ways in the past, there continue to be challenges and opportunities that call for creative and new ways of providing leadership development. "As a foundational piece, the group will develop a theological vision for leadership development," she said.

To address ongoing pastoral formation across the lifespan of congregations and pastors, the task force is considering:

- A transition-into-ministry program to support beginning pastors and their congregations;
- Making it possible for leaders to network and collaborate through online conversations;

- Core ministry courses that the schools could offer online; and
- Supporting ongoing excellence in pastoral training through a continuing education certificate.

"Area church leaders are critical in identifying what the current leadership challenges and issues are, and they are calling for effective ways to develop tools for accountability, evaluating and resolving conflict for the health of the leader and the congregation," said Zimmerly, adding, "This meeting doesn't resolve all those issues, but it sets a good foundation to start working together, where we will grow in our ability to listen to each other, offer the gifts we each bring in leadership development, and together imagine new ways to help the church be faithful in the

face of the diversity and complexities of this century."

Last month's meeting at Grebel continues the work begun in 2009 when the task force was established to develop strategies that "will ensure sufficient and qualified pastoral and congregational leaders for the next two decades."

The task force's mandate reads, in part: "While we cannot see what the future holds, we believe that leaders, the local congregation, the area churches, our camps, school partners in education, and the national church are all a part of Christ's body. Each has specific gifts to contribute to calling and forming leaders. MC Canada believes that with a partnership model of leadership development, which values and works with the gifts of all the partners, we will create new leadership formation models that will strengthen our ability to call and form the diversity of leaders."

The task force also explored ways to ensure that this emerging leadership commission finds ways to engage other parts of the church that work at leadership development, such as local congregations, camps, and elementary and high schools. ❧

PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD



Mennonite Church Alberta's Camp Valaqua generated some off-season excitement on the first weekend in November, when it brought House of Doc, a Winnipeg-based band, to headline fundraising events at Mennonite churches in Edmonton and Coaldale. The events played to just over 200 people, and raised approximately \$1,000 for the camp. Valaqua director Jon Olfert counts the events as successes, saying, "A big part of fundraising is friend-raising." These events did both.

MC Canada follows up on Harmony resolution

BY DICK BENNER

Editor/Publisher

ST. CATHARINES, ONT.

Following through on a commitment not to bury the Harmony Group's motion on sexuality at the national assembly in July, Mennonite Church Canada General Board members agreed last month to have their Winnipeg members meet with members of Harmony soon with a progress report and

then to report back at the General Board meeting in March 2012.

"We should fill them in and explain what is happening with the Being a Faithful Church [BFC] 3 study since July," urged Rudy Baergen, chair of the Faith and Life Committee, "and ask them how they see

such progress."

Others around the table, including Aldred Neufeldt from Ontario, urged this conversation to be "through their congregations around a panoply of sexuality issues."

Donita Wiebe-Neufeld of Edmonton, Alta., said, "We need to hear from others, too," while Karen Martens Zimmerly, denominational minister, urged seeing the sexuality issue through a multicultural lens that is not always in line with the Russian/Swiss/German perceptions and viewpoints.

Vince Friesen, newly elected chair of the Church Engagement Council, encouraged the use of the word "journey" as suitable

'Tight timeline' for churches to complete Being a Faithful Church discussions

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent

Mennonite Church Eastern Canada pastors who met with MC Canada's General Board in St. Catharines last month expressed concern that the Jan. 31 deadline for feedback from congregations and leaders on the Being a Faithful Church 3 document was a very tight timeline, especially as the material had only become available a few weeks earlier while congregations were beginning to prepare for the Advent and Christmas seasons.

MC Canada wants churches to answer two questions:

- Tell us what you have learned about the use of the Bible in your Christian life and what you think others might learn from your experience.
- What are the underlying and over-riding assumptions, principles and guidelines that you believe are helpful in the interpretation of the Bible and its use in your faith and life?"

The discernment tool available online at mennonitechurch.ca (follow the "Being a Faithful Church" link on the right side of the home page) invites congregations to try to set aside two hours to gather and share stories of how the Bible has impacted individuals, families and the congregation. These stories can then be summed up and sent to MC Canada.

MC Canada executive director (formerly general secretary) Willard Metzger and moderator Andrew Reesor-McDowell went to significant pains to explain that MC Canada is not hoping for congregational consensus on biblical interpretation, but the variety of voices

both within congregations and from congregation to congregation.

The General Board then heard sharing from a variety of congregations that have already been putting significant work into thinking together about how they understand and use the Bible. Wilmot Mennonite Church had a preaching series followed by adult formation discussions for most of the fall, which included a Sunday sermon by Metzger on the Being a Faithful Church process.



Don Penner, pastor of Wanner Mennonite Church, Cambridge, Ont., left, discusses the Being a Faithful Church process with MC Canada executive director (formerly general secretary) Willard Metzger, at St. Catharines United Mennonite Church on Nov. 10.

language for this discourse. “We should invite persons to be ‘on the journey,’ rather than making declarative statements,” he said.

General Board members to meet with Harmony, which identifies itself as “a loosely structured network/movement of people active within their congregations for the past three years in raising awareness of how issues of inclusion for LGBT folks in our congregations affects both them, their families and friends, and the church as a whole,” include Hilda Hildebrand, Lynell Bergen and Rudy Baergen, in addition to Vic Thiessen, MC Canada’s chief administrative officer and executive minister of Church Engagement, who has been attending Harmony meetings as MC Canada’s representative.

The General Board also discussed the need to initiate a response tracking method with congregations to “ensure a full representation of voices from across the constituency and advocacy positions.” This was important, members agreed, to show their commitment to the integrity of the process and to strengthen commitment and trust in the BFC process.

Moderator Andrew Reesor-McDowell reminded General Board members of the six steps they committed themselves to:

- Discerning the will of God for our personal and corporate lives is the ongoing vocation of the church. We do this not because we are forced to, but because we want to be God’s obedient, covenant people.
- Scripture is the foundational source for us as we strive to be faithful.
- Scripture promises that the Holy Spirit will be present when Christ’s body engages the vocation of being faithful. It is up to us to diligently, prayerfully and joyfully invite the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us and not behave in ways which shut the Spirit out.
- Many factors contribute to the dynamic nature of discernment and understanding. Discernment is, therefore, an ongoing task of faithfulness. As the Holy Spirit guides us “into all truth,” the church may want to repeat its understandings, modify them or change them.
- The outcome of this discernment will depend on how we read and interpret Scripture, and which of the biblical voices and perspectives are given more—or

less—authority.

• This need to “weight the voices” of Scripture is, in turn, informed by criteria of scriptural interpretation that are shared in the church. It is important to identify these criteria as carefully as we can.

While Harmony applauds MC Canada

for working on biblical resources, it notes that many congregations have already started dialogues of their own without resources to give legitimacy to their discernment or even how to start such conversations. ❧



Marianne Mellinger, left, moderates a Mennonite Church Eastern Canada mentoring workshop panel made up of Waldo Pauls, Carol Penner and Renee Sauder.

MC Eastern Canada pairs new pastors with mentors

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

Pastoral mentoring was the topic of a recent Mennonite Church Eastern workshop.

MC Eastern Canada has established relationships between new pastors and experienced ones, and between pastors new to the Mennonite faith and those with a long Mennonite history. Recently, the area church also established a mentorship for two pastors new to transitional ministry with one who has many years of experience.

A mentor’s key job is to listen to the mentee patiently, attentively, objectively and empathetically, it was explained during the event at Erb Street Mennonite Church on Nov. 23. Questions are asked to get a clearer picture, and to help mentees to think about their situation more clearly. The relationship’s official ending comes when the mentee moves to be ordained, with mentors often being involved in the service of ordination.

One of the topics that came up was the difference between supervision and mentoring.

Marianne Mellinger said that when she supervises students in the master of theological studies program at Conrad Grebel University College, she has responsibility for the students and some authority over them. On the other hand, as was made very clear in the afternoon panel discussion, mentors walk along side their mentees, mostly with a listening ear, occasional sage advice and “ruthless gentleness,” but do not have responsibility for the mentees or authority over them.

Topics at monthly mentor/mentee meetings include spirituality, relationships, boundary maintenance, family and spouse, as well as self-care. Mentors are not involved in mentees’ pastoral reviews, although they are asked for letters of reference for licensing and ordination. ❧

History and mission go arm in arm

By PHYLLIS PELLMAN GOOD

MWC/AMBS
ELKHART, IND.

“Mirror on the Globalization of Mennonite Witness,” a two-and-a-half-day conference, brought together mission thinkers and historians from the Global South, Europe and North America to explore themes found in the volumes of the Global Mennonite History Series, a project of Mennonite World Conference (MWC).

Held in late October at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), the event became a lively discussion about how awareness of history can—and should—inform mission planning and action. Participants in the event examined how Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches have emerged and flourished—or faced challenges—around the world.

The conference was prompted in part by the release of *Churches Engage Asian Traditions*, Vol. 4 in the Global Mennonite

History Series.

Jaime Prieto of Costa Rica, the writer of *Mission and Migration*, the Latin America volume of the Global Mennonite History Series, brought themes of history and mission together in his address to the conference. “Writing a history of a church is an apostolic calling,” he said. “It is recording stories of faith; it is extending the call of Jesus. In fact, we hear the stories of Jesus through the church’s stories. Every time you collect a story of a church, you collect a story of Jesus.”

