

CANADIAN MENNONITE

September 2, 2013

Volume 17 Number 17

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crate of debris
at a time

pg. 20

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EDITORIAL

Healing sexual abuse

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Two stories on sexual abuse have re-emerged recently on the Mennonite scene that call for sober reflection and some self-examination, but not self-obsession. They should be seen, in the present, as “teachable moments” and occasions for healing, rather than harsh judgments on the sins of our fathers.

We refer to the re-surfacing, after some 20 years, of the sexual abuse of women by one of our leading theologians, the late John Howard Yoder. Although he creatively schooled those of my generation in a peace theology from our Anabaptist roots, that “provided a crucial witness to the secular world and combat[ted] a host of injustices,” as his obituary in the *New York Times* noted on Jan. 7, 1998, he also sexually violated some 80 women, at last count.

These victims, now feeling free to tell their stories in a more enlightened time, are asking for an official acknowledgement from church leaders, and a more open and honest discussion of sexism broadly in the Mennonite church.

“My generation is still impacted by residual practices of church decision-makers,” wrote Charletta Erb, a marriage and family therapist intern, in a blog entry published online by *The Mennonite*.

“I am wary of our conflict avoidance, cautious for safety in the church, cautious of why women are not more at the forefront of church life, publishing our ideas in equal frequency to men. I have to ask what the church has learned through

the experience, what could go better in restoration of victims and perpetrators in cases of sexual harassment and abuse? Where can growth continue?” she asks.

The safety of women in another setting—the Manitoba Old Colony of Bolivia—has also hit the international media in a recent in-depth story by *Time* reporter Jean Friedman-Rudovsky as a follow-up to the horrendous event in August 2011, when eight Manitoba men, aged 19 to 43,

were convicted of raping women and children, using an anesthetic spray on their victims while they slept, and were sentenced to 25 years in prison. Officially there were 130 victims—at least one person from more than half of all Manitoba Colony households.

Two years later, Friedman-Rudovsky visited the colony, spending a week talking to the victims and to the leaders in an attempt to assess the culture that may have fostered this reprehensible behaviour. To her dismay and surprise, and to ours looking on, she found that rape is still occurring, with the colony leaders taking a rather casual, if not cavalier, attitude towards the crimes. “If a perpetrator is not ready to admit his sins, the question is whether the victim or the accuser will be believed . . . and women in Manitoba already know where that goes,” she writes.

Both of these stories are hard to read, and even harder to reconcile, as members of a faith community that ironically

champions “justice” as one of its core beliefs. Can we, with God’s help, bring some kind of redemption to this shadowy narrative?

In both cases, we in the larger community can feel rather helpless. In the Yoder case, it is a distant event, happening in an era when, in a more patriarchal religious system, men took liberties that today are not tolerated. In the Bolivia Old Colony story, these are far-distant cousins, both in faith and practice, and in geography. We are shamed and saddened, but barely capable of reaching into such an insular communal group that first and foremost resents and resists any outside counsel or help.

Let me suggest two possible responses, one of which is already well underway:

- **ACKNOWLEDGE THE** far-reaching damage of Yoder’s behaviour while still maintaining respect for, and receiving theological instruction from, his creative thinking and influence well beyond our denominational borders.

Sara Wenger Shenk, president of Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind., where Yoder’s influence was most felt, has called for a public “revisit” of his legacy—“getting the facts straight and shouldering the urgent healing work that must still be done.”

Mennonite Church U.S.A., through a joint effort with Shenk, has convened a six-member discernment group to “guide a process that hopes to contribute to the healing of victims of Yoder’s abuse as well as others deeply hurt by his harmful behaviour.”

- **LOOK TO** persons like Eve and Helmut Isaak, already working with the Old Colony leaders to address the problems from the inside, “creating spaces for more wholesome living.”



ABOUT THE COVER:

‘We’ve never dealt with anything like this in Canada before,’ says Janet Plenert, MDS director for Canadian operations, of this summer’s flooding in southern Alberta. See story on page 20.

PHOTO: JANET PLENERT, MENNONITE DISASTER SERVICE

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Psalm 130: **CHERYL WOELK**

CHRISTIAN FORMATION SUNDAY FEATURE

Hindsight foresight insight

A vision of Mennonite education for our times

BY SUSAN SCHULTZ HUXMAN

CONRAD GREBEL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE



The ability to see clearly is an important sense to us as Christians and as Mennonites: our theology, The Anabaptist Vision; our music, “Be Thou My Vision”; our scripture, “Without a vision, the people perish.”

Mennonite education at its best gives our church a special kind of seeing—akin to high definition or 3D. I call that hindsight, foresight and insight.

A Princeton historian, Harris Harbison, once said, “The goal of the liberal arts is to provide hindsight and foresight in this universe of things and events. The part of Christian belief is to provide insight, which is of crucial significance for living.”

I want to explore these three dimensions of seeing with more direct application to the distinctiveness of Mennonite education:



But what an amazing and history-altering 18 months [Conrad] Grebel lived! Our students in residence, many of whom are not Mennonite, are attracted and empowered by his story.

Hindsight

Hindsight is the ability to see what has come before. And that can only happen if a firm foundation of one’s past is communicated with clarity and conviction over and over again. In Deuteronomy 4: 5-10, as Moses tells his people of God’s new laws for them, he is most concerned about them not retelling the story—and keeping the covenant alive—for the youth and future generations. Moses says, “*Watch out. Be careful never to forget what you have seen God doing for you. Tell your children and your grandchildren about the glorious miracles he did.*”

Moses invokes all kinds of “memory cues” for keeping hindsight alive, saying, *“Impress these commandments on your children in this way: Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”*

One way to practice hindsight is to remember to tell the stories you learned while at church, at camp, at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, at Conrad Grebel University College, at Canadian Mennonite University, at seminary or any other place where Mennonite education is practised!

Every Mennonite church and school has its own story. Grebel’s namesake, Conrad Grebel, was an unlikely Anabaptist hero. He was born into a wealthy, leading family in Zurich, Switzerland. He dressed in elegant, regal attire. He was extremely well educated. His father used his political connections to gain scholarships for him in three leading universities of the day—in Vienna, Paris and Rome. But Grebel got into trouble at all three universities, and he ran out of his father’s money. He came home without earning a degree! Sounds like a real loser!

And yet he prevailed. He became the first Anabaptist. He was dubbed “the ringleader” of this new “radical” Christian ministry. Through lively debates and provocative letters and speeches, Grebel first articulated the need for the Reformation to go a step further, to embrace a new church that favoured a voluntary Christian fellowship—a gathered free church of believers, based on the New Testament. He refused to baptize his

Pontius’ Puddle



daughter Isabella, and performed the first adult baptism in Zurich in January 1525.

For these “treasonous” acts he was arrested, imprisoned and later died before he reached his 30th birthday. His entire Christian ministry was compressed into the last four years of his life, and his powerful witness as an Anabaptist did not emerge until the last 18 months of his life. But what an amazing and history-altering 18 months Grebel lived! Our students in residence, many of whom are not Mennonite, are attracted and empowered by his story.

This year at our college retreat for Grebel students we also told the story of Harvey Taves, one of the founders of this institution. Here was a man who, before his untimely death at age 39, worked tirelessly and patiently for six years in the late 1950s to get the Mennonites in Ontario to embrace the idea of starting a Mennonite college on a secular university campus.

Detractors on the right dismissed the idea of a Mennonite college as “too worldly” or “too expensive.” Detractors

on the left, many with ties to Goshen College in Indiana, dismissed the idea because a Waterloo campus would compete with Goshen for students and donors. To quote a leading U. S. Mennonite scholar of the day, “There would be too few qualified academics in Canada to do the job right!”

Taves was not to be outdone, though. Without being dismissive or discouraged with either of these formidable blocs of naysayers, he quietly worked behind the scenes to line up support. Shortly before Grebel’s charter was finally granted in 1961, Taves wrote, “One thing seems absolutely certain to me, and that is that the young person who maintains his faith in the face of opposition is in a much better position to represent that faith once he enters professional life. For this reason, starting a Mennonite college that is affiliated with the UW [University of Waterloo] is worth the risk.”

Most of our stories about Mennonite education are more personal. For me, at my alma mater, Bethel College, a Mennonite school in Kansas, the experience of a Mennonite history class—a class I really didn’t want to take—made an indelible impression.

The final unit of the course, *American Mennonites and War*, culminated with a film that celebrated Mennonites’ steadfast devotion to faith in the face of war. The only note I took that day was a statement made by its narrator, a Mennonite historian. “War is good for Mennonites,” he said. “It brings out their best.” Scribbled in the margin, I wrote, “What? You’ve got to be kidding.”

Eight years later, I wrote a dissertation for my Ph.D. in communication that explored that very subject. And I have been writing about various aspects of rhetoric

of the marginalized and Mennonite faithfulness to church and state ever since.

These stories are not unique. Graduates of Mennonite institutions have many formative stories that have made all the difference in their lives, so we all must tell our stories, and we must tell and retell them in our churches and in our communities. Hindsight builds a “firm foundation” of knowledge and faith principles that can be transferred from one generation to the next. Hindsight fortifies us and grounds us. There’s a reason we say, “Hindsight is 20/20.”

But if our vision is reduced to just looking in our rear-view mirror, we can become overly cautious and risk-averse. We get stuck in neutral. So we also need another way of seeing.



Foresight

Foresight is the ability to see what is coming, to be “ahead of the curve.” Foresight pushes us and makes sure we don’t get too complacent, too insulated, too comfortable! Foresight demands we embrace our future full-throttle!

In an educational context, this means asking whether my college experience will prepare me for the future, for a meaningful, relevant and marketable career.

Our Mennonite schools are all eager to champion academic excellence, to celebrate the achievements of our students and faculty, and to roll out new academic programs that are “cutting edge.” And we all have many distinguished alums!

Given Grebel’s unique relationship with UW—rated Canada’s most innovative university—we are especially well-equipped to “hitch our wagon” to this “shooting star.” But at Grebel we push the boundaries of academic excellence with an eye to balance, because we are

also eager to promote a vibrant future of “countercultural” education, to embrace “peculiar peoplehood” for the 21st century. We want to push the frontiers of what it means to study peace in our culturally diverse world and so we are excited to launch our new Mennonite Savings and Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement in 2014. We are looking ahead, not just to prepare our students for a meaningful career, but for a meaningful life.

This attention to balance runs counter to the fragmentation and extreme specialization that is common in the stand-alone secular research university or trade school. Some educators have called this trend, “The Home Depot approach to education,” where there is “no differentiation between consumption and digestion.” As the *Chronicle of Higher Education* has reported, like Home Depot, “college degrees can become like a vast collection of courses, stacked up like sinks and lumber for do-it-yourselfers to try to assemble on their own into a meaningful whole.” Our Mennonite schools counter that trend by meeting the strong push of specialization with the gentle pull of community accountability.

For example, this past spring at Grebel we celebrated the accomplishments of two students both named “Caleb.” Caleb Gingrich wrote the top research essay in engineering in all Ontario universities with his paper, “Industrial symbiosis: Current understandings and needed ecology and economic influences,” and Caleb Redekop won the C. Henry Smith

Peace Oratory Contest at Grebel with “The church needs to occupy.” The tale of the two Calebs is about the push of specialization meeting with the pull of community accountability.

So foresight is important, but if just foresight is our vision, then we are only chasing the self-serving next big thing. Even community-building initiatives, removed from a larger ethic of care and discipleship, can foster shortsightedness.



Insight

Insight is discernment. It is the power of apprehending the inner nature of things. It is this inner way of seeing found in Romans 12:2, where Paul says, “Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing and perfect will of God.”

Our students in Mennonite institutions are encouraged to seek insight—to practise shalom—by learning to serve others in Christ-centred discipleship. CMU has a signature service/learning program called Outtatown, a six-month-to-a-year-long service commitment to South Africa or Guatemala. Rockway has an all-day Envirothon/Servithon day in Kitchener-Waterloo, and trips to China, Guatemala, France-Germany and Florida. Grebel has service/learning trips to South Africa, Palestine/Israel, London, and many places in North America.

These kinds of experiences are formative for students and make real our aim to educate the whole student intellectually, emotionally, socially and spiritually.

One of the best ways to remember the importance of service to others is to

We are looking ahead, not just to prepare our students for a meaningful career, but for a meaningful life.

hear the ancient words of St. Francis of Assisi, the world’s most revered patron saint of animals, the environment and the poor. In the year 1223, a young apprentice monk expressed frustration because Francis, his mentor, was late yet again for a speaking engagement. Francis had stopped three times along the road to attend to a homeless man and a wounded animal, and to pray for some beautiful birds. Francis turned to his young,

Insight teaches us never to miss an opportunity to witness shalom by performing works of mercy, extending generosity, supporting community and serving the church.

impatient colleague and said in his humble and gentle way, “My friend, there is no use walking anywhere to preach, unless our walking is our preaching.”

Insight tempers the extremes of foresight—opportunism that is merely fast-tracking or self-promoting—and asks us always to think about opportunities to advance the cause of others. Insight teaches us never to miss an opportunity

to witness shalom by performing works of mercy, extending generosity, supporting community and serving the church.

Without insight we have not captured the distinctive of Mennonite education that says knowledge and practice are not sufficient unless they are connected to a witness grounded in Christ, committed to peace and practised in community.

Conclusion

Our Mennonite schools prepare us for seeing in many ways. Hindsight is built by passing the faith traditions to future generations through the telling of foundational stories. Foresight is built by seizing opportunities to advance and extend our knowledge of the world and connections to the world. Insight is built by a distinctive witness of “shalom,” steeped in the good news of the resurrected Jesus and practised in community. ☞

Susan Schultz Huxman is president of Conrad Grebel University College.

Profiles in education

Three women presidents talk about their calling to leadership and the gifts they bring to their schools

BY VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

The Mennonite church is at a unique time in history. Currently, women lead three of the four major institutions of higher learning serving the church in Canada. In October 2010, Sara Wenger Shenk began her term at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind.; Susan Schultz Huxman began serving at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., in July 2011; and Cheryl Pauls took leadership of Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), Winnipeg, last November. The role of president is new to all three of them, and it is the first time these schools have come under the leadership of a woman.

Recently, the three reflected on their calling, gifts and challenges as they lead institutions that shape higher education for Mennonites in Canada.

A call to lead

The previous chapters of their lives have been varied.

Before her call, Pauls served on the faculty of CMU, teaching music theory and practice, and serving in various administrative roles. As a piano soloist, she was active in the new music scene in Winnipeg and beyond. She also participated in congregational worship planning and worship leading. “I care about how things operate, care about how what we’re doing academically extends into the church and the larger community,” she says. “People around me were noticing the things I care about.”

