

CANADIAN MENNONITE

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‘Like a
watered
garden’

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EDITORIAL

The good of bad news

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER



Two headlines this week bring into sharp focus the cultural context in which our own faith community is forming its core belief and practice, one encouraging, the other not so much.

First, the good news: "A little religion could go a long way in helping adolescents cope with depression, according to a new ground-breaking Canadian study," read the front-page news story in the *Ottawa Citizen*. Citing a study tracking 1,000 students from grades 10 through 12, the newspaper reported that, while churchgoing (at least once a month) impacted girls differently than boys, the positive effect of regular doses of organized religion appear to be good medicine for both sexes.

This "good news" for churches is especially welcome since the Canadian Mental Health Association estimates that between 10 percent and 20 percent of Canadian youth are affected by a mental illness and 5 percent of male youth and 12 percent of females aged 12 to 19 have suffered a major depressive episode.

Moreover, Canada has the third highest youth suicide rate in the industrialized world and suicide is second only to accidents as a leading cause of death in 15- to 24-year-olds.

The significance of the churchgoing study is that the choice to attend church was not forced on them by elders, but rather it was a personal decision. The study sample showed that the young

people were not regular churchgoers, meaning they were not taken to church by their parents.

Offsetting this good news, however, was another study reported by Religion News Service (and carried on our website) showing that, while Canada remains overwhelmingly Christian, Canadians are turning their backs on organized religion in ever-greater numbers.

Results from the 2011 National Household Survey showed that while more than two-thirds of Canadians, or some 22 million people, said they were affiliated with a Christian denomination, one in four, or 7.8 million people, reported they had no religious affiliation, up sharply from the 16.5 percent from the 2001 census, and 12 percent in 1991. That means that currently 26 percent of our approximately 30 million population do not affiliate with any organized religion.

While this latter news comes as little surprise to keen observers, the churchgoing trend for our youth as an antidote for depression offers hope that the next generation is returning to faith just as the previous generation too often found the church stuffy, too mired in tradition, too tied to the economic and political structures to offer them a dynamic spirituality for which they yearned—and from which they turned away.

It might also be good news for us as Anabaptist Christians, who, though holding to 500-year-old core beliefs of non-violence and a commitment to justice, a

hospitality that welcomes the stranger (not forgetting our historical journey as immigrants), a discipleship to Jesus that requires a personal commitment and care for creation, offer a kind of spiritual dynamism not found in the mainstream communions suffering declining numbers.

This rich spiritual dynamic, strangely enough, is something we have to be told we possess by outsiders mostly—Stuart Murray, coming out of the Baptist tradition, Greg Boyd, Brian McLaren, Stanley Hauerwas, and other leading religious spokespersons looking to our beliefs and practices as a way to refurbish tired hearts and minds, and lead the way to more redemptive living in a world crumbling under the weight of violence and greed.

As for our youth, *Canadian Mennonite* is doing its best to give them voice and place in our circles. Next issue, we will turn a leaf in this two-year-old tradition, with the changing of the editor from Emily Loewen of Toronto to Aaron Epp of Winnipeg. We thank Emily for giving us a strong foundation and wish her well in her new full-time assignment as a writer for Mennonite Central Committee Canada.

Welcome to Aaron Epp

Coming with strong journalistic credentials, he has been an editor of *Geez* magazine, a national correspondent for *Canadian Mennonite*, a senior correspondent for *Christian Week*, both arts and culture editor for the *Uniter* (student newspaper of the University of Winnipeg), and is currently working also as writer and social media coordinator in the communications department at Canadian Mennonite University, from which he graduated in 2007. He is a member of Douglas Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.



ABOUT THE COVER:

Water trickled through several water fountains in the foyer of Eigenheim Mennonite Church, Rosthern, on April 27 as a visual and audible depiction of this year's Saskatchewan Women in Mission Enrichment Day theme: 'Like a watered garden.' See story on page 16.

PHOTO: DONNA SCHULZ, SASKATCHEWAN WOMEN IN MISSION

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Guiding values:

Hebrews 10:23-25 • Accuracy, fairness, balance • Editorial freedom •

Seeking and speaking the truth in love • Open hearts and minds in discerning God's will •

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Online NOW!

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‘Where is God?’

*One family's journey with
chronic pain has made
them very aware of Christ's
presence in their life together*

BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD
ALBERTA CORRESPONDENT



Rod Reynar has been dealing with chronic pain for most of his life, a situation he and his family—wife Susan, left, and daughters Anika and Joya—have found easier to bear thanks to Foothills Mennonite Church and Christian friends who have helped them with their burdens and shared their joys.

It's hard to imagine a force powerful enough to keep an academic from his books, a father from playing with his children, a husband from attending to the wife he loves.

Rod and Susan Reynar of Calgary need no imagination to describe this force because they walk the road of chronic pain every day. Rod has arachnoiditis, a neuropathic disease caused by inflammation of membranes around the spinal cord. The resultant binding of nerves and blood vessels causes incurable excruciating pain that often confines Rod to bed for months on end.

Surprisingly, though, the many struggles—since 2000, Rod has spent 10.5 years of his life in bed—have taken a backseat to the Reynars' profound experiences of God in the depths of suffering. The story of the Reynar family is a glimpse into a unique experience of God's love that offers incredible gifts of insight and challenge to the church as it seeks to respond to the journey of chronic pain.

Central to the Christian story is Christ's death and resurrection. In spite of the obvious suffering in this story, however, Christians have always struggled to understand why it happens and how individuals and the church should respond. In

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*'I went from an incredible job to living in bed, and experienced huge depression. All dreams came to an end. . . . A brutal time.'
(Rod Reynar)*

(Continued from page 5)

the Book of Job, his friends assume he has sinned, and their well-intentioned attempts to fix him are misdirected and exasperating. In John 9:1-3, the disciples ask Jesus whose sin caused a man's blindness. Jesus answers by saying the blindness happened so the work of God might be displayed.

While both well-known passages point away from blaming the victim, the issue of misunderstanding the cause of suffering still exists in faith circles. From his own experience, Rod says, "It is still there that we have, at some level, the prosperity gospel going. So what do you do with situations, how do you explain to yourself situations that seem so unconscionable. . . . Then when we pray for healing and it doesn't happen, where is God? This is the elephant no one wants to acknowledge."

The question "Where is God?" is clearly rhetorical for the Reynars. In the midst of deep suffering, they have been certain of Christ's presence with them.

The Reynars' story

Throughout his childhood, doctors dismissed Rod's complaints as growing pains, while the fact of a tethered spinal cord remained unnoticed. After high school, constant pain confined him to bed for most of a year.

Rod describes a diagnostic myelogram, during which dye was injected into his spinal column, as one of the "most intensely painful three hours of my life. It's likely the needle was pushed through my tethered nerves." After the test, he says, "In an angry voice the doctor proceeded to tell my mom that all of my problems were in my head, all psychological."

The next day he endured a psychological interrogation in his hospital room, with three roommates and their guests overhearing the whole thing. "What that does to an 18-year-old's sense of confidence," Rod muses of the humiliations.

Over the next four years, he underwent three major back surgeries. "After the third surgery, I swore I'd never go back till I was crawling in, and that occurred 10 years later," he says.

While the Reynars were expecting their

second child and Rod was completing a doctorate of agriculture education degree at Penn State University, he learned the increasing pain was chronic and that he had arachnoiditis caused by a dye used in his myelogram. They were informed that Rod could expect to live the rest of his life with pain levels similar to the end stages of cancer, with one significant difference: there would be no end in sight.

"Everything came crashing to a halt," Rod says.

A further surgery to finally un-tether his spinal cord went badly and key nerves were mistakenly severed, further

increasing his pain and dysfunction. In 1997, unable to afford treatment in the United States and facing at least a year of recovery, the young family moved in with Rod's parents in Calgary.

Not often realized is the impact chronic pain has on a person's identity. This especially becomes an issue in a culture where self-worth is tied to material productivity. "Identity is wrapped up in what we do, and Rod isn't 'doing anything,'" Susan says of this time in their life.

When Susan was at home as a full-time caregiver, their daughters would avoid questions at school about what their parents did for a living. "Growing up, the only identity they have for us is that we are parents. Our girls still talk about that," she says.

Rod describes the pain levels that kept him in bed with words like "burning," "crushing" and "all-consuming." On a scale of 1 to 10, he existed at a 9 for months on end. He could not concentrate, leave the house or engage well with his family. There were points when he was ready to commit suicide to escape the hellish torment.

Susan talked him out of it by reminding him that she and their daughters were an important reason to live and

getting him to promise not to take his own life. "I knew I could not live in fear, I also knew Rod's strength," she says. "It was gut-wrenching, the hardest times for me, without a doubt."

What the church did well

The Reynars are profoundly grateful for the church during their long journey in and out of hospital, in and out of bed, and always dealing with pain. After moving in with Rod's parents, the Reynars immediately found a church community in Northwest Calgary.

"Foothills [Mennonite] Church was a

'I heard a lot, but no one heard about my life, and I have one as well. It was a gift when visitors came and not only talked about Rod's experience . . . but also connected with me and the girls.'

(Susan Reynar)

place that embraced us, even though they knew we were transient," Rod says. "They just kind of absorbed us."

At the same time, Christian friends living far away offered to share their income so Susan could spend time with Rod and their children, instead of struggling to work outside the home while caring for them. Thousand-dollar cheques began arriving each month, with no strings attached and no desire for payback. "It was their way of saying they had too much and wanted to share," Rod says.

In 1998, with pain levels sufficiently managed, Rod got his dream job as dean of agriculture at Olds (Alta.) College. The family moved to Olds and began attending Bergthal Mennonite Church. Rod's job was doable from a wheelchair, it was exactly the career he had always wanted, and it allowed them to get by without financial help from their friends.

But after two years the pain worsened again and eventually work ate up every bit of Rod's energy, leaving nothing for his family. Once more he was completely confined to bed. The regression was devastating.

"I went from an incredible job to living in bed, and experienced huge depression," Rod says. "All dreams came to an end."

Tips for giving—and receiving—visits in the midst of chronic suffering

- **ALLOW YOURSELF** to be open and vulnerable. People who suffer live with difficult questions. It is good to discuss them.
- **SIMPLE PRESENCE** is the most important part of a visit. Free yourself from unrealistic expectations of yourself and others.
- **BE GRACIOUS** in giving or receiving a visit. Suspend judgment.
- **ASK ABOUT** the sufferer's day: What was significant? Just because he is in bed does not mean his day has been empty.
- **REFRAIN FROM** assumptions of what the sufferer can or cannot do. Allow her to make those decisions.
- **PAY ATTENTION** to the experience of family members.
- **REFRAIN FROM** "fix-it" advice unless asked.
- **UNDERSTAND THAT** individuals who walk the road of suffering can be a treasure in the church. They may have wisdom to share because they have time for questions of faith and life in unique ways.
- **REMEMBER THAT** worth is not tied to what we do, but who we are.
- **VISITS ARE** two-way. Who gives and who receives is flexible.
- **HEARING WHAT** is happening in the lives of others is important. Sometimes visitors are afraid to share personal good news, but good news is life-giving.
- **CHALLENGE YOURSELF** to celebrate the good moments in another's life.

—COMPILED BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD

[I was] suffering from levels of pain that made it difficult to have conversations. I could only visit for short periods of time, and there was no energy to put thoughts together. A brutal time. . . . Then many of my social groupings dissolved. There were many people that came directly after, but the number of people that maintained sustained contact with us were few and far between."

Bergthal Mennonite removed a pew from its sanctuary to create room for a stretcher so Rod could participate in worship. When he served on church council, meetings were held at the Reynar home so he could participate.

"People at the church were good," he recalls. "Sometimes this was the only outing I had. There was a cot at the front of the church. Very few people came up at first to talk with me, but that changed as people's comfort level grew. It was such a gift when that began to happen."

And the cheques in the mail resumed.

Responding to chronic pain

Churches are often adept in responding to acute stress, injury and loss. When illness or death occurs, there are established congregational protocols, as well as informal expectations for members

to become involved. But chronic issues throw ideas of timeliness and appropriate response into chaos, and visitors are uncertain of how to be helpful.

"People don't know how to deal with suffering," Rod says. "Some people would come see me once, and I'd never see them at the house again."

One of the problems for the family of a chronic sufferer is that they easily become cut off from their communities. Occasionally the family would not be informed of events, as it was assumed they would not be able to participate.

"It was all-consuming, so I often didn't keep up with what was going on in the community," Susan says of her caregiving role. "That was hard on me." Sometimes people would visit Rod and tell him things, but Susan and the girls might be left out. "I heard a lot, but no one heard about my life, and I have one as well," she says. "It was a gift when visitors came and not only talked about Rod's experience . . . but also connected with me and the girls."

It is difficult for individuals and the church to know how to respond to suffering when causes cannot be eliminated and there is no closure, not even death, on the visible horizon. Visitors often feel awkward and unsure of what is

helpful.

"Sometimes we'd get so tired of people coming with verses lined up, or an anecdote of someone who was healed or [of] a wonderful doctor," Rod says. "All I needed was their presence."

Facing another person's pain can bring up uncomfortable questions of our own vulnerabilities and failings, so they often avoid bringing up the really deep issues they carry with them into the room. That is a mistake, according to Rod. "People stay away because they don't want to subject me to their questions, like 'Who is God?' and 'Why?' But it doesn't matter, because I'm there already," he says.