John A. Lapp, who has shepherded the writing of the global histories since the project was launched some 16 years ago, explained the reasoning behind it. “With the release of these four volumes of history, by writers from each respective continent—Africa, Europe, Latin America

PHOTO BY MERLE GOOD



John A. Lapp displays the newly released fourth volume of the Global Mennonite History Series at the ‘Mirror on the Globalization of Mennonite Witness’ Shenk Lectureship at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary.

and Asia, and the pending publication of Vol. 5, North America, in 2012—a new Mennonite narrative has been created,” he said. “These books accent survival, rather than triumph. They give a more diversified accounting of who we are as a church than we’ve ever had before.”

The conference program encouraged the sharing of difficult facts.

Adhi Dharma of Indonesia, a contributor

Ties that bind Mennonites are theological: Missiologist

By MARY E. KLASSEN

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

In the concluding address of the 2011 Shenk Mission Lectureship, Jonathan Bonk, an ordained Mennonite pastor who is editor of the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* and president of the International Association of Mission Studies, suggested common threads among all Mennonite and Brethren in Christ groups whose story is told in the Global Mennonite History Project.

“For Mennonites, the ties that should bind across time and place are not ethnic, linguistic or nationalistic, but theological,” he said. “Insofar as we are faithful to the witness of the gospels—to not just rejoicing in the good



Bonk

news of what Jesus did, but faithfully following what he said—we will be bound by gospel ties . . . by the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.”

The agenda for the future of the Mennonite church around the world, Bonk continued, is an “epic clash of civilizations—between the kingdoms of this world and the kingdom that is not of this world.” This includes addressing challenges such as violence, consumerism, the decline of the influence of the West, and human dislocation and migration.

In conclusion, he stressed, “If compassion is not the outcome of one’s faith, that faith is ultimately useless both now and in the life to come. If the social margins are not the centre of our ministry, we are profoundly out of step with the one we claim as Lord.” ☞

to the newly released Asian volume, observed that “Christianity arrived through colonialism” in many parts of the southern hemisphere. He further stated that “politics and mysticism are two forces in religious expression in Indonesia, including Christianity.”

Barbara Nkala of Zimbabwe, one of the writers of the African history, commented about a prevalent western missionary attitude: “Africans can only become Christians by becoming more European.”

Questions wound their way through each session.

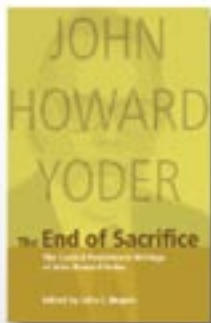
“I find it amazing how varied are our expressions of our faith,” reflected historian C. Arnold Snyder of Canada, a co-general editor of the Global Mennonite History Series. “How can Africans’ view of the gospel, for example, help us all become more Christian?”

Getu Abiche of the Meserete Kristos Church (MKC) in Ethiopia seemed to oblige in his presentation, when he said, “MKC takes disciplinary action with its members by restoring, preventing infection and seeking holiness, but this doesn’t seem to be true in North America. And in MKC, we seek God’s face by fasting and praying, but I don’t see this here.”

Henk Stenvers of the Algemene Doopsgezinde Sociëteit in the Netherlands was a voice for a church with a long past. “Having a lot of history feels like a big burden,” he said. “If history stands in the way of renewal, history is a burden. Together, we in the North and South must find our witness. Can we become interdependent? Then we can see our differences as an enrichment. We can be a whole church in our brokenness.”

Lapp highlighted the significance of the global histories in his comments. “I believe these volumes, and the process that brought them together, represent the beginnings of new ways to think about the world Mennonite/Brethren in Christ movement,” he said. “Semarang is now essential to Amsterdam. Shamshabad is now life-giving to Hillsboro and vice versa. Kinshasa now partners with Berne and Steinbach, and vice versa. Managua now addresses Ephrata and New Hamburg. Through these churches here, there and everywhere, the story goes on.” ❧

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Columbia Bible College leaders led MC B.C. senior youths in snow games at the Senior Youth Impact Retreat at Camp Squeah.

Don't hit snooze with God!

Youth retreat focuses on spending time with God

STORY AND PHOTO BY KRISTINA TOEWS

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
HOPE, B.C.

Mennonite Church B.C. youth groups from all over the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley came together for the annual Senior Youth Impact Retreat at Camp Squeah on Nov. 18 to 20.

It was an exciting weekend of meeting old friends, making new ones, games and worship, as well as sessions with speaker Colin Ashton, who had everyone's attention with his funny stories and real-life connections.

In his first session, Ashton talked about who was a morning person and who wanted to keep hitting the snooze button. He encouraged everyone not to hit snooze with God, but to jump up with excitement

because "today is the day that he wants to spend with you."

For Bryan Rempel and Christian Ishimwe from Living Hope Fellowship, Surrey, what Ashton shared about trusting God really stood out. Rempel mentioned that he would "remember the stories, and how he used them as examples," and Ishimwe shared that "when you put your trust in God, you go for it and it works."

There was a lot of positive and happy energy at the retreat, especially during the worship singing. After the Nov. 19 evening session, youths and leaders were encouraged to pray for each other. Spending time

together, whether in prayer, playing games or just hanging out, was a major highlight of the retreat for many.

This was Keli Whitworth's first Impact retreat. She came as a sponsor from Sherbrooke Mennonite Church, Vancouver, and said that she really appreciated the bonding opportunities within her own group and with youths and leaders from other churches. ☼

Kristina Toews is a youth worker at Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, B.C.

/// Briefly noted

Camp Squeah makes 'sound' improvements

HOPE, B.C.—The main lodge at Camp Squeah, with its large, high-ceilinged and wooden-walled main room, has always had issues with sound quality. During December, improvements were made to the lodge to accommodate a new and improved sound system. Donations from Crossroads Community Church and Mennonite Church B.C. youth pastors helped make the acoustical changes possible. Other improvements include laying a new floor in the kitchen. Camp Squeah will be celebrating its 50th anniversary in July 2012, and it is hoped these changes will improve the experience of guests who use the camp facilities.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN

With files from B.C. News 'n' Notes.



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GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Metzger's address on climate justice warmly received

BY DAN DYCK

Mennonite Church Canada

Whether the scientists are right or wrong about climate change is no longer the issue, Willard Metzger, Mennonite Church Canada's executive director (formerly general secretary), told about a dozen senators and MPs in Ottawa at a breakfast meeting on Oct. 25

"Whether individuals believe that climate change is human induced or not, the facts remain that sea levels are rising, deserts are expanding, violent storms are becoming stronger and more frequent, and that the poor, especially children, are paying the

highest price," Metzger told his audience.

His address—first delivered at an inter-faith panel on climate justice the day before—further exhorted the political leaders: "Whether the developed world takes responsibility for the effect of climate change or not, we have no other option but to take responsibility for our [North American] consumption patterns."

"Climate justice," explained Metzger in a subsequent interview, is a term that helps people understand climate change as a moral issue. As a people of faith, he



Willard Metzger, MC Canada's executive director, spoke to federal MPs and senators about climate justice earlier this year before heading to the 2011 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Durban, South Africa.

said Christians have a moral obligation to ensure that God's creation is maintained as an expression of worship.

But he was careful not to equate creation care with creation worship. "Caring for creation is part of our worship and thanks to God," Metzger said. "If you love God and worship God, you need to take care of what God has given you. Would you feel loved and cared for if a friend came to your home and punched holes in the walls?"

Metzger is keenly aware that climate justice needs to be on the agenda of the national church. "Increasingly, our young adults consider climate justice a concern they want their church to be engaged in," he said. "As a Canadian church in a context rich in natural resources, it is important to encourage ourselves to discern appropriate care and just use of these resources."

Christians can express their care for creation by witnessing to those outside the church. "Our increasingly sceptical Canadian society is demanding the presence of the church in these real-life concerns," he said. "If we can demonstrate that as part of our allegiance to God, then we have a platform to be taken seriously."

The World Council of Churches invited Metzger to attend the 2011 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Durban, South Africa, from Nov. 28 to Dec. 9. He is keenly aware of the tension between the invitation and the distance he must cover to get there. Of all modes of travel, air transport has been shown to produce the largest carbon footprint, and Metzger travels a lot.

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



Mike Erb plays in front of a quilt named 'Pieces of Friendship' created by Arlene Martin. They were two of the many aspects of House of Friendship's annual fundraising dinner on Oct. 28. This year was the 25th anniversary of House of Friendship's involvement in the Chandler Mowat community in Kitchener, Ont., supporting many community projects such as refugee resettlement, parenting classes and a community garden. Chandler Mowat was the first of four communities House of Friendship has supported, and Ferne Burkhardt was asked to document the project; each diner received a copy of the book. Later, Jane Roy, the co-executive director of the London (Ont.) Food Bank, told the diners that it is not exceptional people who do the majority of good work in the world, but average people. The event raised \$18,000 and the quilt was auctioned off for \$1,400.

“Our commitment as a church is to build strong relationships, but we also have to acknowledge the tension in that,” said Metzger, referring to his travel schedule. “This is not different from many other organizations that require strong relationship building, but it is also important to know that [MC] Canada is engaging technology to reduce ecological impact.”

Back at the breakfast gathering of MPs and senators, Metzger’s address received a warm welcome. The speech was translated into French and a bilingual version was distributed to all MPs. Later, Senator Grant Mitchell wrote Metzger, “Thanks for this. It is exceptionally good. And thanks for your leadership and inspiration on this important issue.”