Shenk was a child of missionary-educator parents in Ethiopia, and she and her husband collaborated in an ecumenical theological seminary in the former Yugoslavia for nine years. She has participated in church planting, and has

held conference and denominational positions. A gifted teacher, she has authored numerous books and articles on educational and theological topics.

Huxman has been an active scholar in the fields of rhetoric, media literacy and corporate communication. She has held leadership posts in professional organizations as well as in congregational and conference leadership settings. As a member of the Mennonite Education Board (Mennonite Church U.S.A.), she helped in the presidential searches for three other Mennonite schools.

Both Huxman and Shenk see the influence of their families in modelling and encouraging involvement in Christian education. Shenk’s grandfather served as president at what is now Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va., and Huxman’s father served as president of Bethel College, North Newton, Kan.



'I test ideas in a broadly collaborative, consultative way and am open to experiment with solutions in somewhat playful, provisional ways to find a way forward.'

(Sara Wenger Shenk)

Both women moved from other schools to take on their presidential responsibilities. Shenk served in administration and teaching at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, Harrisonburg, and Huxman was dean of the Elliott School of Communication at Wichita (Kan.) State University.

They speak of mentors who encouraged them to seek positions of leadership within the Mennonite church, and of a process of spiritual discernment around accepting their new roles.

Shenk explains, "I accepted the call to leadership as a sacred trust, joining a team of extraordinarily gifted, spiritually grounded and delightful persons who find great fulfillment in preparing leaders for God's reconciling mission in the world."

Leadership gifts

"It is no surprise that many of the required and preferred qualities for a presidential post involve effective communication," Huxman says, citing inspiring faculty, relating to students, listening to constituents, articulating vision, problem-solving and recruiting students and donors as examples.

As one would expect, all three presidents stress their ability to enjoy people and to develop relationships with them. And, of course, the importance of careful listening. Huxman keeps visual reminders on her desk: a large rubber ear and a prism in a handcrafted ceramic bowl.

"The ear reminds me that I can't learn

anything if I'm talking," she explains. "The prism reminds me that there are always different ways that people will perceive issues. The ceramic bowl—a gift from an international student years ago—reminds me that community and generosity are values in our Mennonite schools."

The three enjoy developing strategic plans, working with change and moving their institutions forward towards their goals.

In her former role as a performer of avant-garde music, Pauls developed skills to explain that kind of music to people and to help them see why it matters to their lives. She transfers that skill to explaining the university, interpreting its vision and inviting people to participate in CMU's vision. She highlights both discipline and imagination as key ingredients in her leadership. "I tend to be perceived as energetic and enthusiastic, and able to involve others in the things I care about."

Shenk identifies a readiness to face challenges, to set her mind on a goal and pursue it, and to engage actively in problem-solving with others. She is ready to pursue innovation and to imagine new possibilities. "I test ideas in a broadly collaborative, consultative way, and am open to experiment with solutions in somewhat playful, provisional ways to find a way forward," she says.

Other qualities include being resilient, having a willingness to be authentic and honest in communication, and a desire to live a life of integrity.

Shaping Mennonite schools and education

This is the first time the presidents of these three schools have been women.

"It's timely that these institutions have been working for a while already at the question of gender balance and affirming women," reflects Pauls.

As married women with children, all three are in a unique position. Huxman cites a *Chronicle of Higher Education* report in noting that only a small percentage of women administrators in higher education—in the roles of dean, provost or president—are full professors, are married and have children.

She says, "I think female leadership in our high schools, colleges, universities and seminaries sends a powerful message to our current and prospective students that gender is not a barrier to career aspirations, that healthy communities of faith and learning can be led by people who took unconventional paths to their post, and that one way to honour diversity is to recruit and retain women and minorities to positions of authority."

Shenk recalls that she has experienced excellent leadership by both men and women, with complementary leadership styles. "But, she posits, "it may be that with some heightened mistrust about institutions and church organizations in general, a woman's relationally attuned leadership style is a welcome, restorative antidote [to a more hierarchical style]."



'I think female leadership in our high schools, colleges, universities and seminaries sends a powerful message to our current and prospective students that gender is not a barrier to career aspirations . . . !'

(Susan Schultz Huxman)

'I care about how things operate, care about how what we're doing academically extends into the church and the larger community. People around me were noticing the things I care about.'

(Cheryl Pauls)



Job challenges

Both CMU and Grebel are facing the challenge of major capital campaigns. Grebel is in the midst of erecting and raising funds for a building to house additional music, library, archival and community space, at a cost of \$8.7 million. CMU is engaged in a \$13.9-million campaign for a new library, learning commons and pedestrian bridge.

The presidents list other challenges:

- **MANAGING CHANGE** to programs and facilities in ways that create more excitement than anxiety
- **DEALING WITH** the complexity of academic institutions
- **FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS** with church, government, community, business and industry
- **MAKING DECISIONS** about work/life balance in a technological world while maintaining a commitment to family life

From her vantage point at the church seminary, Shenk identifies the current "shifting ground" for theological education in today's world—how theological education is financed, delivered and assessed. "Crisis creates an opportunity to rediscover the firmer ground of our shared mission," she says.

Finding comfort in difficult times

Huxman mentions humour, prayer, friends and family, sports and the classroom. "These are 'life-lines' that ground me, keep things in perspective, and bring me much comfort and pleasure," she says.

Shenk emphasizes the spiritual grounding that is necessary for her. She feels nurtured by early morning birdsong, Russian Orthodox choral music, words of Scripture, and prayer with the Anabaptist prayer book, *Take Our Moments and Our Days*.

For Pauls, the simple practice of regularly riding her bicycle to work grounds and invigorates her. Family life is important; she and her husband have two children living at home. She also admits that she gets energy out of most of the things she does at work. "And I am told daily about the people who are praying for me," she says. "That always gives me energy and brings me to a healthier place with God."

Gratitude and commitment

Pauls expresses gratitude "for the kind of imagination that has allowed higher education and the church to work together so well and for a long time [and] for the deeper commitment and imagination that has been possible within the Mennonite church."

"What we're about is really the mission of God in the world," says Shenk. "That's

what fills me with gratitude and courage. It's about Jesus. It's about the great God of the heavens who comes near to us with tender love, forgiveness and justice for all. That is what we're each called to testify to through whatever it is we are and do day in and day out—with integrity—in spirit and in truth." ❧



Virginia A. (Ginny) Hostetter lives in Kitchener, Ont., where she fills a variety of roles: writer, editor, wife, mother, daughter and active member of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church, Kitchener.

/// For discussion

1. What is a story from your life or from the history of your congregation that has had an impact on you? What stories from the past are important to pass on to future generations? What is the best way to share these stories so that they are not forgotten?
2. Susan Schultz Huxman says that foresight is "the ability to see what is coming." Does your church tend to be proactive in responding to change? What makes congregations fearful about the future? Do Mennonite schools have special skills to help us discern the future?
3. Huxman describes insight as "the power of apprehending the inner nature of things." Why is insight important for the church? Does insight improve as we age? Do you agree with Huxman that learning to serve others improves our insight?
4. How do you explain the sudden shift of women to roles of leadership in Mennonite schools? Is this part of a larger shift of more women to leadership roles? How do you think the church will be affected by this shift?
5. In the last 50 years, education has been highly valued, and the number and size of institutions of higher learning have increased considerably. Do you think respect for education will continue to grow or has it already begun to wane? What role will Mennonite schools play in the future?

—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.

✉ Portrayal of Old Colony Mennonites called 'irresponsible and unethical'

RE: "MINISTRY IN a very different world," July 8, page 4.

I am troubled that *Canadian Mennonite* would represent a group in the way that the Old Colony Mennonites of Durango Colony are portrayed in this article. Old Colony Mennonites are not given the benefit of the doubt and they are silenced by such categorical and harsh judgments as:

- **THEY LIVE** in an "emotional, physical and spiritual vacuum."
- **THEY ARE** "impoverished in every aspect of life."
- "[T]HE CHURCH restricts them from basic freedoms."

Making such a negative assessment of Old Colony

FROM OUR LEADERS

Lost and found

STEVE HEINRICHS

2013 marks the 250th anniversary of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, a foundational but forgotten "scroll" for Canada. Steve Heinrichs, Mennonite Church Canada's director of indigenous relations, plays with the Josiah story in II Kings 22 to ponder what could happen if we remembered the covenants of this land.

At 38 years of age, she's the youngest prime minister to take office. She'll serve for eight years, and she'll do her best.

In her fifth year, Ottawa experiences significant struggle with host peoples: grassroots demonstrate, elders cry out. They speak of broken covenants and proclaim, "Treaty rights!"

The PM is confused. Why the frustration? The Department of Aboriginal Affairs tells her to ignore it: "They're blowing off steam. It'll pass." But the PM decides otherwise. She summons a trusted secretary: "Go to the federal archives. See what you can find."

That's when they find the Treaty of Niagara, 1764, buried in the records, covered with dust.



The treaty is passed to the PM with a beautiful wampum, the sacred belt that indigenous and settler governments once used to symbolize their collective obligations.

As the PM runs fingers over the beaded scroll, her secretary invites elders into the office—two indigenous, two settler—to explain its meaning. With shared understanding they offer these words:

"In August of 1764, 2,000 chiefs gathered at Niagara to meet with representatives of the Crown. The year prior, King George III issued a royal proclamation, declaring all lands west of the Appalachians to be 'reserved to the Indians as hunting grounds.' No land could be taken by settler society without indigenous consent.

"The chiefs discussed this proposal with their communities. They prayed

as they discerned its implications.

Twenty-four nations then came together at Niagara to clarify the principles that would govern this relationship, principles of peace, mutual respect and non-interference.

"Your government, Ms Prime Minister, affirmed these principles. The indigenous, in turn, accepted the proclamation. To ratify this pact, wampum belts, like the one you hold, were exchanged, gifts were given and pipes smoked. The treaty was alive! It was a covenant that was to last forever, a chain never to be broken."

The PM is shocked. "Why didn't I know this? Why don't we all know this?" Visibly shaken, she weeps and prays. Then, straightening her suit, she gives orders:

"It's time to redress the wrongs of the past. We haven't honoured our treaty. No wonder there's no harmony in our land. It's not about lazy Indians. We've betrayed our promises. It's not a native issue. It's our problem. Call my Cabinet and get the Governor General. Things are about to change."

And the Canadian public marvelled. The PM did not need to heed the treaty. She did not need to respond to her alarm. She did not need to depart from the practice of other PMs. But she did. It would cost her. Yet she would be remembered because she did right.

Mennonites is possible in this article because of its implicit assumption that Canadian Mennonite forms of religiosity are normative and the faith of Old Colony Mennonites, which differs significantly from most forms familiar to Canadian Mennonites, is aberrant and harmful. If categories of religious life that are familiar to Canadian Mennonites are the only tool used to

assess Old Colony Mennonite faith, then, indeed, all we can do is judge it.

But I think there can be another way in which we take seriously Old Colony Mennonites as they represent themselves. Every society, including ours and Old Colony Mennonite ones, has its dark side where the

(Continued on page 12)

GOD, MONEY AND ME

Gimme, gimme never gets!

KEVIN DAVIDSON

My son takes after his father. He's a picky eater. It's no surprise that our family isn't very adventurous when it comes to menus and cultural cuisine.

Recently, we visited Grandma's house for dinner: a wonderful, authentic Mexican meal. As we were served, my son boldly stated, "I don't like this food."

I was embarrassed by his lack of appreciation. This awkward situation opened the door for a life lesson. Grandma had worked hard and had lovingly prepared a meal she thought we would enjoy. At the very least, we needed to show her some respect and appreciation for what she had prepared.

I reminded my son that being thankful involves more than just giving thanks by saying grace.

A similar scene often plays out at children's birthday parties. Surrounded by brightly coloured packages and bags, many children dive in, one bag after another, without taking the time to read the card or to recognize the generosity and thoughtfulness of the givers. The excitement of the moment is often just too much for them and they forget all the lessons learned about being a gracious receiver.

What is it that we want kids to

recognize when receiving a gift?

- **GOD ULTIMATELY** provides and he is worthy of our thanks.
- **WITHOUT THE** giver, there is no gift. Honour both, and in that order.
- **SEE THE** giver's heart apart from the gift, even if the gift is something they don't care for.
- **REALIZE THE** gift is a gift of grace. No one made the giver give it.
- **THERE ARE** no strings attached, no requirement to repay the giver.

As parents, we are charged with teaching our children some difficult lessons.



What do children hear and see in us when we adults receive a gift: sarcasm, ungratefulness, whiny attitude, payback?

But the Bible promises it's a worthwhile investment: "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Proverbs 22: 6).

Some practical methods for teaching graciousness to our children involve:

- **APOLOGIZING TO** the giver whenever necessary. Not easy at any age.
- **ROLE PLAYING:** Practise how to respond to disappointment and distaste beforehand.
- **SEEING US** parents in action. It

happens more often than we think. Do we practise what we preach? Do we model gracious receiving ourselves? What do children hear and see in us when we adults receive a gift: sarcasm, ungratefulness, whiny attitude, payback?

• **PRAYER.** ASK God to empower us to be gracious receivers.

The fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5 provides us with godly characteristics that show us how to be good gift receivers. Love, goodness and faithfulness help us to show love and appreciation towards givers for who they are and the spirit with which their gifts were given. Joy allows us to demonstrate contentment for what we have, rather than envy for what we don't have. Patience and gentleness give us grace to kindly accept even those gifts that we may not like. Peace, kindness and self-control provide the good judgment to avoid making sarcastic or rude comments.

Teaching kids to be gracious receivers is a two-way street. Receivers extend sincere appreciation to the givers for their thoughtfulness and generosity. When you see it, affirm it . . . then try to model it.

Kevin Davidson is a stewardship consultant in the Calgary 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)

vulnerable, those who don't fit and those who threaten the status quo are hurt and displaced.

I believe there is a time and place to ask hard questions about groups of people different from ourselves, especially if we have committed ourselves to live with them for four years, as the Penners have. But doing so without first honestly examining our own assumptions and motivations—doing so with the naïve un-self-critical approach that this article models—leads to an unfair and skewed representation of a people. This is irresponsible and unethical.

But in the end, it is ourselves to whom we do the greatest disservice. We create a sterile—perhaps even vacuous and box-like—environment in which we can be confident that we are right, but in which the richness of genuine human-to-human interaction with others who challenge our status quo is absent. We impoverish ourselves in so many ways—mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually—when we try to re-form Old Colony Mennonites, or any other group, in our own image.

