

# CANADIAN MENNONITE

November 25, 2013

Volume 17 Number 23

## Imagine!

*A Christmas message  
for those with a loss of heart*

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## EDITORIAL

# Still believe in peace?

DICK BENNER  
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

It's Remembrance Day as I write this. To say that Canadian Mennonites are conflicted on this day is an understatement.

How do we respond in a culture that, even in peacetime, glorifies war as a source of national pride, and our soldiers, fallen and living, as heroic and honourable? As a faith communion, we have always taken literally Jesus' command not to kill, to love our enemies, to pray for those who persecute us. Our own hall of heroes includes those who suffered in prison and died as part of a counterculture to a deeply embedded nationalism of empire over five centuries.

We have steadfastly marched to the tune of a different drummer.

Oh yes, we have had our lapses, to be sure. Students of our history note the ill-fated 1534 Münster Rebellion, an attempt by radical Anabaptists to establish a communal sectarian government in the German city.

And as reported in his major feature "Let nobody judge them," (Oct. 28, page 6), Ross W. Muir highlighted the fact that as many as 4,500 Canadian Mennonites enlisted in this country's military forces between 1939 and 1945—the two infamous world wars. There is no hiding the fact that many of these soldiers were not welcomed back into their congregations with open arms, and, in some cases, were shunned.

So today the issue of war and peace is no closer to resolution than it has been

for hundreds of years. We are still not at peace about our "peace." In Canada, the question has come down to: Do I wear the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) "To remember is to work for peace" button, or the red poppy, an international symbol remembering war veterans and their families. Or both?



No place is this more evident than in the social and conventional media. Here are just a few excerpts:

- **DURRELL BOWMAN**, a fellow church member: "The poppy signifies remembering those who have died in military service. However, tens of millions of civilians have also died in times of war."
- **WILLARD METZGER**, executive director of Mennonite Church Canada, on his blog: "Discerning how to respond to Remembrance Day is not an easy task. Only with humility and respect can helpful dialogue occur."
- **IN A** look back, *The Winnipeg Free Press* ran a lengthy feature, "A soldier shunned," telling the story of a Mennonite who went to war, only to return to have his fellow church members "cross over to the other side of the street" when returning home and causing a church split in southern Manitoba.
- **SOMEONE POSTED** this telling comment from Harry Patch, the last surviving soldier of the First World War: "I felt then, as I feel now, that the politicians who took us to war should have been

given the guns and told to settle their differences themselves, instead of organizing nothing better than legalized mass murder."

- **TIM SCHMUCKER** tells of his fifth-generation forebear resisting the generals in the American Revolutionary War, resulting in his arrest and sentence to die.
- **A PAGE 2** *Globe and Mail* story told of veterans in Chilliwack, B.C., protesting the government's poor treatment of veterans, noting grievances of the New Veterans Charter, which, instead of a life-long pension, offers them a lump sum of \$276,00, and limits a burial fund to those of very-low income only.
- **"WAR IS hell,"** said one of the U.S.'s most well-known generals, William Tecumseh Sherman, way back in 1879. Have we not learned anything in 134 years?

Yesterday, at church, a table was set on stage "for our enemies," while the children were told a moving story about serving "enemy pie." MCC Ontario executive director Rick Cober Bauman choked up when telling of an indigenous landowner back in the 1800s who forgave his Mennonite tenant his "crop payment" when the crops failed, because "we are now neighbours."

Do we still believe in and practise peace? Strong nationalistic/militaristic winds are giving us rough voyage. Has our middle-class comfort, garnered amid dominant-culture affluence, desensitized us to the counterculture identity that gave us place and passion in one of our core beliefs?

"In the last 15 or 20 years, I have heard only one sermon on peace," Bernie Loeppky, a member of Grace Mennonite Church in Winkler, Man., told our correspondent, Evelyn Rempel Petkau, for a feature, "Rethinking peace."

Is this why we are so conflicted on Remembrance Day?

## ABOUT THE COVER:

In our Christmas feature on page 4, Ray Friesen suggests, 'If we can imagine a nativity scene in first-century Palestine (pictured), we can possibly imagine it in our 21st-century world.'

PHOTO: ISTOCK

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**Guiding values:**

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

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*Covenantal relationships and mutual accountability*

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## Online NOW!