“I was humbled by the response,” said Metzger. “It’s not every day a church leader’s address is translated and circulated to all elected federal government leaders.” ❧

Shalom and salaam

Palestinian and Israeli work for peace in the Holy Land

STORY AND PHOTO BY ANDREA EPP

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

NIAGARA FALLS, ONT.

Following their appearance at Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario’s annual conference in Toronto this fall, two Holy Land residents came together in Niagara Falls to discuss their peace efforts in one of the world’s heaviest conflict zones.

Zoughbi Zoughbi, a Palestinian Christian, and Efrat Even-Tzur, an Israeli Jew, seem an unlikely pair to share a coffee. Yet on Nov. 12 they dined together with a group of Niagara area Mennonites eager to hear the pair’s views and of their work back home.



Zoughbi Zoughbi and Efrat Even-Tzur share their Holy Land quest for peace in Niagara Falls, Ont.

PHOTO BY BILL SIEMENS



At 11 a.m. on Nov. 11, 47 people gathered at Rotary Park in Saskatoon, Sask., for the third annual ‘Remembering for Peace’ service, led by Stephanie Epp, right. Through Scripture and prayer, the service remembered all the victims of war, violence and daily injustice. Those gathered were invited to touch their hands in ashes as a sign of confession for personal participation in doing violence. The service concluded with prayers of commitment to the work of peace: ‘May there never be silence in the face of evil. May God give us strength and power as peacemakers, and may we be filled with the nonviolent love of Jesus.’ The event is sponsored by the Peace and Justice Committee of Mennonite Church Saskatchewan.

Edgar Rogalski of Hamilton Mennonite Church said he came “looking forward to a discussion without hate and bias,” in an effort to “try to understand, rather than to judge.”

According to Zoughbi and Even-Tzur, the current situation in their homeland is a far cry from the picture painted by western media.

Even-Tzur explained her work with Zochrot, an Israeli organization educating citizens about the events surrounding the creation of Israel in 1948, when Palestinians were evicted from their homes to make way for Israeli occupation. She wants Israelis to take responsibility for the events and the situation today.

Zoughbi, the founder and executive director of Wi’am Palestinian Conflict Resolution Center in Bethlehem, discussed the oppression of his people in an occupied territory filled with soldiers, checkpoints and restrictions.

The pair said their actions are frowned upon in their homeland and frequently monitored, but, Zoughbi said, “there is no hope without risk. Risk is a recipe for liberation.” He said he wants to “help to empower the weak and bring the strong to their senses, not their knees,” calling for “an honest arbitrator, a third party.”

Both speakers expressed gratefulness for MCC’s support, as Even-Tzur said, “to help us break this dichotomy.” ❧

Speaking out for peace

STORY AND PHOTO BY KARIN FEHDERAU

Saskatchewan Correspondent
SASKATOON, SASK.

On Nov. 11, after the world finished honouring its war heroes, those of the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan, along with many from the wider Bethany Manor community, gathered to honour the peacemakers.

The event, part of the historical society's annual Genealogy Day, brought two faith communities together—Mennonites and Doukhobors—both of which have practised pacifism.

Dave Neufeld, former Mennonite pastor and Mennonite Central Committee worker, prepared the audience with stories of different people he has met who have embodied the spirit of a peacemaker. Ranging from a Buddhist monk to a long-haired stranger, Neufeld pointed out that people, whether connected to the Mennonite tradition or not, strive to practise peace the best way they can. "God has peacemakers in every tribe, in every language," he observed.

Conrad Stoesz, archivist with the Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Man., spoke about the forces that shape popular ideas and create strong messages that war is okay. He pointed out the government's decision to focus on, and celebrate, the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 next year.

That, he believes, is deliberate. "By remembering, the government is trying to shape our current reality," he said, adding, "The stories we tell guide our thinking and our actions."

Using the example of a recent computer game that came on the market, he said that society is being led to agree that war is acceptable. Modern Warfare 3 was released a few days before Remembrance Day with the tagline, "There's a soldier in each of us."

"There is so much excitement about this," Stoesz said, adding that it is estimated there were 350 million games sold on the first day.

"If we don't remember the stories of our peacemakers, we'll live by the stories around us," he warned.



Conrad Stoesz, left, and Bill Kalmakoff, speak in praise of peacemakers at a Nov. 11 gathering of the Mennonite Historical Society of Saskatchewan.

Those peacemakers include conscientious objectors (COs) and the example of their alternative service. Mennonites, Hutterites and Doukhobors had the largest number of COs, Stoesz noted. During

World War II, a total of 11,000 men chose CO status.

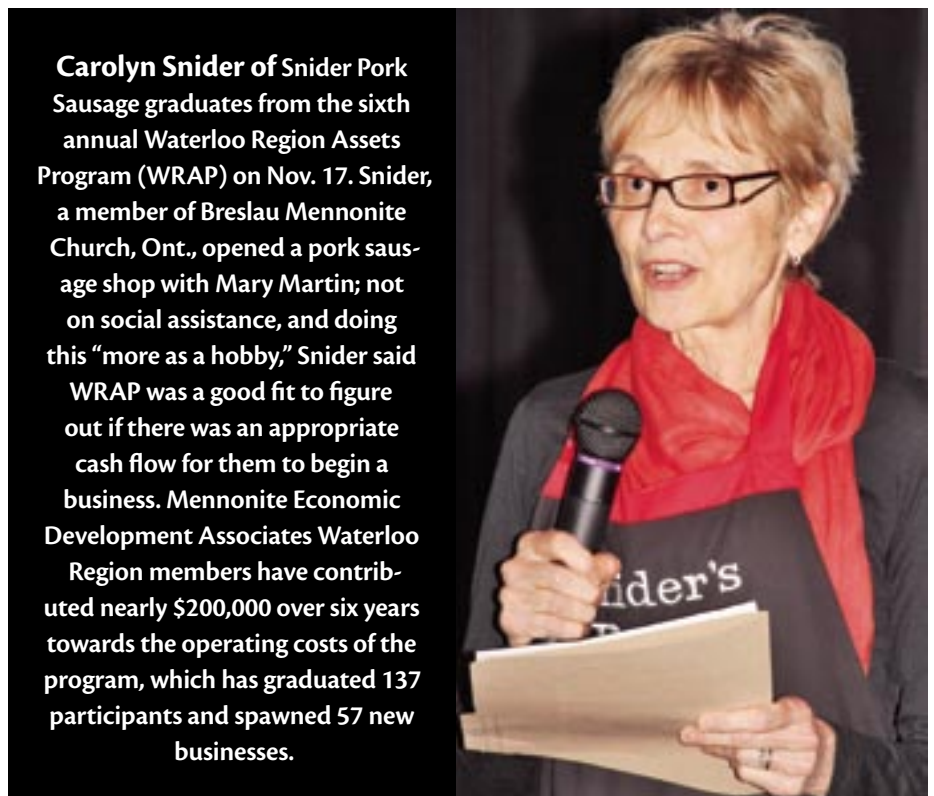
And they suffered for it, he said. Some went to prison and were made examples of. Most were paid only 50 cents a day and the remainder of their wages was donated to the Red Cross. In total, \$2.2 million arrived in Red Cross coffers from their efforts.

But, unlike the soldiers who fought in the war, CO members returned from their service better equipped to serve others, said Stoesz. By comparison, soldiers were plagued by the horror and trauma of war, and many returned physically scarred as well.

Bill Kalmakoff related the history of the Doukhobors. Although he did not focus on specific examples of peacemakers, he explained the Doukhobor peace stance. Their name in Russian means "Spirit-wrestlers," but they have tried to avoid violence, he said.

"They believed if you served in the army, you were killing someone in whom the Spirit of God lives," said Kalmakoff. In 1895, during a rebellion against the Russian army, the Doukhobors agreed to lay down their weapons, he noted. ☿

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



Carolyn Snider of Snider Pork Sausage graduates from the sixth annual Waterloo Region Assets Program (WRAP) on Nov. 17. Snider, a member of Breslau Mennonite Church, Ont., opened a pork sausage shop with Mary Martin; not on social assistance, and doing this "more as a hobby," Snider said WRAP was a good fit to figure out if there was an appropriate cash flow for them to begin a business. Mennonite Economic Development Associates Waterloo Region members have contributed nearly \$200,000 over six years towards the operating costs of the program, which has graduated 137 participants and spawned 57 new businesses.

GOD AT WORK IN US

A lifetime of joyful service

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent
EDMONTON, ALTA.

In 1979, Don Baergen was an orderly in a seniors home when a fellow church member tapped him on the shoulder. Would he consider a half-time salary/half-time volunteer position at a newly formed service agency for immigrants? His wife Joyce had a full-time teaching job, so he said yes.

Thirty years later, Baergen is still at the Edmonton Centre for Newcomers, working with and for immigrants, although the centre has grown and changed dramatically over the years. In Baergen's words, things "just mushroomed!"

From a rented classroom and less than two full-time staffers, the centre has grown into the city's largest immigrant service agency, with 150 staff and a budget of more than \$7 million. Baergen now works full-time, supervising a number of staff as the manager of settlement integration programs.

"It was '81 when we started, May, and they were pretty sparse beginnings," he recalls. "Our first place was Spruce Avenue School. . . . One office desk, an empty classroom with kind of an office attached to the classroom, one desk, one phone and a couple of chairs . . . and endless work. . . . Initially [my] title was office administrator/volunteer co-ordinator, a combination of things. It became quite a generic position."