KERRY FAST, TORONTO

FAMILY TIES

Lament and let go

MELISSA MILLER

Recently I was asked to deliver a devotional at a seniors condominium complex. The suggested theme was, “How do we live with aging and illness and loss of abilities in light of the hope we have in heaven?” Good question, I thought.

I immediately thought of a conversation I had with a family friend, a woman I've known for 40 years. When I last saw her, she told me that Psalm 91:16 says that long life is a blessing. But she added that when life gets to be too long, then it isn't such a blessing any more. At least I think that's what she said. My friend, who is well into her 80s, has a form of Parkinson's disease, which causes her to shake so much that it's difficult for her to speak clearly, to move from one place to another or to feed herself. Certainly that is the gist of what she intended to communicate to me. Long life is a blessing from God and, in her case, with her frailty and difficulties, long life isn't such a blessing any more.

I valued her honesty. Were I in her shoes, I would likely have a similar perspective. She is grieving the loss of health and mobility she knew in the past, and is frankly expressing her grief. In doing

so, she opens herself and invites others into the spiritual questions of aging. Her laments are one way she is talking with, and listening to, God. The Bible, especially the Psalms, are full of laments, the cries of the heart proclaiming to God our sorrows and hurts. The act of voicing the complaint is itself a statement of belief in God and God's compassion.

So when I talked to the seniors, I talked with them about the value of lamenting the changes they are experiencing, and the way such lamenting makes room for hope and trust to be nourished. “God already knows what we are thinking and feeling,” I said. “Telling it to God just makes it easier for us to see our reality, to accept it, and to hear whatever message it

of life,” Smucker says in the Spring 2012 edition of *The Leader*. This hard work can include the death of a spouse, the loss of ability to drive or to care for oneself, to walk without pain, or a sudden move from a familiar home. Learning how to lament becomes an important task in aging.

Smucker also speaks of the spiritual task of letting go as one ages, to nurture “an attitude of yielding to the reality of this stage of life.” With such an attitude, we give ourselves over to the life that God has given us today, open ourselves to how it is that God is with us in our senior years, and the blessings that he has for us in the midst of a season of diminished abilities. In a spirit of hope and trust, Smucker proclaims that such yieldedness “is preparing for the transition to the next world.” Like the Anabaptist virtue of



Yieldedness frees our spirits to rest and trust in God's providence.

is that God has for us.”

My thinking about the spirituality of aging has been influenced by the conversations I have with seniors who are living the hard tasks of aging. Pastoral counsellor Marcus Smucker says that aging is the hardest work a person can do. “Advanced old age is the most physically, mentally and emotionally trying period

gelassenheit, yieldedness frees our spirits to rest and trust in God's providence, a spiritual discipline we can practise at any season of life.

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

✉ Online article 'brilliant, brave, sympathetic'

RE: "THE GHOST rapes of Bolivia"
(canadianmennonite.org/articles/ghost-rapes-bolivia).

I would like to thank the reporter Jean Friedman-Rudovsky for her brilliant, brave, sympathetic and insightful reporting of the horrific story of the horrific so-called "ghost rapes" in the traditionalist Mennonite community of Bolivia. She does not vilify the Mennonites or their traditionalist project, but rather zeroes in on the specific systemic factors that contribute to the making of such a pervasive community horror.

The factors she lists in an insightful online interview—ochbergsociety.org/how-do-you-heal-a-journalist-revisits-a-community-traumatized-by-rape—include "a lack of checks and balances, warped use of forgiveness, lack of sexual and reproductive

She does not vilify the Mennonites or their traditionalist project, but rather zeroes in on the specific systemic factors that contribute to the making of such a pervasive community horror.

health education, and a religion that tells them that their time on earth is meant for suffering, so when something bad happens, you just accept it, rather than raise a fuss, particularly if you are a woman."

In the same interview, Friedman-Rudovsky further reflects that, "whenever you have a group that sees itself outside the limits of the rest of society and that values the reputation or integrity of the group over the safety and protection of the individual, that community is more likely to be prone to sexual abuse."

I hope the Mennonite church-based communities of North America take this story and insightful analysis as a challenge and opportunity to embark on a serious process of self-reflection and wide-scale internal revisioning, since these "systemic factors" and attitudes—along with the harmful effects on the intimate and social lives of women and men—are widely prevalent throughout the Mennonite world, even if not as dramatically expressed as in Bolivia.

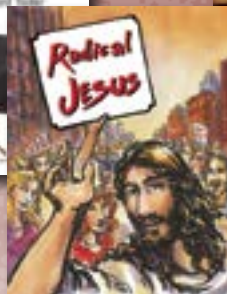
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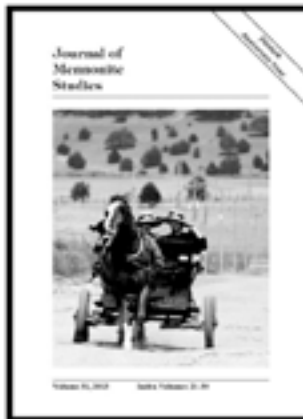
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VIEWPOINT

Healing the Mennonite class divide

BY WILL BRAUN

SENIOR WRITER

The recent coverage of three issues raises the delicate question of how we mainstream Mennonites relate to our more traditional Anabaptist cousins, especially when their troubles surface.

In August, New York-based *Vice* magazine ran a lengthy article entitled “The ghost rapes of Bolivia,” to which *Canadian Mennonite* provided links on its website and Facebook page. It revisits the horrific five-year-old case of numerous men from a Mennonite Colony in Bolivia who gassed and raped dozens of colony women and children.

This summer, national media also reported on the case of government officials in Manitoba apprehending children from a traditional Mennonite community due to allegedly harsh punishment by 13 adults in the community. (See “Old Order Mennonite community in turmoil,” July 8, page 16).

Finally, I wrote an article for this magazine in which Dave and Margaret Penner described profound dysfunction among the Low German Mennonites of the Durango Colony in Mexico, where they worked for four years with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

Canadian Mennonite has taken some sharp criticism for my article (“Ministry in a very different world,” July 8, page 4) and the *Vice* story. This is an important conversation. What is an appropriate response when our cousins in the faith experience difficulties?

Part of me wants to defend them. No person or place is all bad. The good should also be highlighted.



I also remind myself that we have important things to learn from traditional people. As a kid, I recall my dad making this point in reference to our black-clad old-school neighbour. We can learn much about simplicity, humility, community and resisting worldly influences.

I also feel a sense of responsibility to the victims of dysfunction. In defending these communities—or shifting focus to their strengths—one runs the risk of defending the indefensible. If our defence glosses over the trouble, it can leave oppressed people hidden behind a cloak of idealized sensitivities.

In short, I think an appropriate response to troubled traditional Mennonites is one that embodies respect, responsibility and a sense of reciprocity.

Respected Mennonite historian Royden Loewen accused the Penners and me of presenting the Durango Colony as a problem. In his critique (“Boxing up the Old Colony Mennonites,” Aug. 19, page 14), he said the portrayal of the colony was dehumanizing. It’s a point worth considering.

The Penners spoke bluntly about the dysfunction they encountered, although they requested that I not publish the more graphic examples they shared (unlike the “ghost rapes” story, which lays the truth bare in horrific detail). The main message I heard from the Penners was this: Tremendous need exists in the colony, people are yearning for change, and we have a responsibility to respond.

The Penners also spoke with great warmth and affection about the people—people who willingly participated in the programs MCC offered and came knocking at the Penners’ door at all hours. I could have emphasized this more.

One could say the article about the Penners presented the Durango Colony as a problem, or one could say that it told the story of people who immersed themselves in a community for four years; developed a remarkably broad range of spiritually rooted, caring relationships; and encountered profound problems along the way. That is a credible and vital message.

I think it is worth saying that women and children suffering various forms of abuse do not need an academic defence of their church or culture. What they need are people on the ground to help provide safety and healing. The same could be said of the abusers. That is our responsibility as a family of faith. Of course, the work of intervention and healing must be done in a way that is dignifying and culturally sensitive.

Other people will strike the balance between respect and responsibility differently than the Penners. Those perspectives are also of value. That is why I contacted both Loewen and MCC, which also responded in print to my article (“A different take on ‘a very different world,’” Aug. 19, page 13). I wanted to better understand their perspectives. We had constructive exchanges.

I also wanted to ask them about the piece of this puzzle that weighs most heavily on me: the fact that in southern Manitoba—I can’t speak for other parts of the country—Low German-speaking Mennonites have long been segregated and treated by us as an underclass within the Mennonite community. This is a collective sin. I confess my part in it. I have a deep sense of unfinished spiritual business, something I have never heard a Mennonite leader acknowledge.

In my view, those of us who care about traditional Mennonites must take seriously this legacy of segregation. ❧

LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Sehnsucht joy

BY TROY WATSON

I had the good fortune of camping in Algonquin Park in northeastern Ontario a few weeks ago, a perfect place to observe the Perseid meteor shower that happens every August.

I love stargazing. Some of my most cherished summer memories include lying out under the vast night sky in remote unlit areas from the Grand Canyon and Zimbabwe to northern British Columbia.

One evening in Cape Breton, N.S., about a decade ago, I remember feeling a tinge of claustrophobia as I was bombarded with celestial light from every angle. There were stars everywhere, horizon to horizon, completely surrounding me. I wondered how different my perspective on life would be if I'd lived before the era of electric power and relentless illumination, when ignoring the rhythms of nature was not an option.

I'm often overcome with a sense of awe and mystery when immersed in the raw reality of nature. Its grace yet apparent indifference to my survival grounds me in the paradox of existence. For instance, underneath the stars I feel incredibly small and insignificant, but I also feel deeply connected to the universe and history. That the moon I look upon is the same moon that Moses, Jesus and St. Francis gazed upon in moments of prayer and reflection, brings a humbling yet inspiring sense of communion with not only humanity, past and present, but also with our "sister moon."

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "Nature is too thin a screen; the glory of the omnipresent God bursts through everywhere." I think this rings true for anyone with eyes to see and ears to hear. The



staggering, rugged beauty of nature ushers me into sacred space more consistently than any other setting. Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote, "Earth's crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God: But only he who sees takes off his shoes."

I hope I continue to grow and mature to the

point of seeing God primarily in other people, but for now it is in the company of trees, mountains, rivers, lakes, oceans and stars that I most often sense divine presence. "Sehnsucht joy" is one of the most common spiritual experiences I have in response to these divine encoun-

That is one of the chief characteristics of joy: it happens without warning and beyond reason

ters. It is a feeling of indescribable longing for something I cannot comprehend.

Some have described the German word *sehnsucht* as a yearning for a far-off country that feels like home, but not an earthly home we can identify or have ever been to.

C.S. Lewis translated *sehnsucht* with the word "joy." He distinguished joy from happiness and pleasure, in that happiness and pleasure are responses to traceable stimuli, whereas joy is an "inconsolable longing for we know not what." Joy is a kind of divine homesickness, a poignant desire for something agonizingly elusive. It comes upon us like a pleasurable stab, a pang, a wound, "an unsatisfied desire which is itself more desirable than any other satisfaction."

Lewis's own spiritual journey began with Norse mythology, the stars and the

music of Wagner, but it was *sehnsucht*, or joy, that brought him to Christian faith. As he got older, he experienced joy more frequently and spontaneously. That is one of the chief characteristics of joy: it happens without warning and beyond reason in the smell of a bonfire, the sound of crashing waves or the opening lines of inspired poetry.

More than nostalgia, though, joy rekindles a desire for something this world cannot give us. For Lewis, the experience of joy was validation of God, of another world and of life beyond this one. He reasoned that there is no desire on earth lacking a source of satisfaction. Hunger has food, thirst has water, sexual desire has its gratifications. It is only logical, he concluded, that this otherworldly longing of joy has a fulfilment as well. It does, he claimed; it is only not of this world.

Being washed in the fragrance of cedar while walking through the woods, hearing the wind howling through the trees as

a storm moves in, staring up at a meteor-streaked night sky, I'm grateful for these unplanned divine appointments that unexpectedly evoke joy—a divine homesickness—within my soul. Like a bitter-sweet epiphany of emotion, it brings a double-edged realization that my life is both precious because it is so fleeting and at the same time so much more than this temporary, material existence.

These experiences of *sehnsucht* do not move me away from the world, in attempts to escape or detach from it, in order to find God. They move me deeper into communion with the earth and the mysterious omnipresent God who dwells here.

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

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Aguiar—Lillian Grace-Ann (b. June 15, 2013), to Nelson and Delfina Aguiar, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Fuglerud—Carter Henry (b. May 28, 2013), to Kendra and Clinton Fuglerud, Hanley Mennonite, Sask.

Heska—Noah William (b. July 14, 2013), to Ryan and Kelsey Heska, The Gathering, Kitchener, Ont.

Kasdorf—Max Jacob (b. July 29, 2013), to Anthony and Haley Kasdorf, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Lizotte—Summer Michelle (b. April 6, 2013), to Jessica and Jean-Michel Lizotte, North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Martin—Emmalynn Joy (b. Aug. 8, 2013), to Devin and Megan Martin, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

Robins—Sophia Skye (b. Aug. 4, 2013), to Heide and Loren Robins, Hanley Mennonite, Sask.

Suderman—James Robert (b. July 3, 2013), to Andrew and Karen Suderman, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont., in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

Thiessen—June Rosalie (b. May 21, 2013), to Jessica and Chris Thiessen, Emmanuel Mennonite, Abbotsford, B.C.

Toews—Avielle Patricia (b. Aug. 3, 2013), to Nathan and Tara Toews, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Yantzi—Everleigh Joy (b. Aug. 6, 2013), to Erin and Dustin Yantzi, East Zorra Mennonite, Tavistock, Ont.

Baptisms

Doyle Penner—Arnaud Mennonite, Man., May 26, 2013.

Chris Dick, Kara Warburton, Stephanie Doerksen—Carman Mennonite, Man., July 21, 2013.

Kyle Hirschfeld, Linda Loewen, Jessica Pikel, Ben White—North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg, June 9, 2013.

Jesse Reimer Watts—Rockaway Mennonite, Kitchener, Ont., March 31, 2013.

Marriages

Dueck/Ogezi—Karen Dueck (Rosthern Mennonite, Sask.) and Duke Joseph Ogezi, at Rosthern Mennonite, Aug. 3, 2013.

Enns/Wagner—Jared Enns and Tonya Wagner, Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg, July 6, 2013.)

Fast/Martens—Jacoba Fast (Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon) and Russell Martens (Hoffnungsfelder Mennonite, Rabbit Lake, Sask.), Aug. 10, 2013.