[at canadianmennonite.org](http://canadianmennonite.org)

See the "Photos" link on our home page for a web-exclusive photo story documenting the 250th anniversary of the Royal Proclamation in England.



Responding to Remembrance Day: Peace supporters used a peace button in their online profile photo. Read the story on our website or get the link from our Facebook page.

Visit us online for more web-exclusive stories from the Mennonite community and beyond. We'd love to hear your comments.

# Imagine!

*A Christmas message for those with a loss of heart*

BY RAY FRIESEN

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

In Charles Dickens' well-known story, *A Christmas Carol*, anyone who dares enter the inner sanctum of Ebenezer Scrooge's office with so much as a suggestion of Christmas is greeted with the now famous words: "Bah! Humbug!" His nephew is told by Scrooge, "If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with 'Merry Christmas' on his lips should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should!"

Many are tempted to suggest that Scrooge's famous response to Christmas was motivated by his greed and his self-centredness. Maybe, but I am inclined to believe it was not so much greed as it was a lack of imagination that caused him to have no heart for Christmas, no heart for those who did business with him, and no heart for those who needed his help at "this festive season of the year." It was the loss of his imagination that caused the loss of heart.

This loss of imagination is a malady that afflicts not only those who count money 364 days of the year and are then tempted to count presents



under the tree on the 365th. It is a disease of epidemic proportions in our world, with, it would seem at times, very few escaping its deadening impact.

I am convinced that it is lack of imagination that has us believing war will solve the problems in Iraq and Afghanistan, and more and larger prisons will deal with crime. It is lack of imagination that causes millions to go to bed hungry and teenagers in our own city to drift from couch to couch because they have no safe place to call home. It is lack of imagination that builds walls in Palestine and pits religion against religion around the world.

What may be the saddest truth of all is that religion could suffer from the most severe case of lack of imagination of all. As a result, we are quick to divide ourselves and others into insiders and outsiders, and we go out convinced that we must convert all to our way of life, using, at a minimum, the threat of God's wrath, and, at the worst, suicide bombers and holy war.

### **Set imagination free at Christmas**

Unfortunately, Christianity is not free of this loss of imagination that creates for it an inability to sense God's presence, understand God's truth, experience God's power or channel God's love. It is this loss of imagination that has turned the biblical story into a document primarily for polemic and rule making, thereby weakening almost to the point of death the power inherent in the story. This is true of the

entire biblical collection. It is particularly true of the Christmas story.

The Christmas story begs us to engage our imagination, to set it free. Without imagination, Christmas trees would be but branches covered in junk; gifts but tools, books and toys wrapped in gaudy paper; a favourite drink but milk mixed with raw eggs and fermented sugar cane; Christmas music but mushy, sentimental repetition; and a baby born on a manure pile. Without imagination, we read about the song of the angels but fail to hear the music; we forget the wonder of where and to whom they sang; and we lose the message in the chorus: *"Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."*

We read that last phrase—"to those with whom God is pleased"—and believe it to be an exclusionary phrase. We are convinced that God favours some and not others, and proudly see ourselves as the favoured ones. What if those words were not meant as an exclusionary clause, but rather as a descriptive phrase, a phrase describing all people who are not only favoured by God but now able to experience peace? What then? Without imagination, we can't go there.