Anne Falk, a nurse and Mennonite Central Committee volunteer for six years in Vietnam, was the full-time settlement coordinator, working directly with the many Vietnamese newcomers to Edmonton in the 1980s. Falk spent much of her time out of the office with clients, helping to negotiate the medical and legal confusions of immigration.

"It's not that much different than what

we deal with now," Baergen says. "It was just that there weren't that many agencies at that time to help immigrants and we were one of the few."

An idea of how hard Baergen and Falk worked is apparent in the history book, *A Celebration of Service: The Story of MCC Alberta 1965-1991*, in which Falk wrote about that first year: "There were 2,611 contacts with clients by a staff of only 1.5, an average of 328 per month. A total of 66 Mennonite volunteers assisted an additional 80 Vietnamese immigrant families. The staff made 739 contacts with the volunteers to coordinate their work, an average of 92 per month."

The need for immigrant services has never stopped growing. After 30 years of seeing programs, staffing and facilities change, Baergen still feels a sense of belonging. "I think I've always had a sense of

calling to do this work," he says. "It's been more than just a paid employment . . . but a sense of being able to use gifts. I see that I have some gifts of helping and of service, and that's been a great opportunity for me to match those gifts with a place."

The work supervising in an environment of diversity is a significant challenge. With more than 30 different cultural groups represented on staff, communication can occasionally be difficult. "It does take a

little more time, sometimes, to come to a consensus on things," he acknowledges. "There's quite a bit of learning that happens with staff that are quite new."

Baergen is excited about the learning opportunities that abound for everyone connected to the centre, saying that he enjoys "seeing the growth and learning that happens for staff." He enjoys their sense of satisfaction and accomplishment when they help somebody. "Then I hear about it," he says with a smile.

He is energized when clients gain self-confidence and integrate into Canadian society. "For me, it's been a big learning journey as well," he says. "I've never travelled outside of North America . . . but I think having all those cultures, all those countries coming here, getting a taste of some of the culture traits and foods and all of that, it's been very enriching for me."

The Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers provides an ideal workplace for Baergen, a member of Holyrood Mennonite Church, Edmonton, along with his wife, to use his gifts, share his faith and practise the biblical admonition to welcome strangers and show love for neighbours.

While the connection between work and faith is clear for him, Baergen doesn't see this connection as limited to those working only with immigrants. "I think as a Canadian society we are becoming much

'I've never travelled outside of North America . . . but I think having all those cultures, all those countries coming here, getting a taste of some of the culture traits and foods and all of that, it's been very enriching for me.'
(Don Baergen)



Mennos at work



Baergen

Learning to give

Redekop family's generosity born of suffering in Soviet Russia

By J. P. NEUFELD

Canadian Mennonite University

In the Nov. 14 issue, Canadian Mennonite reported on the donation of between \$6.5 million and \$7.5 million to Canadian Mennonite University by the Redekop family of the Fraser Valley in B.C. to create the Redekop School of Business ("CMU receives \$10 million in private, public funds," page 17). Now we tell the story of Jacob and Maria Redekop and their extended family that led to the donation.

Jacob and Maria Redekop's son Peter still gets emotional when he describes the moment he first saw Canadian soil. He was 12 years old, standing on the deck of a ship entering the Halifax harbour. "We were so excited that Canada would accept us, because nobody else wanted us," he said.

In the 1930s, Soviet officials arrested Jacob and the heads of every household in the Russian Mennonite village of Nieder Chortitza (now Ukraine). Jacob was one of only two men who escaped deportation and death. When he arrived home, gaunt and haggard after months of interrogation and solitary confinement, his own children didn't recognize him. Jacob said an angel had visited him in prison and told him he would survive.

"For our extended family clan, that was the beginning of faith," said Walter Bergen, the son of Jacob and Maria's daughter Mary.

During World War II, Jacob and Maria led a group of Mennonites who escaped through Germany, Yugoslavia, Austria and the Netherlands. At one point, the family had to break the windows of a train that was deporting them back across Russian lines and flee into the forest.

By the time the family found refuge in the Netherlands, most of them were on the verge of starvation. In 1947, Jacob, Maria and their four children arrived in Canada, ending years of flight and fear.

The Redekops established a farm on 8.5 hectares of forested land in Abbotsford, B.C. Since then, the children and grandchildren of Jacob and Maria have built successful careers in agriculture, construction, real estate and engineering. They have also become dedicated philanthropists,

supporting charitable causes that include Columbia Bible College in Abbotsford, Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite Economic Development Associates.

Twenty-four members of the Redekop family travelled to Manitoba to attend the announcement of the Redekop School of Business at CMU. Jacob and Maria and their son Jake are no longer living, but John and Peter, two of the three remaining Redekop children, were present for the announcement.

"In the future, the Mennonite business community will be called upon to fund our churches and Christian institutions," Redekop told the gathered crowd.

For Bergen, the school represents an opportunity to foster generosity in a generation that hasn't lived through the suffering and want his parents experienced. Bergen described how his grandfather Jacob taught his own children to give: "The family would get a letter from some distant relative in Kazakhstan or central Asia or Siberia,

telling them of their hardships. My grandfather would invite his four children and their spouses to Sunday dinner. He would feed them, and he would read them the letter, and he would lay down \$200 cash on the table. He would expect every one of his children to match it. And it wasn't, 'Would you please give \$200? It was, 'Here's my \$200. Where's yours?'"

When the distant relatives wrote back to tell the Redekops how they had survived the winter thanks to their gift, Jacob would again read the letter aloud to his family.

"The last time Peter told me about this, he was choking back tears," said Bergen. "He said to me, 'We were helping our relatives, but we were learning to give.'"

Jacob, a resilient man who survived horrendous atrocities, believed fiercely in caring for those in need. He helped start a care facility for elderly Mennonites in B.C. and would raise funds for it with characteristic grit, said Bergen. With his own contribution in hand, Jacob would visit his friends and ask what they could give. If the person offered too little, Jacob would look them in the eye and say, "What? That's an embarrassment!"

"He believed that grace was a blessing that we were meant to give to others," added Bergen, "so that wealth is not just created for personal gain, but also for the community good."

The gift to CMU is meant to honour Jacob and Maria. "Their stories tell me that the human spirit can either be embittered or ennobled," Bergen said, "and I think that the faith of Jacob and Maria Redekop ennobled the things they went through." ❧

CANADIAN MENNONITE UNIVERSITY PHOTO



Members of the extended family of Jacob and Maria Redekop gather at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in October to celebrate the announcement of the creation of the Redekop School of Business at CMU made possible by their donation of a minimum of \$6.5 million.

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Friday, March 2

9:00am **LEAD Conference**

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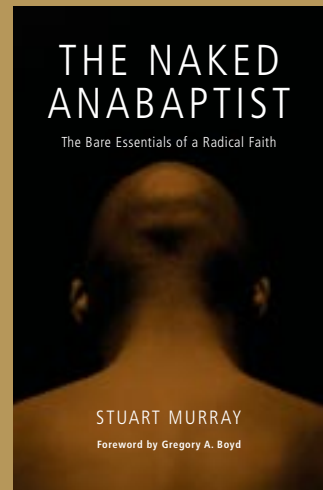
5:30pm **Banquet**

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7:00pm **Celebration Service**

Join us as we celebrate God's faithfulness over the last 75 years.

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More Info at www.mcbc.ca



Guest Speaker

Author of 'The Naked Anabaptist'

Stuart Murray

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Fall 2011
Volume 22 Issue 1



AMBS window

Accompanied by Jonah

Allan Rudy-Froese, Ph.D. candidate, Assistant Professor of Christian Proclamation

Jonah has stuck with me since childhood. Like most kids staring at the standard Jonah picture book, I was curious—and more than just a little afraid—about the prospect of being eaten by a whale and sitting for three slimy, stinky, yet prayerful days leaning on a gigantic spleen.

Jonah stayed with me as a teenager but I was less enthralled by the contours of the whale's inner workings and more bent on argument. Really? Can a guy stay in the belly of the whale for three days? If this story is not "true," then which other stories in the Bible also are fanciful tales? Some years later, as a lonely young adult away from all that was familiar, I found myself speaking to God with Jonah's prayer. I too was falling—going down down down—and Jonah had just the right words for my prayer.

Jonah accompanied me to college, seminary and graduate school. I discovered in the academy that Jonah's story has captivated and delighted

Jews, Christians and Muslims for millennia. It was not only the theologians, historians and scholars of sacred texts who were interested; spinners of stories have found this short book inspiring: Jonah bargaining on the deck of a doomed ship, praying in belly of the whale, preaching in Nineveh and arguing with God begs to be imagined anew in every place and time.

Jonah, as scholar Yvonne Sherwood states, has had an amazing "after life." There are myriads of allusions to Jonah in western literature, visual art, music and more recently in film. It is hard to resist a story which has a fast-moving plot, a motley cast of characters, a guy who gets swallowed by a whale and lives, and a God who continues to pursue an unpredictable prophet.

Jonah continues to accompany me when I serve as resource person for church retreats, work with ministers and students, and sometimes when I preach. Reading Jonah out loud,

acting out scenes from the story and mining the historical occasion of Jonah is not only entertaining but carries us to lively discussions and a deeper understanding of faith. There is so much here: human frailty, prayer, confession, repentance, jealousy and disgust toward the "other." In Jonah we get to sort out the similarities and differences between story, parable, poetry, prophesy, comedy and tragedy. Last but not least we see and experience God's amazing and disorienting grace.