For Rod and Susan, the most important part of a visit wasn't what a visitor did or said, but simply that they came. "Their physical presence there was saying in some way that I want to share your burdens, even though it makes me uncomfortable and raises a host of questions," Rod says. "I can never underestimate the presence of another person, that they are willing to come in and take that on, to try to understand, with no agenda to fix it."

According to the Reynars, an issue for the church is accepting the reality that

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stepping into the life of someone who is suffering is a lifetime commitment. “There are no time boundaries on it and [the church needs] to accept that,” Rod says.

Learning from suffering

A unique opportunity that may come with the experience of chronic pain is the time to reflect deeply upon life’s meaning and mysteries. Rod and Susan

others has helped the Reynars deal with feelings of disappointment when people did not come and they faced feelings of being forgotten. “What has helped me through those moments,” Susan shares, “is having no expectations. Then, when someone comes, it’s always a gift.”

Moving forward

In 2011, Rod’s arachnoiditis became progressively worse, confining him to bed for 18 straight months. The situation

The question ‘Where is God?’ is clearly rhetorical for the Reynars. In the midst of deep suffering, they have been certain of Christ’s presence with them.

could understandably be bitter about the curves life has pitched them, but, instead, they have learned to be profoundly grateful to God and peaceful in responding to people.

An important gift helping Rod to deal with his situation came through a pain specialist who introduced him to meditation. Through meditation, Rod began to find ways to cope, and even thrive, in the midst of crippling pain. Meditation became like going to work each day, a discipline of deeply listening for God and reframing his attitude and outlook.

“The work of my day [is to] deal with the suffering,” Rod says. “Each and every day I have to turn away from the temptations to be angry, bitter and furious, and, instead, to reach out to myself and others in love.”

Prayer was, and is, a crucial part of Rod’s coping with pain and is a conduit for the healing touch of God. Through prayer, Rod works to give himself over into God’s hands. The example of Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane and relinquishing control to God is important to Rod and Susan. “Prayer is just fundamentally being in touch with God,” he says.

They also experienced the communal gift of healing prayer when a pastor and two men from Foothills Mennonite came during a particularly desperate time. “The wind moved through our house when they prayed,” Rod says.

Developing deep graciousness towards

precipitated a trip to the Netherlands, where he received a special implant to help control his pain. The procedure was a success, and today he is once again on his feet and able to engage in life outside the home.

During this time of reprieve, Rod and Susan look forward to re-engaging with family, the church and various communities, and to do some volunteer work. In August, they will move to Winnipeg, where Rod has accepted a volunteer teaching position in sociology at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU).

Moving and resettling are challenges, and come with some mixed feelings for the Reynars; however, the chance to engage academically with the church is an invigorating and exciting opportunity for Rod.

It is not the physical release, however, that is most important to him. “Had I been physically healed, and only physically, I would be a miserable man,” he says. “The redemption that I feel in my life is not tied to the implant that was done. The redemption that we feel now started years ago and, although the last two years took me to the absolute brink of my physical existence, . . . I am profoundly thankful for the last two years because of how God’s redemptive grace has been shown in my life and felt by me. [The implant] has transformed my life, but God has redeemed it.” ❧

Donita Wiebe-Neufeld, co-pastor of First Mennonite Church, Edmonton, blogs at fmclectionary.blogspot.ca. Her April 30 post, “Pick up your mat . . . and what?” is about writing this feature article.



❧ For discussion

1. What have been your experiences of suffering, either personally or by people around you? What are the biggest challenges of dealing with long-term suffering? Have you seen someone’s identity or personality change as a result of suffering? How have relationships been affected?
2. How do Christians react when prayers for healing go unanswered? How would you respond if someone asked, “Why do I suffer?” What was Jesus’ message in the story of the man who was born blind (John 9)? Why do some sufferers become bitter while others can feel thankful for redemption?
3. Why is it so much more difficult for a congregation to respond to chronic pain than to acute situations? How can the church help prevent families dealing with chronic health issues from becoming isolated? Can you imagine someone coming to your church on a stretcher?
4. Why is it important to visit those who find it difficult to get around? Whose responsibility is it to do this visiting? Have our busy lives caused us to shift this responsibility to professionals? How can we do a better job of including those who suffer?

—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.

✉ Editorial sets up false dichotomies

RE: “WHOSE VOICE are we” editorial, April 1, page 2, that focuses on the “ownership” of *Canadian Mennonite*.

I was on the task force in the mid-1990s charged with envisioning the “ownership” structure of *Canadian Mennonite*. From that perspective I offer some comments.

The editorial highlights adversarial contrasts: “editorial freedom” vs. “editorial control”; “equal standing in the body” vs. “hierarchy”; freedom of “critique” vs. “propaganda”; “independence” vs. belonging to the “denominational structure”; “diversity” vs. “hus-banded” control. These contrasting categories do not capture the spirit of the debate at the time.

The discussion then revolved around what it meant to be a body. We were nourished by I Corinthians 12, and tried to imagine how the seven entities—Mennonite Church Canada, the five area churches and Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service (CMPS)—could function together to make the body stronger. We asked what each one brings to, and needs from, the body: What makes us all stronger?

Some mentioned the need for communication, and others the need for resources. CMPS brought the gift of legal incorporation to the table. This was welcomed, not because it gave CMPS a chance to be “independent,” but because it offered needed advantages to all, including expertise and a favourable mailing rate. The national and area churches brought the possibility of an “every-home plan.” None of this was couched in the dichotomous terms used in the editorial.

The editorial policy would also be subject to the building up of the body of Christ. “Critique” and “control” were not the alternatives. Rather, we hoped for mutual discernment that would strengthen the life of the body.

Yes, this process was “serious.” It kept us from affirming “independence,” “control,” “freedom,” “propaganda” and “hierarchy.” Rather, we affirmed the biblical idea of the church as the body of Christ.

We also suggested that the Scripture passage that would guide all of our efforts could be Hebrews 10: 23-25. The key elements there were to “hold fast the confession of our hope,” “stimulating each other to love and good deeds,” “not stopping to meet together,” and, “to encourage each other.” We were confident that *Canadian Mennonite* could serve the body as an effective instrument in each of these ways.

With nearly 20 years of hindsight, some might say that our view of the church as the body of Christ was too idealistic. Exploring that concern would reflect the historical spirit of the proposal, and would not impose on it an alien agenda that does not.

ROBERT J. SUDERMAN,
NEW HAMBURG, ONT.

✉ Magazine’s independence must be made more clear

RE: “WHOSE VOICE are we?” editorial, April 1, page 2.

Despite my reading of this periodical from its very earliest format in the 1950s, and my intellectual recognition that this is an independent periodical, I have a difficult time thinking about its mission other than in the context of its being Mennonite Church Canada’s instrument. Letter responses make it obvious that many other readers have a similar difficulty, making it very unfair for our denomination and its leadership. I encourage you to make its independence very explicitly noticeable in each issue.

While most of your editorial practices do honour our national church, *Canadian Mennonite* often fails in acting like a denominational publication that could intentionally add clarity to recurrent controversial topics.

Nevertheless, and unfortunately so, *Canadian Mennonite* is currently the best avenue through which ongoing dialogue and discernment happens within MC Canada. My experience has demonstrated that this happens in a very limited fashion within our congregations and at area church assemblies.

IVAN UNGER, CAMBRIDGE, ONT.

(Our mission statement on page 3 now notes that Canadian Mennonite is an “independent publication.”)

✉ Inclusion, church identity issues closely linked

I FEEL THAT our church discussions could benefit from a more careful use of the term “inclusion.” The term often seems to carry connotations of an unqualified good.

It is generally assumed that we should all strive to be

more inclusive. In “Quilt to make space for dialogue on sexuality,” April 15, page 20, the problem was described as “[p]eople continue to be excluded from the Mennonite church, as diverse and welcoming as we are.” The assumed solution is to be more inclusive.

What is often missing from such discussions on inclusion—whether it is on issues of sexuality or people with disabilities (see “Stories of Inclusion,” Feb. 18,

FAMILY TIES

Navigating the currents of ethical judgment

MELISSA MILLER

I cohabited with my husband before we got married. Not in the current form of lovers sharing a home together as a preamble—or alternative—to marriage. Our cohabitation involved sharing a residence, but not a bedroom, with a dozen others. At the time, we were exploring communal living and were influenced by Acts 2:44 and by our Anabaptist cousins in the Bruderhof.

Looking back now, I can't imagine that our parents or grandparents were happy with our arrangement. In their worldview, decent Christian people avoided the appearance of sexual impropriety. Living together, even in a kind of semi-family household, certainly toyed with the boundary they had been taught and passed on to us. Still, they were gracious as we found and tested our wings as young adults, supporting our relationship and happily doing their part when we married.

Since I wrote a column on cohabitation a year ago, I've continued to engage others in conversation. I've listened to people who are cohabiting now, and people who cohabited decades ago. I see parallels between my experience of trying out a new form of living together and that of those who cohabit. As young adults do,

I stepped away from my elders' teachings, metaphorically throwing myself off a cliff to test my capacity to navigate the currents of ethical judgment.

Questions marked my flight. How will my life be different from my parents? What from previous generations fits into today? What will I claim and what will I reject? I see the same kinds of exploring and questioning today.

I believe that the individualism of my time led naturally to the choices of today. I didn't ask my parents' permission, nor did I discuss it with my fluid church community. If I'd been called to defend my actions, I likely would have replied from an individualistic perspective that my fiancé and I were responsibly choosing ar-



I am not convinced that the choice to cohabit is a wise one, or that it will serve the partners well in the long-run.

rangements fitting for us. Ironically, this response was made when I was exploring models of Christian community that call for the community to have quite a bit to say about one's ethical choices.

Many people today do not feel bound by community traditions. They are exploring new ways of forming commitments, of attaching and bonding. This dramatic shift

away from marriage towards cohabitation is startling and destabilizing.

I am not convinced that the choice to cohabit is a wise one, or that it will serve the partners well in the long-run. I think that living together without the exchange of committed vows made before God and witnesses weakens a couple's relationship, and makes it more difficult to build an enduring, sturdy union.

At the same time, I acknowledge that my generation has made quite a mess of marriage. Many of us have been unable to keep our marriage promises, or we live in relationships that fall short of abundant, fruitful life in Christ. While I continue to believe that the deepest sexual intimacies are reserved for marriage, it is also difficult to find substantial biblical teaching to support that. Biblical marriages, with their patriarchy, polygamy and concubines, have little in common with the marriages I've witnessed. Further study has led me to conclude that the Bible has much more to say about poverty, wealth and justice than it does about sexual ethics.

Let's remember that the job of the elders is to set the boundaries, to lay down markers to guide the young. It's

the task of the young to question and test those same boundaries. May God be with us as we set markers and as we explore the lines beyond the markers.

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

pages 16-17)—is a corresponding attention to “identity.” Whenever one talks about including someone, it is helpful to think about “into what.”

All communities exist because of shared understandings or boundaries of one sort or another. Core convictions, common mission, expectations of conduct, mutual promises, all of these make for identity. Inclusion is a worthy goal—or not—depending on our

understanding of identity.

Should we be urging our children’s soccer teams to be more inclusive of those who would prefer to use their hands? Probably not, unless our goal is to alter the nature of the game itself. We should, however, be striving to include children from a range of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.

(Continued on page 12)

GOD, MONEY AND ME

He chose to be generous

HAROLD PENNER

Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC) recently completed the printing of *Giving Your First Fruits: Money, Faith and Worship*, which contains the collected writings of Edwin Friesen.

Edwin was a stewardship consultant with MFC for more than 13 years and was involved in the creation of many of its resources. He had a passion for writing, for sharing and for inspiring generosity in others. The book features a collection of Friesen’s writings, as well as recollections of Edwin by various family, friends and colleagues.

Edwin’s writings were often based on experiences from his own life and family, and they profess a very practical

message. Those featured in the book speak about our use, management and sharing of money. The concept of first-fruits giving to God is presented not as a legalistic method of dealing with money, but rather a response to God’s generosity to us, and a means of ensuring money does not displace God in our hearts.

Like the question of which came first, the chicken or the egg, Edwin reflects on the relationship between our generosity and God’s blessing: Do we give first

then experience God’s blessing, or do we give because we feel we have been blessed? How would you describe your experience?

True to Edwin’s nature, he occasionally provides readers with a “rule of thumb” to assist with very practical ideas for money management. These rules were collected from the interactions he had with people throughout his life and considered worthy of remembering and sharing with others. They also reflect his life practice of being intentional in the things he did and encouraging others to

do likewise.

With Edwin, generosity was a conscious decision. He chose to be generous, not only when there would be a charity receipt attached, but to make a practice of also giving directly to bless others without expecting a tax refund at the end of the year. He saw this as a means of ensuring he was truly giving from a generous heart and of breaking the limiting shackles of the charitable receipting system that is part of the Canadian tax system.

Over the years of being an MFC stewardship consultant Edwin counted it an honour and privilege to speak with hundreds of individuals and couples regarding their estate plans, as well as dozens of couples regarding succession planning.

In “Are you keeping a family secret?” Edwin challenges couples to open the conversation and be transparent with their children about their estates and their intentions regarding transferring the estate to their children or charity. While recognizing there may be situations where openness is not wise, he knew from experience the benefit of openness and he sought to model that in his own family.

