

CANADIAN MENNONITE

April 1, 2013

Volume 17 Number 7

God at work in Ethiopia

Stories of evangelism and economic
development begin on pg. 4

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EDITORIAL

Whose voice are we?

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Out of the many discussions at *Canadian Mennonite's* annual board meeting recently in Lethbridge, Alta., came the call, once again, for some clarification on two issues: "Whose voice is Canadian Mennonite's?" and, "Do we print all the letters to the editor?"

Somewhat related, these questions seem to be driven at the moment by a downturn in financial support for Mennonite Church Canada and the area churches. To put it candidly, when some members or group of members do not like something they see in our publication, or are displeased with what they perceive is an agenda with which they disagree, they take it out on our supporting institutions by lessening their financial support to the denomination and area churches, holding these institutions responsible for what appears on our pages.

Let us be clear. While we appreciate immensely the 38 percent funding support to our annual budget by these institutions, we are not "owned" by the churches and hence do not speak for them officially. While we have heavy representation



from MC Canada and the area churches on our 12-member governing board—eight of these members are appointed by these bodies—we are incorporated as an independent body called Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service. We are thus not a part of the denominational church structure.

Historically, this did not come about without serious thought and visioning. Faced with pressure from time to time to fold the publication into the denominational structure, both church and lay leaders opted decidedly for what they cherished as "editorial freedom" over "editorial control." They felt our particular Mennonite community of faith was better served by having a voice free to critique and be open to hearing diverse voices, rather than to try to control the message, making it more of a propaganda vehicle than a spontaneous and spirited forum for anyone wanting to express an opinion or belief.

Moreover, this model fits perfectly with our Anabaptist priesthood theology, where "ownership" of our faith, if you will, is shared and not husbanded by a hierarchy that feels responsible for

the content and expression of faith for its members. We believe all who confess Christ are inhabited by the Holy Spirit for comfort, direction and wisdom, and thus have equal standing in the body.

Larry Cornies, a former board chair, said it best in his farewell editorial: "In the world of church journalism and communication, *Canadian Mennonite* represents an increasingly rare model—a joint project of six church bodies and a grassroots publishing organization that succeeds, each fortnight, at assembling an information package in which open dialogue occurs about issues facing the increasingly diverse and complex family that are the Mennonites in Canada.

"*Canadian Mennonite* is a hybrid. It is not the fiercely independent and autonomous magazine devoted to covering denominational and interdenominational affairs as once envisioned by Frank H. Epp and his contemporaries. Nor is it a mouthpiece for the promotion of programs and points of view by church officials, similar to many other church magazines where editorial control has migrated from the newsroom to the boardroom."

In the same spirit, we print 99 percent of letters sent to us for publication. We would be contradicting our commitment to "fostering dialogue"—part of our mission statement—if we were selective. As we say in our disclaimer, the only restriction is if someone attacks another believer or is rancorous in spirit. Other than that, all voices—letters—see the light of print.



Ken Reddig, right, project coordinator for Eden Foundation, Winkler, Man., receives a cheque for \$1,000 from Al Friesen, a member of the Canadian Mennonite board (representing MC Manitoba). The gift was the prize money given by the Canadian Church Press (CCP) to Canadian Mennonite for winning the 2012 A.C. Forrest Memorial Award for 'socially responsible journalism.' A series of feature articles on mental health published in 2011 were what earned the top honours for Canadian Mennonite, 'so it was only appropriate that we give this money to one of our mental health providers,' says Dick Benner, editor/publisher.

ABOUT THE COVER:

Julian Fantino, Canada's minister for international cooperation, left, visits an Ethiopians Driving Growth through Entrepreneurship and Trade (EDGET) weaving project. See story of the minister's visit on page 7. Our Ethiopian evangelism feature, 'Bogale Kebede: Apostle to the Kaffa,' begins on page 4.

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

Canada

CANADIAN MENNONITE

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40063104 REGISTRATION NO. 09613

RETURN UNDELIVERABLE ITEMS TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

490 DUTTON DRIVE, UNIT C5

WATERLOO ON N2L 6H7

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General submission address: submit@canadianmennonite.org

Readers Write: letters@canadianmennonite.org

Milestones announcements: milestones@canadianmennonite.org

Obituaries: obituaries@canadianmennonite.org

Calendar announcements: calendar@canadianmennonite.org

Material can also be sent "Attn: Submissions/Readers Write/Milestones/Obituaries/Calendar" by postal mail or fax to our head office.

Reprint requests: reprints@canadianmennonite.org

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

Guiding values:

Hebrews 10:23-25 • Accuracy, fairness, balance • Editorial freedom • Seeking and speaking the truth in love • Open hearts and minds in discerning God's will • Covenantal relationships and mutual accountability

Area churches and MC Canada financially support 38 percent of Canadian Mennonite's annual budget.

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Bogale Kebede: Apostle to the Kaffa

By Carl E. Hansen

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

As the notorious persecutor Saul of Tarsus was transformed by God's grace and is now remembered as the "apostle to the gentiles," so Bogale Kebede, charged and imprisoned for murder, was transformed by God's grace to become Christ's apostle to the Kaffa.

More than any other person, Kebede was the founder of the Meserete Kristos Church (MKC) in remote western Ethiopia's Kaffa Region, and remains the primary leader and driving force that guides its development. Currently living in Bonga with his wife, Fantaye Mukuria, and their four children, he serves as general secretary for the national Mennonite church's regional office.

A voice from the Lord

Kebede was born in Bitta Wereda in Kaffa Region. In 1985, he was accused of murder and put in prison in Jimma. An older prisoner, Ato Tesfaye, who was an evangelical Christian, tried to witness to him, but was rebuffed. After two years, the judge sentenced Kebede to 20 years.

The harshness of his sentence made him open to accept Christ now. Tesfaye encouraged him, saying, "This[sentence] is man's decision, but not God's decision." While he was bowing down and Tesfaye was leading him in the sinner's prayer of repentance, Kebede heard a voice saying, "You must ask for your case to be reviewed."

He thought it must be the voice of the old man, so he asked Tesfaye, "Are you speaking to me about appealing?" The

(Continued on page 6)



Church delegates in front of the Bonga Meserete Kristos Church meetinghouse.

(Continued from page 4)

old man answered, “No, I asked you to repent!” The voice and the message came again. Kebede decided it must be from the Lord, so the next morning he wrote his appeal letter. Tesfaye laid his hands on the letter and prayed.

Kebede began to witness to the other prisoners. God reinforced the truth of his witness by doing miracles through him. In the time he remained there, 65 prisoners were converted. With help from the Jimma Meserete Kristos congregation, a church was opened in the prison, where he also learned the trade of carpentry.

The judges did their investigation, and after 16 months they found no evidence. As a result, Kebede was unconditionally released on Dec. 13, 1988.

Witnessing results in conversions

He went home to Kewa Gerba in Kaffa Region, where he witnessed to his mother and brothers. His mother was the first to become a believer; his younger brother, Baheru Kebede, followed.

Kebede took his brother back to Jimma for spiritual teaching and baptism. Kebede got a job in the building trade in Jimma, where he later opened his own carpentry shop while continuing to witness for Christ. Like the biblical apostle, he rented a room, worked all day and held prayer meetings in his room at night.

He would go to his home in Kewa Gerba every two months to witness there, and then return to Jimma for two months of labour at his trade to support himself. There were no other evangelicals in Kaffa at that time, but after the first two months there were four believers.

A felt call to full-time ministry

By the end of 1993, Kebede felt called to become a full-time minister of the gospel. He volunteered for the One-Year-For-Christ program and went for the required six weeks of training in Addis Ababa at the newly formed Meserete Kristos Church (MKC) Bible Institute. He was assigned to Kewa Gerba as a full-time evangelist, where he served for nine years.

In 1994, MKC leaders in Jimma and Addis Ababa asked the church to rally in



Bogale Kebede

a “Kaffa for Christ” movement to pray for and support Kebede as he entered into a full-time ministry of planting the church in Kaffa Region. MKC wrote letters to all the congregations and to some of the former Mennonite missionaries requesting their prayer and financial support.

Support was forthcoming, and Bogale’s work came under the supervision and

support of the MKC Evangelism and Missions Department.

‘Power encounters’

This remarkable people’s movement can be explained, like scenes from the Book of Acts, as a “power encounter” between the Holy Spirit and Satan. It is what happens when God’s Spirit-filled apostles come preaching a gospel of Jesus Christ with conviction and power; a gospel of power that heals the sick and casts out demons; a liberating gospel that frees people from the curses that have held them captive in the bondage of fear, ignorance, superstition, and the oppression of evil spiritual forces exercised by the shamans or “witch doctors” who inflict great suffering upon the people financially, physically, spiritually and mentally.

Kebede had a vision of a great tree. The Lord told him to break off a small branch and plant it in the ground. He said the big tree was the dominion of witchcraft in Kaffa. The branch would grow into a new tree of righteousness. The old tree would be torn out by the roots—and so it was. As he witnessed for Christ, he was given the power of the Holy Spirit to heal the sick and cast out demons. People turned to Christ by the thousands, so that by 2002 there were 8,000 believers scattered in eight congregations and 35 church-planting centres.

As Kebede preached the gospel, healed many sick and cast out demons, people were set free and their lives were changed, so much so that the witch doctors found themselves to be helpless against his power over their dominion. Masses of people forsook the witch doctors and turned to Christ for their salvation and security.

The occult powers that controlled the

Kebede had a vision of a great tree. The Lord told him to break off a small branch and plant it in the ground. He said the big tree was the dominion of witchcraft in Kaffa. The branch would grow into a new tree of righteousness. The old tree would be torn out by the roots—and so it was.

region were centred in seven powerful witch doctors. Five of these, when they saw the power of the gospel and their people being transformed, also accepted Christ and were baptized.

‘What will happen, I will accept’

The one called Gerebecho, who ruled all the other witch doctors, saw the people and the witch doctors one by one forsake the occult and surrender to the Jesus that Kebede and his younger brother preached. He lost confidence and hope in himself. When Kebede came to the area where he was, Gerebecho fled to another area. When Kebede came there, the witch doctor again fled to another place. Finally, he told his relatives and family, “I cannot flee anymore. I will wait for him. Let him come and face me. What will

GOD AT WORK IN ETHIOPIA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CIDA minister praises MEDA project

Sees 'tangible results' for weavers and designers

BY LINDA WHITMORE

Mennonite Economic Development Associates

The sustainable approach to economic development in Ethiopia by Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) was recognized recently by Julian Fantino, Canada's minister for international cooperation.

During his visit, Fantino met with weavers involved in the Ethiopians Driving Growth through Entrepreneurship and Trade (EDGET) program. The project, which aims to help 10,000 farmers and weavers create more sustainable livelihoods for their families, receives funding from the Canadian government through the Canadian International Development Agency.

"This is exactly the kind of project that Canada is proud to support as it delivers tangible results, helps lift families out of poverty and puts countries on track to becoming self-sustaining," the minister said.

Using a business solution to poverty, and working with local partners over five years, EDGET enables rice farmers and textile producers to increase their income by helping them reach higher-value markets, learn new production techniques, implement new technologies and gain access to support services. Since the project began in 2011, weavers have seen as much as an 18-percent increase in their income through the project.

During his visit, Fantino talked with several local weavers and a designer to learn about how they became involved in EDGET and the impact it has had on their lives.

"I have more, steady orders and receive more money for my products because of the linkage to designers," one



Julian Fantino, Canada's minister for international cooperation, left, visits an EDGET weaving project.

male weaver noted. "In this group, we work together to encourage quality and delivery of our orders on time."

A female weaver added, "Since this project and the new things I learned about developing my business and to improve the quality of my weaving, I have gotten more orders and am able to save money. I have made enough money to buy a new house for my family."

Local designers are also benefitting from the project. "I am very happy to participate, as it has given me access to more excellent quality weavers for the fabric for my designs," one explained. "In Ethiopia, there is a strong, proud heritage of excellent weaving skills, and we are investing and leveraging that expertise by linking these weavers to high-end buyers here in country and through export markets."

happen, I will accept."

His relatives invited Kebede to come, and Gerebecho removed all of his medicines, witchcraft paraphernalia and furniture from his house in preparation. When Kebede came, Gerebecho laid down on a mat on the floor; he was afraid after hearing stories of how the other witch doctors had fallen to the ground and screamed in pain as Kebede rebuked and drove out the demons.

People gathered in the house and

Bogale preached to them and healed some sick. Gerebecho gave himself to Christ and gave land to the church for a building. He stayed as a strong Christian for about eight months, but got sick and Bogale took him to the hospital in Jimma, where he died. He became the first person to die and be buried as a Christian in that area.

With the conversion of these witch doctors, people were free and there was a mass movement into the church. Today,

in the *woredas* (districts) of Bitta, Chena and Gesha the hold of witchcraft is completely broken and has disappeared.

More than an evangelist

Kebede's ministry was not only about evangelism. He had a holistic concern for the backwardness and poverty of his people. They were simple subsistence farmers who knew nothing of improved agriculture. He gathered advice from church leaders and government agricultural research centres, and encouraged



A view of Bonga Town in Kaffa Region.

his people to try improved methods.

In 2002, new believers of the Shota congregation decided they would no longer pay taxes, resulting in the government tax collectors becoming concerned. They approached Kebede, asking if he could do something to change his followers' minds before they took drastic action, like confiscating the people's property.

He called the believers together and asked them why they refused to pay the taxes. They replied that, since they learned they were free from the law in Christ, they were no longer under obligation to pay. Kebede gave them further instruction from the Bible, saying they were to respect and obey the government officials and pay their taxes. The people all went home, gathered their money and came to pay their taxes. The government officials were amazed at Kebede's influence, and they became very cooperative, offering to give any land he needed for church programs.