Jonah the prophet can be faulted on many fronts, but he did get something right. It is just a little line said at the bottom of the sea in the belly of the whale, but it still needs to be proclaimed: "Salvation belongs to God." ●

Photo: Lydia Nofziger, new student from Archbold, Ohio, and Allan Rudy-Froese confer about fall classes. To learn more about Allan, visit www.ambs.edu/about/faculty/Rudy-Froese-Allan

Challenges for us in the book of Jonah

Safwat Marzouk, Ph.D. candidate, Assistant Professor of Old Testament



The book of Jonah engages God's relationship with non-Israelites in a unique way when compared with other books of the Old Testament. The non-Israelites who are usually represented as Israel's enemy, oppressors, subject to divine judgment, or are portrayed as a tool used by God to punish Israel, are now the subject of divine mercy and compassion. God sends the prophet Jonah to Nineveh initially to proclaim to the Ninevites the pending divine judgment as a just response to their wickedness.

For an unstated reason the prophet decides not to go to Nineveh; instead he goes the opposite direction, to Tarshish. While some think that Jonah did not want to go because he is nationalistic, others think that Jonah was concerned about his prophetic ministry: God sends him to proclaim a message of judgment, then God

relents, and Jonah would appear to be a false prophet whose prophetic words of judgment did not come to pass.

The prophet's flight to Tarshish brings danger and transformation to the sailors who were facing the threat of death as God stirred the wind of the sea because Jonah was on the boat. Unlike Jonah who was seeking to flee from the presence of the LORD (1:3), the sailors acknowledge the presence of the LORD in the midst of the sea; they feared the LORD, prayed and offered sacrifices (1:10, 14, 16). Despite the danger of drowning and sinking, these non-Israelites initially worked very hard to avoid throwing Jonah in the midst of the sea. They were concerned for the well-being of the source of their troubles.

When Jonah finally made it to Nineveh, he cried out: "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be

overthrown!" (3:4) The prophet's message is very succinct and obscure. The Hebrew word translated "overthrown" could denote a positive meaning—"overturned"—or a negative one—"destroyed." The meaning of the message does not just lie in the sender and the words, but also in how the audience responds to it.

The people of Nineveh believed in God; these outsiders determined the meaning of the message by their repentance. The Ninevite king preached a longer message of repentance than the one proclaimed by Jonah! The king is hoping that "God may relent and change his mind."

The Ninevites changed, and now it was God's turn to change. The reader is soon informed that God "changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it." (3:10) The compassionate and merciful character of God that is usually preached to the Israelites (Joel 2:13-14) is now experienced by the Ninevites (Jonah 4:1-2).

The sailors' acknowledgment of the presence of God in the midst of the sea and God's compassionate and merciful response to the repentance of the Ninevites challenge us as readers of the Old Testament, who always deem the non-Israelites as outside the circle of the divine mercy and compassion. ●

Photo: Safwat Marzouk teaches a course on Exodus this fall. To learn more about Safwat, visit www.ambs.edu/about/faculty/marzouk-safwat

alumni news

Willard Swartley (Bachelor of Divinity 1962, faculty 1978–2004, professor emeritus) is a contributor to *Preaching God's Transforming Justice: A Lectionary Commentary, Year B, Featuring 22 New Holy Days for Justice*, published by Westminster John Knox Press. This work is the first to help preachers focus on implications for social justice in every biblical reading in the Revised Common Lectionary. Twenty-two Holy Days for Justice are introduced, enlarging the church's awareness of God's call for justice.

Ordinations

Jennifer Eriksen Morales (Master of Divinity 2007), May 15, for work as conference LEADership Minister with Franconia Mennonite Conference.

Heidi Siemens-Rhodes (Master of Divinity 2005) May 29, Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Christina Litwiller (Master of Divinity 2009) June 26, Salina (Kan.) Mennonite Church.

Paula Killough (Master of Divinity 2008) June 5, Prairie Street Mennonite Church, Elkhart, for work with Mennonite Mission Network

Adam Tice (Master of Arts in Christian Formation 2007) June 12, Hyattsville (Md.) Mennonite Church.

Renee Kanagy (Master of Divinity, 2008), Sept. 25, New Creation Fellowship, Newton, Kan. ●

Immersed in Scripture

In addition to the curriculum for masters programs, AMBS offers this wide variety of biblical teaching and resources.

Institute of Mennonite Studies

www.ambs.edu/programs-institutes/ims/new-releases

Youth Ministry at a Crossroads: Tending to the Faith Formation of Mennonite Youth

Andy Brubacher Kaethler and Bob Yoder, editors; copublished with Herald Press, 2011

“When young people realize that in holding the Bible ... they are holding a treasure that has been preserved for them across time, and when they realize that this treasure is ... understandable and authoritative, they will be on their way to a lasting faith.”
– Preston Frederic Bush

Forming Christian Habits in Post-Christendom: The Legacy of Alan and Eleanor Kreider

James R. Krabill and Stuart Murray, editors; copublished with Herald Press, 2011

“We need scripture to enlarge our imagination and to expand our faith, as time and time again we get to exclaim—See! See what happened here and what God has done! Scripture gives us permission to dream daringly about a new heaven and a new earth.”
– Sian Murray Williams

Take our moments and our days: An Anabaptist prayer book

Vol. 1, Ordinary time; Vol. 2, Advent through Pentecost

Daily services are filled with “scripture-saturated prayer.”
www.ambs.edu/prayerbook

Vision: A Journal for Church and Theology Volume 11 Number 2: Teaching the Bible in the congregation; copublished with Canadian Mennonite University

Mary Schertz, editor of this issue, notes she is “on a journey to discover ways we can together read the Bible as if our lives depended on it.”
www.mennovision.org/Volume11-2.htm

Church Leadership Center

Pastors Week, January 23–26, 2012

Understanding Revelation for Today

Presenter: Loren L. Johns with a session by Nelson Kraybill

Pastors Week will look at how the mysterious message of Revelation can shape our preaching, teaching and daily life nearly two millennia later.
www.ambs.edu/pastorsweek

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www.ambs.edu/programs-institutes/clc/leading-gods-people

Online course—Spring 2012

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denies peace without justice, the Jesus who came not to bring peace but a sword, as well as the Jesus who weeps over Jerusalem. This class examines biblical passages for reflecting on peace and justice praxis today.

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Mennonite Cooperative Bookstore

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The seminary community recently celebrated the release of *Youth Ministry at a Crossroads* with editors Bob Yoder and Andy Brubacher Kaethler.



Your gifts at work

“**Journey: A Conference-based Leadership Development Program** is meeting an important need among bi-vocational ministers,” Jewel Gingerich Longenecker, associate dean for leadership education, said. “Most people in the program combine jobs and ministry assignments. We repeatedly hear that Journey is helping to form and deepen Anabaptist identity among these people who have been called into leadership by their congregations”

The program currently involves 16 mentees and 11 mentors, including Janice Wagner from Engadine, Mich. (left). Ten mentees came to the Mennonite church as adults, so their experiences in Journey are orienting them to the Anabaptist-Mennonite faith and to their calling in ministry.

Journey is coordinated by the AMBS Church Leadership Center and is cosponsored with Central District and Indiana-Michigan Conferences. ●

AMBS Window
Fall 2011
 Volume 22 Issue 1

The purpose of *AMBS Window* is to invite readers to call people to leadership ministries, and to provide ways for readers to become involved with AMBS through financial support, prayer support and student recruiting.

Editor: Mary E. Klassen
 Designer: Nekeisha Alexis-Baker
 Photos: Peter Ringenberg and Mark Gingerich

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President's Window

Sara Wenger Shenk, President

I grew up with two storyteller parents—who regaled us with tales about when “I was a little boy” or when “I was a little girl.” They also told lots of Bible stories about people who in puzzling ways heard God’s call and dared to take risks.

My parents liberally used biblical wisdom to spice their parental advice. They rejoiced when a “contemporary” version of the Bible came out and bought us each our own copy. When dull Bible teachers or boring preachers didn’t do the magnificent Scriptures justice, they fiercely advocated for better-educated preachers and teachers.

Now, as a seminary president, I look back on that early formation in my family with profound gratitude. I heard the music and poetry of the biblical narratives through my parent’s dramatic storytelling. I heard the mystery of the Word of God in their respectful reverence—thankfully echoed by many other fine teachers and preachers over the years.

I’ve also heard, however, biblical stories manipulated into mind-numbing caricatures and flattened into bland uniformity. I’ve observed how

code words are used to flush out folks not clear enough about the authority of the Bible. I’ve listened as biblical poetry is reduced to stick-figure literalisms and its mystery to abstract propositions.

In some circles, it seems that the Bible is meant to function like a well-engineered machine, and our job is to keep tinkering until its perfect harmonization convinces people that it truly is the Word of God. Instead, the

Bible confounds us with its complexity, conflicting perspectives and diversity of voices, cultures and visions. One pastor told me recently, quoting one congregant while saying he speaks for others as well: “I have real trouble with this Bible!”

For all kinds of reasons, many of us have “trouble” with the Bible. I am immensely pleased that at AMBS, we don’t just have “Biblical” in our name. We have excellent Bible faculty who know how to face the “trouble” head-on. Not only do they love to teach the Bible, but they are also wise guides into its multi-splendored beauty and its astonishing ability to reveal God to us. ●



panorama

2012 Lectureships

Peace and Justice Guest: Carolyn Holderread Heggen, Feb. 28–March 2. Her visit will include a daylong workshop on Feb. 29, “Healing the spiritual sounds of war.”
www.amsb.edu/workshops

Theological Lectureship: Marlene Kropf and Daniel Schipani, March 27–29. Focus on spiritual formation, particularly among groups with diversity in culture and race.