MFC published *Giving Your First Fruits: Money, Faith and Worship* to honour the contribution of Edwin Friesen to the Foundation and its clients. It is our hope that the book will challenge and encourage you to reflect on your handling

Do we give first then experience God’s blessing, or do we give because we feel we have been blessed?



and dialogue regarding money. To read it online or download a free copy, visit MennoFoundation.ca/gyff or contact an MFC office near you to receive a personal copy.

Harold Penner is a stewardship consultant at the Winnipeg 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.

(Continued from page 11)

In church discussions, presuppositions about Christian communal identity are too often assumed without being made explicit. When we talk about inclusion without talking about our understanding of ecclesial identity, we tend to talk past each other.

SCOTT BRUBAKER-ZEHR, WATERLOO, ONT.

✉ Climate-change gatherings negatively impact climate

RE: "METZGER CHALLENGES church on climate change," April 1, page 30.

First of all, thank you to the *Canadian Mennonite* staff for doing an excellent job of reporting on the real situations we Mennonites find ourselves in. Perhaps for future climate-change gatherings, modern communication devices could replace jumbo jets, as the article calls into question our consumption levels.

JAKE GOSSEN, STAPLES, ONT.

FROM OUR LEADERS

Across generations

ELSIE REMPEL

Since last summer I have been responding to a rich crop of invitations to discuss healthy ways of grandparenting and relating across generational divides. I'm enjoying the ride. Rewarding conversations with old and young have ensued. I've learned about many creative ways grandparents stay in touch with their grandchildren, and I've made some new young friends.

I've been blessed by congregations where it is hard to tell who is biologically related because they are all so socially and spiritually related.

After all, when there are only a hundred people living in your village, planning for intergenerational events isn't necessary.

Everyone's participation is required and appreciated!

In urban centres, though, the experience can be different. Because urbanites have easy access to so many activities and relationships, congregational social networks tend to be less robust and disconnectedness can take root. Young and old may not know each other unless they are members of the same biological family, or they personally make deliberate attempts to build an intergenerational sense of

community.

The good news is that some of our congregations are building stronger intergenerational communities. They do so in a creative response to today's reality: Only 20 percent of grandparents live in close proximity to their grandchildren, and even fewer of those grandchildren participate in the congregation of their grandparents. They seek multi-age communities, knowing that seniors age better when they have significant relationships with the young, and that young people



The good news is that some of our congregations are building stronger intergenerational communities.

stay more closely connected to faith communities when they are in significant relationships with seniors.

While connecting with biological grandchildren is a great natural way to build multi-age communities, we need to develop and affirm the alternatives. For example, you might try offering a deliberate focus on surrogate or spiritual grandparenting on National Grandparents Day on the second Sunday in September or on any other Sunday when this aspect of church community is blessed.

Many of our congregations already select mentor pairs when the mentee turns 12. That's great, but let's expand this good practice. Let's bless seniors in our congregations as they relate in life- and faith-affirming ways with the church's children and youth.

The 2011 Evangelical Fellowship of Canada study, "Hemorrhaging faith: Why and when Canadian young adults are leaving, staying and returning to the church," includes the good news that intergenerational relationships and service trips have a positive impact on young people's allegiance to faith and their faith community.

Let's use this finding as an encouragement to serve together in all kinds of contexts: at our local summer camps,

on Mennonite Disaster Service trips, or at the local thrift store or soup kitchen. Let's be intentional about travelling our journey of faith together, knowing that wherever we are along the road, God has a place for us. And that place is blessed by being in relationship with God's children of all ages.

Elsie Rempel is the formation consultant for Mennonite Church Canada and the author of Please Pass the Faith: The Art of Spiritual Grandparenting.

✉ MCC is a worldwide ministry of the church

IN MY ROLE as a member of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Joint Ministry Council (JMC), I had the privilege of participating in several of the March meetings of the boards of MCC Canada and MCC U.S., including their annual joint meeting. As an outside observer I offer the following personal observations and reflections.

I am impressed to see how MCC U.S. and MCC Canada have made a way to work together in a spirit of mutual respect, mutual support and harmony. Thanks to an enormous amount of work in developing clear guidelines and policies, thanks to the good will of the people involved, and thanks to the grace of God, the two MCCs are working in peaceful cooperation and speaking with a unified voice. It is my perception that the two partners work together in harmony with the common goal of serving needy people in the name of Christ.

I am delighted to see how much the church matters to the MCC board members and staff. The people of MCC clearly perceive MCC as a service agency or ministry of the church, not apart or separated from it. As such, MCC is rooted in the church and dependent on it.

I am thankful that MCC understands itself as an explicitly Christian ministry, dedicated to sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord in deed and word. As such, MCC is committed to support and promote Christian churches abroad and at home.

I am pleased to hear how MCC board members and staff identify MCC as a “people organization,” not a money-granting institution. MCC is about helping people in need, not about upholding an institution.

In summary, I thank God for MCC as a worldwide ministry of Anabaptist churches which continues to transform the lives of thousands of people, both those who serve and those who are being served.

During the course of these meetings I sometimes felt as if I heard God saying to MCC staff and workers around the world: *“Come, you who are blessed by my Father. . . Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me”* (Matthew 25:34,40).

WERNER FRANZ, ASUNCIÓN, PARAGUAY

Werner Franz is pastor of Concordia Mennonite Church, Asunción, and a Mennonite World Conference-elected member of the Mennonite Central Committee Joint Ministry Council.

✉ Canadian Foodgrains Bank offers thanks for 30 years

APRIL 13 MARKED the 30th anniversary of the founding of Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

Throughout this year, we wish to celebrate and thank the many people and organizations that have created, built and supported the Foodgrains Bank over the years: the early visionaries, the practical people that worked out the mechanics, the many farmers across the country that caught the vision, Mennonite Central Committee that established the initial food bank and then invited other churches to join, and the 15 Canadian churches and church-based agencies that now belong.

We also want to recognize the hundreds of partner organizations around the world that implement programs in often difficult circumstances; the growing number of church congregations, both rural and urban, that are participating; the many individuals who generously donate cash; the business community that supports growing projects and facilitates grain donations and other efforts; and the Canadian International Development Agency that has supported the Foodgrains Bank from the beginning.

We are thankful that significant progress has been made in reducing the prevalence of hunger around the world over the last 30 years. The most recent report by the Food and Agriculture Organization indicates that the prevalence of hunger in developing countries has fallen from 23 percent to 15 percent in the last 20 years. We have contributed to this progress by reducing the impoverishing effects of hunger and disasters, and by supporting the efforts of households and communities to feed themselves.

Yet we are deeply conscious that there are still 870 million people around the world who go hungry. Continued progress in reducing hunger is by no means certain. Our 30th anniversary is a time of re-tooling how we work, expanding some new approaches, strengthening the quality of our program, and inviting Canadians to continue joining with us in this God-inspired work of ending hunger.

While we have much to celebrate, we do so with the knowledge that the work of ending hunger is as urgent and vital as ever.

JIM CORNELIUS, WINNIPEG

Jim Cornelius is executive director of Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Christian living in the 'Age of Spirit'

BY TROY WATSON

A few years ago I heard a story about a Chinese pastor who toured the United States visiting churches across the country. At the end of his trip he was asked what he thought about American churches. He answered, "I am amazed at how much the church in America can accomplish without the Holy Spirit."



Spirit, and can treat the Holy Ghost like a drug that gives them a high, or like a genie who grants wishes via prayer. These Christians sometimes have a disproportionate preoccupation with signs and wonders, the devil and spiritual warfare, as well.

Still other Christians avoid talking about the Holy Spirit altogether. I

I don't know if this is a true story or a provocative sermon illustration some American pastor created, or embellished, for his message. Either way, it strikes me as a tad judgmental. However, it does highlight a question that is paramount for the church today. Are we attuned to the movement of the Holy Spirit?

In Revelation, the last book in our Bible, Jesus gives final instructions to the seven major churches of the first century. Each message is unique and personalized to the particular church he is addressing. There is only one universal message Jesus speaks to all seven churches: *"Those that have ears, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches."* I believe this is the Spirit of Christ's universal message to churches today.

Of course, there are many different understandings of what it means to be in tune with the Holy Spirit. Many Christians seem comfortable talking about being led by the Holy Spirit, but what this actually means to them remains ambiguous and peripheral to what is really important—like evangelism or social justice or Bible study or environmentalism.

There are other Christians who seem to be obsessed with the power of the

have heard pastors dismiss Spirit baptism as something special for the early church and not meant for us today. Some go so far as to preach against this so-called Spirit baptism as dangerous or demonic.

Then there are Christians I would

describe as being Christ-conscious or Spirit-conscious. They view the Holy Spirit as the Divine Presence that permeates all of existence, but we need ears to hear and eyes to see this. The core practices of their faith are directed towards attuning their entire being to Divine Spirit to help them become saturated to the point of overflowing with divine life, love and peace. These Christians are committed to living in a state of Spirit-consciousness or unceasing prayer that enables them to see "Christ is all and in all."

These Spirit-conscious Christians have had the most impact on my own spiritual life. In fact, during my agnostic years it was reading the writings of mystics, past and present, that guided me back to Christ. Reading about their intimate

relationships with the mysterious divine reality I had experienced, but was unable to give language to, fanned the flames of the divine spark within me.

I grew up in a church obsessed with the Bible while being ambiguous about the Holy Spirit. I came to understand at a young age what the Apostle Paul meant when he said, *"the letter [word] kills, but the Spirit brings life."* I saw the Bible used as a tool of destruction and death too many times to count.

Growing up in this environment of biblical fundamentalism unveiled for me the profound truth of Paul's wisdom in I Corinthians 2: The person without the Holy Spirit cannot understand the spiritual truth in the Scriptures while the person filled with the Holy Spirit will be taught by the Spirit, with or without the Bible.

I love the Scriptures and believe the Holy Spirit speaks to me through them. However, I'm confident my faith and relationship with God would continue to thrive if I never read the Bible again. On the other hand, I can't imagine a meaningful life of faith without communion

I'm confident my faith and relationship with God would continue to thrive if I never read the Bible again.

with the Spirit of Christ.

Meister Eckhart, a brilliant 13th-century scholar of theology and Scripture, once wrote, "My Lord once told me a joke. And seeing him laugh has done more for me than any Scripture I will ever read."

I realize this might sound strange to many Christians, but I believe this is the kind of intimacy with God for which we were created. My prayer is that more and more people will experience what Meister Eckhart is talking about. I can think of nothing more divine than having a laugh with the creator/source of pure joy. ☸

Troy Watson (troy@questcc.ca) is the spiritual life director of Quest in St. Catharines, Ont.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Bekker—Finntan Justus (b. April 12, 2013), to Faith and Heinrich Bekker, Grace Mennonite, Regina.

Erb—Gabrielle (b. April 23, 2013), to Patrick and Claudine Erb, Crosshill Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.

Gerbrandt—Isaac Gregory Adam (b. Feb. 14, 2013), to Adam and Sarah Gerbrandt, Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man.

Goetzke—Myelle Rachel Stutzman (b. April 14, 2013), to Eric Stutzman and Lyris Short-Goetzke, Hope Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Gunn—Elaina Carolyn (b. April 2, 2013), to Will and Anne Gunn, Tavistock Mennonite, Ont.

Leis—Clara Mae Hope (May 2, 2013), to Terry and Holly Leis, New Hamburg, Ont., Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Wall—Cayden Hunter (b. May 5, 2013), to Jason and Annie Wall, Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Baptisms

Taylor Baker, Diana Jensen, Emily Moore—Grace Mennonite, Regina, April 21, 2013.

Caleb Derksen, Derek Penner, Steve Peters, Evelyn Philippsen, Adam Wiebe—Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., May 5, 2013.

Deaths

Bowman—Vera, 79 (b. April 29, 1933; d. April 14, 2013), Floradale Mennonite, Ont.

Enns—Elfrieda (nee Dyck), 73 (b. May 9, 1939; d. May 1, 2013), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Frey—Bertha (nee Streicher), 72 (b. Dec. 13, 1940; d. April 13, 2013), Hawkesville Mennonite, Ont.

Hamm—Albert, 66 (b. Jan. 27, 1947; d. April 18, 2013), First Mennonite, Edmonton.

Heese—Mary (nee Wiens), 82 (b. Feb. 12, 1930; d. Jan. 18, 2013), Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man.

Helmuth—Eilene, 66 (b. May 27, 1946; d. April 19, 2013), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Klassen—Helen, 87 (b. Dec. 1, 1925; d. Feb. 26, 2013), Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man.

Loewen—Gerhard (Hardy), 78 (b. Dec. 24, 1934; d. April 12, 2013), Calgary Inter-Mennonite.

Peters—Edward, 83 (b. Jan. 4, 1930; d. April 17, 2013), Bergthal Mennonite, Didsbury, Alta.

Peters—Lottie (nee Goertzen), 67 (b. July 31, 1945; d. March 17, 2013), Laird Mennonite, Sask.

Schellenberg—Anganeta (nee Rempel), 89 (b. July 6, 1923; d. March 28, 2013), Level Ground Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Snider—Doreen, 93 (b. Oct. 11, 1919; d. April 19, 2013), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

Tilitzky—Susan (nee Harder), 90 (b. Feb. 27, 1923; d. April 16, 2013), Level Ground Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Thompson—Heidi (nee Gascho), 28 (b. Nov. 9, 1984; d. May 4, 2013), Avon Mennonite, Stratford, Ont.