With imagination, though, the horizons begin to widen and the

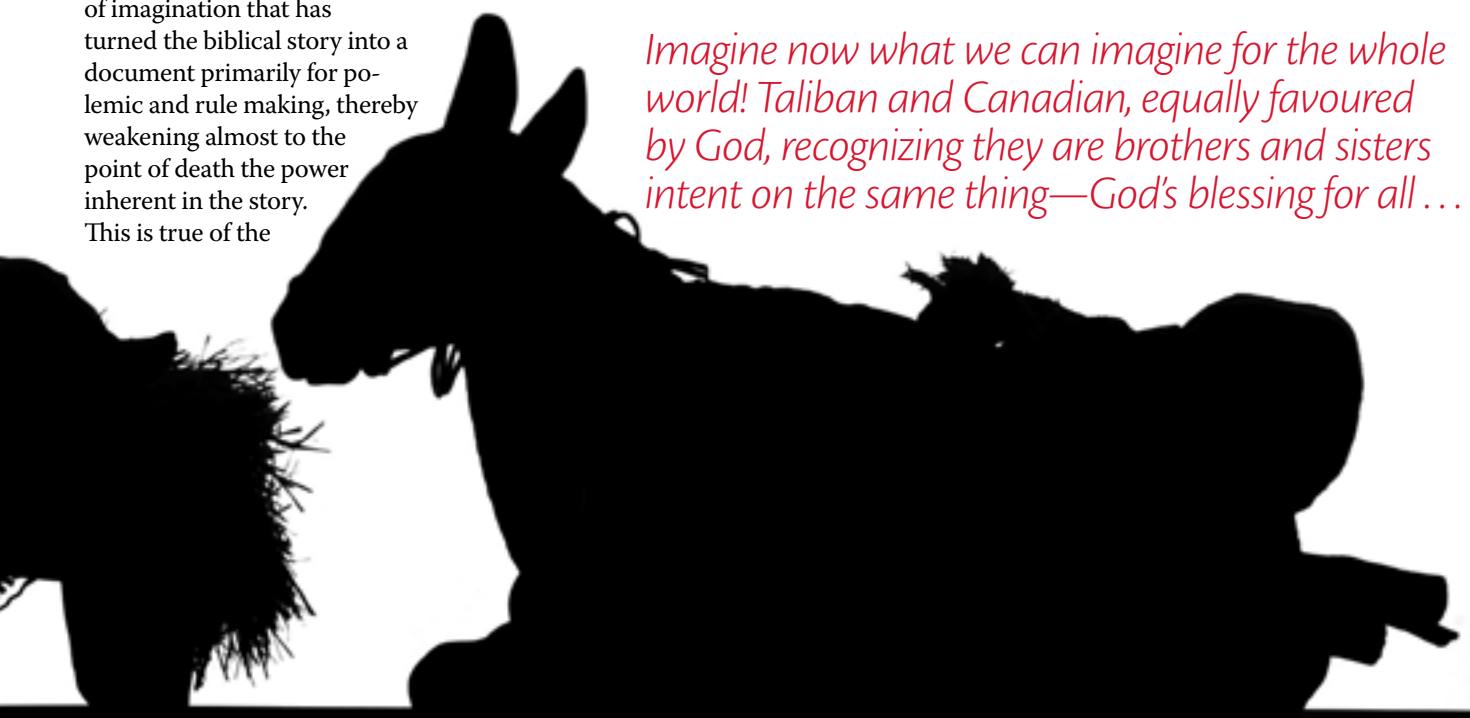
possibilities grow. With imagination, the song of the angels is a "Hallelujah chorus" for all people, as wonderful as the one sung in some food court and making its rounds on YouTube.

With imagination, Christmas carols engage our emotions as they lift our hearts and spirits till they nigh burst. When we begin to imagine, decorated trees transform rooms and space till the warm glow of twinkling lights seems like it was sent from heaven itself. With imagination, gifts raise anticipation to a fever pitch. With imagination, love breaks out everywhere.

You need imagination to do Christmas, and Christmas invites you to start imagining and never stop. Christmas invites us to see more than meets the eye, to see what really is and what surely will be: a planet visited by God, life and history infused with Christmas, a world transformed by what happened that first Christmas.

A barn is just a barn, smelly, maybe old and rickety, dirty, perhaps cold and drafty, dark, slippery with manure, the air tight with the smell of urine. But set your imagination free and bring in Christmas, and the barn is transformed into a nativity scene, peaceful, gentle, warm, filled with a soft glow, doves cooing. Set your

*Imagine now what we can imagine for the whole world! Taliban and Canadian, equally favoured by God, recognizing they are brothers and sisters intent on the same thing—God's blessing for all . . . .*



imagination free, and rough men and polished intellectuals, equally awed by the possibilities, gather around and sense their hearts strangely stirred by hope. Homeless, pregnant-before-marriage teenagers are no longer the source of angst, but the means of hope for our world. And in the distance, you hear the

*It is lack of imagination that builds walls in Palestine and pits religion against religion around the world.*

faint sound of angel choirs. All this, if you but imagine.

Starting with that story and setting our imaginations free, we can bring that same Christmas into our world and change a barn-like existence into a nativity scene of hope, light and life. If we can imagine that first Christmas, we can imagine more. If we can imagine a nativity scene in first-century Palestine, we can possibly imagine it in our 21st-century world.