Forget/Toews—Christine Forget and Walter Toews, Sherbrooke Mennonite, Vancouver, Aug. 3, 2013.

Friesen/Hoepfner—Ian Friesen (Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.) and Krista Hoepfner, at Glencross EMMC, Morden, Man., Aug. 10, 2013.

Klassen/Madigan—Quinn Klassen and Matthew Madigan, at Breslau Mennonite, Ont., Aug. 4, 2013.

Kuepfer/Wickie—Simon Kuepfer and Tamara Wickie, Riverdale Mennonite, Millbank, Ont., July 27, 2013.

Deaths

Bergen—Rosella (nee Epp), 95 (b. April 5, 1918; d. Aug. 2, 2013), Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

Enns—John, 91 (b. Jan. 7, 1922; d. March 12, 2013), Charleswood Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Friesen—Mary, 87 (b. June 16, 1925; d. March 17, 2013), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Harder—Henry, 81 (b. March 23, 1932; d. July 23, 2013), Hanley Mennonite, Stask.

Ilg—Gustav, 87 (b. May 25, 1925; d. March 31, 2013), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Klippenstein—Anne, 87 (b. Sept. 24, 1925; d. Aug. 12, 2013), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Martens—Henry, 92 (b. Oct. 21, 1920; d. Aug. 8, 2013), Altona Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Martin—Henry, 91 (d. Aug. 7, 2013), Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

Peters—Dorothy Marie (nee Schmidt), 87 (b. July 11, 1925; d. June 9, 2013), Fort Garry Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Rempel—Margarete, 92 (b. Feb. 16, 1920; d. Feb. 3, 2013), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Sawatzky—Henry, 87 (b. April 6, 1926; d. Aug. 6, 2013), Sargent Avenue Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Schulz—Henry Alvin, 88 (b. July 16, 1924; d. Jan. 9, 2013), Arnaud Mennonite, Man.

Siemens—Helene, 93 (b. Jan. 29, 1919; d. Jan. 13, 2013), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Wismer—Vera (nee Nafziger), 100 (b. Sept. 15, 1912; d. Aug. 4, 2013), Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

Zacharias—Nancy, 52 (b. March 1, 1961; d. March 16, 2013), North Kildonan Mennonite, Winnipeg.

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.

/// Correction

Arnold Gingrich's surname was misspelled as "Gingerich" in both a July 8 article on page 17, "Built on tradition, open to change," and a subsequent correction on page 9 of the July 29 issue. Also, he grew up in the Mennonite Conference of Ontario, which he later served as an adult. *Canadian Mennonite* regrets the errors.

GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

Congolese youth strengthen Mennonite ties

BY SHELDON C. GOOD
Mennonite Central Committee

In a world where differences and distance often divide people of faith, Mennonite youth in the Democratic Republic of Congo are participating in an exchange program to strengthen ties among the country's three Mennonite conferences.

The exchange program, called Menno-Monde (Menno-World), allows youth to spend a week or two living with a family, attending church and learning to know youth from a Mennonite conference different from their own.

Developed in 2012, the program is sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and the three Congolese Mennonite conferences. The conferences send youth to different parts of the country to help establish relationships that reach across borders that historically have divided Congolese Mennonites.

Designed for people aged 15 to 25, Menno-Monde has given youth like Gina Molumbe Mongala, 24, the opportunity to explore what it means to be Mennonite in another part of their country. For Molumbe Mongala, a member of the Peniel congregation of the Mennonite Brethren conference, participating in Menno-Monde was the first time she travelled "into the country" without her family. "The day I was to leave, I had no appetite all day," she says. She visited a congregation in Bandundu City, about 240 kilometres northeast of Kinshasa, her home area.

"At church one Saturday, I preached to the youth for the very first time in my life," she says. "I showed the Sunday school teachers how to use lesson books. Since I am a Sunday school teacher in my own church, I had brought some booklets for the children and for the teachers."

Judith Malembu Fumulombi, 25, from the Sanga-Mamba congregation of the Mennonite Communion of Congo in Kinshasa, the capital city, worked with

the women's choir and the youth choir at her host church, a Mennonite Brethren congregation in Kikwit. She leads a praise group and directs the youth choir at her home church.

Menno-Monde, which was developed by Mennonite Central Committee Congo's advisory committee, has supported five exchanges so far that involved 13 men, 12 women and 39 congregations. Exchanges take place during school holidays at Christmas and Easter, and during a long break in July and August.

So far, exchanges have taken place in western Congo, but Menno-Monde coordinators hope future exchanges will eventually include Mennonite congregations in the central and eastern parts of the country.

According to Suzanne Lind, an MCC

PHOTO BY SUZANNE LIND



Gina Molumbe Mongala, left, Persévérance Luzindalalu and Judith Malembu Fumulombi, from Mennonite congregations in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, participated in a Menno-Monde exchange during a school break earlier this year. They were hosted by congregations in Kikwit and Bandundu City.

representative in Congo, youth "are eager to think in terms of Mennonite, rather than [separate Mennonite] denominational tags."

Menno-Monde coordinator Leya Muloba Buabua hopes the exchange program can promote Anabaptist values and lay a firm foundation for youth to consider participating in MCC's International Volunteer Exchange Program (IVEP) or the Young Anabaptist Mennonite Exchange Network (YAMEN!), a joint program of MCC and Mennonite World Conference. ❧

/// Briefly noted

Works of theologian John Howard Yoder to be digitized, published online

GOSHEN, IND.—The Mennonite Historical Library has received a \$12,023 grant to digitize and provide online access to unpublished and informally published works of John Howard Yoder, one of the most prominent theologians of the 20th century. The project is a collaborative effort between Goshen College's Mennonite Historical Library and Mennonite Church U.S.A. Yoder, who served for nearly 30 years as a teacher and scholar on the faculties at Goshen Biblical Seminary, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) and Notre Dame University, introduced Anabaptist thought, including pacifism, into mainstream Christian theology. The digital library will provide improved access to Yoder's unpublished works, including lectures, essays and correspondence. Digital files of these works will become freely accessible through the Private Academic Library Network of Indiana and Indiana Memory websites. "We are delighted to partner with the Archives of Mennonite Church U.S.A. and AMBS in this collaborative venture," says John D. Roth, director of the Mennonite Historical Library. "This project is an important step in making the unique resources of our collections more accessible to researchers regionally and around the world."

—Goshen College

Seeking understanding of shared identity

Mennonite World Conference launches new study of its global members

Goshen College
GOSHEN, IND.

A new Mennonite World Conference (MWC) study was launched this summer at Goshen College to determine how the MWC's "shared convictions" are finding expression among 25 groups around the world.

The Global Anabaptist Profile, which is organized and funded by the Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism at Goshen College, will also shed new light on the demographics of the rapidly growing global Anabaptist family and create a digital library of testimonies from pastors and lay members of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ congregations around the world.

"The size of the Anabaptist-Mennonite global fellowship has nearly tripled in the past three decades, with most of the growth coming outside of Europe and

North America," said John D. Roth, director of the institute and secretary of the MWC Faith and Life Commission. "Yet we really don't know very much about the lived experiences—the beliefs, practices and challenges—of our global body. We hope this project will provide a clearer understanding of who we are as a global family and deepen our sense of a shared identity."

In 2011, Roth helped to establish the Institute for the Study of Global Anabaptism at Goshen College and initiated a series of conversations with MWC, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and the mission agencies of various Mennonite conferences regarding the global survey. Following the approval of the project by MWC's Executive Committee and General Council, Roth forged a partnership with

Conrad Kanagy, professor of sociology at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College, who has extensive experience with similar church member profiles; Kanagy will serve as a co-director of the project.

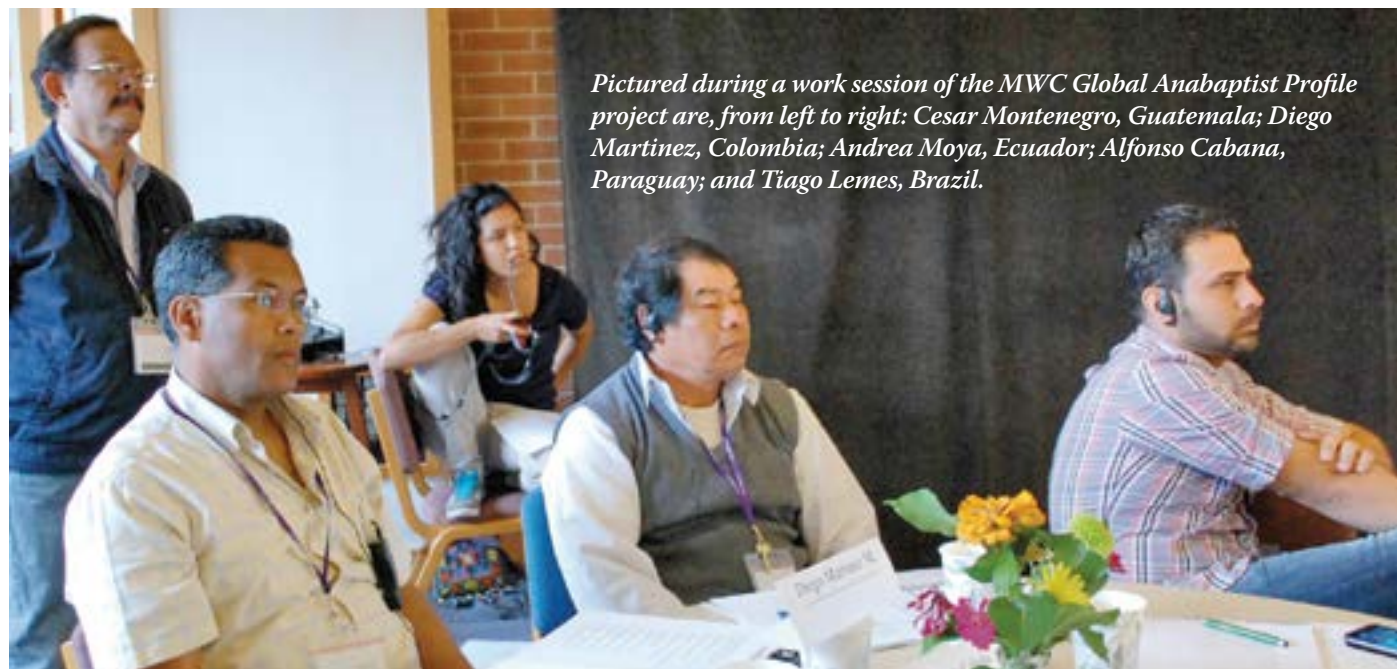
The 25 MWC member conferences that are participating in the Global Anabaptist Profile were selected randomly, with proportional representation within each of MWC's five regions. In the spring of 2013, church leaders from each group identified research associates to carry out the project within their country. At the recent consultation in Goshen, the research associates met for four days to revise the survey, refine additional questions specific to their conference, and receive basic training in social research methods.

Participants in the consultation expressed resounding enthusiasm for the project.

"The task ahead is enormous, but I'm very hopeful that the project will help my church better understand where we are, where we are heading and how we fit into the global church—the bigger body of Christ," said Tigist Tesfaye Gelagle, representative of Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia.

"The research will be owned by our church," said M.Z. Ichsanudin of the GITJ Church in Indonesia, "so that our

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOHN D. ROTH



Pictured during a work session of the MWC Global Anabaptist Profile project are, from left to right: Cesar Montenegro, Guatemala; Diego Martinez, Colombia; Andrea Moya, Ecuador; Alfonso Cabana, Paraguay; and Tiago Lemes, Brazil.

Seven shared convictions

By the grace of God, we seek to live and proclaim the good news of reconciliation in Jesus Christ. As part of the one body of Christ at all times and places, we hold the following to be central to our belief and practice:

1. **GOD IS** known to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Creator who seeks to restore fallen humanity by calling a people to be faithful in fellowship, worship, service and witness.
2. **JESUS IS** the Son of God. Through his life and teachings, his cross and resurrection, he showed us how to be faithful disciples, redeemed the world and offers eternal life.
3. **AS A** church, we are a community of those whom God's Spirit calls to turn from sin, acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, receive baptism upon confession of faith, and follow Christ in life.
4. **AS A** faith community, we accept the Bible as our authority for faith and life, interpreting it together under Holy Spirit guidance, in the light of Jesus Christ, to discern God's will for our obedience.
5. **THE SPIRIT** of Jesus empowers us to trust God in all

areas of life so we become peacemakers who renounce violence, love our enemies, seek justice and share our possessions with those in need.

6. **WE GATHER** regularly to worship, to celebrate the Lord's Supper, and to hear the Word of God in a spirit of mutual accountability.

7. **AS A** worldwide community of faith and life, we transcend boundaries of nationality, race, class, gender and language. We seek to live in the world without conforming to the powers of evil, witnessing to God's grace by serving others, caring for creation, and inviting all people to know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

In these convictions we draw inspiration from Anabaptist forebears of the 16th century, who modelled radical discipleship to Jesus Christ. We seek to walk in his name by the power of the Holy Spirit, as we confidently await Christ's return and the final fulfilment of God's kingdom.

Adopted by Mennonite World Conference General Council, March 15, 2006.

conference will have data that can help our decisions. This is a bridge for building brotherhood among the Mennonite churches all around the world."

Roth acknowledged the complexities of the project, noting especially the cross-cultural differences in understanding theological terms, the logistical challenges some research associates will face in reaching remote congregations, the challenge of illiteracy in some contexts, and the fact that survey results can never fully capture the full reality of Anabaptist beliefs and practices.

"Ultimately, the survey is more like an X-ray than a photograph," he said. "But we hope that it will give a better understanding of some basic trends and directions in our global family, and that the interviews can supplement the quantitative data with individual stories that provide greater texture and nuance."

The project has received grants from MCC and the Schowalter Foundation, with most of the financial support coming from individual contributions. Organizers hope that the Global Anabaptist Profile will be completed in time for the 2015 MWC

assembly in Harrisburg, Pa.