Kebede was deeply involved in the development of the Kewa Gerba community. At the time of his conversion and the

beginning of his ministry there, people lived much as they had for centuries in the past. Kebede and church leaders encouraged the community and the local government officials to build roads and elementary schools.

A believer had started a private clinic, but had trouble running it, so it was taken over by the MKC Relief and Development Association. The association also built a new elementary school and a dry-season gravel road from Bonga to Kewa Gerba.

Evangelist becomes bridge builder

In 2002, the Muslim family of the person Kebede had been charged with murdering won the cooperation of local officials and police, who arrested him on the original charge of murder from which he had been acquitted back in 1988. Since he had lost his acquittal document, he was imprisoned again, this time in Bonga. There, he used his skills as a builder to construct a chapel in the prison and seized the opportunity to evangelize many prisoners, a number of whom turned into productive citizens

upon their release. After two-and-a-half years, an MKC lawyer was able to prove that Kebede's case had been settled long ago, and he was released a second time.

It was in the Bonga prison that Kebede was able to first evangelize the Menja, a despised and oppressed people. Upon his release, he went with his wife and lived among them. He ate what they ate, slept where they slept, healed their sick, delivered them from evil spirits and won them to Jesus. But the Kaffa people back home were so disgusted with the couple for associating with these outcast people that they shunned them for a time.

The Menja keep cattle, live in very simple houses, cultivate *ensete* (a type of banana) and a few simple food crops, and harvest wild honey. Traditionally, the Menja were considered "unclean" by the dominant Kaffa because they do not wash their bodies and they eat dead animals. They were seen by the Kaffa as "wild animals" and "sub-human." There was no fellowship, no shaking hands, no eating together, no entering the same house and no intermarriage between

them. The Menja people themselves accepted that they were different and declared themselves as “untouchables.”

The MKC of Kaffa Region welcomed the Menja converts into their churches, but assigned them separate rows of seats. The Kaffa thought they would die if they touched the Menjas until one day Bogale started washing the Menjas’ feet during communion and nothing happened to him. This was a great challenge for the church.

Today, Menja children are going to school, even university. And the church teaches that there should be no discrimination. However, at the grassroots level Kaffa Christians have a hard time mingling with their Menja brothers and sisters. Despite Kebede’s influence and example, there is still a tendency to form separate congregations and Menja churches have their own evangelists.

There are currently about four local churches and 25 church-planting centres among the Menja, with about 6,000 members.

Challenges for a growing church

In 2004, the MKC separated Kaffa from the Jimma Region and made it an independent region with its office at Bonga, and appointed Kebede to move there to assume the role of regional office coordinator, a role he holds to this day.

Sixteen years ago, believers in Kaffa numbered only 300. Now, the Kaffa regional office oversees 21 local churches and 71 church-planting centres that serve more than 19,000 believers. Besides these, there are now seven other evangelical churches in the 10 *woredas* of Kaffa. About 40 percent of the believers in the region are MKC members.

This emerging church faces many challenges:

- **THE GOSPEL** is proclaimed in the vernacular Kaffa language, but there is no translation of the Bible yet.
- **WITCHCRAFT** IS stamped out in the areas where the churches are present, but how should they indigenize the gospel into the local culture?
- **IN WORSHIP**, the dominant practices of the MKC are being adapted, especially



Kaffa regional delegates at worship during their annual meeting in the Bonga MKC sanctuary.

in the hymnody and style of praying, but how much change should be expected at the cultural level?

- **WHICH CULTURAL** practices should be abolished? Which modified? Which maintained? Which embellished with added Christian value?
- **LINES CAN** be drawn on practices such as smoking, drinking, murder and adultery, but how can problems related to polygamous marriages, for example, be solved?
- **HOW CAN** the church deal with the deep tribal discrimination that separates the Menja and the Kaffa ethnic groups?
- **IN AN** economy of extreme poverty, how do leaders grow the church and

expand the ministry into new areas? How does the church pay the salaries of evangelists and administrators, and build more churches?

- **WITH A** low level of education and skills among its leaders, how and what does the church teach the people, and how does it train new leaders so they can teach better and grow the church? So far, only three people from Kaffa MKC congregations have been able to study at Meserete Kristos College. But with membership growing at about 3,000 per year, how can Kaffa leaders be trained to meet the need?

These are some of the challenges that keep the apostolic Bogale Kebede from resting on his much-deserved laurels, and which should set the wider church thinking about ways it can help. ❧



Carl E. Hansen of Harrisonburg, Va., is director of advancement at Meserete Kristos College, Ethiopia.

❧ For discussion

1. How do you explain the voice that Bogale Kebede heard while he was in prison? Do you know of others who have heard such a voice? How was Kebede convinced that this voice was from God? How important is it to have such a message confirmed?
2. In the 1990s, the Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia grew exponentially. What are some similarities between its growth and what happened in the Book of Acts? What questions do you have about witchcraft and about Kebede’s healing ministry?
3. When Europe was Christianized many hundreds of years ago, the holidays of Christmas and Easter were incorporated into traditional celebrations and came to include pagan symbols such as the Christmas tree and the Easter bunny. Has this been a successful integration of indigenous culture and Christianity? What advice do you have about how to indigenize the gospel into local culture?
4. Carl E. Hansen describes tribal discrimination between the Menja and Kaffa ethnic groups in Ethiopia. Do we have any similar discriminatory attitudes? Whether in Canada or in Ethiopia, how should the church discourage our culture’s unchristian values and attitudes? How do we identify which values and attitudes are unchristian?

—BY BARB DRAPER

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.

✉ Sex reserved for heterosexual marriage partners

RE: "LETS TALK about it," Feb. 4, page 34.

After reading this article on sex, and how to do it, it's no wonder our kids are confused. One youth pastor presented abstinence till marriage as the "ideal," while another pastor wanted to affirm sex in committed relationships.

The Bible is quite clear that sex is reserved for a man and a woman united in marriage. All the emotional, spiritual and physical reasons for this should be clear to any trained pastor. To suggest otherwise is exposing yourself to God's wrath.

I am aware that all fall short, and I am as guilty of that as anyone, but that is where confession and repentance come in. It is no wonder our church is going through such soul-searching on matters of sexuality when our leadership is as ambiguous as this.

ERNIE REESOR, LISTOWEL, ONT.

✉ 'Banning' authority should not extend beyond local church

RE: "A FOURTH way," Feb. 18, page 14.

I would like to endorse Dave Rogalsky's article. As he makes clear, agreeing to disagree—his fourth option for Mennonite Church Canada's Being a Faithful Church (BFC) exercise—is the way we live in most of our relationships, always allowing room for persuasion, but never for coercion.

A very practical implementation of this concept should be terminating the practice of area churches

banning congregations and the de-credentialing of pastors that we have witnessed in recent decades in both the U.S. and Canada.

As initially conceived by the early Anabaptist Balthasar Hubmaier in 1527, the ban was to be applied to individuals by local congregations in order that the church not be publicly disgraced. It happened only after due fraternal admonition, and its intent was always discipline with the end goal of reconciliation. Although the misuse of the ban became a serious blight on Mennonite history, Hubmaier saw it as a reform of an even more misused practice of excommunication then current in the Roman Catholic Church.

To extend the banning authority from the local congregation to the area church, as we do today, removes the element of intimacy implied in Matthew 18. Without that Christ-centred intimacy, majorities are prone to burden minorities with all sorts of unfairness, as our Mennonite history shows both internally and in its relations with the outside world. That may be characteristic of secular governments, but it is not appropriate for Christian churches.

Fraternal admonition by the area church to the congregation is to be encouraged, but coercive banning must be restricted to individuals who have the opportunity to look into the eyes of their accusers within the intimacy of the congregation. Even this local banning may seem archaic and unnecessary in our 21st-century context, but that can await future discernment.

RUDY WIENS, TORONTO

✉ Early Anabaptists had a strong sense of social justice

RE: "A HIJACKED faith" editorial, Feb. 18, page 2.

Thank you for your courage in speaking out on caring for the environment.

However, it is difficult to agree that early Anabaptists weren't involved in justice issues of their time. Menno Simons appealed for religious toleration, objected to war, and expressed concern about officials who taxed improperly and thereby sucked the lifeblood from people. Michael Sattler spoke against Christians waging war with the Turks. Some Anabaptists had earlier been involved in the German Peasants' War, motivated by a list of social-justice matters; their concerns likely did not just vanish when they became Anabaptists.

On the matter of Christ's atonement, there are many wonderful meanings to the cross brought out in Scripture. A nonviolent view of the cross is one wonderful meaning, and another is penal substitutionary atonement, to name only two. Some proponents of a nonviolent atonement rule out penal substitutionary

atonement, but I suggest that such a conflict is found in their modern system, not in such passages as Romans 5:8-11, II Corinthians 5:18-21, Galatians 3:10-14 and I John 4:7-12.

REVEREND TERRY M. SMITH,
MITCHELL, MAN.

✉ Poetic reflections on the left-right divide

RE: "THE LEFT, the right and the righteous" columns by Will Braun, Feb. 4, page 27, and Feb. 18, page 29.

I'm writing to applaud Braun's treatment of the liberal-conservative "blind spots," and to express appreciation for his writing generally.

My poetic reflections on the issue, inspired decades apart, confirm this as a chronic human tendency, not merely within the church, but also in university contexts:

"Viewpoints"
Pitting fraction of truth against fraction,
Often generates unholy friction
That divides a group into factions,
And chars the truth into fiction.

FROM OUR LEADERS

More than just giving

DORI ZERBE CORNELSEN

Several years ago, a former colleague asked a group of lay leaders in the church what they would expect to hear if their pastor ever talked about money in the church. One person quipped, "Money is evil. Give it all to the church!"

Perhaps it is true that the main emphasis of financial teaching in the church is about giving. Is that all there is to authentic financial discipleship? This assumes that, once we get the giving part figured out, we've done enough to connect our faith with our finances.

It is clear from the biblical story that giving generously of our material resources is essential to our spiritual maturity. In his book *Giving to God*, Lutheran biblical scholar Mark Allan Powell writes, "God definitely wants us to give some of our money away,

but God is also interested in what we do with the rest of our money."

Powell uses the word "ARMS" as a "nifty" acronym to describe four aspects of financial discipleship. We are faithful when we Acquire, Regard, Manage and Spend money in God-pleasing ways. The following are some reflections on Powell's

suggestions:

- **WE FAITHFULLY** acquire money when we are committed to earning a living in ways marked by honesty and integrity. While this sounds obvious, it can be difficult to assess whether we acquire money without causing difficulty or harm to others in our complex global economy. Further, we may need to consider whether or not our acquisition depends on exploiting resources and creating an unsustainable footprint. Financial discipleship allows us to reflect on these ideals and on the purpose we have for acquiring money.
- **WE REGARD** money in God-pleasing

• **BEING A** wise steward is a biblical image that describes how we faithfully manage money. Managing well is a learned behaviour. This means we should be taking the opportunity to learn how to budget, invest and use our money wisely.

• **SPENDING IS** also part of faithful financial discipleship. God wants us to lead abundant and joy-filled lives, but we must remember that God desires this for all of humanity. Spending for the sake of accumulating more possessions is rarely the root of joy in our lives. In fact, studies show that we find more joy when we spend money on others rather than on ourselves.

Acquire, Regard, Manage, Spend:
We may be surprised to find that when we embrace these aspects of financial discipleship, we have more money to give



We regard money in God-pleasing ways when our attitude towards money is marked by gratitude and trust.

ways when our attitude towards money is marked by gratitude and trust. Gratitude is the result of understanding that all we have and are is a gift of God. We are not entitled to what we have. From a space of gratitude, we can also begin to learn to trust in God's provision that releases us from overwhelming worry about money.

away! This can be a delightful result of making a clear connection between our faith in a generous God and our finances.

Dori Zerbe Cornelsen is a member of Mennonite Church Canada's Engagement Council and a stewardship consultant for Mennonite Foundation of Canada.

Dogmatic defense of opinion,
 Mine as better than theirs;
 Even if, reveals little else
 Than the sparring of two polar “bears!”
 (1961)

“Black and White”
 I like the hues of black and white,
 They make the “truth” so clear,
 What’s white is safe to emulate;
 What’s black is good to fear.

I also like familiar sounds,
 The way we’ve always spun it;
 But when my comfort zone’s disturbed,

I’m more inclined to shun it.

Yet something haunts my consciousness
 In the safety of extremes;
 What if the truth’s not there at all,
 But somewhere in between?
 (1979)

Or maybe truth is grander still
 Than “in between” can hold
 And begs perspective broad enough
 For mystery to unfold.
 (2009)

IKE GLICK, EDMONTON

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Is our generosity thoughtful?

SHERRI GROSZ

It seems like generosity is all the rage these days. Many retail outlets support one or more charities and invite their customers to join in by giving an extra dollar or two. We receive mailings, phone calls and door-to-door requests for support. We can even give a few dollars instantly by texting with our cell phone.

I wonder, though, if this abundance of opportunity to give, and to feel generous, actually makes it more difficult for us to be thoughtful givers?

If I said yes every time I was asked to round up my sales total at a store, or on the phone, or at the door, I would feel like I had been very generous and that I would have supported many different causes. My wallet and bank statement may tell a different story, though. A dollar here, \$5 there, perhaps \$10 or even \$20 at the door. But is it thoughtful giving?

As a follower of Christ, I take seriously the call to be generous, to help others here in Canada and around the globe

that have a different daily existence than I. Many live where adequate housing, education and freedom to worship are in short supply; some live with famine, natural disasters and inadequate or non-existent healthcare. Many struggle with underemployment and poverty, faced



As a follower of Christ, I take seriously the call to be generous...

daily with difficult choices that I don’t want to imagine. So our household has resolved to try to follow the words in II Corinthians 9:7: “Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion.”