Chapel renovation continues

The Chapel of the Sermon on the Mount will now include a larger foyer with an elevator and main floor restrooms. The existing space will have greater energy efficiency. See the changes as they unfold in the gallery at www.facebook.com/followAMBS

Spring online courses

Register by Jan. 3 to receive a discount on the following online classes:

- **Turnaround Strategies for Churches**, taught by Gerald Shenk

- **Biblical Foundations of Peace and Justice**, taught by Mary H. Schertz

Webinars bring resources to you

- **Re-forming Anabaptism**, Nov. 1, with Joanna Shenk
- **Lent Planning**, Feb. 2, with Marlene Kropf and Rosanna McFadden
- **What’s Mennonite about the missional church?** March 8, with Lois Barrett
- **Doing theology as thriving rural communities**, March 21, with David Boshart ●

ARTBEAT

FILM REVIEW

The attraction of walking

The Way.

Written for the screen, produced and directed by Emilio Estevez. Starring Martin Sheen. An Elixir Films Production, 2011. Rated PG-13.

REVIEWED BY ARTHUR BOERS

In 1985, around 2,500 people walked the Camino de Santiago, a medieval pilgrimage route in northern Spain. Ten years later, the number jumped tenfold. The year that I did it, 2005, there were 95,000 of us. The popularity of this endeavour is one thing, but more surprising is the fact that most pilgrims profess no religious faith or motivation. What is the attraction—besides bloodied blisters, painful tendonitis and crowded hostels?

A new film addresses this question. *The Way* was written and directed by Emilio Estevez and stars his father, Martin Sheen. Sheen plays a sixty-something doctor in California, Tom Avery, who is frus-

Tom is an unlikely pilgrim. He has not trained physically, does not appreciate why anyone walks this route, and dislikes everyone he meets. Nevertheless, a loud Dutchman, Joost, who is walking to lose weight so that he can fit into his suit and to be more attractive to his wife, soon attaches himself to Tom. Sarah, a surly Canadian who is trying to quit chain smoking and is bitterly processing her divorce from an abusive husband, becomes part of the troupe. Finally, Jack, an Irish writer with writer's block, rounds out the motley collection. Tom loathes all three middle-aged companions and complains about them, sometimes insultingly, to

The Way is part of an emerging genre of films that treats spirituality seriously and respectfully, in ways that even non-believers can appreciate.

trated by his middle-aged son's perpetual restlessness. Daniel never finished his education and is reluctant to settle down and get a job. He refuses to listen to his father's objections: "You don't choose a life, Dad; you live one."

Not for long, it turns out. Daniel dies in a freak storm in the Pyrenees during his first day on the Camino. Tom learns the news on his cell phone while golfing with medical buddies. A widower, he flies to Europe to retrieve the body of his only child. While there, he recalls frustrations with his son, but suddenly decides to walk the pilgrimage in Daniel's place. He has the body cremated and deposits bits of ashes along the way.

A lapsed Catholic who does not pray,

their faces. Gradually, and predictably, they all become friends.

One reason that I like this film is because so few depict the Camino de Santiago. *The Way*, however, is filmed on location and the scenery is often stunning.

I also enjoyed it because it often rings true to the Camino experience. Many pilgrim groups form spontaneously. A good part of this Camino pilgrimage involves long heartfelt conversations, lively and raucous meals, and serendipitous encounters with strangers.

Most importantly, *The Way* is part of an emerging genre of films that treats spirituality seriously and respectfully, in ways that even non-believers can appreciate.



Other recent examples include *Of Gods and Men* and *Into Great Silence*.

As much as I appreciated the film, though, two important elements are missing:

- We get no sense of how physically taxing this journey is. Tom, who never trained for long-distance walking, strides through every scene, usually leaving younger companions far behind.
- More importantly, while it is true that most pilgrims are not explicitly religious, the film gives short shrift to the spiritual experiences of the route's seekers. One person comments to Tom about the Camino: "Religion has nothing to do with this, nothing at all."

But my experience on the Camino was different and the film contradicts itself. I have no trouble accepting that Tom, Joost, Sarah and Jack are not particularly religious; nevertheless, even they clearly experience transcendence. Jack refuses to visit churches because in Ireland the church caused so many problems that all such edifices are now "temples of tears." Yet he is moved when he finally gets to the cathedral. As is Joost, who, for all his rowdy drinking and drug consumption, approaches the final destination on his knees.

Such images linger as I recall this lovely and movingly portrayed film. They remind me that if we Christians truly wish to engage the spiritual hunger so evident in our culture today, we, too, just might have to get off our duffs and walk on unconventional paths. ❧

Arthur Boers holds the R.J. Bernardo Family Chair of Leadership at Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, Ont., and is the author of The Way is Made by Walking: A Pilgrimage Along the Camino de Santiago. ❧

'A soundtrack for the church'

Singer/youth pastor names U2, Casting Crowns and the Gaithers as influences

BY DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent

Kyle Wijnands, the youth pastor at Riverdale Mennonite Church, Millbank, near Kitchener-Waterloo, Ont., launched his first CD, *Beautiful Brokenness*, with a concert at the nearby Milverton Mennonite Fellowship on Oct. 7.

Wijnands performed with the praise band at Elgin Missionary Church, Stratford, Ont., when he was growing up. He calls *Beautiful Brokenness* "a soundtrack for the church," full of worship, testimony and personal songs. As an example of the latter, on "Someday, Somewhere, Somehow," he sings of praying for the woman God has chosen for him "until our paths should meet." Wijnands was recently engaged to Christa Kuepfer and they plan a June 2012 wedding.

He believes that until people admit their personal brokenness, the beauty God has created in them cannot shine through. As people submit themselves to God, though, brokenness itself can become beautiful, he says.

Chris Tomlin, the Gaithers, M. W. Smith, Paul Baloche, Lincoln Brewster and Casting Crowns are some of his Christian pop influences, while he names U2 and Hedley as contemporary pop influences.

But Wijnands says he loves hymns for their "theology [and] corporate style with 'we' words," compared with contemporary music, which he feels is self-centred. On *Beautiful Brokenness*, he takes the old hymn, "Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross," edits the words and changes the melody to make it more "singable" in a contemporary setting.

The CD is full of his smooth voice in quiet arrangements and listeners who appreciate subtle pop will find the same as they listen to the songs on *Beautiful Brokenness*.

At the release concert, which was supported by many local congregations, \$1,400 was raised for Mennonite Central Committee's East Africa appeal for famine relief.

Scott Zehr, a youth pastor for four small congregations in Wilmot Township near Kitchener, says he found the concert "an awesome evening of worship and music."

Wijnands says his call to ministry came "around age 10." Although he had no family members who have been pastors, eventually mentors at Elgin confirmed his call. Besides pastoring, he says he also works



"very part-time" as a chaplain at Hillside Manor, Stratford, while taking courses towards a master of theological studies degree at Conrad Grebel University College.

Beautiful Brokenness is available on iTunes, or online at kylewijnands.com. ☘

Favoured Among Women a work of vivid storytelling

BY LAWRENCE KLIPPENSTEIN
Special to *Canadian Mennonite*
STEINBACH, MAN.

Author and family therapist Hedy Martens of Winnipeg has written an impressive and significant new biographical novel. Published by CMU (Canadian Mennonite University) Press, this 407-page novel, *Favoured Among Women*, combines biography, personal reflection, poetry, historical commentary and vivid storytelling. On Sept. 18, CMU Press launched the book at the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach with a public reading by Martens.

This is the first of two volumes that tells the story of Greta Enns from Sergievka, a Mennonite village of the Fuerstenland settlement near the Old Colony in tsarist Russia.

Greta, a real person, grew up in relatively pleasant places of pre-revolutionary Russia. She did not emigrate in the 1920s, but survived the nearly insurmountable, often hugely life-threatening hurdles in which many thousands found themselves during the ensuing years in Soviet Russia. Large numbers would perish under crushing circumstances, but many others lived to tell their stories, and Martens has, with



years of painstaking research and interviews, given readers one of those stories.

The creation of a new book, like the birthing of a baby, always turns out to be a miracle in some way. Martens noted that her book began while she and her husband lived in

England in 1983. While visiting friends and relatives in Germany, the stories that surfaced prompted Martens to delve further into what daily life in Leninist and Stalinist Russia was like in the first decades of the 20th century.

Greta Enns, a relative of her husband John, was one of those whose story compelled Martens. Extensive interviews with her and others who lived through the trauma of the early 1900s provide the base for this novel. The tapes offer an oral history that constitutes a treasure in their own right.

Martens has supplemented those personal stories with extensive research into that period. The novel continues through to the 1940s and Martens is now working on the second volume that will follow Greta to Canada. ☘

Artbeat Snapshots

PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD



'The birth of Jesus Christ is a very reflective time as we revisit this story every year. It is a time of reflection, acknowledging how, even though our Lord was brought into the world



quietly, he continued to perform miraculous deeds; says Alicia Proudfoot (photo above), a Grade 12 student who attends First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, Alta., in describing her Advent painting, 'Westward leading, still proceeding.' She continues: 'The apple is the focal point of this piece. It is showing signs of browning and is a common thing seen in the world; however, no matter how bruised the apple becomes, if cut in a certain way, it forms a star. This is a symbol of how deeds, no matter how small, can surface from the centre of a problem and cause glorious things. The story of Jesus' birth is unending and the star shines in our day to day, guiding us in Jesus' rise from straw to satin, inviting us to do the same.'