As he departed the consultation, Jethro Dube, research associate for the Brethren in Christ Church of Zimbabwe, summarized his hopes for the survey. "It's been wonderful to be reminded that we are no

longer strangers, that we are part of the family of God, citizens with God's people wherever we are in our little corners of the world," he said. "And that we have the responsibility of upholding each up and maintaining our unity as a family." ❧

/// Briefly noted

New leadership for Vietnamese church

Abbotsford Vietnamese Fellowship will welcome Ken Ha as pastor beginning the first of September. Ha will take over duties on a volunteer basis from Nhien Pham, pastor of Vietnamese Mennonite Church in Vancouver, who has been commuting to Abbotsford to give leadership to the group since its inception four years ago. Ha is returning from the United States to Abbotsford, where he served previously with Mennonite Brethren Vietnamese ministries. The Vietnamese group in Abbotsford is small, currently with only five members, and Ha will attempt to expand the group through visitation, sharing the gospel and helping with translation in the local Vietnamese community. Currently, the Abbotsford fellowship gathers together for prayer on Friday night and worship services at Emmanuel Mennonite Church on Sunday night. Pham tells *Canadian Mennonite* that the group has been reduced in number because of many moving out of the community, but that Ha's previous connections in the Abbotsford area should be a help in expanding attendance again.

—BY AMY DUECKMAN

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

COVER STORY

One milk crate of debris at a time

Mennonite Disaster Services at work in Alberta flood clean-up and recovery

By TRISH ELGERSMA

Mennonite Central Committee Canada

“It was extremely daunting, knowing it was only one small basement on one street,” says volunteer Nancy Thiessen, one of about 250 people who volunteered with Mennonite Disaster Services (MDS) to help with clean-up in High River, Alta., after a flood devastated the city of about 13,000 in late June. “All we could do was take one milk crate of debris up the stairs at a time. I could not imagine the stress of facing that alone.”

“We’ve never dealt with anything like this in Canada before,” says Janet Plenert, MDS director for Canadian operations. “We knew we needed to be present and help in a significant way.”

After the flood, Plenert and Jim Dyck of MDS Alberta began constant communication with the Alberta unit, a group of about 12 volunteers from across the province. During the first week, Plenert and Dyck, along with other local MDS leaders, worked many hours touring and meeting with people and organizations affected by the flood. They also worked with their disaster management partners to ensure collaboration and make sure plans could



MDS PHOTO BY JANET PLENERT

Flood damage in High River, Alta., is the worst Mennonite Disaster Service Canada has ever experienced.

across Canada. A businessman and several businesses from La Crete, Alta., donated a new fully stocked tool trailer. Local residents, and several from other parts of

*‘There are still many unmet needs and I’m confident that our constituency will rise up and come and help.’
(Janet Plenert)*

be adjusted to meet the most urgent needs.

Beginning its work through Samaritan’s Purse, MDS was able to set up on the ground within a week after the flood. This was due to overwhelming support and generosity from churches and individuals

Canada, came to help for a day or a week.

Despite the hard work and unimaginable devastation, volunteers were encouraged by the energy and spirit on the ground.

“I’ve never experienced anything like it,” says Thiessen. “In one home where we

/// Briefly noted

Monsanto Fund grants \$100,000 to Foodgrains Bank

WINNIPEG—The Canadian Foodgrains Bank has received a grant of \$100,000 from the Monsanto Fund. The grant, given to the Foodgrains Bank on the occasion of its 30th anniversary, will be used to support growing projects in rural communities in Nova Scotia, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. The funds will be used to help start or support new growing projects in Canada—community fundraisers where farmers and others come together to grow and sell a crop to raise money for the Foodgrains Bank; support from the fund will also be used for inputs or land rental. The grant from the Monsanto Fund is in addition to Monsanto Canada’s annual donation of \$60,000 to the Foodgrains Bank for growing project inputs. The Monsanto Fund is the philanthropic arm of Monsanto; created in 1964, it works to substantially and meaningfully improve the lives of people around the world by strengthening both farming communities in other countries and the communities where we live and work.

—Canadian Foodgrains Bank

worked the lady was so overwhelmed with appreciation that she had all of us in tears. I learned so much about graciousness and gratitude.”

MDS is now working on transitioning from emergency-response mode to long-term recovery, seeking individuals and groups to volunteer for a week at a time as rebuilding begins. The hope is that this work will start in October.

“We have an opportunity here in Canada to rally together and serve a group of strangers that need hope,” says Plenert. “There are still many unmet needs and I’m confident that our constituency will rise up, and come and help.”

To volunteer with MDS in Alberta, call the Alberta volunteer coordinator at 587-216-6169. //



Sheila Wiebe, left, and Karen Schellenberg, associate pastor of Carman Mennonite Church, Man., stand on the bridge overlooking the Boyne River during a vigil held to remember the lives of Lisa Gibson of Winnipeg, who drowned her two young children in the bathtub and then took her own life in the Red River. Schellenberg, who planned the vigil, says it was held by the water 'because of the significant role water . . . played in the final hours and minutes of Lisa, Anna and Nicholas's lives, and because of the frequent mention of "the river" throughout Scripture. Water can be powerfully destructive and powerfully healing as well.'

'It is enough, O Lord'

Vigil held in wake of tragic deaths of a Winnipeg mother and her two children

STORY AND PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent
CARMAN, MAN.

When news of the very tragic deaths of a young mother and her two young children hit front pages, shocking residents of Winnipeg and surrounding communities, Karen Schellenberg began to feel its impact in her rural church, an hour's drive from the city.

Lisa Gibson's body was discovered in the Red River several days after her two children, Anna, 2, and Nicholas, 3 months, were found unresponsive in the bathtub of their home on July 24. As the story unfolded in the national media in the days following, people began to understand the tragedy as one of a loving mother who was in deep psychiatric distress.

Schellenberg, associate pastor at Carman Mennonite, said, "In conversations with people here, mostly mothers, both younger and older, [the recent tragedy] kept coming up. I started to recognize how deeply so many felt and how quickly stories of 'I remember how that was for me' surfaced, maybe not to the same extent,

but a version of deep sadness or despair."

When she saw how this tragedy impacted her community, she said she decided to plan a vigil "as a way of giving people some space to express their sorrow, their pain and their questions . . . because Lisa's story is our story." She extended an open invitation to the congregation and any of their friends and neighbours.

Eleven people gathered along the banks of the Boyne River that flows through Carman on the evening of Aug. 7.

Sheila Wiebe, a mother of four, attended the vigil. "I went because . . . I remember very clearly how dark some of those times could be [as a new mom]. Your lack of sleep, your emotions and your guilt because you have this wonderful baby. I felt very close to that situation even though the years have passed since that time for me. That feeling has definitely stayed with me, the intensity of all the emotions that come along with having children."

Schellenberg shared the story of Elijah

in I Kings 19. "You would think that having such a powerful experience of God would keep Elijah going for a long, long time," she said. "You would think that the birth, the gift of a healthy child, would be enough to keep Lisa going for a very long time. She had it all, it seemed." But her plea was the same as Elijah's: "It is enough, O Lord. Take away my life."

The group tossed flower petals into the river and lingered on the bridge, watching the petals gently float with the slow current. They watched the reflections and took note of how the clouds configured to form the wing of an angel. Slowly one by one they crossed to the other side of the bridge and continued watching the floating petals.

"That was so powerful and moving," said Wiebe. "I had never taken part in something like this before. It was a time of solidarity and standing together." She and many of the others gathered that evening resonated with Lisa's story. "I walk very closely with anxiety and depression," she said. "You don't have to have postpartum to be able to recognize there are times when life just seems overwhelming and difficult, and despite your best efforts you come up short."

As evening fell, the group walked across the road to the church offices and continued to talk, weep and laugh together. ❧

'Who can we trust?'

Mennonites stand with indigenous brothers and sisters

STORY AND PHOTOS

BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada

WINNIPEG

Of the approximately 150 people who attended an Honour the Apology rally at the Forks in Winnipeg on July 25, more than 20 were members of the Manitoba Mennonite community.

Rallies held across the country urged the federal government to honour its June 2008 apology to Indian Residential School (IRS) survivors by releasing all documents related to those schools.

The files are considered crucial to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's mandate to acknowledge the injustices inflicted upon indigenous populations by the IRS and to create a public record of what happened.

Despite a Jan. 30 order from the Superior



Steve Plenert, left, peace coordinator for Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba, prays at Winnipeg's Honour the Apology rally on July 25. In an e-mail following the event, Plenert wrote: 'My prayer is that, as peoples who dwell in this land, . . . we would carve out history stories that we can all be proud of. My prayer is for compassion for those who have suffered. My prayer is that the shame of the residential school experience would be transformed into hope, goodness and understanding. It is God who can change our hearts.'

Court of Ontario to release all related files, the vast majority are still in the hands of various government departments.

Honour the Apology was sparked by July

16 reports of nutritional experiments performed on more than 1,000 IRS students during the 1940s.

Since the July 25 rally, the commission has reported another discovery: aboriginal children were also subjected to medical testing.

"If we're going to walk a good path towards reconciliation, honest and open truth-telling is critical," says Steve Heinrichs, Mennonite Church Canada director of indigenous relations. "Whenever new information like this surfaces, it re-traumatizes indigenous survivors and their communities, and they understandably ask once again, 'Who can we trust?' We must demand better of our government," he says.

Ron Janzen, executive director of Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba, was one of several religious leaders from the local faith community who addressed the gathering. He told participants that "the work of justice adds honour to the national apology and thereby becomes a true testimony of Canadian citizenship and respect." ❧



Participants at an Honour the Apology rally at the Forks in Winnipeg on July 25 included members of the Manitoba Mennonite community: Pam Peters Pries; Karen Martens Zimmerly, MC Canada denominational minister; Dora Dueck; Byron Rempel-Burkholder; Steve Heinrichs, MC Canada's director of indigenous relations; and Arlyn Friesen Epp, MC Canada's Resource Centre director.

VIEWPOINT

What is the ‘settler problem’?

BY ROGER EPP

By the end of a long day of hearings, there are few adjectives—short of “monstrous”—that can do justice to the plain words of old men who face the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) commissioner with tears in their eyes and disclose the intimate shame of their residential school experiences to a room filled with strangers, grandchildren and people they have known their whole lives. For some, it is the first time.

The men talk of hunger, thirst, loneliness, braids cut, beds wet, strange sexual touching by adult supervisors, brutalities, a hand misshapen by a disciplinary beating. They talk of bitterness dissipated by time, traditional teachings or, in one case, a miracle.

Likewise, few adjectives can do justice to the grim roll-call assembled and read out by one of the last generation of students at the Ermineskin Indian Residential School, located in Hobbema, Alta., until its closure in 1973. Of his classmates, the number of those who have died prematurely and unnaturally is close to 50.

When the TRC held hearings last month at Hobbema, it did so, fittingly, on the site of the old residential school. The location served as a reminder that not only the long-standing policy of the national government was to “separate the Indian from the child,” but also that such twisted idealism, destructive as it has been, ultimately did not succeed.

I have my own short history at Ermineskin, whose building, all but condemned, became in its final years the temporary home of Maskwachees Cultural College. Twice a week I drove



out to teach Political Science 101 to a small class of mature students who showed me that education really was about personal liberation and preparation to serve their community. They also showed me the peepholes through which teachers once

spied on students.

I am the great-grandson of settlers on Treaty Six land. My ancestors are buried here. Over time, my understanding of what it means to live in this place with a sense of care and obligation has coalesced into three convictions:

- **FIRST, SETTLER** people must challenge in every generation the mythology that there was no one here when “we” came, that we made something of it, and that, therefore, we represent a superior civilizing force. The historical reality is much more complicated than that.

But the mythology is as powerful as ever. It offers a simple justification of our being here without any need to look back or face up to unfinished business. It inspires the endless search for a “solution” to the “Indian problem” without ever turning the question around: What is the “settler problem”?

- **SECOND, ALL** of us who live here are treaty people. In other words, the terms of our co-existence were established by agreement before most of our settler ancestors arrived.

- **THIRD, WHILE** political leaders ought to make public apologies and offer compensation for serious wrongs, past and present, the real work of reconciliation is mostly for neighbours. If anything, governments seem particularly ill-suited to it.

Five years have now passed since Prime Minister Stephen Harper said that the attitudes that led to the residential school system had no place in contemporary Canada and that the burden of the survivors needed to be borne by all Canadians. By all accounts, the words were sincere. But they were not enough. Although they acknowledged what had happened, they fell on the stony ground that associates apology with erasure. From that perspective, the residential school system is old news. Survivors are left to wrestle with the imperatives of forgetting, to “just get over it.”

In Canada, the TRC has taken up the work of listening and collecting stories with a formidable persistence, with and without government cooperation. When it finishes its public work in 2014, it will leave an archive accessible to all Canadians. There will be no excuse for ignorance.

But by itself the TRC cannot change attitudes, transfer burdens or build relationships. It cannot widen the circle of memory and responsibility.

For that reason, what happened at Hobbema was not just that old men broke their silences. It was that people from Edmonton, Camrose and Ponoka were there to listen. It was that the mayor of Wetaskiwin, who attended both days, asked to take his turn at the microphone to describe his own change of heart, and to express his aspirations for the relationship between his community and the neighbouring Cree communities. It was that everyone ate together.

In other words, the work of “remembering” has begun and will continue as those who were present bear witness to what they heard. For they will not have gone home unchanged or unacquainted with courage. In that, there is reason for hope that a different Canadian story—honest, open-ended—can emerge. ❧

Roger Epp is the author of We Are All Treaty People and one of 12 members of the Canadian Mennonite Publishing Service board. This column is adapted from his summary comments as honorary witness to the TRC hearings at Hobbema, and is reprinted in shortened form from the Edmonton Journal.

MCC PHOTO BY SARAH ADAMS



This Syrian girl sings, plays musical chairs and paints during a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) visit to the temporary Lebanese community where she lives. The activities are coordinated by Development for People and Nature Association, an MCC partner.

Syrian children carry heavy load

BY LINDA ESPENSHADE
Mennonite Central Committee

When Syrian children return to school this fall, many will carry a weight much heavier than a backpack.

They will remember fleeing their homes while bombing, shelling, shooting and raids

happened around them, as the loss of family members and neighbours who have died in the Syrian conflict weigh on them.

Some worry that they will not have a place to live or that they won't be able to

stay where they are currently sheltered. Others aren't sure they will be able to attend school, because there's no school available or because their families are running out of money.

"The children are most affected by what's going on, especially psychologically," says Bishop Jean Kawak, a spiritual director for children and youth leader of the Syrian Orthodox Diocese in Damascus.

Concern for the children has been part of almost every plan Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) has implemented

Foodgrains Bank commits another \$1.1 million for Syrian refugees

By JOHN LONGHURST

Canadian Foodgrains Bank

Canadian Foodgrains Bank has committed another \$1.1 million worth of assistance for refugees fleeing the conflict in Syria.

The assistance, which will be used by Foodgrains Bank member World Renew to assist refugees seeking safety in Lebanon and Jordan, brings to just over \$4 million the total amount of assistance being made available to help people from that country.