A few years ago our church started a pledging program. In the last quarter of the fiscal year the entire church is invited to prayerfully reflect and indicate giving intentions for the coming year. The information is summarized and helps the finance committee and board make

spending plans. The first year pledging was introduced led to many conversations about giving in our household. While my husband and I talked about our giving plans for the church, it was natural that we talk about our other giving, too. It is a practice we continue to this day.

We talk about the charities we supported the previous year and the ones we would like to support this year. We discuss various programs and projects that are starting or ending. We also listen

for the Spirit of God calling us to pay attention to a cause or need through the year. These conversations help us to be thoughtful givers that seek to follow the example of our generous God.

Sherri Grosz is a stewardship consultant at the Kitchener, Ont., office of Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC). For more information on impulsive generosity, stewardship education, and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit MennoFoundation.ca.

✉ 'Second best predictor' statistic requires proper context

RE: "A HIDDEN darkness" editorial, March 4, page 2.

I first want to applaud Dick Benner for naming an ongoing issue in society from which the church is not immune. Good on him for advocating that we "remove the cloak of secrecy from sexual abuse and deal

with it openly."

That said, I have a serious concern with the passing reference to research published by Carolyn Holderread Heggen: "... the second best predictor [of abuse] is conservative religiosity, accompanied by parental belief in traditional male-female roles."

On an emotional level, I find this statement offensive. It appears to only serve an inflammatory purpose;

FAMILY TIES

What will you do for love?

MELISSA MILLER

Weddings are natural places where we think and talk about love. At the two weddings I attended recently, love was all over the place—in the words of the preacher, in the warm support of gathered family and friends, in the vows exchanged by the bride and groom, and especially in their radiant faces, beaming as they sealed their commitment with a passionate kiss. Of course, we all applauded at such enthusiastic expressions of love.

Love is also present in the story of Mary's tender care of Jesus, as told in John 12. She offered Jesus the most loving act she could conceive of, anointing his feet with costly perfume, then wiping those same feet with her hair. Her intimate, vulnerable gesture draws us in with its sensory details: Jesus' well-travelled bare feet; the sweet fragrance of perfume; Mary's hands gently touching his feet; her hair cascading over his feet, mingling with the perfume; the shocked faces of the bystanders. Mary's act of love had a poignant dimension, given that death hovered like a shadow in the background.

Witnesses to the encounter between Mary and Jesus didn't see, or turned away from seeing, the love and the poignancy;

instead, they raged with judgment and embarrassment. What is a holy man doing allowing a woman to touch him this way in public? they asked. Why is this costly perfume being wasted? Why wasn't this precious resource given to care for the hungry poor?

Jesus reprimanded those who would shame Mary. "Leave her alone," he said "She is preparing me for my death, for my burial. Wherever the gospel is told, she will be remembered and honoured." What Mary did for love was understood and honoured by Jesus. I wonder if the powerful scent of the perfume would have stayed with Jesus and with Mary as he endured his trial and death? Would it have been a comfort to them?



God's steadfast love is enfolded by our hands and arms and voices, by the whole of our bodies.

How does death affect our acts of love? When death comes calling, it seems that we are often drawn back to the basics of caring for the body. Touch. Physical presence. Salty tears. Words of affection. Memories celebrated. Gratitude for what has been. This is one of the gifts I am privileged to witness as a pastor: the

ways people care for each other at times of death—grandchildren who offer one final, sweet hug to Grandma; spouses who steadfastly stay at the hospital bedside, walking with their loved one in the valley of shadows; friends and family members holding each other in the shocking hours after a sudden tragedy.

At times our bodies are the best way God has to assure the grieving ones of his love and care. God's steadfast love is enfolded in our hands and arms and voices, by the whole of our bodies. And blessed are we when we experience this "God-ness" within our bodies, whether we are on the giving or the receiving end of such care.

Jesus demonstrated God's love by the way he cared for his friends shortly before his death. His humble act of washing the feet of his disciples is told in John 13, paralleling Mary's act of loving service in the previous chapter. John's placement of the two foot-cleansing stories suggests both Mary and Jesus were generous with their love, willing to give of themselves lavishly and freely.

What might we do for love? Are we most responsive during the big events of

life, like weddings and deaths? Or could we exercise such generosity in the little moments as well?

Melissa Miller (familyties@mts.net) lives in Winnipeg. She is wrapped in the family ties of daughter, sister, wife, mother, friend and pastor.

no effort is made to develop or reference these research conclusions. It doesn't identify what "second best predictor" implies, and fails to identify the study definition of "conservative religiosity" or "belief in traditional male-female roles." Like Scripture, statistics require context to interpret. The paragraph could be removed with no effect on the editorial, as it doesn't support the main argument—which begs me to ask,

"Why write it?"

I would self-identify as theologically conservative. My wife and I mutually discern equally important but different roles in our family. Should social services be concerned for the safety of my children?

At a statistical level, study conclusions can be affected by methodology, making context for interpreting survey results critical. For example, did a

EASTER REFLECTION

The gift of giving ... a kidney

MARIA H. KLASSEN

SPECIAL TO *CANADIAN MENNONITE*

It's Easter and as Christians we celebrate the resurrection of Christ. God sent his Son to us to be crucified, to die and then to be raised from the dead. He gave us the gift of his Son so that we can have eternal life.

As a Mennonite people we have a tradition of giving:

- **WE ARE** involved in our homes, giving time and resources, providing physical safety and spiritual guidance, and so much more, as we nurture our children.
- **WE ARE** involved in our churches, giving our time to plan, teach, guide, tithe, sing, worship and pray.
- **WE ARE** involved in our communities, giving our time to make and serve meals, donating food, coaching sports and teaching various skills, just to name a few.
- **WE ARE** involved in the broader Mennonite community, giving our time to sew quilts, can meat, work in thrift stores, clean up after disaster has struck and serve in other countries. And the list could go on.

We can also give the gift of a kidney. Carol Penner's husband Eugene was diagnosed with kidney cancer in 2008. He had his diseased kidney removed

and is functioning well on one healthy kidney. After watching the process that her husband went through, with much prayer and thought, Carol, pastor of The First Mennonite Church, Vineland, Ont., felt called to donate one of her kidneys.

With her husband's support she made that first phone call that started the undesignated kidney donor process. Many appointments, lots of testing, numerous questionnaires, and hours spent talking to doctors and other

We aren't all called to donate a kidney, but we can sign our donor card or donate blood.

hospital staff resulted in more decisions that had to be made. Did she want to be a one-to-one donor or part of a chain that would include four donors and four recipients.

She opted for the latter choice. The whole process took a year before the day came when four people donated their kidneys and four people received the gift of life. The operation itself, which

was done laproscopically, took around three-and-a-half hours. The doctor who removed Eugene's kidney also removed Carol's. They had trusted him with her husband's life, now they did so with hers.

Statistically, the loss of a kidney does not shorten a donor's life. A kidney, on the other hand, gives life to a person dying a slow death on dialysis. With the miracle of modern medicine and an excellent healthcare system, doctors have

the knowledge to transplant kidneys and give the gift of life.

A faith in God, trusting him to take care of you, a caring community and a supportive family all help someone to give without expecting anything in return. Carol's church gave her the gift of time: four weeks off to recover from the surgery, which took place last fall.

She says it is a joyful experi-

ence giving someone life.

God calls us to give in lots of different ways. We aren't all called to donate a



Penner

kidney, but we can sign our donor card or donate blood.

For more information about what it's like to donate a kidney, read the blog that Carol kept as she went through this process at anundesignteddonor.blogspot.ca.

Maria H. Klassen, a retired teacher living in Dunnville, Ont., is a member of Vineland United Mennonite Church.

random survey of sexual abusers find that many of them counted themselves as “conservative” or “traditional” in gender roles? Did a random survey of the population at large, who self-defined as “conservative” or “traditional,” have a higher proportion of sexual abusers? Both? Or something else entirely?

I am not familiar with Heggen’s research, and the accuracy of her conclusions is not my point.

What I am suggesting is that Benner—and *Canadian Mennonite*—should exercise caution in the use of statistics in editorials. Generalizing and printing potentially offensive statements of this nature should be properly explained, rather than used to ambiguously imply that a certain subset of the church should reconsider its theological and ideological beliefs on the grounds its members are more likely to form them into abusers.

Child abuse is not a “conservative” versus “liberal” issue. Abusers of any theological or ideological stripe equally offend the God who told the little children to come to him.

SEAN EAST, BADEN, ONT.

✉ Reader questions use of ‘second best predictor’ quote

RE: “A HIDDEN darkness,” March 4, page 2.

Unlike Wordsworth, whose heart leapt up, or Chief Dan George, whose heart soared, my heart sinks whenever I hear a call for a new look at society, sexuality or the church. If the past is any indicator, I can assume what we will be getting is a feminist/modernist/neo-Marxist attempt to replace the biases of Classicism, Christianity and western culture with thoroughly modern biases. This tendency is even more depressing when it is accompanied with a distrust of “dead white male logic.”

For example, your editorial includes the sentence that “the second best predictor [of sexual abuse] is conservative religiosity, accompanied by parental belief in traditional male-female roles.” We could spend time analyzing this quote, but let it suffice that here in one short clause we have a negative spin on conservatism, religiosity and perhaps parental beliefs.

Furthermore, there is the suspect phrase, “traditional male-female roles.” The word “traditional” is unnecessary here, since even in modern societies normally only females give birth to babies, and only males inseminate females. The feminist argument, that both females and males should be totally unprepared for such roles, will not win agreement from everyone.

Moreover, the clause is very open to misinterpretation. It could easily be read to mean that conservative people, religious people, people with strong parental

beliefs, or people who recognize male and female roles, are naturally prone to incest and pedophilia.

It would be more useful to ask why incest and pedophilia are normally hidden, and why certain people are more likely to partake in them. The simple answer is, most kinds of sexuality cannot be open, especially in small, secluded communities. For example, the pastor cannot be seen leaving the brothel at 4 a.m. Therefore, whatever sexual impulses he may have are normally hidden. And this is partly the reason why conservatives and Christians get false positives when it comes to incestuous and pedophilic tendencies.

Unfortunately, any inquiry of this sort will tend only to ask politically correct questions. That is, the ideological parameters of the inquiry will be a given even before any inquiry begins. Because, of course, too many people would be uncomfortable if they didn’t know the answers before they ask the questions.

I believe that if we truly regard these matters as important, we would shed our blinders before proceeding, whether they be traditional or modernist.

KEVIN MCCABE, ST. CATHARINES, ONT.

✉ Let the little children come . . . to church

WHEN INFANTS AND toddlers are introduced to the church for the first time, it is our biggest job to make them feel safe and loved. It delights my heart when the little ones realize that they have just pulled into the church parking lot and are excitedly toddling towards church because they know that it is going to be fun! These positive feelings of joy are going to be the building blocks for them as they advance into our kids ministry.

When the child enters the room and sees something fun, it can make those first moments more relaxed. Simple ideas, such as using a cute and cuddly puppet as a non-threatening introduction to the strangers in the room, can help soothe an apprehensive child. Blowing bubbles is fun for babies and toddlers, and is a familiar and fun activity that will draw them in. Laughter and giggles can erupt when some balloons are brought out for toddlers. An easy transition to the room can teach kids their first lesson that Christians are filled with love, joy, peace, kindness, gentleness, self-control and patience.

Some infants and toddlers do need a measure of gentleness and patience on the part of parents to help make the transition go smoothly. The kids will make the transition faster and have less separation anxiety if they only have positive experiences in the room. Going into a nursery/toddler room environment once a week is more difficult than day-care for children

because it is not a part of their routine, and rotation of volunteer caregivers means that these are strangers that the child doesn't trust yet.

If a child is crying inconsolably in the room, this will affect compassionate children that have made the transition to independence and set them on edge as they worry about the hurting child.

Having Bible stories associated with negative feelings and being upset is completely opposite to what we want to accomplish in our ministry. Let us not teach kids that Sunday means they will go to our church and hear about the Bible in a state of fear, confusion and anxiety. These are not seeds for us to sow.

Instead, let's invite our kids into our Sunday school

It delights my heart when the little ones realize that they have just pulled into the church parking lot and are excitedly toddling towards church because they know that it is going to be fun!

rooms with the joy and love that can only be found in God. This might mean a little patience on everyone's part, but it's worth it!

ELLEN FRIESEN, SASKATOON

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LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

The 'Age of Spirit'

BY TROY WATSON

American theologian Harvey Cox wrote a book called *The Future of Faith*, in which he presents three major stages in church history. The first was the "Age of Faith," when Christians focused on following the way of Jesus more than believing certain things about him. Around the third or fourth century the church entered the "Age of Belief," when we defined faith as believing certain things as true. Now Cox suggests we are seeing the fall of the "Age of Belief" and transitioning into the "Age of Spirit."

For approximately 1,600 years the church looked to finite words and people—Scripture, creeds, tenets, priests, theologians—as the arbiters of God's truth. Yet Jesus did not send us the Bible, doctrine or clergy to teach and guide us into truth. Jesus promised us the Holy Spirit:

- "The Spirit of truth, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13).
- "The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things" (John 14:26).

Are we finally entering the "Age of Spirit"? I hope so.

For as long as I have attended church, Christian education has been synonymous with Bible study. I wonder what would happen if we gave as much time, energy and focus to being taught and guided by the Spirit as we do to studying the Bible? I believe the church would thrive again.

Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner writes, "The Christian of the future will be a mystic or will not exist at all." By mysticism, he does not mean some esoteric



phenomenon, but a genuine experience of God emerging from the very heart of our existence. He believes the source of spiritual conviction comes not from theology, but from personal experience of God.