Unger—Helen (nee Driedger), 96; (b. Sept. 13, 1916; d. March 18, 2013), Elim Mennonite, Grunthal, Man.

Wiebe—Jacob A., 90 (b. Aug. 1, 1922; d. April 23, 2013), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Wilker—Elroy, 78 (b. Feb. 13, 1935; d. May 7, 2013), Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, 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

COVER STORY

'Like a watered garden'

Theme of Saskatchewan Enrichment Day urges women to get their hands dirty in God's good earth

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONNA SCHULZ

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*

ROSTHERN, SASK.

The foyer of Eigenheim Mennonite Church, filled with bedding plants on a garden bench and trickling water from several fountains, visually and audibly depicted the theme of this year's Saskatchewan Women in Mission (SWM) Enrichment Day theme: "Like a watered garden."

Related to the theme, Melita Hildebrand gave participants a mental workout with a gardening quiz, and Marian Hooge Jones offered a physical workout with a series of gardening-related stretches and exercises.

Kaytee Edwards, representing Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan's gardening project, described her work of teaching inner-city children to grow their own food. SWM designated a portion of the afternoon's offering for this project.

Keynote speaker Lavonne Dyck of

Glenbush eloquently shared what gardening has taught her about faith in Christ. Then four women—Verna Olfert, Kristen Fehr, Renata Klassen and Rosalind Epp—shared their "100-word stories" about meeting God in their gardens. This was followed by conversation in the pews around the question, "What have you learned about God through gardening?"

Hosted by Eigenheim Women's Fellowship on April 27, the event began with morning refreshments and a time of visiting. Worship included hearty singing led by Gwen Ens and a devotional by Lois Siemens.

The afternoon session began with a devotional by Naomi Unger and special music by the Eigenheim women.

A memorial service, led by the women of Zoar Mennonite Church, Langham,

honoured Saskatchewan women who passed away in 2012.

Provincial executive officers were commissioned for another year of service during the annual business meeting. They are:

- MYRNA SAWATZKY, president
- MARILYN NEUFELD, vice-president
- RUTH QUIRING HEPPNER, treasurer
- VERNA OLFERT, secretary

Naomi Unger and Lois Siemens continue on the program committee, with a third position left vacant. Kathy Friesen, Glennis Koop, and Denise Epp form the nominating committee. ❧

/// Briefly noted

MDS helps after flood closes Shekinah Retreat Centre

On May 2, with flooding being a concern in 10 other Saskatchewan communities, Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) sent a notice to Mennonite Church Saskatchewan congregations calling for volunteers to help clean up after flooding at Shekinah Retreat Centre near Waldheim. "It was caused by an ice jam," says Kristy Letkeman, Shekinah's executive director. The flash flood, which occurred on the day school groups were to begin coming, caused a metre of water to pool in the building used for the annual summer camps and school programs. "This was higher than anyone has seen it," she says. "Normally, the water peaks at the end of June." The damage was extensive and the whole kitchen has to be rebuilt, but the camp has no insurance coverage. There are repairs to pay for, while, at the same time, there is a loss of income from the school groups who can't use the camp. On May 7, a second notice from MDS announced that the clean-up at the camp had been completed and now volunteers were needed to help with rebuilding so that the summer camp season could get underway. Rebuilding was expected to take place May 13 to 17.

—BY KARIN FEHDERAU



Bedding plants on a garden bench help participants get into the spirit of this year's Saskatchewan Women in Mission Enrichment Day theme: 'Like a watered garden.'

'A contribution to the public debate'

European Mennonites plan multimedia project to focus on public influence and future identity

BY JAN WILLEM STENVERS

Mennonite World Conference
AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS

"A contribution to the public debate." That's what Fernando Enns, professor of Mennonite peace theology and ethics at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, calls euMENNet. This multimedia project aims to reveal the influence of five centuries of Mennonite migration, and to sharpen the Mennonite identity in Europe for the future.

For centuries the Anabaptists moved away, lingered, and moved on. The Anabaptist diaspora led the Mennonites throughout Europe, to countries like Ukraine, Poland, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and others. Time and again there were reasons to stay and reasons to move on: oppression, economic malaise, economic prosperity, freedom of religion.

As an initiative of Kees Knijnenberg of the International Menno Simons Center and Antoinette Hazevoet, five centuries of Mennonite Europe are being assembled with the help of euMENNet. Through a website that will be ready for use in 2014, a migration tour and other activities, stories of Mennonites throughout Europe will be told. EuMENNet is an international project to which various Mennonites in Europe are contributing.

What connects this group of European Mennonites? And how much do they differ from one another? What is their story? What has been their influence on European history and societies? What can we learn from their stories? These questions will be answered by Mennonites throughout Europe by video, text and data.

Together with others, Enns is in charge of the content element of the project. "EuMENNet will help us European Mennonites to get to know each other,"

he says. He thinks of euMENNet as one tool to do this. "It's necessary to establish something which will shape the Mennonite identity in Europe."

The project tries to develop this identity through the stories of the Mennonites themselves. "It's not like scholars and church boards develop an identity and then tell the congregation what it is," Enns says. "We want to tell the stories from a bottom-up approach, with different facets from different regions. We're not only looking for the history of Mennonites from various areas in Europe, but also for the goals they have and the challenges they are facing right now."

This multimedia project is about Mennonites, by Mennonites, and is very interesting and valuable for Mennonites, but, according to Enns, it is also of importance to other Europeans. "The story of the Mennonites has a lot to do with the story of Europe," Enns says. "In the areas where they were allowed to settle, the Mennonites have always contributed to language development, economy, culture, politics and theology. They also contributed to technological progress, for instance in the field of agriculture."

Mennonites also had their role in the political history of Europe. "In the times of the Reformation, Anabaptists/Mennonites asked for the freedom to choose for [adult] baptism," Enns says. "They asked for freedom of speech. They asked for freedom from conscription. All these freedoms, which the often-oppressed Mennonites fought for as a minority back then, are now seen as universal human rights."

Enns feels that everyone can learn from all these contributions to history. "Nowadays, everybody talks about the



Professor Fernando Enns is in charge of the content element of the European multimedia project. 'EuMENNet will help us European Mennonites to get to know each other; he says of one of its many benefits.

importance of religious freedom and tolerance," Enns notes. "But in the meantime, it is getting more and more difficult to actually deal with these concepts. We are facing the limits of freedom as well. How can we preserve diversity without losing unity? As a minority which carries a lot of diversity within itself, yet always strives to preserve its unity, Mennonites can contribute to this debate."

EuMENNet is not enough to shape this contribution to the European democracy, of course. But, according to Enns, "it is a way to determine our identity and show it to others. . . . What is it that makes us call ourselves Mennonites? And how will we profile ourselves to the world around us?" ❧

God at work in the Church

Snapshots

HOFFNUNGSFELDER CHURCHES PHOTO



The Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite churches of Glenbush, Rabbit Lake and Mayfair, Sask., celebrated Cornie and Marlene Martens' 50 years of ministry on April 28 with a worship service, fellowship meal and afternoon program. The couple was given a cross made by Dave and Sue Neufeld Herschel from dismantled grain elevator wood as well as a cash gift and flowers from the churches. Cornie, of Rabbit Lake, had been nominated to serve the three congregations as a lay minister in 1959. In August 1963, he was ordained by the Hoffnungsfelder churches and has pastored continuously since then. He is now a retired farmer.

MC CANADA PHOTO BY DEBORAH FROESE



Willard Metzger, left, has been overwhelmingly affirmed by the Mennonite Church Canada General Board to serve a second three-year term as executive director. Hilda Hildebrand, chair of the General Board, right, says, 'Board members recognize that Mennonite Church Canada is in a period of transition. That brings with it some unique challenges. Willard has provided good leadership in a difficult time and has a strong sense of the hopes and concerns facing our church and our increasingly diverse constituency.' Metzger says that he looks forward to serving a second term and feels comfortable in the midst of Canada's shifting religious landscape. 'I have a strong sense that God is at work in this time of change and I'm excited to be a part of what God is doing,' he says.

MENNONITE CHURCH EASTERN CANADA PHOTO BY LIZ WEBER



Hawkesville Mennonite Church youths are this year's Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Bible Quizzing champions. The event took place at Breslau Mennonite Church on April 13. Pictured from left to right, front row: team members Frank Cento, Ciaran Fast-Sittler, Simon Raimbault, Katie Bartel, Liv Cento and Irian Fast-Sittler; and back row: coaches Laverne Martin and Jon Hines. Brett Kropf of East Zorra Mennonite Church, Tavistock, won the Quizzer of the Year Award.

PHOTO BY JOSH PENFOLD



Seven pastors completed the Mennonite Church Eastern Canada Transitioning into Ministry (TiM) program on April 16. TiM combines mentoring by established pastors, peer group support, coaching by trained clergy, and retreats for teaching and spiritual formation. Pictured from left to right, front row: Myrna Miller Dyck, Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, mentor; Marianne Mellinger, MC Eastern Canada co-ordinator of leadership formation; Kendra Whitfield Ellis, Floradale Mennonite Church, TiM participant; Ardith Frey, Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, mentor; Lois Bukar, Wideman Mennonite Church, Markham, TiM participant; Scott Mabee, Erie View Mennonite Church, Port Rowan, TiM participant; and Lloyd Oakey, Calvary Mennonite Church, Ayr, mentor; and back row: Alissa Bender, Hamilton Mennonite Church, TiM participant; Henry Paetkau, MC Eastern Canada area church minister; David Brubacher, clergy coach; Dave Rogalsky, Wilmot Mennonite Church, New Hamburg, mentor; Sean East, West Hills Mennonite Church, New Hamburg, TiM participant; Hans Peters, Jane Finch Community Church, Toronto, TiM participant; and Meghan Lennox, TiM director. Missing: Chip Bender, clergy coach; and Liz Brazier-Ackerman, Rouge Valley Mennonite Church, Markham, TiM participant.

\$80,000 donation supports Being a Faithful Church process

BY DAN DYCK

Mennonite Church Canada
WINNIPEG

A group of committed national church supporters which wishes to remain anonymous has pledged \$80,000 over four years in support of Mennonite Church Canada's Being a Faithful Church (BFC) process.

The BFC process began in 2009 and is designed to strengthen congregational and individual capacity to discern the Bible in the church's current context.

The money will help make possible wider consultation and more inclusion of congregations of new Canadians, and cover travel and meeting costs, and document publication and distribution. The BFC budget over four years is set at \$103,000. The group invites others to contribute the remaining \$23,000.

"The BFC process is a prime example of collective discernment and why the national church exists," says the lead donor.

Alissa Bender, pastor of Hamilton Mennonite Church, Ont., says of the

donation, "It's encouraging that these individuals are willing to put their financial resources behind the process, especially for congregations who may find it more difficult to participate." The gift sends a weighty message on the importance these supporters place on nationwide community discernment of significant faith matters, she adds.

Richard Bage, youth pastor at Altona Bergthaler Mennonite Church, Man., echoes Bender's sentiments. "That's fantastic," he says. "Anytime we can gather to read Scripture and discern, it's a good thing. We need to celebrate that." As a youth pastor, he hopes that what adults learn from the BFC process will be passed on to youth. "We need to equip our adults well to engage our young people, but we also need to be willing to intentionally engage our young people on difficult issues," he says.

MC Canada executive director Willard Metzger has been an observer of a similar



"It's encouraging that these individuals are willing to put their financial resources behind the process, especially for congregations who may find it more difficult to participate," says Alissa Bender, pastor of Hamilton Mennonite Church, Ont., of the recent donation to Mennonite Church Canada's Being a Faithful Church process.

process in another national church body. He saw firsthand how one process developed into uninformed debate when people said they had not been adequately consulted. Metzger hopes more people can engage in important biblical discernment the new funding will now facilitate.

"The early church's Council of Jerusalem sets an example for us regarding the BFC process," Metzger says, referencing the Acts 15 story of a wider church gathering that drew together the wisdom of many people to discern important church matters of the day.

Metzger notes that the gift is being made with no expectations on the process's outcome, and the donors declare they have no agenda other than that they simply feel called to support what they believe is important for the national church, regardless of the specific issues being studied at any stage of the process.

"These supporters are regular contributors to Mennonite Church Canada, and they have assured me that this is a contribution over and above regular giving to local and regional churches and church agencies," Metzger says. ☞

☞ Staff change

New intercultural studies director coming to Columbia in August

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.—Kara Bergstrom has been appointed as the new intercultural studies program director at Columbia Bible College (CBC), beginning in August. She comes with a master of arts degree in cross-cultural ministries from Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary at ACTS Seminaries, and has given leadership to short-term mission projects as director of global projects at Trinity Western University, Langley, B.C. Bergstrom was also a site leader and mentor with the Canadian Mennonite University Outtown program based in Winnipeg. Her most recent position was as a writer and editor with the MB Mission International office. "I am excited to join the CBC team as the director of intercultural studies," she says. "I have already met a number of the students and am inspired by their passion for and commitment to serving Christ across cultures." Bergstrom and her husband Kent reside in Abbotsford with their two pre-school children, Brook and Luke.