Altogether, the assistance is helping to meet the food needs of more than 55,000 people each month.

“Our assistance is filling an important niche,” says Grant Hillier, the Foodgrains Bank’s international programs director. “We are providing food for people who have not yet registered with the United Nations, for fear of what registering may mean if they try to return home, and also for those who have increased medical expenses or high housing costs.”

For the latter, assistance from the Foodgrains Bank “allows them to use their limited disposable income on these things, rather on daily food needs,” he adds.

The assistance, which is made possible with support from the Canadian government, is being provided through food baskets and cash-based food vouchers.

Markets in Lebanon have the capacity to provide the necessary quantity, quality and diversity of foods

to ensure beneficiary nutrition requirements are met,” says Hillier. “As a bonus, we are providing employment for people in the region who grow and sell the food.”

The conflict in Syria has become one of the world’s largest refugee crises, with more than four million people displaced in that country and almost two million others forced to seek refuge in nearby countries.

WORLD RENEW PHOTO BY WAYNE DE JONG



A Syrian family in a refugee camp in Lebanon.

with its partners since the beginning of the Syrian crisis more than two years ago. The children who are affected are not just Syrian, but also those in Jordan and Lebanon, who have to share their schools, food, homes and resources with relatives or guests.

MCC’s partners in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon have distributed more than 75,000 school kits. MCC has supported after-school educational programs, summer camps and special events specifically for children.

Getting children into school is the most positive way to help refugees and displaced children within Syria cope, says Paul Haidostian, president of Haigazian University in Beirut and a partner of MCC Lebanon.

Housing is a significant issue for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, where the government has not provided shelter for refugees, according to Ali Jammoul, project officer and volunteer coordinator for Development for People and Nature Association (DPNA), another MCC partner. “It leads to various problems, such as epidemics, inaccessible drinking water, sanitation and hygiene issues, living in places that are not suitable for living, sexual harassment, domestic violence, no ability to attend schools,” he says.

DPNA and MCC have been working together to provide psychosocial activities at one of the biggest shelters in Lebanon, based in and around a partially built school. DPNA conducts art workshops, group games and musical activities for the

children, and distributes kits and blankets.

“The children love it when the young adults from our partner agencies come to do activities with them,” says Sarah Adams, MCC representative for Syria and Lebanon. “They run up to them when they arrive and trail after them when they leave.”

MCC has committed almost \$8.2 million in response to the Syrian crisis, providing locally bought food, clothing and shoes, cash assistance for rent and other priorities, and material resources—blankets, relief kits and hygiene kits—for almost 10,000 Syrian families. Peacebuilding training—trauma response, conflict resolution and interfaith dialogue—has been part of creating a more secure environment for adults and children. ❧

CoSA looking to expand volunteer base

Information meeting planned for Oct. 15 in Brandon

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU
Manitoba Correspondent

There is a journey to learning from your mistakes,” says Larry (a pseudonym), who has been out of prison for three years now. He credits Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) for walking with him on this journey.

“In my first year out, I was very anxious and sensitive to criticism,” he says. “Part of that comes from being inside prison and the high stress I felt a lot of the time. When I was inside, I felt constantly watched and judged.”

A circle of committed volunteers continues to meet with him regularly to offer him encouragement and hold him accountable for his actions and decisions.

“This kind of support is important in the hard times and the good,” Larry says. “I don’t have the feeling of being judged, and that’s important to me. There is a gentleness and respect when the people with CoSA raise concerns. Oh, we’ve had our clashes and opinionated conversations, but trying to deal with the issues I face can’t be sugar-coated.”

CoSA is a community-based interfaith program that works to enhance community safety by creating a human network

around high-risk offenders after their release from prison, explains Joan Carolyn, program director. “In an attempt to facilitate healthy relationships and activities, we provide weekly circle meetings with staff and trained volunteers,” she says.

The CoSA model of reintegration began in Canada in 1994. It was started by Harry Night, a Mennonite pastor, who befriended a repeat sex offender. Night and some of his parishioners formed a support group and obtained funding from Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and the Correctional Service of Canada to keep the group going. It was effective, as the man did not re-offend.

Today there are 16 main offices across Canada, with 20 program sites. “MCC Canada has had an active role over the years,” Carolyn notes. “Their restorative justice program assists the various MCC-based CoSAs to network, acts as an advocacy voice and joins as a representative on the more recent work to possibly establish a national CoSA.”

Although the Manitoba office of CoSA has been involved throughout the province

over the years, its primary activities have been in Winnipeg. However, three people in the Brandon area are currently in need of support and accountability.

“We’d love to find out if people are willing to get involved there,” says Carolyn. CoSA is bringing a presentation to Brandon on Oct. 15 at 7 p.m. Information will be shared through readers’ theatre, storytelling and conversation. “One of our biggest challenges is finding support volunteers,” she says. “It’s at times challenging to get over the reality that people are asking for help and we simply can’t supply.”

Currently there are 30 volunteers with the program and 10 core members. Over its 15-year history, there have been 36 core members who have voluntarily gone through the program and just over 110 support volunteers.

“We only ask for a one-year commitment from all circle participants and that is reviewed annually,” Carolyn explains. “It is then the decision of the whole circle as to whether they should continue or not. The average circle lasts two-and-a-half years.”

Karl Langelotz began volunteering this year after completing the training sessions. He recently helped a core member move into a new rental home.

“She and her roommates were so excited to be moving into their own space,” Langelotz says. “Finding decent accommodations is probably the biggest challenge for our core members. Relying on former friends for help isn’t always the healthiest option.”

Despite the challenges, Carolyn, who has been involved with the program for 14 years, says, “there always seems to be more reasons to celebrate than to mourn. When I began, a common view of many people was that the offenders were beyond hope. It’s been inspiring to see what can happen when people come together to seek to break violent patterns and build positive ones. I never want to minimize the challenges facing our clients, circles and communities. Those are real and sometimes things don’t work out as one might have dreamed . . . but there are those who do learn step by step to thrive and it’s such incredible joy to be even a small part of that journey.” ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF COSA



Adam Klassen Bartel, left, a Manitoba Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) support volunteer, plays the guitar for Daniel Epp, a program associate, during a camping trip for core members and volunteers. CoSA is planning an information session in Brandon on Oct. 15 in an effort to interest new volunteers in the area. For more information, e-mail cosawpg@inititivesjc.org or call 204-925-1915.

Workers leave China, richer for godchildren

By DAN DYCK

Mennonite Church Canada

Phil and Julie Bender are leaving the country and ministry that have been their home and vocation for the last nine years.

Serving with Mennonite Church Canada as English teachers in a university setting through Mennonite Partners in China, the couple are busy cramming nearly a decade of life in China into suitcases and farewell visits into their schedule.

The Benders are already godparents to a male medical student who just graduated as a doctor, and a female senior English major, both of whom they taught during their China mission. The couple made a ministry of inviting students into their home for food and hospitality, visits that often led to conversations about faith and God.

Their leaving has brought another godchild into their lives. Lisa, a second-year psychology major, was enrolled in Phil's optional oral English classes for non-English majors this past year. In a long letter to Phil, Lisa expressed her conviction that "God has brought us together."

Lisa, who is responsible for the care of her 82-year-old grandfather, and the Benders have grown quite attached, writes Phil in an e-mail. "She was pretty much raised by her grandparents after her parents divorced and moved away, and she tells us we have supplied the parental bond that she never had. We visited her ultrarural home at the end of a rutted road deep in the hills and rice paddies of Sichuan Province last week. [It was] an unsought



Just before their return to Canada after nine years of ministry in China, Phil and Julie Bender, left and right, became godparents to Lisa, a second-year psychology major who was enrolled in Phil's optional oral English classes for non-English majors this past year. She credits God with bringing her and the Benders together.

and delightful blessing at the end."

The Benders will be sharing stories of their ministry in China with congregations across Canada this coming fall. ☘

RED DEER ADVOCATE PHOTO BY ASHLI BARRETT; REPRINTED BY PERMISSION



Byron Peters and Simon Wiebe ride the last stretch of a 960-kilometre trek from La Crete to Red Deer, Alta., this summer. Peters and Wiebe, along with Calvin Elias, not pictured, raised more than \$23,000 for Mennonite Central Committee's Generations program (70 percent) and for Mennonite Disaster Services relief to flood victims in southern Alberta (30 percent). Says Peters, "I am blessed to be healthy enough to take up this challenge of cycling. I want to use it to bring awareness about people in need."

GOD AT WORK IN US

OBITUARY

A friend remembers

David Victor Falk, 80
March 25, 1933 – June 1, 2013

BY JACK DUECK

Now David Falk is forever. Even though one agrees with T.S. Eliot that “in our end is our beginning,” how does one weigh the spirit of a friend?

O David, what language shall I borrow?

Shakespeare claimed that, “the evil that men do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones.” Not so this time, Willy, not so. Now a parade of images attends my remembering:

• **I HAVE** an image of David choosing love over all reasoning when this young lawyer met with me, a theology and music graduate, in a coffee shop near Portage and Main in Winnipeg: **David:** “Yakob, I need to give up lawyering.”

Me (aghast): “But you can’t just give it all up: all the studies, the awards, the accolades from professors and judges.”

David: “But none of these mean enough. Without love for this noble profession, the value of these things diminishes. I’m convinced that jurisprudence would never be truly mine; my heart would not be in it. Music could be mine; creativity in music would engage my power and my true passion.”

• **I HAVE** an image of David and Viola, his first wife, returning from four years of music study at Detmold, Germany, to face two choices: an invitation to join a prestigious law firm in Winnipeg and an invitation to be professor of music at Goshen (Ind.) College. They chose music pedagogy.



Falk

• **I HOLD** an image from 1968 in Goshen of David and Viola inviting us to attend a movie with them in South Bend. Shortly before departure, our babysitter cancelled due to illness. David and Viola went alone. A head-on collision with a drunk driver instantly killed Viola and hammered David into a deep coma.

Later, he and I sat and sat and sat in silence, in spiritual and mental darkness, he with wired jaw and broken body. One day, in wrenching groan, he wheezed, “Yakob, I cannot love any more.”

• **I ALSO** have images of a first drive with him to Viola’s grave and he unable to remember the accident, bereft without a ritual of commemoration, with only retching convulsions, as power, love and mental toughness evacuated.

• **I HAVE** an image of David one day declaring, “I did not ask for it,” and I’m assuming he was still on the mantra of the unfairness of the senseless event. “No, Yakob,” he said. “I did not ask for it, but deep in this one corner of my heart, I feel a stirring of creative love and with it a hope for power and mindfulness.”

• **I HAVE** an image of David Falk at Goshen, in 1969, requesting that I present a homily at his wedding to Patricia Yoder Dreves. For the text I chose II Timothy 1: 7: “*For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*” (KJV).

At his 2013 memorial in Waterloo, Ont., I chose the same text because I remembered that, over a 50-year-long

friendship, love was the catalyst in the trinity of power, love and sound mind that governed his living.

• **IN AN** image of David in various long conversations about the nature and methodology of teaching voice and choir, he maintained that a last bastion of dictatorship is the conductor and the voice teacher. He declared that the role requires an exercise of power and mental toughness, but he underlined that power without solid love at its core short-changes the student.

• **I HAVE** an image of David teaching at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ont., for 27 years with full creative powers, mentoring each student in a love rooted in mental toughness.

During visits, David noted that he was teaching human beings, connecting with them on the levels of their strengths, goals, fears and weaknesses.

A former student commented: “He got under our skin to understand what made us tick and from there led us into integrated freedom of expression in making song.”

• **I HAVE** an image of visiting David at his studio, where he reiterated his passion: “You know, we may blithely exercise and enjoy the creative gifts, but we dare not take them for granted. . . . Creation has blessed us with the creative use of power infused with love and a sound mind. These can be taken away in one flash, one tragedy, one body failure.”

For the last 15 years of his life David wrestled with Parkinson’s disease.

As I sit at his grave, the news media flash a litany of a world addicted to power without love, caught in slaughter and raging discord. But another image heralds a resurrection: thousands of David’s former students scattered across this globe in opera houses, concert halls, church music departments, high schools and colleges answer the clamorous discord with their harmonies.

So, Shakespeare, not so this time. ❧

Pilgrims in profile: Bonolo Makgale

STORY AND PHOTO BY KAREN SUDERMAN

Mennonite Church Canada

PIETERMARITZBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

An introduction to Anabaptism has provided Bonolo Makgale with food for her spiritual journey. She says that she is drawn to, and fed by, “the authentic living, the authentic spirituality expressed by Anabaptists, the non-conformist approach to life and faith.”

Makgale is the third child in a poor family from a small village in South Africa. Raised by a single mother after her parent’s marriage deteriorated, Makgale accepted Christ at age 13. She has seen the goodness of the Lord in her life to this day.

She is an associate pastor and elder in a local church in Cape Town, and works for the Women’s Hope Education And Training (WHEAT) Trust, a non-governmental organization that funds women-led organizations. Makgale is passionate about social justice, human development and theology. As well as serving in her church and working with the WHEAT Trust, she is studying for a post-graduate degree in theology and ethics at the University of the Western Cape.

Makgale was introduced to the Anabaptist Network in South Africa (ANiSA) through one of her undergraduate studies teachers and has been attending ANiSA Dialogues, events that allow people of all backgrounds to wrestle with difficult

issues of faith, church and theology, and explore what it means to be faithful disciples in community within South African society.

At a recent Dialogue, Makgale said, “It was a lovely space to be with people that are passionate about God, society, people and life, and I am committed to be part of the movement.”

She sits on a planning team for Cape Town ANiSA activities and serves on the ANiSA Steering Committee.

As her involvement with ANiSA grows, Makgale said she notices more and varied expressions of Anabaptism in South Africa: “Faith, peace and justice, I would say. A life of genuine worship to God, and service to society and people of God. Authentic faith, I suppose, which is actually a huge thing for me, as I feel that most of my Christian journey was robbed of authenticity because I was caught up in conventional wisdom, legalism and unnecessary expectations created by people and church of what it meant to be Christian.”

Andrew and Karen Suderman are Mennonite Church Canada Witness workers who provide leadership to the activities of the Anabaptist Network in South Africa.



Bonolo Makgale says that an introduction to Anabaptism has provided her with food for her spiritual journey.

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PERSONAL REFLECTION

What I did on my sabbatical

BY DAVE ROGALSKY
EASTERN CANADA CORRESPONDENT

Before we took it, many people questioned my sabbatical. Mennonite Church Eastern Canada asked what I would do with my time, as it has a fund that will pay a pastor's congregation one third of his/her

salary for a sabbatical, but not a vacation.