AMBS PHOTO BY MARY E. KLASSEN

*Alan and Eleanor Kreider, seated, were honoured at a Nov. 10 celebration of the release of **Forming Christian Habits: The Legacy of Alan and Eleanor Kreider** at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. Gathered around them are some of the people who helped to create the book; from left to right: James Krabill, who, along with Stuart Murray edited the book; Barbara Nelson Gingerich, managing editor of the Institute of Mennonite Studies, which co-published the book with Herald Press; Nekeisha Alexis-Baker, graphic designer; Mary Schertz and John Rempel, the institute's director and assistant director, respectively.*



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January 18
David Waltner-Toews
"From A Brotherly Philippic to Tante Tina to the mysteries of disease, death and transformation: Mennonite reflections on a life of poetry and science"

January 25
Patrick Friesen
"Stop Meaning, Start Singing"

February 1
Magdalene Redekop
"Here Come the Clowns: Laughter in Mennonite Writing," featuring "Sush Funk and Her Old Bag of Secret Schunt"

February 8
Rob Zacharias
"Mennonite Literature as Communal Debate: Tracing the Collapse of the Russian Mennonite Commonwealth through Canadian Literature"

February 15
Julia Kasdorf
"From Sleeping Preacher to Poetry in America: a writer's journey"


February 29
David Bergen
"My work in retrospect, within the Mennonite world and without"

March 7
Darcie Friesen Hossack
"Writing Towards Home: A prodigal daughter looks back"


March 14
Paul Tiessen
"Miriam Toews: the trouble with 'Mennonite' novels"

All readings and lectures will take place on Wednesday evenings at 7PM in the Conrad Grebel Chapel
grebel.uwaterloo.ca/mennolit

Institute of Anabaptist and Mennonite Studies



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PERSONAL REFLECTION

Where are the Christians?

Fear often rules in Israel-Palestine, and everyone is needed to help create peace

BY KELSEY HUTTON

SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KELSEY HUTTON



Kelsey Hutton meets with women and children of Um Fagarah, a small village in the South Hebron Hills, as part of a CPT delegation investigating the demolition of a home two days earlier.



The Israeli army maintains a constant presence in the old city district of Hebron.

Fear will control our lives if we let it. And fear is the name of the game in Israel-Palestine.

In November I joined a team of people from North America and Europe on a Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) delegation. I honestly didn't realize how much my perceptions of the Israel-Palestine conflict would change after my trip. But independent of the issue of whether Israel has the right to do what it does, what we witnessed was an occupation by a government that was systemically oppressing the Palestinian population.

The 12 of us arrived in Jerusalem and spent the first few days meeting with the Israeli Committee Against Home Demolitions; Sabeel, an ecumenical liberation theology centre; and Bedouins struggling against the Israeli government to keep their land in the Negev Desert.

I laughed a lot in the next few days, but swallowed back a lot of frustration as well. So much of what we witnessed had to do with fear or, for the strongest, the decision to reject living by fear. We met with a former Israeli soldier who works for Breaking the Silence, an organization that collects testimonies from Israeli

veterans about the reality of the abuse they inflicted on Palestinians, which was justified for "security" reasons.

There are moments when fear overcomes, and others when fear is swallowed and digested, turning it into fuel for change. These troughs and valleys shape everyday life in Israel-Palestine.

Walid made the choice to create change and take his home city of Hebron out of the shadow of the Israeli army. Despite being 98 percent Palestinian, Israel refuses to give up control of the city. Between 400 and 600 Israeli settlers have taken over Palestinian apartments and hospitals, and between 1,200 and 1,500 Israeli soldiers are stationed in Hebron to protect them. But no one is responsible for curbing settler violence and harassment of Palestinians.

Walid works for an organization called the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee, which restores historic buildings, local shops and businesses, to keep both the economy and the spirit of the city alive. Walid and the committee are choosing to thrive despite the constant threat of blockades, arrests, shop closures, home demolitions and machine guns.

But no one is responsible for curbing settler violence and harassment of Palestinians.



Palestinian Jerusalemites protest Israel's illegal home confiscations in the neighbourhood of Sheikh Jerrah.

But it can be a deadly balancing act, especially for people like Layla who, on our first night in Hebron, fed us a feast of flavoured chicken and rice, a special dish usually saved for weddings.

Layla's teenage son was arbitrarily arrested last year. When the 15-year-old refused to sign confession documents that were written in Hebrew because he insisted he'd done nothing wrong, they locked him up. After two months, including three weeks in solitary confinement, he broke down and signed the papers. His "trial" lasted less than two minutes, and on top of the large fine he was placed on probation for five years.

A friend of mine who went to Palestine for the first time was asked, "Where is God in this?" Her thought was not where is God, but where are the Christians?

Jesus credits us, the people of God, with a hunger and thirst for righteousness, but here in Canada that seems limited to writing letters to our MPs while in the Middle East young, nonviolent Palestinian leaders regularly run the risk of exile, arrest, beatings, torture or death.

We met so many people whose courage broke through the muffling layer of fear draped over Israel-Palestine. They are Israeli activists who openly admit their own peers consider them "traitors," and Palestinians—both Muslim and Christian—who have been resisting the occupation for 63 years.

Using the love and grace of God, incredibly brave people are changing the fabric of Israel-Palestine. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." They shouldn't have to do this work alone. ❧

Why I am a Mennonite

BY AARON EPP

Special to Young Voices



Stephanie Siemens

When Daniel Eggert was growing up in Edmonton's First Mennonite Church, there were 12 other people his age in Sunday school. From that group, only he and one other person still attend the church today. The other 11 have stopped going to church or they attend services elsewhere.

induced them to remain in the Mennonite church, and you will get a variety of responses.

For 22-year-old Stephanie Siemens of Osler Mennonite Church, Sask., the Mennonite commitment to pacifism is important. "Nonviolent peacemaking and social justice are really important, I believe,"

'My impression is that Mennonites are open to talking about different opinions without telling other people they're wrong.'
(Stephanie Siemens)

When asked why the 26-year-old is a Mennonite, and why he is committed to attending a Mennonite Church Canada congregation, Eggert responds that it is the community that keeps him going. "It's a very supportive community and it's raised my family and I'm a product of it," he says. "I feel it's my responsibility to put [something] back into it."

Ask other young Mennonites what attracted them to the Mennonite faith, or has

says Siemens. "Also, living simply in a way where you don't use more than you need."

Siemens adds that those things are important to her because of Jesus' example. "I believe that he's on the side of nonviolent peacemaking and I'm pretty sure he lived a pretty simple life," she says. "Trying to follow his example is something that we [in the Mennonite church] all try to do, and those things are important."

Kalynn Spain of Hope Mennonite

Church, Winnipeg, Man., agrees with Siemens. “Pacifism, simplicity and having the value of service, and the idea that there are problems in the world and we should be a part of the solution, instead of the problems—those are core values that I think really define Mennonites,” says Spain, 23.

“I think faith has a lot to do with how you live your life and you need to look at the choices in your life,” she adds, citing simple living as an example. “We live in a society that encourages us to get more things all the time. To live a life of simplicity is to change your attitude. If we are more thankful for the things we already have, then we don’t feel like we need to get more things.”

Joel Kulik grew up in the Evangelical Free Church before attending a Baptist church for nine years. The 28-year-old began attending a Mennonite church four years ago when he met his wife, Tamara Petkau. Kulick, who now self-identifies as a Mennonite, says one of the first things that struck him most about the Mennonite faith is its focus on service.

“I see Mennonites as being more action-oriented and more humble than other denominations,” says Kulik, who attends Charleswood Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. “I think it’s important because that’s what Jesus taught us and it just seems to me that in a lot of churches there’s always the thought of, ‘What’s in it for me?’ [Whereas] I find that Mennonites seem to emphasize others’ well-being over themselves.”

Kulik also appreciates the Mennonite emphasis on community. “It just seems no matter where you go in the world, if you meet other Mennonites, you feel like you’re truly brother and sister,” he says.

At the same time, Kulik still considers himself somewhat of an outsider because, in his experience, those who grew up outside of the Mennonite heritage can find it difficult to become a true member of the community. “The first question someone will ask you is your name, so you say your name and often they’ll ask again,” Kulik says. “So you tell them again. They’ll say ‘oh,’ and the conversation stops. . . . I just got the impression that some people were reluctant to go into deeper conversation with me because they had the perception of me that I wasn’t really a Mennonite.”

This observation leads Kulik to another thing he appreciates about being Mennonite. He has found Mennonites to be comfortable questioning themselves.

Siemens agrees. “My impression is that Mennonites are open to talking about different opinions without telling other people they’re wrong,” she says.

Spain adds that that is one of the things that keeps her coming back to Hope Mennonite Church. “I want to remain with my group, even if I don’t always agree with all of the things Mennonites believe in,” Spain says. “Just because I disagree with some of the things the larger church does, I still think it’s important to remain a part of [it].” ❧



Joel Kulik and baby Maelle



Daniel Eggert

Majority of faculty at Mennonite colleges, high schools are Mennonites

BY RACHEL BERGEN
National Correspondent

Most Canadian Mennonite colleges, universities and high schools have a majority of Mennonite or Mennonite Brethren professors or teachers, whether or not they have policies regarding the

number of faculty that must attend a Mennonite or MB church.