This has proved true in my own life. My lifelong study of Christian doctrine, theology and the Bible has probably done

as much to deteriorate my faith as it has to nurture it. As Mark Twain humorously quipped, "It ain't those parts of the Bible I can't understand that bother me, it's the parts that I do understand." Modern scholasticism has poked so many holes in the Christian worldview it has become a herculean task to maintain faith with intellectual integrity and honesty.

I know the primary reason I'm still

We have just celebrated Easter and, in my experience, most churches still treat the death and resurrection of Jesus as the epitome of the gospel message. Yet Easter is not the ultimate fulfillment of Christ's mission. Pentecost is.

a Christian is my personal experience of the mystical reality of God. Once a person has tasted, glimpsed and partaken of the divine presence it is hard to ignore the "really real" and the soul's longing for deeper communion with the Spirit of truth and love. I think Rahner is right that the Christians of the future will be people who have encountered God's Spirit personally.

The Scriptures themselves point to the centrality of the Holy Spirit in Christian life. In my next few articles I will be highlighting some of these Bible passages.

Let's start with how the gospels introduce the Messiah.

I was raised to believe the gospels taught Jesus' primary mission was to die for our sins and conquer death by rising again. We have just celebrated Easter and, in my experience, most churches still treat the death and resurrection of Jesus as the epitome of the gospel message. Yet Easter is not the ultimate fulfillment of Christ's mission. Pentecost is.

In all four gospels, John the Baptist, the forerunner—or one who announces the coming—of the Messiah, introduces Jesus as the Messiah in the same way:

- "I baptize you with water. . . . He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Matthew 3:11).
- "I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Mark 1:8).
- "I baptize you with water. . . . but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Luke 3:16).
- "I didn't know [Jesus] was the one, but when God sent me to baptize with water, he told me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and rest on is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit'" (John 1:33).

According to John the Baptist, the Messiah came to baptize people with the Holy Spirit.

Reforming our understanding of Jesus' mission as ultimately to baptize people in the Spirit will have profound implications on both our theology and practice. And if Cox is right about us entering the "Age of Spirit," this should arouse in us great hope for the future of the church.

To be continued.

Troy Watson is spiritual life director of Quest, St. Catharines, Ont., and can be reached at troy@questcc.ca.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Carter—Lauren Faith (b. Feb. 13, 2013), to Robert and Jacqueline Carter, Wellesley Mennonite, Ont.

Friesen—Cole Jacob (b. Feb. 14, 2013), to Brent and Amy Friesen, Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask., in Saskatoon.

Gingerich—Claire (b. Dec. 1, 2012), to Brandon and Jessie Gingerich, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Sauder—twins Jack Lloyd and Lane Burton (b. Feb. 21, 2013), to Will and Janelle Sauder, Carrot River Mennonite, Sask.

Thiessen—Sawyer James (b. March 2, 2013), to Trenton and Jessica Thiessen, Ross Road Community Church, Abbotsford, B.C.

Toews—Ariana Chloe (b. Feb. 27, 2013), to Amanda and Jeff Toews, Foothills Mennonite, Calgary.

Marriages

Hoehn/Renner—Alissa Hoehn (North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.) and Kyle Renner, at Lake Metigoshe, N.D., March 9, 2013.

Regier/Steinmann—Neil Regier (Tiefengrund Rosenort Mennonite, Laird, Sask.) and Pauline Steinmann (Wildwood Mennonite, Saskatoon), at Wildwood Mennonite, March 2, 2013.

Deaths

Cressman—Mervin, 73 (b. Sept. 10, 1939; d. March 6, 2013), St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

Eby—Eileen, 94 (b. Oct. 28, 1918; March 14, 2013), Preston Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.

Flaming—Elfrieda (nee Klassen), 85 (b. July 13, 1927; d. March 13, 2013), North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Herrfort—Esther, 73 (b. Aug. 7, 1939; d. March 11, 2013), Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.

Hunsberger—Enos, 86 (b. March 13, 1926; d. Jan. 13, 2013), Shantz Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Inglis—Janet May (nee Bechtel), 95 (b. Jan. 28; 1918; d. Feb. 27, 2013), Wanner Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.

Kornelsen—Ed, 78 (b. Aug. 20, 1934; d. Jan. 28, 2013), First Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Krahn—Tina, 90 (b. April 16, 1922; d. March 1, 2013), Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Lammert—Frank, 84 (b. March 3, 1929; d. March 3, 2013), Niagara United Mennonite, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

Leis—Marie, 91 (b. Nov. 16, 1921; d. March 5, 2013), Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.

Mierau—Albert, 84 (b. July 19, 1928; d. March 7, 2013), Zoar Mennonite, Langham, Sask.

Mueller—Michael, 38 (b. Nov. 21, 1974; d. Feb. 25, 2013), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Neufeld—Ernest, 80 (b. April 16, 1932; d. March 13, 2013), North Leamington United Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Penner—Marge (nee Klassen), 87 (b. Sept. 15, 1925; d. March 1, 2013), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Weier—Margaret (nee Enns), 99 (b. July 3, 1913; d. March 7, 2013), Vineland United Mennonite, Ont.

Wiebe—Elizabeth (Betty), 91 (b. Feb. 1, 1922; d. March 7, 2013), Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Wiens—Vernon, 68 (b. Aug. 18, 1944; d. March 4, 2013), Erie View United, Port Rowan, 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

Introducing the Future Directions Task Force

National, area church leaders come together to ponder ministry in an era of decreasing donations from local congregations

BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada
WINNIPEG

How to financially sustain ministry is a topic of discussion for at least six national church bodies in Canada, including Mennonite Church Canada.

MC Canada and its five area churches—MC British Columbia, MC Alberta, MC Saskatchewan, MC Manitoba and MC Eastern Canada—are responding to this question by collaboratively establishing a Future Directions Task Force.

MC Canada executive director Willard

Metzger connects with a wide range of faith leaders through the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada and the Canadian Council of Churches. “Wherever I go and whoever I visit in the broader community of faith in Canada, whether mainstream or

evangelical, I hear the same thing,” he says. “Leaders are trying to confront the impact of declining donations to their national bodies.”

The newly created task force will discern how the national and area churches together in their current form can be sustainable into the future. They will explore whether current programs, structures and strategies may need to change to best serve the church moving forward. It emerged from an 18-month period of informal consultation between leaders of the area churches and the national church, and discussions with pastors, church members and young adults.

“We see ourselves accountable to both the area churches and Mennonite Church Canada,” says Aldred Neufeldt, task force chair and vice-moderator of MC Canada.

“Area and national church leaders have come to the conclusion that current

“I’m not gloomy about the future of the church. I believe in God.”

(Ken Warkentin, task force member)

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA



Members of the task force were selected to represent a diversity of backgrounds and geographical regions across the country. From left to right, top row: April Yamasaki, pastor, Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, BC; Chad Miller, associate pastor, Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary; Gerald Gerbrandt, past president of Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg; Ken Warkentin, executive director of Mennonite Church Manitoba; and Rebecca Steiner, enrichment coordinator at Community Mennonite Church, Stouffville, Ont.; and bottom row: Terry Keller, MC Eastern Canada Executive Board member; Aldred Neufeldt, task force chair and assistant moderator of MC Canada; Hilda Hildebrand, moderator, MC Canada (ex officio member); and Willard Metzger, executive director, MC Canada (ex officio member). Not pictured: Gail Schellenberg, regional superintendent of schools in Saskatchewan, formerly principal of church schools in Rosthern, Sask., and Winnipeg.

programs and systems are not sustainable in the long-term,” says Hilda Hildebrand, MC Canada moderator. “While congregations are generous, and giving has increased in many of them, gifts toward ministries at the area church and national level continue to decline.”

As the task force pursues its work, it will confer with a broad spectrum of church members and supporters, young adults and congregations comprised of new Canadians. Small working groups selected for their expertise will be invited to prepare study

papers on a variety of relevant issues.

What the end result will look like is not known at this time, says Metzger, but every effort is being made to remain objective and hopeful.

“I’m not gloomy about the future of the church,” says Ken Warkentin, Future Directions Task Force member and executive director of MC Manitoba. “I believe in God.”

The task force anticipates bringing a report to delegates at the 2014 MC Canada assembly. ☞

sermon from David B. Miller, AMBS associate professor, in which he used a large “reset” button. He questioned how willing Christians are to push that button—to follow Jubilee teachings of giving to the needy, cancelling debts and returning property to original owners.

Venture capitalist Kim Tan recounted how, when he was a doctoral student, he became convinced that living out biblical Jubilee principles is at the heart of Christian faith. He emphasized the need for financial capital to solve problems of poverty.

Tan’s mission grows out of his understanding of the Bible’s teachings. Israelites were told that every three years they should give a 10th of their possessions to the poor. Then every seven years, they were to cancel debts, release slaves, and let the land, animals and servants rest. In the 50th year, the year of Jubilee, they were to return to original owners all property they had bought in the previous 49 years.

Tan then pointed out that Jesus reinterpreted Old Testament principles to mean “Jubilee is every day. In business there are whole loads of opportunities for us as we create wealth. If we have the Jubilee spirit in us, we will think of creative and imaginative ways to share that wealth and lift people out of poverty.”

At the end of Pastors Week, Jewel Gingerich Longenecker, AMBS associate dean for leadership education, sent the 180 participants home with a challenge: “This has sparked a very important conversation. I encourage you to engage that conversation not only with people who think like you do. If phrases like ‘compassionate capitalism’ make you crazy or angry, I hope you will find people to talk to for whom that is not the case. If you are just chomping at the bit to get on with creating wealth so you can distribute it, I hope you will pause to pay attention to some of the potential dangers of creating wealth. But let’s talk to each other.” ☞

‘Let’s talk to each other’

Pastors Week raises surprising topics of wealth and capitalism

BY MARY E. KLASSEN

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary
ELKHART, IND.

The Pastors Week theme of Jubilee raised topics that were surprising for the annual Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) event: wealth creation, business enterprise and capitalism. The Jan. 28–31 event began with a

AMBS PHOTO BY SAEJIN LEE



Dori Zerbe Cornelson, stewardship consultant with Mennonite Foundation of Canada, led a workshop at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary’s Pastors Week on how to revitalize congregational offerings. Additional workshops were led by Karen Martens Zimmerly and David Bergen on the goal of a multicultural church for Mennonite Church Canada, among others. Mark Diller Harder of St. Jacobs (Ont.) Mennonite Church helped lead worship.

Tan then pointed out that Jesus reinterpreted Old Testament principles to mean ‘Jubilee is every day.’

'Where the church thinks'

Gerald Gerbrandt challenges scholars and the church at Grebel's annual Sawatzky Lecture

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent,
WATERLOO, ONT.

In spite of a snowstorm, Gerald Gerbrandt delivered the 2013 Rod and Lorna Sawatzky Visiting Scholar Lecture at Conrad Grebel University College through the college's website on Feb. 8.

As professor emeritus at Canadian Mennonite University, where he served in various roles as professor, academic dean and president over many years, Gerbrandt titled his talk, "Where the church thinks: The role of the Christian scholar." Of particular concern was the role of scholars in Mennonite communities of faith.

Working from the thesis of Phyllis Tickle, author of *The Great Emergence*, Brian McLaren and others, that the church is at a point of major change, Gerbrandt wonders how scholars can be of assistance in the church.

He believes that institutions of higher learning, like universities, are places where scholars take entrepreneurial-type risks to find new ways of understanding truths in new times. He pleads with the church for space for scholars to "get it wrong," to be provocative, to go down new paths that are not necessarily the "correct," "good," or ultimately right ones.

According to Gerbrandt, the process of doing study and writing is balanced by scholarly reviews, discussions and meetings to challenge each other's research. Scholars can help the church by testing ideas for the church, he said.

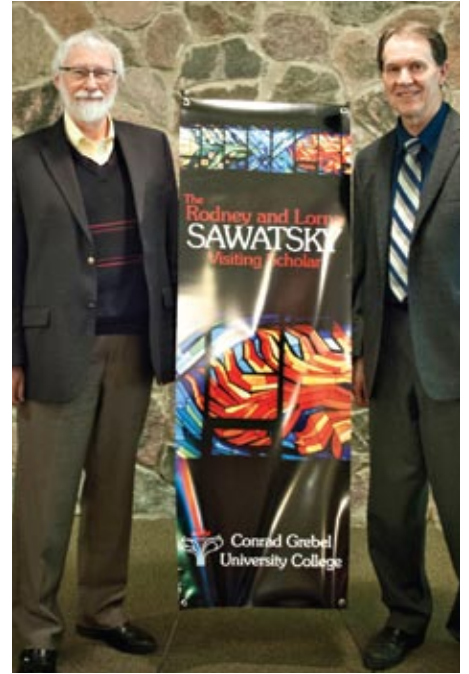
Scholars in the Mennonite/Anabaptist tradition are already part of the congregation, where ideas are brought up for discussion in community. This is not only an intellectual process, but one of testing through action or practice, he said, adding that scholars need to be active parts of congregations in order to be able to be the most help to the church. It is there that they and their ideas are challenged, encouraged and shaped by the community

of faith.

This community, he suggested, uses the Bible not as a rule book or a legal text, but as an imagination-shaping story or meta-narrative of how God is at work in the world, among people and in the universe at large. Scholars, as part of such communities, have their minds and lives shaped by this story as well. Gerbrandt invited his listeners "to consciously allow the story of God, and God's love and care for us, to become the world in which we think."

Gerbrandt's Sawatzky Lecture can be viewed online at www.grebel.ca/sawatzky. %

With files from Melanie Kampen, Canadian Mennonite University.



Gerald Gerbrandt, left, and James Pankratz, Conrad Grebel University College academic dean, pose with the Rod and Lorna Sawatzky Visiting Scholar Lecture banner. Gerbrandt's lecture was snowed out in Waterloo, so he delivered it electronically over Grebel's website.