—Columbia Bible College



Bergstrom

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

Small congregation draws big talent

Mather hosts eighth annual coffeehouse

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent

The tiny hamlet of Mather in southwestern Manitoba is home to about 100 people, but for one night of the year the population burgeons. On April 13, the Mather community held its annual coffeehouse at the community hall, drawing about 130 people from far and wide.

Begun eight years ago by members of Trinity Mennonite Fellowship, the coffeehouse has become a highly anticipated event in the region.

Judy Hildebrand who, together with Art Harms, has been on the organizing committee since its beginning, says it was especially timely this year because two middle-aged people from their small congregation had died during the year. "Even though it's getting harder to find people to help plan the coffeehouse, we wanted to make sure it happened this year," she says. "Our congregation was going through a hard time and so this year was not the year to stop."

The coffeehouses began when Jeff Thiessen, a musician, was pastor of this small congregation of about 50 members. "We have quite a few musicians in our church and he was looking for ways to showcase local talent," says Hildebrand. "After Jeff left, we continued. It is a really good community event for Mather."

From the beginning, the organizing committee decided on several agencies and organizations it would like to support with proceeds from the coffeehouse.

"Over the years, we have supported different Mennonite Central Committee projects like Global Family, Foodgrains Bank, Agape Table, our local food bank, and Frontier Foundation, which teaches people in northern communities how to log their trees and build homes," says Hildebrand.

This year, \$1,831 was raised for Christian Peacemaker Teams.

Although the coffeehouse idea was born out of Trinity, it has never been part of the church's programming.

"We are just kind of an ad hoc committee," says Hildebrand. "We want to do this and so we get together."

Although there is a lot of talent in the

'We have quite a few musicians in our church and he was looking for ways to showcase local talent.'

(Judy Hildebrand)

SENTINEL COURIER PHOTO BY GREG DEJONG



A group of young teenage musicians are a highlight at the Mather Coffeehouse on April 13. Zach Tiessen, Tyler Rempel, Myles Tiessen, Brianna Hildebrand and Daria Hildebrand are from Trinity and Crystal City Mennonite churches and Cornerstone Ministries Church.

small local congregation, "there is not always a lot of energy," she says. "Like many communities, our farm women often have off-the-farm jobs and even some of the farming husbands as well. As a church, we don't do much fundraising or social events because everyone is so busy. But when there is a cause, or if something comes up, we know how to pull together."

Besides the music, delicious homemade baking is also a crowd attraction. In the past, Hildebrand made many of the homemade cinnamon buns and doughnuts, but this year Trinity's food committee, Pauline Zacharias and Lil Krahn, took up the challenge and provided homemade tarts.

"It has been such a great event every year," says Hildebrand. "It is very hard to say that we're not going to do any more. After the concert, we realized what a great evening it has been and really there was not that much work involved." ❧

PHOTO BY MATT SAWATZKY, 2012



Madeline Spence of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation at Nelson House, Man., says 'Our land used to be so good; the shorelines used to be so different.'

VIEWPOINT

Faith and megawatts

BY WILL BRAUN
SENIOR WRITER

The director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Manitoba at the time told me two issues stirred up the most flak from constituents: MCC's work in Israel-Palestine and its involvement with hydropower issues in the north.

That was a dozen years ago. I was MCC's hydro guy.

After three-and-a-half years I quit that job. The opposition I faced from the MCC board and constituency made the work untenable. Looking back, I wish I had handled some things more

graciously, but, regardless, advocating for better treatment of indigenous people and land affected by hydro dams was just "too political," as they say, for the organization.

In the past few years, I have returned to hydro-related work during the hours I'm not writing for *Canadian Mennonite*. I am the lone staffer with the Interchurch Council on Hydropower, for which MCC serves as a valued member, funding source and website host.

The climate has shifted somewhat now. Manitoba Hydro is on its heels as people

from all sides question its plan to gamble \$20 billion on two huge new dams and related transmission lines. The provincial Tories, a former NDP energy minister and the publisher of the *Winnipeg Free Press* have all said the plan is too risky.

Our little church group has jumped into this charged political climate with a few opinion articles in the provincial paper of record—the *Free Press*—and a new photo exhibit that explores the complicated reality of northern hydropower.

Photographer Matt Sawatzky, a graduate of Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, and Cree elder Ellen Cook, who is co-chair of our council, travelled to four hydro-affected communities last fall to gather images and stories. The result is an exhibit entitled "A Sad Sort of Clean." It consists of 22 large photos along with a half-hour video. The exhibit, which is at the Flatlanders gallery in the

PHOTO BY MATT SAWATZKY, 2012



Herb Cook of the Misipawistik Cree Nation at Grand Rapids, Man., surveys a shoreline littered with logs from eroding shorelines on the Cedar Lake hydroelectric reservoir.

Winnipeg Centre Vineyard Church until June 30, will also be available for church and community events, such as an upcoming United Church regional annual general meeting.

In the take-home postcard that accompanies the exhibit we ask whether hydropower is truly clean, as the utility brands it, given the ongoing extensive environmental damage depicted in the photos. We also suggest that innovative energy conservation measures could be a cheaper, greener and entirely realistic option to pouring ever more cement into rivers.

While our work may be somewhat less controversial than in the past, it is still well out on the obscured periphery of church activity. In a way, that's okay. Not everything can be or should be at the centre.

That said, I think the spiritual significance of faith-based work on these sorts of current "political" issues could be better understood within the faith community. What does faith have to do with megawatts? Does Jesus care about dams?

Like many other large-scale resource developments, dams in northern Manitoba have left deep wounds on the land and in people's hearts. Our photo exhibit makes this clear. Our

consumption harms people and the good lands God created. I see our group's work as a simple expression of love for people at the northern end of the transmission lines and an expression of respect towards creation. I see our work as the work of healing a broken relationship.

When I'm talking to a northern fisherman or elder about the anguish and frustration of hydro impacts, the spiritual significance of the work feels obvious and deep. We connect on a spiritual level.

Other aspects of the work are more

complicated and nuanced. Speaking publicly about a high-stakes issue gets messy. Dams are not black and white. They do not have carbon-spewing smokestacks, but to call them clean, as government and Manitoba Hydro do, ignores the obvious damage up north.

Our involvement is further complicated by the fact that different elements of the indigenous population have opposing views about the proposed new dams. It is further complicated by the fact that many Mennonites work for Manitoba Hydro and in government departments involved in hydro development.

I welcome the challenges that these factors present. I think the faith community should move toward, rather than away from, contentious, complicated issues, in part because we cannot disassociate ourselves. As consumers, we are involved every time we flick a light switch. We are in a relationship whether we admit it or not.

There is great potential to be involved in an intentional constructive way, a way that welcomes candid dialogue with all parties, takes seriously Jesus' words about "the least of these," thinks creatively about environmental and economic justice options, and returns continually to the need for love and healing.

For more on the Interchurch Council on Hydropower, visit energyjustice.mcc.org. ☿

PHOTO BY WILL BRAUN



Photographer Matt Sawatzky at the May 3 opening of 'A Sad Sort of Clean,' an exhibit of his photographs.

Prison funding changes a cause for concern

BY KARIN FEHDERAU
Saskatchewan Correspondent

Harry Martens has been going into prisons to visit inmates for the last 30 years. As a volunteer for Person2Person (P2P), a Mennonite Church Saskatchewan-supported program based in Prince Albert, Martens and his wife Eva have seen a lot and know just about everything about life on the inside.

Recent legislation—to close the federally funded work farm at Riverbend that employed about 75 inmates and was highly therapeutic for the prisoners who worked there—and government funding cutbacks to P2P have changed the way he looks at prison visitation. “We just feel the government is not sensitive to prisoners,” says Martens, a member of Osler Mennonite Church. “It was a cruel thing to do,” he says of the closure of Riverbend, noting that many inmates grow up in an atmosphere of violence and hate, but they responded well to the animals and learned to trust again.

Otto Driedger, who worked as director of corrections for Saskatchewan from 1968-71, knows it, too. “People that are troubled relate better to animals,” he says.

“They shut all the farms down across Canada because there is no need for farm-hands,” charges Florence Driedger, a member of Peace Mennonite Church in Regina, whose background in social work brought her into contact with corrections issues.

But according to a government statement, the decision to close the farms was made after a review in 2008 to find the most effective way to use the funds available. “Offenders were not gaining the maximum employability skills through agriculture,” says Sara Parkes, a Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) media relations advisor.

“The Conservative government has ushered in some new bills and made some new policies in recent years that [are] impacting the atmosphere in the prisons,” says Brent Cooper, the full-time chaplain at the province’s Regional Psychiatric Centre in



Florence and Otto Driedger are avid supporters of Circles of Support and Accountability that works with prisoners released back into the community.

Saskatoon. “Prisons are becoming more like prisons, and rehabilitative and restorative programs are at stake,” he says.

But, counters Parkes, “the mandate of CSC is to contribute to public safety by actively encouraging and assisting offenders to become law-abiding citizens.”

Institutions now regulate volunteers

Frustration mounts when Martens is asked about the loss of funding for P2P’s director. “P2P has been a positive thing. [Now], it’s like a school that could use a teacher,” he says.

While acknowledging that funding has been cut to P2P, the government maintains that the program continues to exist and volunteers are welcome. It’s just that now “the institution is responsible for coordinating volunteers,” says Parkes of the change.

But Martens says he has noticed a change to the way volunteers are treated when they go to visit prisoners now. “It’s harder to get in to see visitors,” he says. “We found at the Regional Psych Centre that we can’t visit as a group any more.”

“I would agree that new policies have made it appear more challenging for volunteers to be engaged at the institution,” Cooper acknowledges. “Some volunteers have found these new policies to be annoying and restrictive,” but he notes that “the new policies were implemented for liability purposes.”

Walter Jantzen, pastor of Horse Lake Mennonite Church, volunteers at the penitentiary in Prince Albert through P2P. His experience of the changes has been more positive. While acknowledging that there have been rough spots in the past, nevertheless he believes that the warden and institution on the whole view the efforts of volunteers in a positive light. “They appreciate what we’ve done,” he says.

Healing lodges praised

Martens believes the negative atmosphere in prisons feeds into a system that makes it difficult for inmates. The solution, he believes, lies with aboriginal healing lodges. In light of higher incarceration rates among Canada’s first nations than the general population, it’s an idea that’s gaining support.

“I can’t say enough good about the healing lodges,” he says. “The elders are wonderful [and] inmates learn decision-making and to quit blaming society.”

Jantzen agrees on this point. “I like the whole idea” of healing lodges, he says, and believes the lodges display a more positive environment for inmates. So, it appears, does the government. A healing lodge at Duck Lake was recently expanded.

How should Mennonites respond?

“The Mennonite church is strong on restorative justice,” says Otto. “I think we should express a great deal of concern for the tough-on-crime mentality.”

“It’s more than just an emotional issue,” adds Florence. “Mennonites are practical people. Let’s look at what works.”

Now finding the finances to support what works is the next challenge for Mennonites in Saskatchewan. ❧

EFC critical of tabled Manitoba bullying bill

Evangelical Fellowship of Canada
OTTAWA

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC), of which Mennonite Church Canada is a member, has released its analysis of Manitoba's anti-bullying legislation, Bill 18, the Safe and Inclusive Schools Act.

"In our review of the law, we discovered a number of problems with the bill," explains EFC legal counsel Faye Sonier. "Some of the language is vague and the bill employs terms that have not been defined in law, either by the courts or by legislators. The government's proposal will leave school administrators and parents with the tasks of interpreting the law and sorting out how it should be applied. This scenario leaves no hope that it will be applied consistently across the province."

"In addition to clarifying the language in the Bill, we also encourage Manitoba's legislators to adopt an inclusive approach to their anti-bullying measures," continues Sonier. "While in one section Bill 18 requires 'due regard' for the principles of the Human Rights Code, which prohibits discrimination on various grounds, including religion, age and nationality, in another it mandates that only a select group of student clubs be supported by school boards. These are clubs related to the promotion of gender equity and antiracism, or awareness for people disabled by barriers or people of all sexual orientations and gender identities."

"In singling out some groups of students for special status, Bill 18 inherently creates a second class of students: those who are bullied for reasons other than the categories identified in the legislation," explains Don Hutchinson, EFC vice-president and general legal counsel. "These measures are divisive, rather than inclusive. The clubs mandated by Bill 18 do not reflect the needs of the substantial number of students who are most often bullied. This approach may, in fact, increase the frequency of bullying by isolating and segregating

students, sending them to separate corners, as it were."

"We have identified over a dozen areas of concern in this short bill," concludes Hutchinson. "Our concerns, as well as those expressed by representatives from the Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Coptic and Catholic communities, should give Manitoba's

legislators a reason to pause. Manitoba is a province with a diverse population, and each citizen—and identifiable minorities that have suffered discrimination and bullying themselves—deserves to have their concerns heard and addressed by their elected officials."

"I think we can all agree that no child should be bullied for any reason, at any time," says Hutchinson. "Where we disagree is . . . whether Bill 18, in its current form, will help reduce incidences of bullying behaviours. We're not convinced that this piece of legislation will achieve the goals the minister of education hopes it will." ❧

'Our concerns, as well as those expressed by representatives from the Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Coptic and Catholic communities, should give Manitoba's legislators a reason to pause.'