I answered that I and my wife would be visiting historical sites, both Christian and others, including the Christian basilica at Ostia Antica and the Roman Forum; attending churches, like St.

Peter's in Rome and San Francesco in Assisi; visiting galleries to see art, such as "Night Watch" by Rembrandt in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and Michelangelo's "David" in Florence; and attending museums to view artefacts from Pompeii and early Christian burial art in the Vatican Museum. We would also be experiencing the culture, food and wine of Italy, Germany and the Netherlands, all in a measured way, as it was a sabbatical after all, a rest time.

Besides that, on our return I would begin a year-long spiritual direction seminar and take some hand drumming lessons.

The area church granted the request and the congregation, which had granted

PHOTO BY ANNEMARIE ROGALSKY



Dave Rogalsky at the Coliseum in Rome during his sabbatical this May.

me full pay on the sabbatical, used the money to pay a short-term interim pastor.

Our congregation at Wilmot Mennonite, New Hamburg, Ont., asked questions too: Why? Why now? Why so long? Why there? Will we change and you change? Will you come back? Yes, we returned. I know I've changed, and so have they.

But the question afterward from my friend, "Why to Europe?" rang in my head. It became more "Why go travelling?" as I thought about it. As I thought about it, I realized that I went, and hope to go again, not for the things I planned, but for the things that happened, the serendipities, the unexpected, most of

which were good:

- **MARIA** at the farmers' market in Rome, who gave us a bottle of olive oil as a gift from an Italian to some Canadians, for friendship.
- **THE WOMAN** who warned us in Naples that we were in danger of being robbed.
- **THE MAN** who loved Fellini films with whom we discussed our favourites while waiting for a subway in Rome.
- **WORSHIP THAT** broke out twice while we were in churches, at St. Peter's in the chapel over the spot where Peter was executed, and at St. Paul's outside the walls.

There was, though, the man who tried

to sell us a "real" Christian Dior bag for 50 Euros.

Why did we go? For the things we didn't expect: the people, the experiences, meeting God at every turn. We spent nearly every evening praying, journaling, thinking about what God had been doing in us and around us.

It wasn't a vacation. It was a rest focusing on God, who goes before us in all of life, who is more visible to us when we get out of our regular routine.

Special thanks to the folks at Wilmot, MC Eastern Canada, and *Canadian Mennonite* for the time and financial support to sabbath. ☸

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ARTBEAT

'Dig in' to Scripture

MennoMedia collaborates with partner denominations in a going-back-to-the-Bible series

MennoMedia

If all the texts in the Bible are important, how do we decide which texts are the most important, the ones that deserve our utmost attention, discernment or devotion?

Mennonite Church Canada is engaged in a process called "Being a Faithful Church," designed to help congregations study and discern Scripture for today's world. It examines both helpful and unhelpful ways Christians interpret the Bible.

Meanwhile, MC U.S.A. congregations are undertaking a "Year of the Bible." Rather than falling into one particular calendar year, congregations are asked to devote a year to biblical study, with each congregation setting its own design and schedule.

To help congregations during these



study periods, MennoMedia is producing a resource named "Dig In: Thirteen Scriptures to Help Us Know the Way." This new 13-session print and video curriculum focuses on 13 core Scriptures for Anabaptist Mennonites.

The project grew out of MennoMedia staff brainstorming to create a new resource to build on the biblical emphasis of the denominations. The concept was pitched to Dave Bergen, MC Canada's executive minister for formation, and Terry Shue, director of leadership development at MC U.S.A., for their input. MennoMedia staffers Amy Gingerich and Byron Rempel-Burkholder collaborated with Bergen and Shue to discern 13 core biblical passages that have been important to Mennonites.

"Coming up with 13 core scriptures was no easy task," says Gingerich. "There are far more texts that we could have included. We are trying to suggest some of the core texts that shape us as a people who read and interpret the Bible with a certain lens."

Planners sought to use a balance of Old and New Testament texts and settled on the following for the curriculum: John 1:1-18; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; II Timothy 3:14-17; Isaiah 53:1-12; Mark 8:27-9:1; Philippians 2:1-11; Romans 12:9-21; Matthew 5:1-12; Matthew 5:38-48; Matthew 25:31-46; Matthew 28:1-8,16-20; Acts 2:1-4,14-28,41-47; Colossians 3:1-17.

Once the texts were chosen, the planning team of Bergen, Shue, Gingerich and Rempel-Burkholder worked to identify people from churches all over the U.S. and Canada who could share their perspectives on one of the texts. The 26 interviewees—two per session—submitted videos of themselves answering a series of questions about how they experience and interpret the Bible passage in their own context.

"'Dig In' is a bit different from many Bible study curriculums, in that it focuses on storytelling and prayerful reflection as an essential part of our use of Scripture," notes Rempel-Burkholder. "As we hear the voices of brothers and sisters around the continent and the stories of our fellow group members, we exercise the Anabaptist value of community discernment of the Word."

In each session, after a group reading of the text, a five-minute video of interview clips opens a time of sharing in which group members are invited to reflect on how the text impacts their lives. While the participant guide provides some good Bible background material written by long-time Bible teacher Leonard Beechy, the discussion and sharing are more personal and experiential than scholarly. Similarly, both the Bible-reading activities and the closing prayer try to give room for personal responses from the heart.

"In a time when the church wrestles with many potentially divisive challenges, I am inspired when I think of the immensely positive influence of getting immersed, together, in this collection of key texts that so profoundly form our spiritual and community identity," Bergen says of the series. ❧

/// Briefly noted

New titles added to 'With the Word,' 'Kids Can' series

New Bible studies on the books of Acts and John have been released by MennoMedia, as well as focused children's studies on God's love and the way of Jesus. "With the Word" studies focus on individual books of the Bible from an Anabaptist perspective; Acts and John are the newest in the series that also includes Matthew, Isaiah, Psalms and Luke. If used with a group, the devotionals provide additional food for thought and discussion the following week. Two new titles join the "Kids Can" series. "Kids Can Catch the Love" highlights Old Testament characters to help kids explore God's love for humanity and the ways people demonstrate their love for God. "Kids Can Know the Way" shows children the way of Jesus through stories Jesus told and by learning about people he met. The "Kids Can" series includes a Bible story and discussion starters, along with crafts and games to reinforce the themes. They are geared for children in grades 1 to 5, but can be adapted for younger or older children. Each study includes 10 sessions.

—MennoMedia



Essays for a church to come

New book in Polyglossia series on Radical Reformation theologies released

MennoMedia

Taking a cue from well known “postmodern” thinker Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), the essays in Peter C. Blum’s *For a Church to Come* consist of, as the book’s subtitle alludes, *Experiments in Postmodern Theory and Anabaptist Thought*.

Blum’s essays—which the author, a professor of theology at Hillsdale (Mich.) College, says explore some commonly held ways of talking about knowledge, meaning, commitment and action—are not meant as arguments intended to demonstrate fixed conclusions.

“Some postmodern theoretical work—which is often either quickly dismissed or uncritically assumed to be anti-Christian—is actually well worth bringing into contemporary Anabaptist-Mennonite conversations about discipleship and corporate life,” Blum says.

The book brings John Howard Yoder to the same table with Nietzsche, Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, and provides a provocative glimpse of what the resulting conversation might look like. John D. Caputo, a major figure associated with postmodern Christianity, has written the foreword.

With the support of Hillsdale College, Blum has sought to focus his research and writing on giving back to the Anabaptist tradition, which has nurtured and profoundly shaped his experience and understanding of Christian discipleship since his teenage years. The essays collected in *For a Church to Come* (Herald Press, 2013) are foremost among the results.

Scott Holland, professor of theology and culture at Bethany Theological Seminary, Richmond, Ind., says of the book, “I have been waiting for an engaging and experimental work on Anabaptism and postmodernism to add to my syllabus of required texts in an upper-division seminary course. Peter Blum has written that book.”

The book is meant to appeal to a range



of readers interested in Anabaptist-Mennonite thought, from those with only some undergraduate exposure to the theorists discussed, to those whose academic interests focus on their work.

Blum, who graduated from Goshen (Ind.) College, has advanced degrees in sociology and philosophy from the University of Notre Dame. He is a member of Salem Mennonite Church near Waldron, Mich., and has published several poems and a number of blog posts on contemporary music, as well as his essays on the relationship of contemporary social theory to an Anabaptist understanding of Christian discipleship.

The Polyglossia series is intended for conversation among academics, ministers and laypeople regarding knowledge, beliefs and the practices of the Christian faith. Polyglossia grows out of John Howard Yoder’s call to see the Radical Reformation as a tone, style or a stance, a way of thinking theologically that requires precarious

/// Briefly noted

Web video series to help churches sing, learn together

TORONTO—Fundraising is underway for an innovative online video project called Break into Song, designed to help worship leaders learn how to teach new music. With a choir and a congregation to help demonstrate techniques and challenges, each video will unpack new music, and show creative ways to teach it and use it in worship. At the end of each episode, leaders will be able to take a song they’ve only ever seen in a book, and teach it with confidence and use it in worship as if it were an old favourite, says project leader Hilary Seraph Donaldson. To raise money to produce these free high-quality videos, a month-long crowdfunding campaign begins on Aug. 26. Visitors to breakintosong.ca can watch a preview video and donate to the project using Indiegogo, a crowdfunding website. The goal is to raise enough funds to produce an initial season of three to five episodes, each roughly 10 minutes long. The series was conceived by Donaldson, a church musician and graduate student who holds degrees in theatre and sacred music. Says C. Michael Hawn, church music professor at Southern Methodist University, Donaldson “brings knowledge of worship and the people’s song, creativity, theological insight, and a spirit of openness to the joyful duty of what I call the Eleventh Commandment: ‘Sing to the Lord a new song!’”

—Break Into Song

attempts to speak the gospel in new idioms. The series is a form of theological reflection that blends patient vulnerability and hermeneutical charity with considered judgment and informed criticism. The books in this series emerge out of conversations with contemporary movements in theology, as well as philosophy, political theory, literature and cultural studies. ///

Learning to be 'alert to glory'

Poet and CMU professor Sally Ito shares about creativity, writing and inspiration

PHOTO COURTESY OF SALLY ITO



Sally Ito

Poet Sally Ito was born in Taber, Alta., and currently lives in Winnipeg. She has published three books of poetry, along with a collection of short stories. Her latest book of poems is Alert to Glory, published by Turnstone Press in 2011. Ito teaches creative writing at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, and was recently writer-in-residence at the Centre for Creative Writing and Oral Culture at the University of Manitoba. Earlier this year, Nick Schuurman of Cambridge, Ont., spoke with Ito about her most recent book of poetry, the work of writing and faith.

NS: *Mary Oliver wrote, "To pay attention is our endless and proper work." Your latest book, Alert to Glory, is largely about observation and making sense of what we see. What do we risk missing in distraction?*

SI: Oh, everything and anything, I'd say.

NS: *Many of us, I think, have this image of the poet as an entirely cloistered figure. In what ways has your work as a poet been a shared labour, informed by community and family?*

SI: It's not been a shared labour, really, ex-

'People sometimes have a need to hear words about what they feel, but have never truly articulated to themselves or others.'

(Sally Ito)



Observing and paying close attention is a discipline. As I quoted a poet friend of mine, Tim Bowling, in my book: "Poetry is a discipline of consciousness."

NS: *You also write about more distant, future sorts of seeing, about catching glimpses of things yet unseen in their entirety. What gives you cause for hope and how does that inform your work?*

SI: There are a lot of things to be hopeful about. I'm largely an optimistic person myself, but I think that writing, ultimately, is a hopeful act. The tenacity people must have to write in a time when there is so much written already is a deeply hopeful disposition (or delusion!), don't you think?

cept insofar as I've observed my community and family, and drawn conclusions from those observations through writing.

However, I do think that poetry can be more than that. When it is performed or read, it can act as encouragement and inspiration for others. Poetry often says what is unsaid, but not unfelt. People sometimes have a need to hear words about what they feel, but have never truly articulated to themselves or others.

NS: *Borrowing from the words of the Psalms, you write about the fact that the universe is not a mute place, and that, if we take time to stop and listen, we will notice it is, in fact, saying something. What have you heard, and from where? What are*

some of the places in which you have been most overwhelmed by that sense of awe and wonder?

SI: Poetry comes to me in two ways: snippets of words that seem to describe a situation or feeling I am having at the moment; or are “musical” in some fashion, or by way of an image that keeps haunting me.

Awe and wonder are sparks off the flint of the contemplative mind. Places in the natural world where there is beauty or grandeur, or the presence of these in the human world of created architectural forms or in art, bring on a sense of wonder and awe. But it is all in the disposition of the seeing eye before the apprehension of these things as awesome and wonderful. You must be “alert” to see the “glory.”

NS: *What sort of things do the students you work with find most difficult when it comes to creative writing, and what do you find yourself offering in terms of advice and experience to help them work through it?*

SI: Creativity is in itself a messy process. You must be inspired to create, which is a different state of mind than what is needed, say, for editing and revising, or even reading, for that matter.

After you’ve created, then you have to take a breath and step back, and say, “Now, is this good or bad? How can I make it better? What can I do to improve the work?” Then you have to make changes and shape your piece accordingly through your own critical processes and from receiving feedback from readers engaged in the same process themselves.

Most students don’t have difficulty with the “creating” part, but they do have

trouble with the “critical” part. It takes a lot of nerve and energy to create things, but you also need a thick skin to be told, or tell people, that the work is “confusing,” or “missing something,” or that it can be improved by changing certain elements

NS: *In “Poet” you write, “I had it all wrong these years / trying to make a career out of skipping stones / on the smooth flat waters of the lake.” Three books in, do you still struggle with that tension?*

SI: Oh yes. I think every poet struggles with a vocation she or he feels is underappreciated by the world at large.

NS: *Who have you been learning from lately, and what has that looked like?*

SI: My creative writing students recently did oral presentations for me on different contemporary and modern poets, and one student introduced to me the work of Irish poet Eavan Boland. Boland was an interesting writer with a feminist perspective, whose verse was engaging to read. I took a few books of her poetry out of the library recently, including a book on the writing of sonnets in English, as well a book of translation of German women poets in the post-war period. Poet Robert Bly has talked about the need for poets to read widely from translated works, and I agree, so discovering that Boland had done these translations of German was a pleasure to discover and to read. ☘

Nick Schuurman is a member of First Hmong Mennonite Church, Kitchener, Ont., and a student at McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, Ont.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NICK SCHUURMAN



Nick Schuurman

With eyes of a newcomer

African student at CMU sees beyond this country’s affluence and materialism to its busyness and shallow faith

BY BETHANY PENNER

Canada is known as a land of plenty but, through the eyes of a newcomer, it’s not necessarily the land of happiness.