WILMOT MENNONITE CHURCH PHOTO BY KEN QUANZ



Gerald and Martha Schwartztruber, right, congratulate Dave and Annemarie Rogalsky on the 30th anniversary of Dave's pastoral ministry on Feb. 10. Rogalsky began his ministry at Grace Mennonite Church, Winkler, Man., on Feb. 1, 1983, and has since served five Ontario congregations: Poole Mennonite, Milverton; Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite, Waterloo; Hanover Mennonite; East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock; and Wilmot Mennonite, New Hamburg.

Love your office administrator

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

Alberta Correspondent

Does your church have a secretary? If the word “secretary” brings to mind someone who only answers phones and prints bulletins, chances are, you don’t. More than likely, what you have is an office administrator with duties well beyond what most church members realize.

“Secretaries Day,” first celebrated in 1952, was changed to “Professional Secretaries Day” in 1981, and then to “Administrative Professionals Day” in 2000. The name changes reflect the expanding variety and growing responsibilities of office professionals.

Growing administrative responsibilities and professionalism are evident

in the church. Ev Buhr of Edmonton First Mennonite Church and Juanita Champagne of Edmonton’s Sunrise Community Church (Mennonite Brethren) see their work as beyond secretarial.

As office administrators, among a host of other duties, they keep up with a variety of safety, accounting and privacy guidelines; know who to call in case of flooding, slippery parking lots, fire alarms, elevator and other structural issues; stay current with relevant social media and computer skills; sort and archive church records; and deal with technology questions regarding church equipment.

Last fall, their congregations sent

Buhr and Champagne to a Church Administrative Professionals Symposium featuring speakers and workshops designed to provide renewal and equip them for the unique pressures of church administration. Besides inspiring plenary sessions, workshops included topics such as: double duty: filling in for the pastor, burnout, changing social networks and privacy policy concerns, workspace ergonomics, regulations governing churches, five steps to using Skype and workplace communications.

Mennonite Church Alberta area minister Dan Graber identifies church administrators as a crucial hub of communication.

“In some ways they are the most powerful persons in our system, at the centre of communication as well as in many cases [being] the first person visitors and web links meet,” he says. “So it’s crucial they need to be good at what they do. More than one of the persons in these roles have sabotaged the pastor or lay leader, intentionally or unintentionally, through bad skills, laziness or accident.”

Many churches are beginning to send office staff for professional development, he says, noting, “Some continuing education paid for by the church shows appreciation and respect, encourages them to get new skills, update their skills and sharpen their skills.”

Asked what they most dislike about their jobs, Buhr replies, “My dislike is going through the sanctuary and sharpening pencils, arranging hymnals, making sure every pew has the right number



The congregations that employ Ev Buhr, left, and Juanita Champagne sent them to a ‘church office’ administration symposium in the fall of 2012.

Care and feeding of an office administrator

- **DO SAY** thank you. It makes the myriad details of work feel worth it.
- **REMEMBER THAT** on Sunday the office administrator is at church to worship. Business is best done on other days.
- **DON’T EXPECT** your office administrator to remember verbal requests. Send an e-mail, phone, or write your message or bulletin announcement.
- **REFRAIN FROM** calling the office administrator at home with church questions. This extends work life into family time and needed information is generally at the office. Leave messages there.

- **REALIZE THAT** office administrators are easily caught in the middle of church politics. Respect their need to relate well with everyone and maintain confidentiality.
- **ENCOURAGE CONTINUING** education, providing a budget amount for this each year.
- **CALL THE** church office with committee meeting dates so the administrator does not need to go searching for the information.
- **ON APRIL 24**, Administrative Professionals Day, say thank you to the person who keeps your church organized!

—COMPILED BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

of hymnals. That takes about a half-hour of my time every week, and an hour if I do the pencils. It's stupid time."

Champagne adds, "I think, for me, it is having to make phone calls about things like getting people to come in to do estimates on things like lighting, where I don't feel I have enough information to deal with it. Dealing with trades and not having the information I need. . . . I can show [the trades people] around, but can't tell them

how long the equipment has been there. These people come during office hours, but the people who know the answers are at their own jobs somewhere."

But the positives outweigh the negatives for both Buhr and Champagne, who cite job satisfaction as the main reason they are church office administrators.

"I feel very appreciated by everyone in church, not just the pastors," Buhr says. "I love dealing with different people all the

time, the different challenges. I like that there is a lot of variety."

"I like my hours," Champagne says. "I've worked in retail and other offices. Dennis [the pastor] says thank you every day. I like the challenge of learning something new"

April 24 is Administrative Professionals Day. How does your church support and appreciate its office staff? ☞

New Columbia Bible College president installed

'What does it mean to be an Evangelical/Anabaptist Bible college?' asks Bryan Born

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Bryan Born, Ph.D., the former director of intercultural studies at Columbia Bible College, was formally installed as the

school's seventh president at a ceremony on March 10.

In recognition of the school's place in church and community, the service was

held at Ross Road Community Church, Born's home congregation affiliated with the Mennonite Brethren denomination.

Past-president Ron Penner gave a charge to the new president, in which he advised Born to abide in the vine, shepherd like Psalm 23 and remember that "the one"—as in the lost sheep of Luke 15—is always worth going after.

In his address, "The power to hope," Born asked the question, "We are an Evangelical Anabaptist Bible college; what does that mean?" He then cited the stories of two 16th-century Anabaptist martyrs: Dirk Willems, who rescued his pursuer only to be burned at the stake later; and Maeyken Wens, who was fixed with a tongue screw to keep her from witnessing on the way to her execution. "Some view Christianity as 'pie in the sky,'" Born said, "but these stories provide us with a spiritual legacy. We believe in a God who transforms and brings new life."

Born concluded his remarks by saying, "The resurrection changes everything. It means there is always hope. It means the story is never done. We believe in a God who transforms and brings new life, and because of that we will risk everything to change the world. We at Columbia will 'declare God's power to the next generation, his mighty acts to all who are to come' (Psalm 71:18)."

As a sponsoring partner at Columbia, Mennonite Church B.C. participated in the service. Vice-chair Karen Heidebrecht Thiessen gave greetings on behalf of MC B.C., and executive minister Garry Janzen gave a prayer of blessing. Artur Bergen, pastor of Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church, took part as the college board's vice-chair. ☞



Bryan Born, right, chats with former students Karen and Al Stobbe following his installation as Columbia Bible College's new president on March 10.

Building bridges through 'double understanding'

Ovide Mercredi addresses annual Building Bridges event

STORY AND PHOTOS BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent
WINNIPEG

“You’re not elected to change anything, but to teach them who we are.”

These instructions were given to Ovide Mercredi when he was elected grand chief of the Assembly of First Nations in 1991. This was exactly what he sought to do when he met with the Mennonite church community last month in Winnipeg.

On the evening of March 15, Mercredi was the guest speaker at the Circle of Life Thunderbird House for the annual Building Bridges event hosted jointly by Mennonite Church Manitoba and MC Canada. Following a supper of stew and bannock, the large crowd that braved the cold weather and wintery driving conditions listened

intently as he spoke about the Indian Act and various treaties, and how they have impacted his people.

The following day, Mercredi spoke to 40 people who belong to the Partnership Circles, a program of MC Manitoba and MC Canada that links 20 southern Manitoba congregations with northern first nations communities. He drew several parallels between the experiences of the Mennonite community and first nations, but the listeners had no difficulty seeing how the similarities quickly diverged.

While the two first nation communities allocated to Mennonites when they arrived in Manitoba in the 1870s allowed them to establish a solid agricultural base and land

ownership, first nation people continue to be landless in their own homeland. The Indian Act of 1869, according to Mercredi, took away the rights of Canada’s indigenous inhabitants to practise their own religion, retain their own traditional and cultural ways, and govern themselves.

“This is why I don’t support the Indian Act,” he said. “It is about white people defining who we are, who is Indian and who is not. It gives the federal government control over every aspect of our lives. We are landless with no title to anything.”

Treaties 1 to 11, drawn up between 1871 and 1921, are virtually identical, explained Mercredi. “They were prepared in advance, like a template, and not based on negotiations,” he said. “Any negotiations that happened were not inserted in the text. The federal government interprets the text as saying we surrendered all our land. Our people understand that we agreed to allow settlers to come, but not that they could



During a break in the MC Canada and MC Manitoba Bridge Building sessions, listeners were eager to hear more from Ovide Mercredi, former grand chief of the Assembly of First Nations. Pictured from left to right: Don Rempel Boschman, Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg; Mercredi; Carol Brown, Graysville Mennonite Church; Hilda Franz, Altona Berghaler Mennonite Church; and Earl Dyck, Pembina Mennonite Fellowship, Morden.



Henry Neufeld, a long-time Native Ministries worker, found a diamond willow tree and a poplar tree that had grown wrapped around each other near Bloodvein, Man. ‘This is what Ovide [Mercredi] is talking about,’ he said as he showed how the two trees could easily come apart and then fit together again. ‘The two trees can grow together, but the poplar will never become a willow and the willow can never become a poplar, but they fit together beautifully.’

take our title.”

“There has to be a meeting of the minds, otherwise there is no treaty,” said Mercredi. “We have no process for treaty implementation. Many issues remain unresolved, but we have no mechanism to make it happen. . . . We operate on a philosophy of co-existence, two nations of people with a common vision of how they are going to co-exist.”

“This is an opportunity for me: your willingness to want to learn,” Mercredi told his Mennonite audience. “Hopefully, we will come to a place where we will reach ‘double understanding.’”

“I think the idea of reconsideration is the most important thing I would like to ask from your community,” he concluded. “By that I mean setting aside our perceptions of each other and trying to establish our

relationship based on a blank page where there are no stereotypes. Reconsideration includes building a partnership with the idea of helping each other to overcome any obstacles that stand in the way of social or economic progress, that recognizes we are bound together by a common humanity, and mutually supports our own cultural values and particular understandings.”

Comments by those who listened to Mercredi included: “As Mennonites, we wouldn’t tolerate impositions of the nature of those in the Indian Act,” and, “Look at how we respond to the perceived infringements to our freedom in Bill C-18, or to injustices we see in the Middle East or elsewhere. Why do we not have that same sense of outrage here? How is this any different?” ❧

the “one who showed mercy.”

Marshall noted that in Luke the “two great commandments” are really only one, with the verb “to love” mentioned only once. “To love the neighbour is to love God,” he said, “and to love God is to love the neighbour.” The action of the Samaritan is true worship found in another religion.

But Marshall did not paint a picture of the lowest common denominator or “the interfaith discussion of the most liberal members of a tradition.” He clearly stated that the Christian insistence that people learn that God is love by observing the intra-Trinitarian love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is something that gives pause to Jewish and Muslim participants of interfaith dialogue. He called for “not simply a passive toleration of one another’s idiosyncratic views, but a positive appreciation for what each brings to the table.”

Especially in his second lecture, he noted that every action of the Samaritan worked to reverse the victimhood of the Jewish man “who fell among the thieves,” turning back his powerlessness, violation, humiliation, isolation and vulnerability.

His conclusion was that “to inherit eternal life” Christians need to “do the commandment to love neighbour and God with heart, soul, strength and mind.” Christians need to form themselves and each other in the practice of mercy, “becoming truly loving persons,” doing the work of restoration of victims and working for systemic change in culture. ❧

Insights from the parables of Jesus

Bechtel Lecturer focuses on the Good Samaritan

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
WATERLOO, ONT.

“**W**hen dedicated believers of one religious tradition experience in the adherents of another tradition facets of truth and beauty and goodness and holiness they simply cannot deny, things necessarily change.”

This was just one of the lessons Chris Marshall, professor of classics and religious studies at Victoria University in New Zealand, drew from two nights of close study of Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10, as the 13th annual Bechtel Lecturer at Conrad Grebel University College, March 14 and 15.

He said that Jesus’ Jewish listeners—in particular, the lawyer who asked the question, “Who is my neighbour?”—would have been scandalized by Jesus’ putting a Samaritan in the third place in the story. They would have expected a Jewish layperson to follow the priest and Levite

down the road, but, instead, a universally hated and disdained Samaritan is the hero,



Lester Bechtel, left, listens in as Chris Marshall, speaker at the 2013 Bechtel Lectures at Conrad Grebel University College, centre, discusses restorative justice from the parable of the Good Samaritan with Mark Yantzi, one of the founders of victim-offender reconciliation.

Historical group expands vision, improves facilities

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KARIN FEHDERAU

Saskatchewan Correspondent
SASKATOON

When members of the Saskatchewan Mennonite Historical Society met for their annual gathering early last month, they looked beyond their borders.

During their meeting, they learned about a conservative group in their community, heard about Pilgram Marpeck's ideas of the Christian faith and, in a practical sense, expanded their archives, opening up new opportunities to help others.

The weekend opened with a focus on the Plains Conservative Mennonite Church, a small conference of Mennonites who live and work north of Saskatoon.

"In the late '50s, early '60s, bishops in the U.S. General Conference Church saw things that troubled them," said Chester Steiner, an elder in the group. Increasing use of radio and television, and involvement in competitive sports concerned them. When their concerns were not addressed, the group felt that the only option was to leave.

Eight years later, a second group with similar concerns also left. Today, both groups work together and are known as the Nationwide Fellowship Church, with 22 congregations in Canada and many more in the U.S. Each church builds its own schools and publishes its own textbooks, Steiner explained.

Important customs in the churches are foot washing, head coverings for women and anointing with oil for healing purposes. Members serve in the community through prison visits, singing in nursing homes and publishing Bibles for distribution in Russia.

All the women from the Plains Conservative Mennonite Church who came to the historical meeting wore white prayer caps and simple dresses similar to Amish women in southern Ontario.



Klaassen

Members of the group, including all the children, also sang for the society.