(Don Hutchinson)

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GOD AT WORK IN US

An unlikely friendship

The story of Mzwandile and Cobus

BY ANDREW SUDERMAN

Mennonite Church Canada

PIETERMARITZBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

An unlikely but emerging friendship between Mzwandile Nkutha and Cobus van Wyngaard through the Anabaptist Network in South Africa (ANiSA) demonstrates in a small way what it looks like to overcome deeply rooted racial prejudices in South Africa.

It is an unlikely friendship because Nkutha is a black Zulu and van Wyngaard is a white Afrikaner.

"ANiSA opened up a space where we could talk, share our story, talk about our backgrounds in an honest and open way

[more] than perhaps we could elsewhere," says Nkutha. "It was these spaces that made this friendship possible."

To fully understand the ramifications of their friendship, one must first understand the history of racial relationships in South Africa, where overcoming racial separation is an ongoing struggle. From 1948-94, racial segregation, introduced by colonialism in the 17th century, stood as the official all-encompassing political system of apartheid.

During apartheid all aspects of South

African life and activity were governed by racial categories: black, Indian, coloured (mixed race) and white. For whites, life was one of privilege, and they benefited from the best that the country had to offer. But for other racial groups, especially blacks, life was unfair, unjust and oppressive.

During his formative years, Nkutha grew up just outside of Johannesburg in Soweto, the largest black township in South Africa, while van Wyngaard grew up in Swaziland and South Africa. Although van Wyngaard's family would explicitly challenge the notions and beliefs of apartheid, as whites they benefited from their place of privilege.

Not only are Nkutha and van Wyngaard racially different, they come from people groups with a long, tenuous and violent past. On Dec. 16, 1838, combat between the Zulus and Voortrekkers, the ancestors of the Afrikaner, left the river near the battlefield running red with blood. The Battle of Blood River is commemorated yearly by Afrikaners because of their belief in "God's deliverance in that battle." But it also reminds Zulus of a battle that was a massacre that claimed thousands of lives.

Both Nkutha and van Wyngaard were formed by faith. Nkutha grew up in a black Baptist church, and is now a pastor of a Vineyard church. Van Wyngaard is a *dominie* (pastor or minister) in the Dutch Reformed Church, which today wrestles with its historic affiliation with the apartheid government and its policies.

Nkutha and van Wyngaard met at the first Dialogue held by ANiSA in April 2011. Sharing and listening to one another's stories sparked openness between them.

"As we got to know one another, we found ourselves living out a similar story," says Nkutha. "In our own contexts we have been exploring what it might look like to have the church demonstrate something different within our society. In this way we both have been walking the same journey."

Both men find themselves moving outside of their theological traditions, discovering common ground within the Anabaptist story, witness and theology.

Nkutha describes the Anabaptist story as one that "takes seriously the life and teachings of Jesus. It is this life and lifestyle

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ANABAPTIST NETWORK IN SOUTH AFRICA



Through the safe spaces provided for connection and discussion by the Anabaptist Network in South Africa (ANiSA) Dialogues, Mzwandile Nkutha, left, and Cobus van Wyngaard are building an unlikely friendship across a history of racial divide.

that seeks to embody the gospel, a gospel that seeks peace and right relationships with one another. This is the gospel that is needed within South Africa and a world that too often embraces violence in its search for power and control."

The South African church finds itself in a compromised position given its historic and ongoing relationship with the state. "The Anabaptist story," says Nkutha, "helps in giving an alternative model as to what it means to live as kingdom political people, instead of tying itself with the political agenda of a particular party or state."

Initially, van Wyngaard was drawn to

Anabaptism because of its strong emphasis on nonviolence. "Anabaptism has provided an alternative way for people to think and believe, new and alternative ways for the church to relate to and approach the state or 'the powers,'" he says, "ways that do not allow the status quo of injustice and oppression to continue."

"In the new South Africa," says van Wyngaard, "we are all supposed to like each other. Realistically, however, we are still not supposed to interact with each other. . . . Mere desegregation does not bring about new relationships, a fact that we have been made painfully aware of in

South Africa."

The emergence of Nkutha and Van Wyngaard's unlikely friendship provides a glimpse of hope in a country searching for such reconciliation. ❧

Mennonite Church Canada workers Andrew and Karen Suderman help to support and grow communities of peace, justice and reconciliation in South Africa. One aspect of their work includes ANiSA Dialogues, which provide opportunities for people to connect with one another in a safe space.

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ARTBEAT

The impact of one woman pastor's ordination

STORY AND PHOTO BY MARY E. KLASSEN

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary
ELKHART, IND.

By telling the story of the ordination of Emma Sommers Richards, a new book from the Institute of Mennonite Studies aims to show that “all church members will share in the benefits and blessings that God will shower on faithful Anabaptist Mennonite congregations.”

The impact of this first ordination of a Mennonite woman pastor is shared from a variety of perspectives in *According to the Grace Given to Her*, just released by the Institute at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS). Three editors, James E. Horsch, John D. Rempel and Eldon D. Nafziger, and nearly 20 contributors describe the influences and themes of Richards' life that led to her ordination and reflect on what it meant in their lives and ministries.

The book begins with Miriam Book describing the setting of the call to women to serve in the Mennonite church. Then Elaine Sommers Rich, Richards' sister, tells about influences in their family life. Arlene Mark tells about other early influences through education and church involvement, and Nancy V. Lee tells about the ministry of Richards and her husband Joe as missionaries in Japan.

Following each of these and the additional chapters are testimonials from pastors for whom Richards was a mentor or source of inspiration, including Dan Schrock, John Gray, Rachel Fisher, David Sutter and Janice Yordy Sutter.

Emma Richards was ordained in June 1973 by the Illinois Mennonite Conference at the request of Lombard Mennonite Church, where she was serving on the pastoral team. “It was an ordination that marked a breakthrough in North American Mennonites' understanding that the Holy Spirit calls forth both women and men,” said institute director

Mary H. Schertz at a celebration of the book's release earlier this year.

Also at the celebration, Gayle Gerber Koontz, AMBS professor of theology and ethics, emphasized the significance of this ordination for the church. By 1987, a little more than a decade after Richards' ordination, in the General Conference Mennonite Church there were 44 women licensed or

ordained in ministry positions, an estimated 10 percent of pastoral leadership. “In what we used to call the Old Mennonite Church, by 1986 about 32 women were serving as licensed or ordained pastors, co-pastors, associate or assistant pastors,” Gerber Koontz pointed out. “Two years later, the number of women with credentials for pastoral ministry in the Old Mennonite Church jumped to 62. That decade after Emma was ordained was a huge shift.”

In their preface to the book, the editors say they hope “through the story of Emma's call to ministry, all brothers and sisters in the church will see that Holy Spirit gifts given to women need to be encouraged for the well-being of the whole body of Christ.”

The book is available online at bookstore@ams.edu and MennoMedia.org/store. ❧

*‘It was an ordination that marked a breakthrough in North American Mennonites' understanding that the Holy Spirit calls forth both women and men.’
(Mary H. Schertz)*



As Frances Ringenberg, left, a member of the pastoral team of Prairie Street Mennonite Church in Elkhart, Ind., greets Emma Sommers Richards at the celebration of the book about Richards' ordination, Ringenberg said, ‘You were the first woman pastor I ever saw.’ Richards was pastor of Lombard (Ill.) Mennonite Church, where Ringenberg was a member before her move to Indiana.

FOCUS ON SENIORS

BOOK REVIEW

An unfinished agenda

Coming Home: An Autobiography of My 1952-2011 Years.

Robert S. Kreider. Create Space/Mudcreek Press, North Newton, Kan., 2012.

REVIEWED BY RONALD J.R. MATHIES
SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

The title of *Coming Home* is an appropriate metaphor for this fascinating retelling of the last 60 years of Robert Kreider's 93-year pilgrimage. We read about at least three "homes": his devotion to his family, past, present and future; his love of teaching and the Mennonite academy, as professor, dean and president of Bluffton (Ohio) College, and later as professor of history and peace studies at Bethel College in Kansas; and his commitment to the mission of the church, primarily in his leadership in higher education, but also in Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and Mennonite World Conference (MWC).

But "coming home" implies having been away from home, and it is here that the book offers glimpses into the enormous influence that Kreider has had in building bridges to the world, especially Africa, for Canadian and American Mennonites.

Considered the father of the MCC Teachers Abroad Program (TAP), Kreider spent a year's leave from Bluffton developing the program that would eventually send more than a thousand teachers to Africa between 1962 and the mid-'80s.

At the beginning of the decade of independence bringing "winds of change" that would sweep the continent in the 1960s, the book narrates with rich descriptions the enthusiasm articulated by African leaders at the prospect of political freedom. In the future Malawi, the soon-to-be president told him, "There is no country in Africa where you will find a greater eagerness for education than here." Kreider felt "embraced by African life" and caught the "exhilaration of

missionaries in love with their calling."

The TAP program was foundational to the development of short-term study programs in Mennonite institutions and in the globalization of their curricula. He characterizes his role in the development of TAP as "one of the great satisfactions and blessings of my life."

An example of his ongoing inspirational leadership in MCC includes 14 years on the executive committee, leading the MCC self-study from 1972-74 that examined, among other things, the relationships between Canadian and American perspectives of this "most beloved of Mennonite institutions."

Kreider's passion for the global church is evident throughout this time. He

He laments the 'continuing mutual illiteracy and want of appreciation between Mennonites' east and west, Swiss and Dutch, and is saddened by the severing of MCC Binational into two.

wrote and edited the large wall-sized "Anabaptist-Mennonite Time Line" and served as a member of the MWC executive committee.

The book demonstrates a historian's gift of detail, including names of people and places. He writes about political, institutional, denominational and family histories with equal ease, engaging the reader with his vivid and appreciative descriptions of people, events, issues, culture, nature, scenery and food.

He asks many provocative questions: of history, the church, society and of himself. He is often self-critical: Was he fair in student discipline? Did he hurt someone? Could his analysis and writing



have been sharper? Yet he is rarely critical of others, save leaders who abuse their power. He laments the "continuing mutual illiteracy and want of appreciation between Mennonites" east and west, Swiss and Dutch, and is saddened by the severing of MCC Binational into two.

He concludes the book with the

recognition that he didn't accomplish everything he had hoped, "but enough is enough. It is now time to live gratefully with an unfinished agenda."

Without a doubt, one of the ongoing tributes to Kreider is the "cloud of witnesses," including myself, who are eternally grateful for the agendas he opened for us that have profoundly shaped our lives. ❧

Ron Mathies is executive director emeritus of Mennonite Central Committee and former director of the Peace and Conflict Studies program at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Timeless treasures at Waterloo North

BY MIRIAM MAUST

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

Where could you go in your town to find a show of artifacts from three or four continents? Our 50 +/- group at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, did just that after we followed through with a suggestion from our previous meeting.

"Bring anything antique, unique, memorable, collectable, sentimental, newly created," the instructions said. So under the skylights of the fellowship area of the church on April 10, a cold, dreary day, an instant "museum" sprang up for two hours and then disappeared back into the homes from whence the treasures had come.

The museum pieces reflected the nature of our Waterloo North constituency:

homes with connections to Pennsylvania forebears (Helen Reusser's fraktur and pin-pricking art); Ukrainian homes from which refugees had fled from violence (Gudrun Mathies' family Bible and Anne Friesen's drinking cup); and from other homes in global places of members' upbringing (Kayoko Shimpo's Japanese calligraphy, "Listen to the Snow"); and from extended travels (the Peters' special African masks.) There were family photographs, grandmothers' and great-grandmothers' locket, engagement or wedding watches, and school books.

There were hymnals and other books, some kept in North American homes for generations. Jan Overduin's 17th-century devotional book by Theodorus

Brakel, *Steps of the Spiritual Life*, was in his father's library in the Netherlands. "He got it from his dad, my grandfather, who no doubt got it from his dad, the founder of the Overduin pastors dynasty," he explained. "It's clear that the author's priority was developing a close walk with God, 'enjoying' the presence of God in his daily life."

Absorbed with looking at the tables full of exhibits, our heads turned, however, as Palmer Becker entered the room wearing his great-grandfather's Siberian goat coat brought from Russia by his grandparents in 1875. Nearly five kilograms in weight, the coat lay on a table like a weary animal when Palmer took it off and felt a lot lighter!

Certain precious objects symbolized personal travail or new life-giving beginnings evoking deep feelings.

Overcome by emotion, Anne Schmidt Friesen asked a friend to read her description: "This cup is the only heirloom I have. It was from a set that my grandparents got as a 25th-wedding anniversary gift in my home village of Margenau in southern Ukraine. Years later, it was the only thing of value that my mother took as we fled our home during World War

PHOTOS BY JOHN THIESSEN



Wilbur Maust found this piece of driftwood on Manitoulin Island, Ont., cleaned it up and mounted it.



Henry Regier exhibited a 160-year-old Kroeger clock face along with copies of Arthur Kroeger's book, *Kroeger Clocks*.

FOCUS ON SENIORS

II. She took it so that we could have a drink of water as we made our way westward. At one point we found ourselves in Poland and under attack from Soviet troops. As we fled that day, my mother again took this cup and put it in a little cloth bag so that we could drink water."