Paulin Bossou and his family moved to Winnipeg from Africa two years ago, and

he has seen beyond Canada’s relative affluence and materialism.

“People are not living very well here,” he says. “They have money and infrastructure,

(Continued on page 36)



(Continued from page 35)

but people are not happy here. There is a lack of something. Money and the other things that we strive after does not bring happiness.”

Bossou, currently a student at Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), Winnipeg, had worked for La Casa Grande Benin, a home for disadvantaged children, some of whom have lost their parents to AIDS, in the West African country, for the past 10 years.



Paulin Bossou

*‘But here, this time doesn’t exist. People are rushing and looking for money, and they are not living.’
(Paulin Bossou)*

Bossou, his wife and their two children felt it was time to try something new and they were drawn to Manitoba by a Mennonite connection. In Benin, he was associated with a Mennonite church, and he was fascinated by Mennonites. He had heard that Canada, Manitoba in particular, had an abundance of Mennonites, and this brought the family to Winnipeg.

One big difference between Benin and Canada is how people choose to use their time, Bossou observes. “In Benin, I had enough time to share my time with other people and help other people,” he says. “But here, this time doesn’t exist. People are rushing and looking for money, and they are not living.”

Bossou also expresses concern that many people in Canada appear to live their faith on a shallow level. “The environment here does not help to make a good Christian,” he says. “For me, to be a Christian does not mean to just go to church, but to participate in the life of the community. Here it is an option to go to church or be part of the community. But not for me.”

To him, being a Christian means spending time with people, enjoying life and sharing experiences with others. It also means taking the necessary time to worship God and grow in faith, which means giving God more than an hour on Sunday morning. God has had a huge impact on the Bossou family and their immersion into the radically different culture of Canada.

Bossou has learned the importance of

trusting God to the fullest. “I discovered that people don’t want to depend on God because they have many opportunities to do things themselves,” he says. “If you can do something by yourself, you do not expect another person to do it. They try to be rational, instead of using faith.”

As Bossou studies at CMU, his wife is taking classes at St. Boniface University, also in Winnipeg. The family plans to return next year to Benin, where Bossou will continue being the director of La

Casa Grande Benin, which began in 2000 as a partnership between the Burgos Mennonite Church and Mennonite Board of Missions, a predecessor agency of the U.S.-based Mennonite Mission Network.

Bossou says he will return to Africa with many positive experiences of Canada. “Here is good, but not the place for me,” he says. “For us, it is a privilege to be here and learn more about this country, and share what we have learned with other people. It is a dream or something special to come and live in this country, and now we will share it with our friends.” ✎

The Voice of the Voiceless articles were written for Canadian Mennonite University’s Journalism: Practices and Principles course during the Winter 2013 semester. Teacher Carl DeGurse is vice-chair of Canadian Mennonite’s board of directors and assistant city editor of the Winnipeg Free Press.



Bethany Penner

CANADIAN MENNONITE



Do you know of someone in your congregation not getting Canadian Mennonite?

Ask your church administrator to add them to the list. It is already paid for.

Connecting the global church

BY RACHEL BERGEN

Young Voices Co-Editor

The old saying goes that it's better to give than to receive, but Kristina Toews' six months in Colombia have taught her differently.

The 26-year-old Eben-Ezer Mennonite Church member from Abbotsford, B.C., is doing a three-year service term working in communications for both Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Colombia and Mennonite World Conference (MWC) in Bogotá, Colombia's capital city.

Prior to this, she was a member of MWC's Young Anabaptist Network and served in Bolivia with an MCC Service and Learning Together team in 2007. She has also ministered as a youth pastor at Eben-Ezer.

In Colombia, Toews's role is to connect the global church. Part of this involves visiting Anabaptist churches in the area, writing prayer requests and sharing them with the worldwide Mennonite community.

Although she has just started her term, she has already learned a great deal from the people and places she has visited. The biblical concept of sharing is one such thing, rather than merely giving or receiving. "Sometimes we think we know best, and that we need to 'give' that," she says. "Other times, we might react in the opposite end of the spectrum and think we need to learn from others and shouldn't share any thoughts or experiences."

Being in community with others—whether it be locally or globally, by e-mail, social media or face-to-face conversations—can provide amazing opportunities for sharing, according to her. "Our churches have a lot of experiences, gifts and resources which we need to be willing to share," she says. "And we have a lot to learn that we need to receive."

This is something the churches in Colombia have taken seriously. In the congregations Toews has visited, the faith community extends far beyond the individual church. "There are always prayers for brothers and sisters in other parts of Colombia, and I've seen in several churches consistent prayers for brothers and sisters around the world," she says. "It's

encouraging and has challenged me to see how churches here take these relationships so seriously."

These churches also actively work in their areas to help and advocate for those who are persecuted. Their faith is holistic, Toews says, citing the case of Weaving Hope Mennonite Brethren Church and MCC that worked in the impoverished Chocó area. At one time, many farmers grew coca plants that are harvested to produce cocaine. Although they committed these crimes out of desperation in order to provide for their families, Weaving Hope and MCC helped more than 200 families participate in the cultivation of legal crops, like cacao and rice.

Although many farmers stopped growing the coca plants, government-ordered fumigations supported by U.S. Agency for International Development funds took place indiscriminately throughout the region without consulting communities, killing what they wrongly assumed were coca plants. This rendered the land sterile and, as a result, the farmers were left with nothing.

According to reports from MCC Colombia, those affected say the fumigations contaminated their water sources and the health of the people in the area.

Toews says that Colombian churches are intentional about sharing concerns and stories with the local and wider church. This is important to their strength as a body, and something Canadian Mennonites can learn from, she believes. "I feel like we're all so much richer by knowing the stories and being united," she says.

She hopes that Canadians will participate more in communicating with the global church. "It would be cool to encourage people to engage the global community through sharing or asking questions," she says.

To build connections in the global church, e-mail her at kristinatoews@mwc.cmm.org or "like" MWC's Facebook page to participate in a global Anabaptist dialogue. Toews blogs about her adventures at xtinascrossing.blogspot.com. ❧

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KRISTINA TOEWS



Kristina Toews sits atop Monserrate, a cathedral on top of the mountain near downtown Bogotá, Colombia.



Kristina Toews is pictured on the way to Chocó, Colombia, the scene of a devastating fumigation.

Calendar

British Columbia

- Sept. 18-22:** Truth and Reconciliation Commission gathering, in Vancouver.
- Sept. 28:** Mennonite Fall Fair, in Prince George.
- Oct. 7-9:** MC B.C. pastor/spouse retreat.
- Oct. 10:** Columbia Bible College annual general meeting, at 7 p.m.
- Oct. 17, 23:** Mennonite Church B.C. dessert fundraising evenings; (17) Level Ground Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, and Eden Mennonite Church, Chilliwack; (23) Peace Mennonite Church, Richmond.
- Oct. 18-20:** MC B.C. women's retreat

at Camp Squeah, Hope.

Oct. 26: Columbia Bible College annual fundraising dinner. For more information, development.events@columbiabc.edu.

Alberta

Sept. 14: MCC golf tournament, in La Crete. For more information, or to register, visit mccalberta.ca/golf.

Saskatchewan

Sept. 20-22: Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization junior high retreat at Youth Farm Bible Camp. Guest speaker: Joe Heikman.

Oct. 18-19: Saskatchewan Women

in Mission annual retreat at Shekinah Retreat Centre. Theme: "I heard her voice: Courageous women in the Bible."

Manitoba

Until Sept. 14: Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, Winnipeg, hosts the 81st-annual Open Juried Exhibition of the Manitoba Society of Artists. Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (Monday to Friday), Noon to 5 p.m. (Saturday).

Sept. 14-15: Charleswood Mennonite Church 50th-anniversary celebrations include a concert, family activities, worship and food. For more information, call the church at 204-837-7982 or e-mail cwoodmc@mymts.net.

Sept. 20: MCC Canada celebrates its 50th anniversary in Canadian Mennonite University's Great Hall, at 7 p.m. Program includes dessert reception.

Sept. 21: Brandon MCC relief sale at the Keystone Centre. For more information, visit home.westman.wave.ca/~hila/.

Sept. 28: Westgate Mennonite Collegiate fundraising cyclathon at

Bird's Hill Provincial Park, north of Winnipeg.

Oct. 18-20: Scrapbookers retreat at Camp Moose Lake. For more information, e-mail camps@mennochurch.mb.ca.

Ontario

Sept. 20-22: Men's Meat Retreat at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp, with chef Dave Lobe and resource person Chip Bender. For more information, visit slmc.ca/retreats.

Sept. 22: Fourth annual *Sing the Journey/Sing the Story* event, at the Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m., led by Mark Diller Harder. For more information, call Will Stoltz at 519-696-2805.


Sept. 27-29: 200th-anniversary celebrations and homecoming weekend at First Mennonite Church, Kitchener. Special anniversary service in the afternoon of Sept. 29 with guest speaker Janet Plenert of Mennonite World Conference. For the latest details, visit www.firstmennonitekitchener.ca.

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UpComing

CMU offers workshop to help worship leaders find new songs

WINNIPEG—Helping worship leaders discover the best new songs is the goal of New Songs for Worship, to be held on Nov. 2, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., at the Canadian Mennonite University Chapel. Led by Christine Longhurst, a former worship pastor and author of the popular re:Worship blog (re-worship.blogspot.ca), the workshop will also address issues of musical style. "We'll look at new music in a wide range of styles—new contemporary hymns, praise and worship, and everything in between," says Longhurst. "The goal is to help leaders find ways to bridge the stylistic gaps that often exist in congregations." It will also include a look at the recent resurgence of traditional hymnody. "Many of today's contemporary songwriters are drawing from traditional hymn sources for their inspiration," Longhurst says. "We'll take time to look at these new trends." New Songs for Worship is presented by CMU, with sponsorship from Mennonite Church Manitoba and other Manitoba-based Mennonite denominations. For more information, or to register, contact Longhurst at clonghurst@cmu.ca or call 204-487-3300. A second New Songs for Worship workshop is planned for Jan. 25, 2014, in Winkler, Man. —Canadian Mennonite University

Sept. 30, Oct. 1: Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp fall seniors retreat. The same program of worship, learning and fellowship will be offered each day. Speaker: Sue Steiner. Topic: "Telling our stories." For more information, call 519-625-8602 or e-mail info@hiddenacres.ca.

Oct. 1: Deadline for grant proposals to the J. Winfield Fretz Publication Fund in Mennonite Studies. For more information, visit mhso.org/events and follow the "Fretz Award" link.

Oct. 3: MC Eastern Canada pastors spiritual retreat at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp.

Oct. 5: "Doing worship differently": an MC Eastern Canada workshop with John Bell at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo.

Oct. 11: New Hamburg area churches host Theatre of the Beat's *Forgiven/Forgotten* play at Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, at 8 p.m.

For more information, contact Hillcrest Mennonite Church at 519-662-1577 or hillcrest@golden.net.

Oct. 16: "The multi-staff team: Developing healthy practices": an MC Eastern Canada workshop at Erb Street Mennonite Church, Waterloo.

Oct. 17-19: Ten Thousand Villages festival sale at Hamilton Mennonite Church; (17, 18) 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., (19) 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Enjoy homemade soup and dessert in the Villages Café.

Oct. 20: 10th annual Gospel Vespers at the Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, with a focus on *Life Songs II*. Leader: Bob Shantz. For more information, call Will Stoltz at 519-696-2805.

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.

Wildwood Mennonite Church in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan is inviting applications for a part time **Youth Pastor**, a person who has a passion for youth ministry, building relationships among peers and with God. This person will be committed to Anabaptist theology and will be a strong supporter of the Saskatchewan Mennonite Youth Organization (SMYO), and Mennonite Church Saskatchewan and Canada. Start date is negotiable. Inquiries, resumes, and letters of interest may be directed to the Wildwood Search Committee at secretary@wildwoodmennonite.org, 1502 Acadia Drive, Saskatoon, SK S7H 5H8 (306) 373-2126.

The **MCC Furniture Thrift Store** in Winnipeg is seeking additional personnel. Dedicated volunteers are needed for interesting and rewarding positions including:

- Sales Associates
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A Truck Driver position is also available on a volunteer or paid basis. Please discuss your interest and availability with: Rick Janzen, Manager, FCC Furniture Thrift Store, at 204 694 3669 or email to: mccmgr@shaw.ca

Classifieds Announcement

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For special awards sale see:

www.mysteriesofgrace.com

Employment Opportunities



Bethel Mennonite Church in Winnipeg Manitoba is inviting applications for a full time lead pastor to commence in summer 2014.

We are seeking a person with a strong Anabaptist theology as well as ability to engage the congregation through worship and preaching. This person will have strong administrative skills and be able to work with & lead a multi member pastoral team. Our desire is that the successful candidate, along with the pastoral team, can enable and nurture the gifts of the congregation in order to enhance the overall mission of the church. Pastoral experience along with a Masters of Divinity or equivalent is preferred.

Please send resumes to jbpeters@shaw.ca or contact Jake Peters at 204-889-5094 for information. For more about Bethel Mennonite Church see: <http://bethelmennonite.ca>.

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Drop-in hockey scores with community

PHOTO COURTESY OF EDEN MENNONITE CHURCH



Eden Mennonite Church sports ministry has been going for 17 years

BY AMY DUECKMAN
B.C. Correspondent

A simple game like roller hockey has turned into a ministry that has been going on at Eden Mennonite Church in Chilliwack for more than 17 years. Eden offers its church parking lot every Wednesday afternoon from April to October for youths aged 12 and over to play drop-in hockey.

Pastor Rob Brown, who began the missional project in 1996, is still involved and his son Kayden now also takes part. The event draws players from the congregation as well as the community, and promotes interaction among churched and non-churched. Some young men from the community make it such a priority to attend that they have arranged their work and personal schedules to keep Wednesdays from 4 to 6 p.m. free.

The Eden congregation also supports the players by supplying

extra helmets and sticks for those who want to play but don't have their own equipment, and by hosting fellowship events such as barbecues.

"Pastor Rob and everyone involved have turned this enjoyable pastime into a community of friends from both inside and outside the church, a place to mentor young people in the ways of sportsmanship and being part of a team," says a report from Eden Mennonite published in the Mennonite Church B.C. "News & Notes" newsletter. "The roller hockey program takes a simple game like hockey and turns it into a practical outreach program where anyone . . . can participate, have fun and learn important life skills, not to mention get a great workout!"