### **Possibilities abound**

Think of the possibilities if we imagine the nativity scene not only in a story “once upon a time,” but imagine it today. Imagine it in Bethlehem, where it first happened, and the wall separating Israelis and Palestinians begins to shake, pieces of concrete begin to crumble, and then, with a crash, all 720 kilometres of it falls down, clearing the way for those whom God favours to shake hands with each other.

Imagine it eight kilometres away in the city of Jerusalem, held to be holy by three of the world’s religions. Imagine it there and notice that, haltingly at first, but soon more courageously and boldly, it swells into a chorus, Muslims, Christians and Jews together joining the angels in their song: “*Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.*”

If we’ve imagined this far, why stop there? Imagine now what we can imagine for the whole world! Taliban and Canadian, equally favoured by God, recognizing they are brothers and sisters intent on the same thing—God’s blessing for all—and joining hands to plant gardens, build roads and erect schools.

If we can imagine that, we can imagine

enough food in the Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia and Haiti, and in our own inner cities.

In Canada, imagine the possibilities! Indigenous, French, English and all others now convinced that our country is not for one group or the other, nor only for those who have lived here ‘x’ number

of years. Imagine us joining hands to create a truly diverse society respectful of all, generous to all, and joining arms to welcome ever more people from around the world who need the safety and economic benefits of life in Canada.

Imagine treating our planet with the respect God intended and with the spirit of generosity that makes each of the earth’s six billion residents an equal partner in what the earth can produce. Imagine an end to homelessness, drug use, broken families, violent fathers, despairing mothers, frightened children. Imagine a personal transformation as profound as that experienced by Ebenezer Scrooge.

Imagine the Leafs going to the Stanley Cup. Okay, there may be a limit.

All of this and more is

wildly improbable only if we decide the Christmas story is limited to but one way of reading, serves but one purpose or is restricted to one version as it appears in dried ink spots on pieces of paper. Set the story free to be what God intended, engage your imaginations in the way God designed them, dream of the world that is possible, a world already being dreamt by God. Imagine the possibilities, and there may be no limit to what can happen.

As you gather around a nativity scene this Christmas Eve, join hands and hearts with family around the tree, admire the beauty of it and the decorations that adorn it, enjoy the appetizing sights and smells of a table laden with turkey and trimmings, and imagine what is possible because of what was. Then imagine what will be because of what is, and be prepared to be amazed at the transformation of life and the world that you will see. ❧



*Ray Friesen is co-pastor of Emmaus Mennonite Church, Wymark, Sask.*

### ❧ For discussion

1. Do you know anyone with a “Bah! Humbug!” attitude towards Christmas? What makes you want to say “Bah! Humbug!”? Where do you draw the line on sentimentalism? What does it mean to have a heart for Christmas?
2. Do you agree with Ray Friesen that, “You need imagination to do Christmas”? If the baby Jesus came to our world today, what would be the 21st-century equivalent to the stable, the manger, the shepherds, the magi? How might changing the setting of the story change its impact?
3. Friesen can imagine a Canada that is “respectful of all, generous to all, and joining arms to welcome ever more people from around the world.” Can you imagine that? What would need to happen for that to be possible? Why is the Leafs winning the Stanley Cup more difficult to imagine?
4. How does greed and self-centredness impede our imaginations and keep us from seeing the true meaning of Christmas? How does the commercialization of Christmas impact the message? How can we foster a generous Christmas spirit in each other this season?

—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](mailto: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.

## ✉ Before progressing, we need to know our starting point

RE: "WHAT'S AHEAD" editorial, Oct. 14, page 2. Dick Benner is right to suggest that our "anchor" is the Corinthian passage on the foundational place of Jesus Christ in our Mennonite journey. His final line, "Canadian Mennonite will continue to push the edges, explore new pathways, and listen to our sisters and brothers as they call us to new witness and action," is great. But it could be made better if *Canadian Mennonite* would not only "explore new pathways," "push the edges," and "call us to new witness," but also find ways of highlighting, recalling and celebrating that foundational Christocentric impulse of Anabaptism as articulated by the Apostle Paul.

Progressive theology only moves forward faithfully if we know the central starting point of all movement, which is Jesus Christ. It's by him that we discern which

(Continued on page 8)

## FROM OUR LEADERS

# It's really a peace and justice issue

WILLARD METZGER

Climate change. It's a divisive issue. Whether one believes climate change is happening or not, I believe it is ultimately a peace and justice issue, and how the church responds to it is an important expression of worship.