Overall, the institutions—including Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.; Canadian Mennonite

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CMU



Vonda Plett teaches a class on psychology at CMU.

University (CMU), Winnipeg, Man.; Columbia Bible College, Abbotsford, B.C.; Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, Winnipeg; and Mennonite Educational Institute (MEI), Abbotsford—are committed to hiring professors that have spiritual lives that they will invest in the school and the students.

Neither CMU nor Grebel have quotas for the number of Mennonite or MB professors they must hire, but they do require their prospective professors to actively affirm their institution's mission. It just so happens that Grebel and CMU attract professors that are from a Mennonite background, so they both show a majority of

and either be or become a member of one of our conference's churches."

Ashley Redekop, a student in Columbia's Quest adventure discipleship program and an MEI graduate, says that attending these Mennonite schools "definitely affected me and my theology."

MEI "doesn't specifically hire teachers with a Mennonite background, although we do expect all staff to support our school's statement of faith," says MEI secondary principal Dave Loewen. "A teacher's background would certainly influence their response to a range of issues, and I believe that having teachers of varying backgrounds broadens the views of

Ashley Redekop, a student in CBC's Quest adventure discipleship program and an MEI graduate, says that attending these Mennonite schools 'definitely affected me and my theology.'

professors from these denominations.

CMU requires professors to actively take part in the life of a Christian congregation. They must also affirm a confession of faith of their own denomination, explains Earl Davey, academic vice-president.

"We require that people [applying for faculty positions] be aware of, and support, our mission," says Jim Pankratz, Grebel's dean.

Susie Guenther Loewen, a Ph.D. candidate, appreciates the proportion of Mennonite to non-Mennonite professors at CMU and Grebel. As a bachelor of biblical and theological studies student at CMU from 2003-07 and a graduate student of theology at Grebel from 2008-10, she feels that it was important to have professors from that background. Although she generally believes it is important to have professors from varying backgrounds, for her area of study specifically it was important to have Mennonite professors.

According to Columbia president Ron Penner, the Bible college "expects senior administrators and regular faculty to affirm our conferences' confessions of faith

students."

MEI does consider candidates outside of the Mennonite faith, but they need to profess Christian faith or articulate where their Christian journey lies when they are interviewed.

The same is true for Westgate, which looks to hire applicants that are members of supporting churches. This "enhances the chances of finding staff that can appreciate the features of the Mennonite Anabaptist faith and how these tenets would shape their teaching in this school," says principal Bob Hummelt.

Guenther Loewen believes that Mennonite schools should have a quota of Mennonite professors. Although not every teacher or professor needs to be Mennonite, since she believes diversity is important, young Mennonites should be nurtured in their faith by those with similar backgrounds, she believes. "Mennonites have something to bring to the table," she says. "If we lose our distinctive contribution, then that voice will be lost from ecumenical dialogue." ❧



Titus Guenther teaches a biblical and theological studies class at CMU.

Calendar

British Columbia

Feb. 3-5: Young adult Impact retreat at Camp Squeah.

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

March 3: MC B.C. annual meeting and 75th anniversary celebration and banquet.

Alberta

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

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

Saskatchewan

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

Jan. 27-29: Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization senior youth retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

Feb. 24-25: MC Saskatchewan annual

delegate sessions at Shekinah Retreat Centre.

March 11: RJC Guys and Pies fundraising event.

Manitoba

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

Feb. 3: CMU campus visit day.

Feb. 4: Winkler and area celebration evening for CMU.

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

Feb. 22: Adults with Disabilities Venture Camp at Camp Koinonia. For more information, call the Camps with Meaning office at 204-895-2267.

Feb. 22: CMU open house for prospective students.

Ontario

Dec. 31: Milverton Mennonite Fellowship annual New Year's Eve event. New format with dessert extravaganza, featuring the Hilton Family and Triumphant Sound. For

UpComing

2012 assembly to be held in Vancouver

ST. CATHARINES, ONT.—During General Board discussions in November, Vic Thiessen, Mennonite Church Canada's chief administrative officer and executive secretary for church engagement, reported on plans for next year's assembly, to be held in Vancouver, B.C., from July 12 to 15. The sessions will be held at the Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel, which has a 1,000-seat auditorium in addition to room and meal service for those attending the shortened session. Since there is no youth assembly planned, congregations are encouraged to send their young adults as delegates, General Board members said. There will also be no children's assembly. Registration forms will be ready in January, Thiessen noted.

—BY DICK BENNER

more information, call 519-595-8762.

Jan. 11: Mennonite/s Writing in Canada, a public lecture series featuring authors reading from their work and reflecting on their careers as writers of Mennonite heritage, begins with Rudy Wiebe, at Conrad Grebel Chapel, at

7 p.m. For more information about this and future readings, visit grebel.uwaterloo.ca/mennolit.

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

Jan. 21: MC Eastern Canada event for pastors, chaplains and congregational

A Joyful Christmas And Blessed New Year

CANADIAN
MENNONITE

From the staff at *Canadian Mennonite* to all of our readers



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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: Benjamin Eby Lecture at Conrad

Grebel Chapel, at 7:30 p.m. Speaker: Jim Pankratz. Topic: "Gandhi and Mennonites in India." For more information, visit grebel.uwaterloo.ca/eby.
Jan. 27: Pax Christi Chorale's 25th

anniversary gala fundraiser featuring the world premiere 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;

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Employment Opportunities

MENNOMEDIA POSITION OPEN: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

The job includes oversight of all development functions, including fundraising, donor contacts, and capital campaigns. Requirements: bachelor's degree and at least three years' experience in fundraising and development, ability to travel 5-10 days per month, and a commitment to Anabaptist/Mennonite faith. Full-time, starting April 1 or sooner. Application deadline: Jan. 30. For more information and to respond, go to www.MennoMedia.org and click on "job openings."



Camps with Meaning



Mennonite
Church
Manitoba

ASSOCIATE PROGRAM DIRECTOR, CAMPS WITH MEANING

Mennonite Church Manitoba invites applications for the full-time position of Associate Program Director for Camps with Meaning. This person will give leadership to the summer camping and winter retreat ministry of Camps with Meaning, including camp and retreat promotion; program design; budget preparation and management; and summer staff and volunteer recruitment, training and support.

Qualifications include an undergraduate degree in outdoor education, recreation or camping ministry; experience in camping ministry; excellent communication and management skills; and the ability to work well with staff and volunteers of all ages. The successful candidate must demonstrate a personal faith commitment to Jesus Christ, affirm the Camps with Meaning Statement of Faith, and uphold the vision and mission of Mennonite Church Manitoba. A complete job description is available at www.campswithmeaning.org.

Application deadline is Monday, January 10th. Send resume in confidence to: Justin Zacharias, Interim Director of Camping Ministries, Camps with Meaning, 200-600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, MB R3P 2J1; e-mail: justin_zacharias@hotmail.com; or phone: 204-362-6386.



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gourmet reception at 6:30 p.m.;
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Feb. 17: Sawatsky Lecture at Conrad Grebel Great Hall, at 7:30 p.m. Speaker: Julia Spicher Kasdorf. Topic: "Mightier than the sword: Martyrs Mirror in the new world." For more information, visit grebel.uwaterloo.ca/Sawatsky.

Feb. 22-24: 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.

PASTORAL OPPORTUNITY

Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church
Kitchener, Ontario

Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church invites applications for a full-time Pastor.

This Pastor will be expected to lead a ministry team that guides this urban Anabaptist congregation toward its mission of nurturing households of faith, joyfully responding to God through worship and prayer, faith formation, caring relationships, and living justly and peacefully. The focus of the Pastor will be preaching and worship, pastoral care, nurturing and supporting lay leadership gifts.

Applicants should be ordained or eligible to be ordained, with graduate work in an Anabaptist setting preferred.

Inquiries, resumes, and letters of interest may be directed to:

Muriel Bechtel, Area Church Minister
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada
4489 King St. E.
Kitchener ON N2P 2G2
Telephone: 519-650-3806 / 800-206-9356
Fax: 519-650-3947 / E-mail: mbechtel@mcecc.ca

Closing date for applications: January 30, 2012.

ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba invites applications for the full-time position of Associate Pastor.

Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church is looking for an individual with a capacity to relate to all age groups. The Associate Pastor will work in a team environment and the responsibilities will take into account the gifts that this person brings, to address the needs of the congregation. Major emphases include: spiritual nurturing of youth/young adults, pulpit ministries, teaching & Christian education, and mission/evangelism.

Applicants should have a commitment to contemporary Anabaptist theology and a degree in Christian ministry. An equivalent combination of education with relevant experience will be considered.

Please submit your Ministerial Leadership Information (MLI) form via Mr. Henry Kliewer, Mennonite Church Manitoba at www.mennonitechurch.ca/programs/leadership/mli/ or call 204-896-1616. Or send an initial resume for our consideration by mail or email to: Gerhard Dyck, Chair, Pastor Search Committee, c/o Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church, 926 Garfield Street, Winnipeg MB R3E 2N6, Church Tel. 204-786-1006, pastorsearch2012@yahoo.ca.

Reviews will begin in the middle of January 2012 and will continue until a suitable individual is found.

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Interested applicants should visit www.rockway.ca for more information.

Duties will commence September 1, 2012.

Applications should be sent to: principalsearch@rockway.ca



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