Walter Klaassen spoke about Pilgram Marpeck, whose letters were not discovered until June 1958. Marpeck is "very important for the 16th century and for today. He wrote in response

to live issues in the European church of the day," he said, explaining that Marpeck argued strongly against forcing people into the faith.

"Marpeck rejects legalism in the church because it leads to coercion in the church," Klaassen said, suggesting that splits in the church have more to do with misunderstandings and zeal for old customs.

By comparison, said Klaassen, true fellowship, according to Marpeck, is based on love for family, adding that, "whoever

punished before evil fruit appears takes the authority of Christ." Klaassen said that, according to Marpeck, Jesus never used his authority to dominate, and the church should not use coercion in faith matters today either.

In speaking about discipline in the church, Klaassen offered this insight: "Church discipline is there to admonish and warn, [but] expelling someone leaves a wound."

"How does Marpeck's thinking filter down to today?" asked one participant. Klaassen suggested that, because this Anabaptist scholar was only discovered 55 years ago, his influence hasn't been fully felt yet.

Cornie Guenther spoke about the importance of keeping records so that others can see what God has done for Mennonites. "That's why archives are important," he said. "Our children need to hear the stories of God's faithfulness."

Archives built and maintained by the historical society exist in the basement of Bethany Manor, Saskatoon, and are continually expanding. Recently, special rolling shelves costing \$29,000 were purchased to help house all the donations of books and papers it receives, noted board chair Jake Buhler. ❧



Children of the Plains Conservative Mennonite Church join their parents in a cappella singing at the Saskatchewan Mennonite Historical Society's annual meeting.

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

'What God is doing in our midst'

B.C. MDSers volunteer near and far

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

From a wind-damaged Bible camp in northern B.C. to a flooded town in North Dakota, and even to storm-ravaged New York City, British Columbians gave of their time and talents to Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) projects this past year.

Fundraising banquets on March 15 and 16 in Sardis and Abbotsford provided opportunity to share the stories of God's work through MDS, and raised \$24,000 more for the ongoing work of the organization.

Keynote speakers Kevin King of Lititz, Pa., executive director of the binational MDS, and Janet Plenert of Winnipeg, MDS Region V [Canada] manager, told moving stories of several people in affected regions touched by the work of MDS volunteers who witnessed the love of Christ through their hands-on deeds.

King told of a group of Lancaster County, Pa., Mennonites and Amish who arose at 3 a.m., drove three hours to New York City to clean up after Superstorm Sandy, worked all day, then returned home the same night. Local New York residents found this unbelievable. "[MDS volunteers] come as strangers and leave as friends," King said.

"Every disaster is a local disaster," said Plenert, as crises always profoundly and directly disorient those to whom they happen. Thanking those of B.C.'s Lower Mainland who volunteered to clean up at Pine Lake Bible Camp last summer after a severe windstorm, she said, "On behalf of the camp, I express my profound gratitude to you."

Last September, a number of volunteers from B.C. went to Minot, N.D., to build

a house for a mother and daughter, and some continue to work there as well as in New York.

B.C. MDS board member Waldimar Neufeld encouraged people from all walks of life to volunteer with MDS. Electricians are particularly needed.

A "Pastors to Projects" program allows constituent pastors and their spouses to serve as part of MDS short-term work crews for a week. "We encourage pastors to become involved with volunteers in this way," said Neufeld, noting, "MDS is prepared to cover their costs for a week."

For more information, visit mds.mennonite.net. ☞

☞ Briefly noted

Ten Thousand Villages to close stores, cut staff

In its commitment to the future sustainability of Ten Thousand Villages (TTV) Canada in the wake of the recent recession and changing buying patterns, 10 retail locations will be closed and head office staff will be reduced by 20 positions this year. Thirty-five TTV retail stores will remain open, as will its recently re-launched online store. "The decision to make these retail and staffing changes was not an easy one . . . but it is a decision we need to make to ensure we are able to support our artisan communities for years to come," says Ryan Jacobs, general manager of the organization. "That remains our primary objective." The new plan will uphold TTV Canada's operational principles and fair trade business practices, leverage current strengths and partner more closely with its sister organization in the U.S. It will continue to sell artisan-crafted personal accessories, home decor and gift items from around the globe through its remaining retail stores, Festival Sales and online shopping. "We thank all of the committed staff, volunteers and customers who support our vision and give so generously of their time and talents," adds Jacobs.

—Ten Thousand Villages



Attendees at a March fundraising banquet view the display telling of Mennonite Disaster Service's many projects during the past year.

Caring for criminals: Crime and faith in Canada

A year has passed since Bill C-10, the federal omnibus crime bill, became law. As part of the ongoing discussion of criminal justice—an area in which Mennonites have long been innovators—we present the following perspectives on the question of how Christians can respond to people who break the law.

‘Get smart on crime’

BY WILL BRAUN
Senior Writer

When John Hutton sees a person convicted of murder or assault, as he regularly does, he does not see a “bad guy” to be feared or reviled. Instead, he sees the potential for change.

Hutton heads up the John Howard Society of Manitoba, an organization that provides programs and services—tools for change—to men in jail and men trying to reintegrate into society after their release.

Without negating the fact that many of the organization’s clients have seriously hurt people, Hutton says of the offenders, “I see people that have been damaged, have been victims themselves.”

In some cases, he also sees people who “have made very powerful changes in their lives. . . . When you talk to someone who has spent 10 years in jail for murder and spent 18 years out of jail” engaged in a successful career and actively involved in helping others make positive change, that’s “really exciting,” Hutton says.

He goes on to speak of a man who spent many years in prison for violent offences, but is now “leading an entirely different life with the support of a [Mennonite] church community.”

Hutton, who attends Hope Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, is much less excited about the changes he sees as a result of Bill C-10. Despite falling crime rates, the



Hutton

number of people in Manitoba jails has jumped by about 20 percent. The expense of building jail cells takes away from rehabilitation programs, he says. In addition, Hutton says the aboriginal community has been hit particularly hard by the current crime agenda. Aboriginal offenders are more likely to get convicted and less likely to get parole, he says. They stay in jail longer.

According to Hutton, “prisons are turning into the new residential schools.” A recent report by the government-appointed correctional investigator states, “Aboriginal-specific legislative provisions are chronically under-funded, under-utilized and unevenly applied by the Correctional Service.”

Bill C-10 has also made it harder and far more costly to get a pardon. Instead of rewarding people who make positive change, Hutton says this move simply ensures that

“the past continues to haunt” people for years, harming their employment and community involvement prospects, things vital to reintegration.

A request for an interview with a Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) spokesperson or Vic Toews, the minister of public safety, was declined, but an e-mail from the department states that Bill C-10, The Safe Streets and Communities Act, improves on previous laws by “enhancing information-sharing with victims, increasing offender responsibility and accountability, strengthening the management of offenders and their reintegration, and modernizing disciplinary actions.”

The e-mail adds that CSC “will continue to support and assist offenders towards rehabilitation.” Last year, the department spent \$105 million of its \$2.4-billion budget on programs related to rehabilitation and reintegration. That’s up from \$55 million in 2007-08.

Hutton says Canada should “step away from the tough-on-crime approach,” and, instead, “get smart on crime.” Canada should “look at what works,” he says, something that has led to major changes in states such as Texas, where the focus has shifted from punishment to rehabilitation and treatment.

By isolating offenders and making them feel like they are not part of their community, they are “more likely to do harm in the future,” Hutton says.

Hutton believes that when Jesus said, “I was in prison and you visited me,” he was indicating that “somebody doesn’t stop being a member of our community just because they have broken a law.”

“We need another way,” Hutton says, adding that Mennonites have been “very good at quietly, professionally, competently finding those other ways.” ☞

A victim’s voice: Wilma Derksen

In 1984, Cliff and Wilma Derksen’s 13-year-old daughter Candace was abducted and murdered. The case was not solved until 2011. Below are excerpts of Wilma’s presentation to a parliament-ary committee considering Bill C-10 in

November 2011. She speaks of her ongoing work with other victims of crime:

“Two weeks ago I was with a group [of victims] that spent most of the evening analyzing the problems of our justice

system. At the end of the evening, I asked them what they would do to create justice in our country.

"I expected that they would suggest changes to our criminal justice system similar to the bill we have before us today. I thought they would prioritize safety at all costs, propose stiffer sentences and advocate for more victim rights.

"They didn't. While not denying that we have to maintain prisons, they insisted that we, as a society, need to put our energy and creative thinking into giving our young



Derksen

people a better education.

"I'm thrilled to report that this past February we saw our own case finally brought to justice. For the first time we heard the story. But sentencing of the man who murdered our daughter did not satisfy our deep longing for justice.

"In some ways we had already found justice in the joy of the good things that had come out of Candace's death and in the support of our community of friends.

"The trial brought out the truth, and it was the truth that healed us and set us free,

not the sentencing. I still find no satisfaction in thinking that the man will be sitting in prison for the next 25 years. There is nothing life-giving about that. It is just sad.

"As the minister of justice rightly noted earlier this week, beyond legislative initiatives such as Bill C-10, the Government of Canada is funding many creative, community-based justice initiatives that address the root causes of crime, support victims of crime and help ex-offenders reintegrate into the community. I would ask that you assign a greater proportion of your attention to this good work." ❧

Children of imprisoned parents speak out

Government and media often brand people who have committed offences as "bad guys" to be feared and put away.

But that's not how their kids see them. In *What Will Happen to Me?* a 2011 book, Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz and Howard

Zehr, the Mennonite pioneer of restorative justice, present the portraits and words of kids whose parents are behind bars:

PHOTOS BY HOWARD ZEHR, FROM THE BOOK *WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME?* © BY GOOD BOOKS (WWW.GOODBOOKS.COM). USED BY PERMISSION. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



'I missed a lot. Like last year at my school there was a father-daughter dance. My friends asked me what I was wearing, and I said I wasn't going. I had bought the dress—I don't know why. I was looking at the dress, imagining just me and my dad. I started crying.'

(Cassandra)



'My grandma filled in for my mom until she came back. . . . When my mom was gone, I'd cry myself to sleep. . . . I don't really know my dad. He's still alive, but I wonder, is he getting hurt in jail or something like that? I want him back so I can be with him. . . . I want them around so we could have a family.'

(Jalon)

Metzger challenges church on climate change

MC Canada executive director speaks at peace and justice breakfast event

BY DAVE ROGALSKY
Eastern Canada Correspondent
BADEN, ONT.

“Climate change is a justice issue.” This was the message Willard Metzger brought to the annual Steinmann Mennonite Church Peace and Justice Community Breakfast on March 16. The executive director of Mennonite Church Canada noted that there are still many people who deny that climate change is a human-created tendency, but, regardless of its source, it really is happening.

Droughts, floods and storms have increased four-fold in Southeast Asia in the last 50 years, he said, leading organizations like Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and World Vision to spend more of their funds on saving people's lives, rather than making those lives better.

Quoting a recent MCC report, Metzger said, “Every night one billion people—one

sixth of the world's population—goes to bed hungry. . . . An estimated 250 million people are affected by climate-related hazards in a typical year . . . and that is projected to grow by 50 percent, to an estimated 375 million people a year,” in the next two years.

Rather than focus on the reasons for climate change, Metzger spoke about how he believes Christians need to respond. Since North Americans and Europeans form less than 25 percent of the world's population, but use 75 percent of its resources, western Christians need to think of this in terms of justice.

The West has operated under a growth model, as if the world and its resources were infinite, he said, suggesting that Christians need to begin to think about how they can

“love their neighbour as they love themselves,” providing all with enough.

“What kind of world have we developed that the poor must gather in the presence of the rich and beg for survival?” he asked, referencing the pleas by a minister from Grenada at the 2011 UN Climate Change Forum in Durban, South Africa, as his country is swamped by rising ocean levels.

Metzger said that creation care is “lodged within a theology of worship, because true worship encompasses generosity, restraint and compassion. These values are critical to creation care. . . . [T]heir opposites—greed, recklessness and apathy—threaten the health of the earth and its inhabitants.”

He called on individual Christians and communities to make governments at all levels know that climate-change justice is important to Canadians while they live out individual lives of restraint. He challenged Christians to not move from denial to despair, both of which lead to apathy and inaction, and, instead, worship God through various means, including loving their neighbours and questioning their consumption levels.

Tying in a missional message, he concluded, “We will invite [people] to worship God with us by preserving and protecting the earth and all its inhabitants.” ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA



'Preserving the planet isn't just a job for radical activists or climate scientists. Churches can—and should—also help protect the world's resources,' Mennonite Church Canada executive director Willard Metzger recently told Scott Cressman, a reporter for the New Hamburg Independent newspaper. Climate change is a moral issue, not just a political one, according to Metzger, pictured during a 2011 trip to South Africa. 'Really, I think creation care is part of the theology of worship.' Metzger addressed Steinmann Church, Baden, Ont., on March 16 during a Peace and Justice Community Breakfast.

ARTBEAT

BOOK REVIEW

Christian ethics for non-academics

Radical Christian Discipleship.

By John Howard Yoder. Edited by John C. Nugent, Andy Alexis-Baker and Branson Parler. Herald Press, 2012, 184 pages.

REVIEWED BY BARB DRAPER
BOOKS & RESOURCES EDITOR

The late John Howard Yoder has long been recognized as an important Mennonite theologian, but his work has mostly been used by scholars and has not been readily accessible to the people in the pew.

But with *In Radical Christian Discipleship*, three Yoder scholars have put together previously unpublished sermons as well as articles from church publications in a collection designed for non-academics. While not presented as systematically as his academic work, this Yoder material is easier to read. It brings together some of what Yoder had to say to the church, providing new insight into his ideas about what it means to follow the way of Jesus.

The editors found so much interesting Yoder material that this is only the first of three such volumes.