Shirley Martin brought her string of pearls, a gift from her "found" biological mother about 28 years ago. The accompanying note from her now 99-year-old mother reads: "Tears were shed when I



Anne Schmidt Friesen treasures a teacup her mother saved when the family was forced to flee Ukraine during the Second World War.

lost you; tears were shed when I found you."

A piece of "found art" came from Wilbur Maust's residence. He described it thus: "On our summer holiday on Manitoulin Island in the '80s I found this piece of driftwood on the beach of Gore Bay [Ont.]. I removed the sand and dirt with my Swiss knife. The form that emerged looked like a dancer with a scarf thrown overhead. I only shaped the head and the feet slightly, then coated it with olive oil and mounted it on a base."

The beauty of viewing a private museum is that you not only get an appreciation of the *objets d'art*, but also a new understanding of their owners. My only advice to those attempting a treasured showing like ours would be to exhibit at a time when all church congregants gather. Children and grandchildren would no doubt be surprised and edified. ❧

Miriam Maust is a long-time member of Waterloo North Mennonite Church and recently authored her memoir-in-essays, On Language and Love.



Palmer Becker entered the room wearing his great-grandfather's Siberian goat coat brought from Russia by his grandparents in 1875.



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OBITUARY

Professor studied Anabaptist history and present-day Anabaptists

Leland Harder

July 1, 1926 – March 21, 2013

BY MARY E. KLASSEN

Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary
ELKHART, IND.

Leland Harder, a scholar of both Anabaptist history and Anabaptists of the late 1900s, died at the age of 86 in North Newton, Kan. Harder was a pastor, seminary professor and sociologist, who combined all of these areas to make significant contributions to the church during his lifetime of ministry.

In 1958, Harder and Bertha, his wife, joined the new faculty of Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart. Over the next 25 years, he taught at the seminary and also served briefly as associate director of the



Harder

Institute of Mennonite Studies (IMS).

Harder taught in the area of practical theology and directed field education, matching students and congregations for internships.

Jacob Elias, professor emeritus of New Testament at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), was a student of Harder's and later a colleague. "My student years at AMBS in the 1960s were profoundly shaped by the way Leland encouraged me in my sense of calling toward pastoral ministry," he

said. "When a part-time ministry position opened up in South Bend, Ind., he recommended this as a setting to gain experience and receive supervision. Two years of challenging and inspiring ministry set the stage for me to accept a call to Mountainview Mennonite Church in Vancouver."

Two areas of significant scholarly research serve as a lasting legacy of Harder's work. One is the sociological research of church members, conducted by Harder and J. Howard Kauffman in the 1970s. They reported their findings in *Anabaptists Four Centuries Later: A Profile of Five Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Denominations* (Herald Press, 1975).

A second study, conducted in 1989 by Kauffman and Leo Driedger as an update, provided material for Harder's book *Doors to Lock and Doors to Open: The Discerning People of God* (Herald Press 1993). Harder interpreted the research in ways that would help congregational members enter more fully into decision-making in the church.

Driedger reflected how the study involved both Canada and the U.S., and both the General Conference Mennonite

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Church and what was called the “Old” Mennonite Church. “[N]ow we are the Mennonite church,” Driedger said. “We were very much at the grassroots of making that work,” he added, helping the different Mennonite groups understand themselves and each other better.

The other area of Harder’s scholarly work is *Sources of Swiss Anabaptism* (Herald Press, 1985), the fourth volume in the Classics of the Radical Reformation series coordinated by IMS. This involved collecting and translating, with help from others, the letters of early Anabaptist leader Conrad Grebel.

It is “a definitive study of that topic,” said Willard Swartley, professor emeritus of New Testament and former AMBS dean. “It’s an incredible contribution to the church.” Swartley remembers Harder as a careful scholar. “He didn’t do his work hastily. He put years into this volume.”

After completing high school in Hillsboro, Kan., Harder served in the navy and then earned a bachelor’s degree at Bethel College, North Newton, Kan., in 1948. He married Bertha Fast, a student at

Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Chicago, in 1951.

In 1983, the Harders both retired from teaching at AMBS and moved to North

Newton. Harder is survived by his son John of Windsor, Ont.; his son Thomas and wife Lois of Wichita, Kan.; and five granddaughters. ☸

☸ Briefly noted

Seniors search for abundant living

NEW HAMBURG, ONT.—The spring seniors retreat at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp and Retreat Centre focused on addressing today’s spiritual hunger. Arthur Boers, the R.J. Bernardo Chair of Leadership at Tyndale Seminary, Toronto, spoke of a broader malaise in society reflecting patterns of distracted busyness. In the Christian community he sees an increasing desire for abundant living to respond to the feelings of emptiness and lack of meaning or lack of focus in life. Boers asked, “What happens when we live differently than our neighbours?” He encouraged the seniors to examine how technology isolates them or brings people together in their families. He talked about the need to create focal places that become natural places for conversation, noting that in biblical times the well was a focal place for conversation. Church gatherings are venues for people to engage meaningfully with others, he said. Following these practices will hopefully lead individuals in the direction of abundant living, he said, suggesting that people develop a disciplined prayer life by setting aside regular times for contemplation and reflection on the Scriptures, pausing to allow God to speak to them.

—BY RALPH LEBOLD

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PERSONAL REFLECTION

Express yourself

Body art illustrates faith of three young Mennonites

BY RACHEL BERGEN

YOUNG VOICES CO-EDITOR

Some readers may only know me as *Canadian Mennonite's* Young Voices co-editor. Not many know a lot about me. I have a meaningful relationship with Netflix, I'm addicted to Twitter, when I'm not in school I help on my family's farm . . . and I have a large tattoo on my upper left arm.

Tattoos have had a pretty nefarious reputation up until a few years ago, and are still seen that way by some. Quite a few people I consulted before going under the needle advised against it, mostly because of this reputation and the permanent nature of tattoos.

is that my continuing education will further equip me to practise good journalism on a global scale.

The tattoo reminds me to strive to work for peace, justice and reconciliation through journalism every day .

Maria Krause, 26, who grew up attending Langley Mennonite Fellowship in B.C., also got a tattoo to mark a change in her life as well.

Between her return from a term with an MCC Serving and Learning Together (SALT) program in Zambia and beginning her master of political studies degree at Queens University in Kingston,

I endured two hours of searing pain to permanently ink my arm with a compass—for a purpose. I did it to commemorate my values and faith.

After taking all of their opinions into consideration, about a year ago I endured two hours of searing pain to permanently ink my arm with a compass—for a purpose. I did it to commemorate my values and faith.

The compass tattoo was imagined in part to honour my identity as a global citizen. This has been fostered by my faith, by a three-year term with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) in Russia when I was a child, by my church community, and by my family who raised me with a global conscience.

It was also to mark a change in my life, a transition into graduate school at the University of British Columbia. My hope

Ont., she got a dove on her inner ankle to symbolize her commitment to peace and shalom,

"My life's work is built around [peace]," she says. "I structure my relationships around shalom and living in right relationships. . . . The dove represents that."

Krause is planning on getting another tattoo of a flock of cranes. This tattoo will also be a symbol of peace. It is meant to remember an important part of her life when she heard a Hiroshima survivor's story during a trip to Japan years ago. "The were looking at devastation head on," she says of the nuclear holocaust that brought about the end of the Second World War in the Pacific. "I saw that



Rachel Bergen's compass tattoo.

grace and mercy and hope and love are always underlying everything. . . . We can work together and build peace and reconciliation.”

Landon Erb also had a life-altering experience that influenced his decision to get a tattoo.

Erb, 28, a 2010 graduate of Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, has seven tally marks tattooed above his left wrist. The number is a biblical symbol of the completeness of God. He got the tattoo when he was 20 during his Outtatown discipleship training in Guatemala.

“I was at a point in my life where I had a significant experience of God being complete and me not being complete,” he says. “I like that it reminds me of a past experience, but it isn’t just that. It has gained meaning over time.”

Formative personal experiences

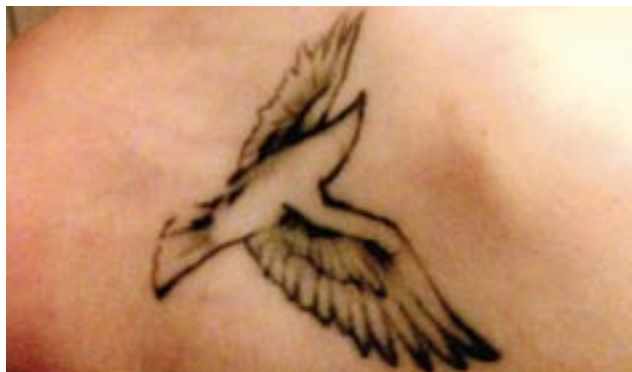
don’t normally come up in his everyday conversations, but because his tattoo is visible to others, people ask about it. “When people do ask about my tattoo, they can enter into my life in a way that I wouldn’t commonly speak about it,” he says. “People are struck by the story. It opens up a space to connect with people in a more meaningful way.”

He and his wife Jessica are getting tattooed again soon: Trinitarian symbols and verses from the Gospel of John.

Despite what some may think about tattoos, in my experience, when you care about something so much that you decide to get a permanent representation of it on your body, it’s an opportunity for dialogue about something important. Looking at my tattoo every day allows me to renew the sentiments for which I got the tattoo in the first place. ✎



Landon Erb's tattoo of seven tally marks.



Maria Krause's tattoo of a dove.

VIEWPOINT

Straddling boundaries

BY MELANIE KAMPEN

SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES

I was sitting in a theology class during my first year at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg, when the question first dawned on me: Where does my professor go to church? Where did any of my professors go to church?

What kind of members were they in their congregations, I wondered. Did they

serve in teaching roles? Did they give lectures similar to those in the classroom, or did they preach sermons that drew on the rich theological tradition that had already begun to captivate me?

What might congregations look like if such academic theological work was not only common, but accepted and pursued

(Continued on page 35)



Melanie Kampen, 23, is a student in the master of theological studies program at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., and is a graduate of Canadian Mennonite University. She is a member of Springfield Heights Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

(Continued from page 34)

as a vital form of Christian faith expression and inquiry? I began to dream of an academic church, and as I learned more about the churches my professors and other students attended I soon discovered that academic churches do exist, even among Mennonites. Not as congregations solely comprised of theology professors, but as places of worship that include and value academic reflection and inquiry on questions of faith.

I never noticed the absence of academic theology in my home congregation prior to my encounters with it at CMU, but it was becoming an important part of my own identity and my understanding of Christianity. Much to my chagrin, this soon revealed itself as a gaping hole among several Mennonite congregations with which I had worshipped.

I have found two main reasons for the absence of academic theology in Mennonite churches:

- **ACADEMIC THEOLOGY** is considered too abstract and conceptually complex that it is irrelevant for the worshipping community.
- **ITS CRITICAL** and authoritative claims run up against the official theologies of the church and it becomes a perpetual source of tension and conflict.

Both arguments express a negative and suspicious posture towards academic theology.

The developments of these attitudes toward academic theology are, of course, far more complex and can vary significantly between congregations, and from person to person. I simply want to draw attention to some of the dynamics at play and suggest a way forward by thinking about the roles different sorts of theology play in the church and the academy.

Nicholas Healy is a Catholic theologian whose work I have found helpful in articulating various kinds of theological reflection in Christianity. Healy distinguishes between four sorts of theological inquiry: official, ordinary, academic and churchly.

Official theology refers to summary statements that a denomination makes

on its understanding of Christianity. For Mennonites, this could include documents such as the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, material produced by the national church, writings of the early Anabaptists, or reconciliatory documents between Mennonites and Lutherans, to name a few.

What characterizes official theology is its authoritative purpose. It seeks to articulate and affirm the claims of the denomination. In the Mennonite church, official theology is most commonly produced by the national and area churches, as well as pastoral teams and council members of individual congregations.

Ordinary theology, by contrast, is the everyday theological reflection of lay Christians. By calling it ordinary, Healy does not suggest that it is simple or lesser. What constitutes ordinary theology is that it is reflection done by ordinary Christians on life experiences. Moreover, as Healy states, these ordinary theologians are vital to Christianity.

In his article "What is systematic theology?" in the January 2009 issue of the *International Journal of Systematic Theology*, he writes: "Some church people may be relatively uneducated, but a large portion will bring knowledge and skills in areas largely unfamiliar to theologians and church authorities to their thinking about Christianity."

The third and fourth categories—academic and church theology—name two locations where theological reflection occurs. Official and ordinary theologies can take place in both settings. The historical relationship between the university and church is somewhat complex. Prior to the 16th-century Reformations, theologians and clergy were one and the same. Universities were church-instituted and their faculty also served in various ministerial roles. In the wake of the Reformations, with their anti-clerical sentiments and a turn to individual scriptural interpretation, rationalism emerged as a viable alternative to orthodoxy.

Universities were not insulated from the effects of an increasing commitment to rationalism, and many sought to distance themselves from theological conflicts between church authorities.

This paved the way for modern biblical scholarship, in which one could study and analyze biblical texts as one would any other literary text—that is, apart from any commitment to the truth it claims. This history, in admittedly broad brush strokes, accounts for some of the existing tensions between academic and church theology.

Ultimately, Healy believes that the task at hand is neither to decide between church and academy, nor to devise some sort of compromise between the two. Rather, he contends in the same article that “systematic theology must neces-

ordinary, academic and churchly theologies. For Healy, academic theology can play a vital mediating role between the other three, intertwining them in order to craft its own theological contributions, rather than devising its own positions out of pure reason.