God created the earth, and it was good. It is able to sustain its inhabitants. For this we must thank God. When the earth is shielded from political or generational gluttony, it remains a context of health and wellbeing for all the children to come. For this we must marvel at God's goodness.

But how much appreciation are we showing for God's miraculous gift if we do not care for it?

Christians may disagree on whether climate change is real or not. But caring for creation is a natural and necessary expression of worship. It's an important

way to honour God as creator of the world around us and of all who live in it.

It's been almost two years since I attended the UN Climate Change Forum in Durban, South Africa, but what I learned there still haunts me. Humanity's insatiable appetite for more is damaging creation. It risks supplies of drinking water. It's changing the sustainability of food supplies. Extreme flooding and drought are leaving people homeless.

Food, water and shelter shortages have been identified as leading causes of human conflict. Experts who monitor worldwide conflict are projecting a growing social instability that will lead to an increasing number of global conflicts and war.

A June 2012 report from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees states, "Environmental considerations are increasingly affecting the movement of refugees and IDPs

[internally displaced persons] in the East and Horn of Africa." These stresses "also led to deteriorating social cohesion and the occurrence of resource-use conflicts."

When people are left hungry, thirsty and homeless, there is no justice and there is no peace. When we care for creation, we take fundamental steps toward peace. We do our best to ensure that land remains fertile and supports life. We do our best to protect clean water sources for this generation and those to follow. We do our best to make sure that all people have shelter.

Whether you believe in climate change or not, can humanity agree to rein in its appetite? Can we agree to treat creation with care and respect for the sake of present and future generations?

When we ignore creation care, we ignore our global neighbours.

Caring for creation is ultimately about doing the right thing. It's about creating a climate of peace and justice for all.

*Willard Metzger is executive director of Mennonite Church Canada.*

(Continued from page 7)

edges are faithful to push, which new pathways are healthful, and which “new witness” points us to the in-breaking kingdom of God, rather than to some other kingdom.

MARCO FUNK (ONLINE SUBMISSION)

## ✉ Looking for more ‘meat’ in Canadian Mennonite

RE: “WHAT’S AHEAD” editorial, Oct. 14, page. 2. Thanks for the roadmap ahead: “more use of photography and video . . . personal expressions of faith . . . and vision and experience.”

Yesterday, my friend and I discussed why we can no

## GOD, MONEY AND ME

# Asking charities the right questions

DARREN PRIES-KLASSEN

For 40 years, Mennonite Foundation of Canada has partnered with people to help them live generously in support of the church and related charities. Increasingly, we find donors are asking questions to better understand the effectiveness of charities. While we applaud the effort on the part of donors to understand a charity’s impact, not all questions are helpful in evaluating an organization’s effectiveness.

The most commonly asked question by which most charities are measured is, “What amount of my donation will go to the charity’s overhead?” This question is problematic, in that it

assumes there is a clear demarcation between charitable expenses “for the cause” and those that are “overhead.” The widely held perception is that dollars spent by the charity for the cause—acceptable expenses—are dollars spent directly on the organization’s mission. Blankets for the cold, food for the hungry and medicine for the sick are the most obvious examples of acceptable charitable expenses. Nearly all other spending by a charity is considered overhead, a necessary evil in making the good works of the charity happen.

Charities simply cannot operate without so-called overhead costs. Recycled

office equipment, volunteers and a minimally skilled, low-paid staff may not be the most efficient way to accomplish the task. The opposition to overhead costs assumes that every dollar not used directly for the cause is wasted money.

Thinking this way is problematic. First, no one working in a charitable organization is overhead. Some of the most committed and passionate people serve in all areas of the charity’s work. To say that some employees are overhead, while others are not, is inaccurate. Like all other organizations, charities need quality people. Volunteers are a huge benefit to many charities, but



*The greatest competition the charitable sector faces is a combination of consumption and western self-interest.*

some roles are best filled by paid staff, and getting the best person for the job requires a competitive salary, often more than donors think is acceptable.

Second, charities need quality tools to do the job. It is more efficient and a better use of resources for a charity to have equipment that works, rather than spending time fumbling with copiers that jam and outdated computers. Charities and donors alike need to accept this reality.

Contrary to popular belief, charities are not engaged in a zero-sum game for

money, whereby they compete only with other charities for resources. Charities compete against the clear and repetitive message that we are to spend on ourselves first, and if there are a few leftovers, then and only then are we to share them with the less fortunate.