The three parts of this book include five lectures Yoder gave at Goshen College in 1963, 12 articles he wrote for *Gospel Herald* and *Christian Living* in the 1950s, and three sermons and a commencement address from the late 1960s and early '70s. Although much of this material is more than 50 years old, it remains relevant for today.

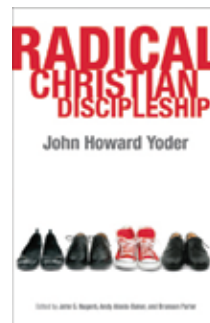
In each of these articles and lectures Yoder addresses the issue of how faithful disciples of Jesus should live. He asks hard questions about ethics and lifestyle, such as how faithful Christians should use their leisure time and what a proper Christian response to capitalism should be.

For Mennonites in the first half of the 20th century, nonconformity meant being separate from the world; it was a term that referred to Mennonite rules of behaviour and it invoked such things as distinctive dress and the avoidance of alcohol and movies. Yoder's interpretation of nonconformity must have been startling to the traditionalists and refreshing to the young people of the day, as he brought a new way of thinking about what it means to follow Christ. In these sermons he declares that morality is not black and white, and that the Christian life is not a matter of rules.

Yoder's ideas have been very influential in Mennonite churches that are now part of Mennonite Church Canada. Since the

1960s the old Mennonite dress codes have disappeared and most churches have moved away from the evangelical and fundamentalist theology of the early 20th century. The church has heard Yoder's declaration that peace is not an appendage to Christianity, but an integral part of it. Mennonites have tried to take seriously Yoder's challenge to live as radical Christian disciples.

Today the Mennonite church needs to hear Yoder's words again. He does not espouse a soft and easy Christianity, saying instead that we must count the cost and follow Jesus into suffering. He warns of the dangers of national religion and the temptations of wealth. We are called to give and to serve, and to love and forgive, but we cannot expect our work to be recognized or even to be effective. Our path should be the way of the cross because that is the path Jesus has shown us. In the end it will lead to victory, for that is the wisdom and power of God. ☞



/// Briefly noted

Revised edition of *The Amish* released

A newly updated edition of John Hostetler's classic introduction, *The Amish*, has been released by Herald Press. The late author's book on Amish customs, beliefs and practices has sold more than three-quarters-of-a-million copies in earlier editions. The new edition, with all new photographs, was revised by Steven M. Nolt, a recognized Amish scholar, and by Hostetler's daughter, Ann E. Hostetler. The new edition was expanded to 48 pages, with full-color photos taken by photographers respectful of Amish concerns about images. The original booklet, published in 1952, has been popular in tourist locations and on Amazon.com. John Hostetler was also the author of *Amish Society*, published by Johns Hopkins Press. For more online information about this and other books, visit MennoMedia.org/store.
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forgiven/forgotten

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April 19, 8 pm and April 20, 2 pm & 8 pm
Conrad Centre for Performing Arts
36 King St W, Kitchener

April 25, 8pm
Ottawa, ON - venue TBA

April 26, 8 pm
Valleyview Mennonite Church
1170 Melsandra Ave. London

April 27, 7:30 pm and April 28, 3 pm
The Bank Theatre
10 Erie Street South, Leamington

May 3, 8 pm
Nineteen on the Park
19 Civic Avenue, Stouffville

May 4, 8 pm
The Berkeley Theatre
26 Berkeley St, Toronto

May 5, 8 pm
St. James Anglican Church
58 Peter Street North, Orillia

For ticket information and additional
showtimes, visit mcco.ca/forgiven

Dates in Western Canada to be announced.

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PERSONAL REFLECTION

Tragedy and comedy in Mennonite life

STORY AND PHOTOS BY AVERY PETERS

SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES

It's a Wednesday night and there is a good turnout at the St. Clair O'Connor Community, an inter-generational housing project in Toronto, where internationally renowned author Miriam Toews is present to share her experience as a Mennonite author for the Mennonite Heritage Club that meets there.

In much of Toews's work there is a juxtaposition of tragedy and comedy. While she may not intend to write comedy, moments of humour emerge out of dark events. In Toews's book *Irma Voth*, the girls escape from their home because of their abusive father, but it is amusing to go with them on their road trip and laugh with them as they learn to take on adult responsibilities, like taking care of their baby sister.

The interviewer, Magdalene Redekop, is also an author and former professor at the University of Toronto. As a part of her upcoming book, *Making Believe: The Crisis of Representation*, Redekop will include an analysis of *Irma Voth*, which is based on Toews's experience as the lead actress in the 2007 movie, *Stellet Licht* (*Silent Light*).

Redekop is a specialist in Low German, and since many in attendance also know the language, she indulges in a Low German-themed question structure based on the fingers on one's hand. Redekop's questions for Toews revolve around comedy (little finger), Mennonite identity (gold ringer), the theme of

shunning in Toews's novels (long neck), Toews' role in *Stellet Licht* (butter licker), and finally, the role of art in the Mennonite community (lice killer).

Redekop asks Toews, "What draws you to comedy? Do you consciously write it?"

"I don't intentionally set out to write comedy," Toews replies. "It's actually the way I see the world. It's dark and tragic. It's also ridiculously absurd and funny." Toews lived through some difficult experiences, including the early deaths of her father and sister. She explains that in her life comedy provides relief. She remembers many bouts of laughter and how nobody made her laugh harder or longer than her sister.

Toews ends *Irma Voth* with the two main characters sitting in a movie theatre in Mexico City watching the movie that they were a part of creating before they moved there on their own. The movie was filmed on their father's farm, so naturally the producer recruited the two young sisters to help with translation and other odd jobs. When they finally see the movie, it is a beautiful culminating event where we see so much of who they were, who they have become and who they are becoming.

I couldn't help but feel an uncomfortable laughter as I read the final scene. All those in the audience didn't know this and they want to keep the girls quiet as they make comments throughout the movie: "When we saw the kids from our campo Aggie said ha! Look! It's Aughte!



Miriam Toews visits St. Clair O'Connor Community's Mennonite Heritage Club to discuss life as a Mennonite author. Her mother lives at the intergenerational housing project in Toronto.



Author and Low-German specialist Magdalene Redekop facilitates the heritage club's discussion with author Miriam Toews.

And somebody behind us told her to be quiet.” Perhaps this comic scene is an example of the Mennonite penchant for comedy.

Before Redekop’s questions and discussion of comedy in Mennonite culture, I hadn’t ever thought about laughter’s place in my family life. I loved when my grandparents taught me Low German rhymes and I remember family gatherings where my cousins and I shared laughter.

Toews says that she does not intend to write comedy, but it comes out that way. There are tragic events in many of her stories, but laughter and absurdity usually follow. Even though she does not set out to write comedy, she does it very well. Her juxtaposition of tragedy and comedy is very true to life, and I think that is why her writing resonates with so many readers within and outside of the Mennonite community. ❧

Embracing the orphan at home

BY BRANDI J. THORPE

Special to Young Voices

On page 35 of the Jan. 21 issue, Thorpe wrote “Advocating for the orphan” about international adoption. Now she looks at local adoption, and the story of a young couple who adopted two children.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SHALEEN MARTENS



Seth and Dillon.

The cry of Christ is to love his people. The example he sets is unquestionable. He embraces those who are rejected by the world, setting a standard meant to be followed. Christians are taught to do as Christ did, to love those who are not loved, to embrace the orphan.

This gospel is meant to transform lives.

was even the ring bearer at their wedding. In retrospect, Shaleen says it was clear that God had a plan for Seth and Dillon to be in their lives.

The couple were adjusting to the newness of married life, new jobs and a home under construction, when God began to call them to adoption.

For Shaleen [Martens], God first revealed his plan a month after they were married. Reading her Bible, she says she heard a still small voice speak, something she had never experienced before, saying ‘I want you to adopt Seth and Dillon.’



Dillon and Seth.

For Shaleen and Cody Martens, members of Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Grunthal, Sask., it has. Shortly after being married, the Martens, now 23, let their lives be transformed by the conviction to adopt two young Métis brothers from Saskatoon. They are adamant that God prompted the adoption and created the circumstances for it to happen.

When the Martens first met their sons, Seth, 7, and Dillon, 4, they were being fostered by Cody’s parents. As Shaleen did homecare work with them, both Shaleen and Cody got to know the children. Seth

“Looking back now, I can’t believe how selfishly we thought,” Shaleen says. “For me, it is hard to reflect on where I was at and believe that God looked at me and said, ‘I’m gonna use you.’ But He did.”

God’s call to the Martens required growth and sacrifice. Cody recognizes that he was able to embrace the calling to adopt because he knew it was God’s will for them. Today he says that, “despite the difficulties of parenting and a very different lifestyle, I feel very blessed.

For Shaleen, God first revealed his plan a month after they were married. Reading

her Bible, she says she heard a still small voice speak, something she had never experienced before, saying “I want you to adopt Seth and Dillon.”

“My prayer was this,” Shaleen shares, “God, I think this is bananas! Crazy! It will never work! But I love you, and I know with you all things are possible. You can do anything! I will obey you.”

She then asked God for two things: further confirmation of his will, and that God would reveal this to Cody without her. Two days later, Cody approached Shaleen with the same message on his heart.

Three years after Shaleen and Cody became parents to Seth and Dillon, they welcomed their first biological child, Beau. Both Seth and Dillon love their new brother dearly.

When originally sharing the adoption plans with their community, many people were in shock, thinking them too young. Some people close to the couple were supportive, but there were many responses that were discouraging. The Martens say that through the difficulties, the support and encouragement of their family and friends means the world.

Challenges did occur in the adoption process. Waiting, paperwork, transitions in lifestyle, emotional issues of children being uprooted to a new family, children being dismissed by some because they are not biological—these parts of the process were heart-wrenching, but not always shared with their community.

Despite the challenges, there have been

moments that tell these young parents they are doing God’s will. Moments of cuddles and giggles, realizing these two brothers get to grow up together, watching their children grow spiritually, hearing Seth talk about having a family one day that will adopt kids, too. Those moments are reminders that God blesses obedience and embraces those who embrace the orphans.

Cody and Shaleen’s obedience has begun a legacy that will influence generations. They have given their children a standard of faith to grow into, and have demonstrated that to follow Christ your life must reflect his calling. They are examples to the church that orphans are among us, and must be loved. Their very lives declare that to love the unloved requires sacrifice and new definitions of family.

The Martens have embraced this new sense of family, revealing that it isn’t about genetics, it is about love. The love they speak of influences their children. Recently, when Seth saw pictures of children that were poor and hungry, he told his parents, “We should go get them and bring them home. We have two extra chairs at our table.”

This child of adoption has grasped something that the church does not always: God really cares about his children and wants the church to be his hands and feet, the ones who take care of orphans. ❧

Brandi J. Thorpe, a blogger for Young Voices, is residing for a season in Kitchener, Ont.



Shaleen, Seth, Dillon, Cody and baby Beau.

A beat to think about

Mennonite theatre troupe tackles restorative justice with drama

STORY AND PHOTOS BY EMILY LOEWEN

Young Voices Co-editor

In the basement of Toronto’s Danforth Mennonite Church, two chairs and a laundry basket serve as a makeshift set. Two young actors repeat their lines over and over, practising how to move, when to pause and what to say.

The stage managers watch every move and make suggestions, still wearing their

scarves and winter coats to keep warm. The rehearsal space may be cold, but it’s free, and that’s important when you’re a young independent theatre troupe.

This is a rehearsal for Theatre of the Beat’s latest play, *Forgiven/Forgotten*, which explores the themes of restorative justice through the story of a community



Johnny Wideman, Katie Cowie Redekopp and Leah Harder Wideman watch over a rehearsal.



Rebecca Steiner and Benjamin Wert in rehearsal for Theatre of the Beat's latest play, *Forgiven/Forgotten*.

surprised to discover it will be home to an offender on parole.

The play, commissioned by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Ontario, with a cross-country tour sponsored by MCC Canada, is the latest offering from a troupe that strives to inspire conversations about social justice and peace through drama. Two of its recent plays looked at stories of American draft dodgers and the War of 1812.

"We try to do good plays that get, like, critically good reviews," says artistic director Johnny Wideman, "but we're also really looking at trying to challenge and sometimes make uncomfortable the audiences,

beats and pauses for us to kind of hopefully think about important things and issues."

A major challenge for the group has been finding ways to make it financially sustainable. Many of its shows are put on in churches and are admission by suggested donation, which means that if they don't attract a large audience, there isn't much to split between six people. However, Theatre of the Beat has found the Mennonite community very supportive of its work. The funding from MCC, as well as a grant from Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, has meant this summer's tour will be easier than in years past.

While the work may not always be easy,

The troupe formed after [Johnny] Wideman, 25, finished his drama degree from the University of Waterloo, Ont., in 2009, and couldn't find work that combined drama with his interest in social justice.

to get them thinking about things that we think are important or that we think could have some light shed on them in a new way."

The troupe formed after Wideman, 25, finished his drama degree at the University of Waterloo, Ont., in 2009, and couldn't find work that combined drama with his interest in social justice. He worked in independent film for a while, but missed the connection that forms with the audience in theatre.

So Wideman, who attends Community Mennonite Church, Stouffville Ont., brought together actors Rebecca Steiner and Kimberlee Walker, both 23, and Benjamin Wert, 28, with stage managers Katie Cowie Redekopp and Leah Harder Wideman to form Theatre of the Beat. Wideman, Steiner, Walker, Cowie Redekopp and Harder Wideman all knew each other from residence at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

The company's name comes from a combination of theatre terms and the goal of provoking thought in its audience. In theatre, when a script says "beat," it signifies silence, "pregnant moments when nothing's happening that hold a lot of importance," Wideman explains, "so I'm trying to use theatre in that way to kind of create these

finding audiences who appreciate their work is fulfilling for the troupe's members. After a showing of *Gadfly*, a play about draft dodger Sam Steiner, at a fringe festival in Montreal, a group of draft dodgers took the troupe out for lunch and shared their own stories.