Such a dynamic, service-oriented notion of academic theology certainly bears on my earlier dreams for an academic church. The gift of academic theology is not to enlighten the church with the latest hermeneutical methods and doctrinal elucidations. To be sure, academics serve a teaching role in the church, but

I have a deep ambivalence toward attempts to engineer a church through a group of academics, on the one hand, or without them, on the other.

sarily be a bit of an outsider in both the church and the university if it is to contribute to the quest for greater understanding of the Christian faith.”

For Healy, academic theology has a unique function in relation to the church as well as to official and ordinary theologies. It is worth quoting him at length here (emphasis added by me):

“For unlike official theology, *its concern is not to get its productions as correct as can be* in order to set forth the communally normative path for the faithful. *It cannot be merely playful either*, of course, since it aims, in its own way, to bring further light to the truth about reality as a whole as it relates to God. It does so, however, by *negotiating critically, imaginatively and constructively with ordinary theologies* as well as with *official* theology, and so *must engage with the multitude of human productions outside as much as inside the sphere of the church*. Rather than being normative, *it is developmental and experimental*. It explores new or forgotten approaches, engages new events, and new or hitherto overlooked resources amongst ordinary theologies and the productions of other university disciplines.”

Healy’s work helps us to reconfigure the church-academy debate from a binary tension to a dynamic and theologically rich relationship between official,

we must remember that this teaching takes the form of service. The words of the prophet Isaiah are striking: “*The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens—wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught*” (Isaiah 50:4, NRSV).

While I still get excited about a room full of theologians debating both concrete church issues as well as more conceptual concerns, I have a deep ambivalence toward attempts to engineer a church through a group of academics, on the one hand, or without them, on the other.

Teachers are one part of the body, but the Isaiah passage powerfully recasts how we think of teaching. Here, the role of the academic theologian is to sustain the weary and to listen to the voices of official, ordinary and churchly theologies.

The task of the academic theologian is not to speak from a position of intellectual or theological priority, but to articulate what they hear, to describe what they see, to bring the often conflicting voices together in new and different ways, and thereby reconfigure the relations between official, ordinary, academic and church groups toward healing and reconciliation. ☸

Calendar

British Columbia

Jun 21-22: Brian Derksen concert to celebrate the 40th-anniversary of MCC B.C. thrift shops, at Central Heights Mennonite Brethren Church, Abbotsford.

June 22: MCC B.C. annual general meeting at Central Heights Mennonite Brethren Church, Abbotsford, and groundbreaking for new MCC centre in Abbotsford.

June 22-23: Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church 50th-anniversary celebration.

Alberta

June 15: Camp Valaqua hike-a-thon. Registered hikers receive a free T-shirt and hot dog lunch. For more information, or to register, call the camp office at 403-637-2510. All proceeds support the camp.

Saskatchewan

June 14-15: MCC Relief Sale and Auction at Prairieland Park Hall E,

Saskatoon, from 4 to 9 p.m. (14), and 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. (15). Theme: "Providing water for life."

June 21-22: RJC year-end musical performances.

Manitoba

Until June 22: "Who will listen to our stories?" An exhibition of storytelling through art featuring the works of Sylvia Regehr Graham and the CancerCare Manitoba Art Therapy Program, at the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg.

June 9: MCI Saengerfest, worship 10:30 a.m., concert, 2 p.m.

June 11: CMU President's Golf Classic.

June 15: Golf tournament fundraiser for Camp Koinonia. For more information, e-mail camps@mennochurch.mb.ca.

June 17-28: Canadian School of Peacebuilding at CMU.

June 23-25: Wilderness challenge fundraiser for Camp Koinonia. For more information, e-mail camps@mennochurch.mb.ca.

July 29-Aug. 2: MC Canada youth assembly at Camp Assiniboia, Man.

Aug. 27: Westgate Collegiate annual golf tournament at Bridges Golf Club.

Ontario

June 2: Seventh annual Harmonia Sacra solfa shaped-note singing event, at the Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Leader: Laurence Martin. For more information, call Will Stoltz at 519-696-2805.

June 4: Fundraising banquet and panel discussion on "Pastoral training in the 21st century: The art of improv," at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, at 6:30 p.m. Music by Charlene Nafziger and Willem Moolenbeek. Proceeds to the Ralph and Eileen Lebold Endowment for Leadership Training. Hosted by Conrad Grebel University College and Mennonite Church Eastern Canada. For tickets, call 519-885-0220 ext. 24217 or e-mail aenns@uwaterloo.ca.

June 11: Fundraising chicken barbecue and pie auction for Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp, at the camp, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. To reserve a ticket (required), call 519-625-8602 or e-mail

info@hiddenacres.ca.

June 15: Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario spring meeting and bus tour with Timothy Epp speaking on Anabaptist/Black interaction in the 19th-century Canada, at New Covenant Mennonite Fellowship, Glen Allan, at 10 a.m. For more information, visit mhso.org or call 519-884-1040.

June 21-23: Hanover Mennonite Church 50th-anniversary celebration. For more information about the June 21 Mennonite Youth Fellowship reunion at Riverstone Retreat, or activities on June 22 and 23, contact the church at 519-364-4309 or hmc@wightman.ca.

June 22: Strawberry social at Nithview Community, New Hamburg, from 2 to 4 p.m. and 6:30 to 8 p.m.

June 23: Poetry reading by Cheryl Denise (from her book *Leaving Eden*) at the Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Music led by Fred Martin and No Discernable Key. For more information, call Will Stoltz at 519-696-2805.

June 28-30: Family Camping Weekend at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp. Campsites are on a first-come, first-served basis; cabins need to be reserved. For more information, call 519-625-8602 or e-mail info@hiddenacres.ca.

June 29-30: Nairn Mennonite Church, Ailsa Craig, 65th-anniversary celebrations. (29) Hymn sing and special music, at 7 p.m. (30) Anniversary service with Karen James Abra, former pastor, and special music, at 10:45 a.m.; a fellowship meal and sharing of memories follows. For more information, or to book a seat for the meal, call 519-232-4425 or e-mail nmc@isp.ca.

July 25-28: The Bridgefolk (Mennonite-Catholic) conference, Reconciliation: A Way to Peace, at Conrad Grebel University College. For more information, or to register, visit bridgefolk.net.

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

UpComing

Peace Camp aims for global impact with local actions

WATERLOO, ONT.—Conrad Grebel University College's third annual Peace Camp for youth aged 10 to 14 begins on July 29. This week-long day camp will encourage youth to inspire lives,



strengthen ties and make peace happen all over the Waterloo Region. Equipped with a five-year grant from the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation and ongoing sponsorship from the Mennonite Savings and Credit Union and Josslin Insurance, Peace Camp is embarking on a voyage of learning and discovery where youth will collaborate with people in different neighbourhoods to help ordinary citizens do extraordinary deeds. Peace Camp partners with the peacebuilding organizations of Interfaith Grand River and House of Friendship, as well as organizations committed to reversing the effects of violence: Working Against Youth Violence Everywhere and the Canadian Mental Health Association. Peace Camp coordinator Sarah Klassen says, "This summer's theme, 'Local actions with global impact' will allow youth to participate in and experiment with arts, crafts, games, and sports that will not only teach cooperation and respect for others in the local community, but in the global community as well." To register, visit grebel.ca/peacecamp.

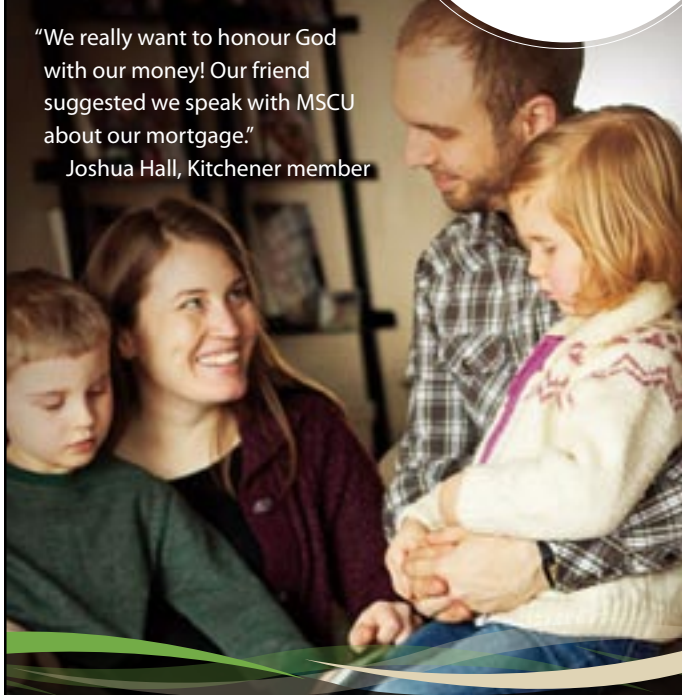
—Conrad Grebel University College

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Announcement

Canadian Word Guild
AWARDS

MYSTERIES OF GRACE AND JUDGMENT DVD

For special awards sale see:
www.mysteriesofgrace.com

Travel

Visit Europe the Mennonite Way!
12-15 day individual or group hotel Tours focusing on Mennonite/ Anabaptist heritage in Holland, Belgium, Germany, Poland and Switzerland.
www.mennoniteheritagetours.eu

Employment Opportunities

PASTOR AT HARROW MENNONITE CHURCH
Position is FTE (negotiable). For more information or to apply please visit www.mcec.ca/opportunities

BRETHREN PRESS AND MENNOMEDIA are seeking a **PROJECT EDITOR**, up to full time, for a new Sunday school curriculum, *Shine: Living in God's Light*. The editor works closely with freelance writers and editors and various committees, and reports to the project director. Applications will be reviewed as they are received. Find the job description and contact information at www.shinecurriculum.com.

BLUMENORT MENNONITE CHURCH is an intergenerational, rural congregation of 200+ members, located along Hwy 306, 10 miles south of Plum Coulee at Rosetown, MB. We are prayerfully seeking a **FULL-TIME YOUTH PASTOR**, who is Spirit-filled, with a Biblically-based worldview, strong relational skills with young people, and a passion for youth ministry. We seek someone mission-minded, willing to disciple youth and communicate to them the relevance of the Gospel and the truth of Jesus Christ. The successful candidate will oversee youth and young adult programs. Preferred start date is August 1, 2013. For further inquiries, contact Eric Peters at 204-362-0615. Submit resumes, with references, to epfarms@gmail.com by May 31, 2013.

/// Classifieds

Announcement

Elias Reunion July 13 - 14, 2013

Mennonite Collegiate Institute, Gretna, MB

Lodging & Meals available

Register on-line @ www.eliasreunion2013.com or Phone

Linda Klassen 204-325-4630
Fred Rempel 204-436-2521 or
E-mail Linda.Klassen@xplornet.com
Fred.Rempel@hotmail.com

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FACULTY POSITION IN MUSIC THEORY



Conrad Grebel University College

Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo invites applications for a full-time regular faculty position in Music Theory in the Department of Music, to begin **July 1, 2014** at either the Assistant or Associate Professor level. Review of applications will begin **November 1, 2013**. Conrad Grebel University College is an equal opportunity employer and encourages applications from all qualified individuals; however, Canadians and permanent residents will be given priority. For further information about the position, qualifications and application procedures, see:

uwaterloo.ca/grebel/music-theory-faculty

MCC sets new target for Syria crisis campaign

By JULIE BELL

Mennonite Central Committee Canada

The executive director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada says the situation in Syria is likely to worsen and more must be done for the people affected by the conflict.

Don Peters recently visited Lebanon, where up to a million Syrian refugees are living. He says they are in desperate need of shelter, food and medical assistance.

MCC began its Syria crisis campaign last year with an initial goal of \$500,000. The total has now surpassed \$1 million. Peters is calling on MCC supporters, and

all Canadians, to help MCC meet its new goal of \$1.5 million.

“There is much, much more work to be done,” he says. “This is an ongoing disaster. The United Nations agencies haven’t yet kicked in with the amount of assistance that these people need. And other agencies, such as MCC, are going to have to continue their support.”

To date, MCC has dedicated more than \$4 million to programs in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, including cash contributions as well as material resources such as blankets,

relief kits, clothing and footwear.

While the bulk of MCC’s work has been in humanitarian assistance, Peters says MCC is also providing training for partner agencies that work with displaced Syrians both inside and outside the country. As well, MCC supports peacebuilding programs, some with a special focus on trauma recovery.

Peters says his trip gave him a new appreciation of the value of these programs. “What really struck me was that maybe half of the people we met were themselves displaced from their homes,” he says. “And yet they are still caregivers for others. They said this is our situation now and this is what we need to do. Their dignity and poise [are] remarkable.”

It’s estimated that more than 70,000 people have died in the ongoing conflict. More than three million are displaced, either within Syria or to neighbouring countries. ❧

MCC PHOTO BY SARAH ADAMS



Walid Dabbous, left, a Syrian refugee now living in Sidon, Lebanon, tells his story to Don Peters, executive director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada, centre, and Ali Jammoul, a worker with the Development for People and Nature Association. MCC is working with the association on conflict prevention and recreation activities for children in refugee settlements in Lebanon. MCC has also provided the association with material resources such as food, blankets, relief and education kits.