According to the World Bank Group, Canadian gross domestic product (GDP) in 2012 was at an all-time high of \$1.82 trillion. If charitable organizations in this country could leverage even one additional percent of last year’s GDP, we would triple the current \$9 billion of annual charitable giving in Canada. Think of the incredible impact we could have with this influx of resources. How will we change attitudes and behaviours unless we have the best people, tools and communication at our disposal? And yes, we will need to spend some money for this to happen.

Worthy causes do not sell themselves. The church and related agencies need quality people to develop sound strategies and communicate them effectively.

Charities should not be judged by the amount of money spent on overhead. They should be judged on their passion to make a difference in the lives of people, the size of their ambition, the clarity of their plan, and the way in which they make dreams come true and problems disappear.

*Darren Pries-Klassen is executive director of Mennonite Foundation of Canada. He is also vice-chair of the national board for the Canadian Association of Gift Planners.*



longer stomach watching the 10 p.m. CBC TV news, even discounting the commercials: excessive graphics and raucous audio “branding” of the program; a focus on emotive topics; tedious interviews to solicit the wisdom of ordinary Canadians “on the street.”

I hope our vision for *Canadian Mennonite* will continue to seek a meatier level.

PETER DICK, TORONTO

## ✉ Young faith is worth protecting

RE: “A VITAL escort service for young adults” by Betti Erb, Sept. 30, page 25.

I want to express my sincere appreciation for this article. Because of my age (nearly 78 years old) I can associate a little with the author’s metaphor of the

(Continued on page 10)

## FAMILY TIES

# Longing to hear God’s ‘yes’

MELISSA MILLER

**W**e gathered as a church community a few days after death had visited with a stunning blow. For many of us, our first reaction, upon receiving the news, was a cry of disbelief, “No!” Then we added words like “unreal” and, “This can’t be,” as if we had the power to go back in time, to turn death’s hand and to stop it from taking our loved one.

We were shocked and disoriented. A sudden and unexpected death can leave survivors scrambling to find purpose in a foreign and frightening landscape.

In our dislocation, we made our way to church.

With its people, the rituals of faith and the building itself, the church offered stable ground on which we could stand. Leading the congregation that day, I leaned on the Spirit for strength and wisdom.

Words of contrast were given to me and I spoke them to the people. “At an unreal time,” I said, “we come to the church to seek what is real. We come shattered by death, yearning for life and healing. We come with our disbelief, to affirm what we believe. And we come with our cries of ‘no,’ longing to hear the ‘yes’ of God.”

God’s ‘yes’ to life overcomes the ‘no’

of death. God’s reality steadies us when death has served up a shocking unreality. Our belief in Jesus’ victory over death sustains us when death separates us from our loved ones. As we grieve, the church community provides us with a place and a people to help us find our way. With its steady pattern of gathering for worship, and its proclamation of Jesus’ victory over death, the church gives us a template to aid our mourning and help us heal. This holds true whether death is shock-



*The church provides a container for grief, and helps us carry our loss and claim our Christian hope.*

ingly abrupt or as gradual as a receding tide.

In November, our thoughts are often on death. Perhaps it’s the brown and gray landscape of the northern hemisphere as the earth sheds the green of spring and summer, preparing to be wrapped in the snowy white of winter. Perhaps it’s the national remembrance of those who have died in military service, and, for pacifist Christians, the costs of waging war and the call to work for peace. In some churches, All Saints Day on Nov. 1 is an occasion to celebrate and remember the saints.

In my setting, the Mennonite churches

of the Prairies often hold an Eternal Life service on the Sunday before First Advent. To prepare, I encourage people to visit the graves of their loved ones, and to share stories of how they have blessed their lives. In our church, we will read the names of those who have died and light candles in their memory. We will sing songs of comfort and hope. We will cry. In doing so, the church provides a container for grief, and helps us carry our loss and claim our Christian hope.

As real and natural as death is, it does not represent the final answer for

Christians. We must face it, accept the changes it brings and honour the loss of the physical presence of our loved one. Yet we do not mourn as those without hope. We join in the voices of the saints across the ages, scoffing with the Apostle Paul, “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” (I Corinthians 15:55) This is our Christian hope, God’s ‘yes’ to the futile ‘no’ of death.