"It was just amazing," says Wideman. "Like, we were just, like, sharing stories and talking about current issues and talking about past issues, and it was, like, a good 40- to 50-year generation gap. It was really neat and really inspiring."

With its work, Theatre of the Beat tries to appeal to both Mennonite and secular audiences.

"We try to touch on enough stuff with spirituality and faith and pacifism to make the secular kind of community think about things differently," Wideman says. "And then we try to touch on enough, you know, progressiveness, open-mindedness, sometimes looking at things in as new light as we can, to sometimes make the Mennonite audiences feel uncomfortable."

Forgiven/Forgotten will tour across Canada after its premiere at the Conrad Centre for the Performing Arts, Kitchener, Ont., on April 19 and 20. Visit theatreforthebeat.com for other dates and locations. ❧



Johnny Wideman is creative director of Theatre of the Beat.

Calendar

British Columbia

Apr. 12-14: Youth Jr. Impact retreat at Camp Squeah.

May 4: MC B.C. Women's Inspirational Day at Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church.

Alberta

April 27: Mennonite Historical Society of Alberta annual general meeting and conference, at First Mennonite Church, Calgary, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Theme: "Historical roots of mutual aid as practised among Mennonites." Speakers, panel discussion, exhibits and lunch. To register (by April 20), call 403-250-1121 or e-mail mhsa@mennonitehistory.org.

Saskatchewan

April 13: A Buncha Guys spring concert, at Mayfair United Church, Saskatoon, at 7:30 p.m.

April 14: "Songs for the Sale" fundraiser for the MCC Relief Committee, at Forest

Grove Community Church, Saskatoon, at 7 p.m.

May 11: RJC open campus day.

May 11: RJC spring choir concert, 7 p.m.

May 25: RJC golf tournament at Valley Regional Park.

Manitoba

Until April 27: "From Paraguay to Winnipeg: Explorations of place home and childhood" art exhibit at Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg. Featured artists: Miriam Rudolph and Bennie Peters.

April 14: Sargent Avenue Mennonite Church adult choir presents Parts II and III of *The Messiah*, at 7 p.m.

April 18-20: Westgate Collegiate senior high musical.

April 27: CMU spring concert featuring choirs and ensembles.

April 27: Mennonite Collegiate Institute fundraising supper, at Buhler Hall, Gretna, at 5:30 p.m. Concert featuring Ted Swartz, "Laughter is a sacred space," follows at 7 p.m. For more information, or to register, call

204-327-5891.

May 3: Mennonite Collegiate Institute Chamber Choir concert, at Manitou Opera House, Manitou, at 7 p.m.

May 7: Westgate Collegiate fundraiser banquet at the Marlborough Hotel, 6 p.m.

May 10-11: Workathon at Camp Moose Lake. For more information, e-mail camps@mennochurch.mb.ca.

May 12: Mother's Day fundraiser at Camp Assiniboia. For more information, e-mail camps@mennochurch.mb.ca.

May 24-26: Birding retreat at Camp Moose Lake. For more information, e-mail camps@mennochurch.mb.ca.

May 29: Westgate Collegiate spring concert (Grades 7, 8, 9) at Bethel Mennonite Church, 7 p.m.

May 30: Westgate Collegiate spring concert (Grades 10, 11, 12) at Bethel Mennonite Church, 7 p.m.

Ontario

April 6: The Wayne Gilpin Singers present "The Road to Victory?" concert of classic and contemporary Christian

music at St. John the Evangelist Church, Kitchener, at 8 p.m. Tickets available at the door or by calling toll-free 1-800-867-3281.

April 9: Mennonite Savings and Credit Union's 49th annual meeting, "Stories of social justice," at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden. Registration at 6:30 p.m.; meeting at 7 p.m. An excerpt from Theatre of the Beat's newest production will be featured.

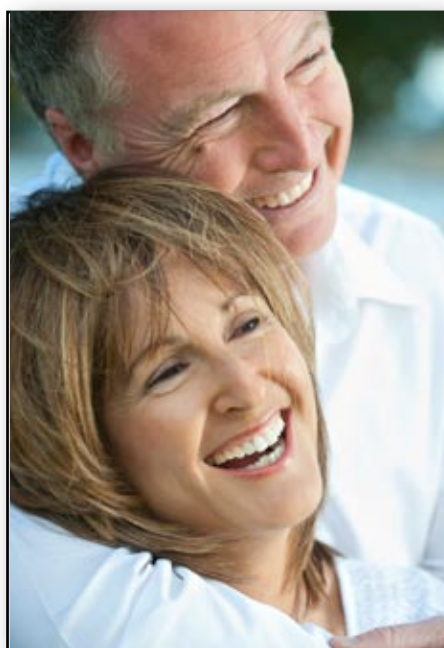
April 12: Benjamin Eby Lecture with Leonard Enns at Conrad Grebel University College chapel.

April 12: "Peace, Pies and Prophets" presented by Ted and Company Theater Works, at Toronto United Mennonite Church, at 7 p.m.

Fundraiser for Christian Peacemaker Teams. For more information, e-mail canada@cpt.org.

April 12-14: Dinner and theatre presentation at Floradale Mennonite Church; *Mom, It's Time to Sell the House* by Barb Draper. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. (12, 13); play begins at 8 p.m.; 2 p.m. matinee (14). For dinner reservations, call 519-669-4356.

(Continued on page 39)



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Rosthern, SK S0K3R0
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1-800-772-3257
Mennofoundation.ca

(Continued from page 39)

April 13: "Launch Pad" fundraiser for Theatre of the Beat, at Parkview Village Auditorium, Stouffville, at 7 p.m. Donations accepted in lieu of admission. For more information, e-mail info@theatreofthebeat.com.

April 13: "Peace, Pies and Prophets" presented by Ted and Company Theater Works, at United Mennonite Educational Institute, Leamington, at 7 p.m. Fundraiser for Christian Peacemaker Teams. For more information, e-mail canada@cpt.org.

April 19: Menno Youth Singers present a coffeehouse and silent auction, at Waterloo-Kitchener United Mennonite Church, Waterloo, at 7 p.m. Free.

April 19: 12th annual ham dinner fundraiser for MCC's meat canner project, at Hamilton Mennonite Church, from 5 to 7 p.m.; entertainment to follow. Vegetarian alternative available. For more information or tickets, call 905-387-3952 or 905-528-3607, or email hmc@coגעco.net.

April 19,20: MCC and Theatre of the Beat present the *Forgiven/Forgotten*

Tour, a play and conversation about restorative justice and a Christian response to crime, at the Conrad Centre, Kitchener; (19) at 8 p.m., and (20) 2 and 8 p.m. For more information, visit forgivenforgotten.wordpress.com.

April 20: Women of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada holds its spring Enrichment Day, at Tavistock Mennonite Church; registration at 9:30 a.m., activities run from 10:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Theme: "Wonderfully made: Women, faith and self-care. Speaker: Terri J. Plank Brennenman of Goshen, Ind. To register by April 5, contact Florence Jantzi at 519-669-4356 or jantzi@golden.net.

April 20: Shalom Counselling Services fundraiser, "Lessons my mother taught me," featuring Roger Martin, dean of Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, at St. George Banquet Hall, Waterloo, at 6 p.m. Music by Michael Wood Trio. To reserve tickets by April 10, call 519-886-9690.

April 20,21: Pax Christi Chorale presents Handel's *Solomon*, an oratorio, at Grace Church-on-the-Hill, Toronto; at 7:30 p.m. (20) and 3 p.m. (21). For tickets, call 416-491-8542 or visit

paxchristichorale.org.

April 22: New Hamburg Mennonite Relief Sale promotion dinner, at Bingemans, Kitchener, at 6:30 p.m. Keynote speakers: Luke and Kaitlyn Jantzi, returned MCC workers from South Sudan. For tickets, call 519-745-8458.

April 25: MCC and Theatre of the Beat present the *Forgiven/Forgotten* Tour, a play and conversation about restorative justice and a Christian response to crime, at St. Paul University, Ottawa, at 8 p.m. For more information, visit forgivenforgotten.wordpress.com.

April 26: Deacons of Jazz perform a fundraising concert for Silver Lake Mennonite Camp, at Hamilton Mennonite Church.

April 26: MCC and Theatre of the Beat present the *Forgiven/Forgotten* Tour, a play and conversation about restorative justice and a Christian response to crime, at Valley View Mennonite Church, London, at 8 p.m. For more information, visit forgivenforgotten.wordpress.com.

April 26-27: MC Eastern Canada 25th-anniversary celebrations at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, Kitchener, including the annual church gathering,

(27) Public worship celebration at 2:30 p.m. with César García, general secretary of Mennonite World Conference. Everyone welcome to attend, but registration is encouraged by visiting mcec.ca and following the "registration" link.

April 26-27: Engaged Workshop, for engaged or newly married couples, at Living Water Fellowship, New Hamburg. For more information or to register, e-mail Denise Bender at denise_bender@yahoo.com.

April 27,28: MCC and Theatre of the Beat present the *Forgiven/Forgotten* Tour, a play and conversation about restorative justice and a Christian response to crime, at the Bank Theatre, Leamington; (27) at 7:30 p.m., (28) at 3 p.m. For more information, visit forgivenforgotten.wordpress.com.

April 29: Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp spring seniors retreat. Keynote speaker Arthur Boers will share about his book *The Way is Made by Walking: Spiritual Hunger in our World Today*. For more information, or to register, call 519-625-8602, e-mail info@hiddenacres.ca, or visit hiddenacres.ca online.

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MUSIC COORDINATOR POSITION

NUTANA PARK MENNONITE CHURCH in Saskatoon is looking for a Music Coordinator to serve as choral director and work with a music committee to develop and enhance the role of music in our congregation. This is a part-time position. Please send all inquiries and/or resumes to: Selection Committee, Nutana Park Mennonite Church, 1701 Ruth Street, Saskatoon, SK S7J 0L7; or email: npmc@npmc.net. The deadline for applications is May 24, 2013.

LENDRUM MB CHURCH invites applications for **TWO PASTORAL ROLES**. Lendrum is a well-established church in Edmonton, Alberta with an average attendance of 150 people. We are a diverse intergenerational congregation. We are looking for pastors who

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

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

Salary is according to the MB conference guidelines along with generous benefits.

For further information, or to apply, please call (780.434.4268) or e-mail to Pastoral Search Committee lmcc@compusmart.ab.ca. All communication and applications will be handled confidentially.

Employment Opportunities

MENNONITE CHURCH MANITOBA is seeking a **FULL-TIME RESIDENT MANAGER AND A PART-TIME FOOD SERVICES COORDINATOR** for Camp Moose Lake, located 1.5 hours Southeast of Steinbach, Manitoba. For a full list of qualifications and job description see our website www.CampsWithMeaning.org, click on "Job Opportunities".

Closing date: April 9, 2013. A letter of intent and a resume, or inquiries can be directed to Justin Zacharias, Director of Camping Ministries at jzacharias@mennochurch.mb.ca, or phone 1-204-362-6386. Mennonite Church Manitoba, 200-600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg MB R3P 2J1.

FULL-TIME LEAD PASTOR

GRACE MENNONITE CHURCH in Winkler, is prayerfully seeking a full-time Lead Pastor. We are asking God for a Pastor who is passionate, strong in pulpit ministry, with special emphasis on Biblical preaching and encouraging the congregation to walk the Christian walk. We are a congregation of approximately 400 members seeking a pastor who will be inspiring, and help provide spiritual vision and leadership to our congregation and pastoral team. Preferred start date would be May 1, 2013. All applications will be held in strict confidence.

Please direct resumes and/ or inquiries to gmcsearchcommittee@gmail.com

For additional information please visit our website at www.gracechurchwinkler.com



Mennonite Central Committee

MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE (MCC) MANITOBA is seeking to fill the position of **FINANCIAL SERVICES COORDINATOR**. This full-time, salaried, term position (13 months) is responsible for planning, organizing and managing all aspects of the finances of MCC Manitoba. A detailed job description is available at serve.mcccanada.ca.

Application deadline is April 26. Please send Resume and Cover Letter to Tricia Prosser at triciaprosser@mennonitecc.ca.

MCC is a relief, service, and peace agency of the North American Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ST. CLAIR O'CONNOR COMMUNITY INC. (SCOC), a Not-for-Profit, Intergenerational Home, which was developed under the sponsorship of two Mennonite Churches, is now inviting applicants for the position of Executive Director. SCOC is committed to providing a continuum of care for the residents of the SCOC community.

SCOC receives funding from both the Provincial and City Governments, in support of the Long Term Care unit, Adult Day Program, and Housing operations.

This dynamic, independent individual will be responsible for the direction, finances, planning, funder relations and obligations, resident relations, and resident family relations, as well as ensuring good community relations. A key aspect of the responsibilities will be to provide direction in the planning and implementation of the SCOC's Long Term Strategic Plan and developing an organizational structure in support of the Strategic Plan. The Executive Director reports to the SCOC Board of Directors.

SCOC is located in Toronto at the corner of St. Clair and O'Connor streets. SCOC offers a competitive salary and benefits package.

Please submit applications with resumes by April 15, 2013 to:

By email to retlaw@fradsetr.com

or

Walter Friesen
Board Chair
St. Clair O'Connor Community Inc.
2701 St. Clair Ave. East
Toronto, Ont.
M4B 3M3

A really 'young voice'!

PHOTO BY ERIN BRANDENBURG



Jack Penner, almost 1, is captivated by a recent issue of Canadian Mennonite, along with his father Andrew, a performer-composer with Kitchenband, a Toronto-based musical-theatre collective.