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

(Continued from page 9)

warships protecting cargo ships from German U-boats during the Second World War. I see the warships as witnesses to faith protecting the valuable cargo—the young people—from being blown up by the U-boats. Also, she has given a profoundly vivid picture of the young people today in their battle of values.

LOELLA J.M. EBY, KITCHENER, ONT.

### ✉ No discipleship without salvation, reader maintains

RE: “RETHINKING PEACE,” Oct. 14, page 4.

Thank you so much for this feature by Evelyn Rempel Petkau. It provided excellent opportunity for readers to pause and carefully consider our peace witness from several vantage points. Like so many other issues, when it comes to the pursuit of peace, we so easily swing to one extreme of the pendulum or the other.

Gordon Allaby rightly highlights one end of that pendulum when he states, “The heresy we face today is salvation without discipleship.” In my opinion, we are equally in danger when we swing to the opposite extreme of speaking about discipleship without salvation. We need both together!

We need our peace witness to flow from our experience of the atoning work of Jesus that was accomplished through his death and resurrection. When people ask us why we so ardently strive towards the reconciliation of people, we can respond by saying that it is a reflection of how God has reconciled us to himself through Jesus. “*We love because he first loved us*” (1 John 4:19).

RYAN JANTZI, CLINTON, ONT.

### ✉ Belief in peace ‘is in our blood’

RE: “LET NOBODY judge them,” Oct. 28, page 6.

I happen to agree with Jacob H. Janzen’s sentiment cited as the title for Ross W. Muir’s feature article. I would hasten to add, however, a further statement by this venerable leader.

During a November 1940 exchange between Mennonite leaders and national war services officials, Deputy Minister LaFleche asked, “What will you do if we shoot you?” Janzen replied, “Listen, general, I want to tell you something. You can’t scare us like that. I’ve looked down too many rifle barrels in my time to be scared in that way. This thing [belief in peace] is in our blood for 400 years and you can’t take it away from us like you’d crack a piece of kindling over your knee. I was before a firing squad twice. We believe in this.”

The early church confession, “Jesus is Lord,” was

proclaimed boldly in a society which declared religiously and politically that “Caesar is Lord.” Anabaptist Mennonites were just one of several renewal movements that sought to recapture the truths of that confession. Like such groups as the strongly pacifistic Waldenses and early Pentecostals, Anabaptists found that confession elaborated upon in such places as Christ’s Sermon on the Mount. Yet, as Muir’s article demonstrates, that core confession is always just a generation or two away from extinction.

For Mennonites, our Caesar may have been the kaiser, fuhrer, president or prime minister. Ever since that early church, Christians throughout the ages have had trouble remembering, as the recent Herald Press book title puts it, to be *For God and Country (In That Order)*. How do we share that radical discipleship call in our own nationalistic or patriotic contexts?

It is, I believe, true that formal or informal shunning of those who stray beyond the boundaries has not proven an effective way of maintaining those persons or the faith. The challenge I read from Muir’s history, and the larger contexts which qualify his findings, is that we need to focus more on our centre, those core radical truths that flow from recognizing Jesus as Lord. As Peter and the other apostles put it, “*We must obey God rather than human beings*” (Acts 5:29).

KEN BECHTEL (ONLINE SUBMISSION)

### ✉ Working for peace can be a messy business

THANK YOU FOR publishing Ross W. Muir’s excellent article, “Let nobody judge them,” as the feature in your Oct. 28 edition, page 6.

As a baby boomer born in the post-Second World War era, I have never had to face the difficult choices that my parents’ generation did. And as a Canadian coming of age in the Vietnam War era, it was easy for us to have righteous indignation about the atrocities of that conflict. Of course, it was not so easy for our American counterparts.

Many Mennonites, myself included, have a certain ambivalence as Remembrance Day approaches. In more recent years, we make passing reference to “Peace Sunday” and the braver among us may wear “To remember is to work for peace” buttons.

However, like Muir, even those of us raised as Mennonites may have relatives, or relatives of our partners, who served in the military. How do we honour their memory? Does wearing a poppy glorify war or simply acknowledge the horror of it and remember the sacrifices?

Only in more recent decades have I learned about the kinds of Mennonite war stories that Muir

references, including those of many Mennonites in Ukraine who were liberated by, and served in, the German military.

The essence of this dilemma is captured by Muir's quote from the late Frank Epp's 1969 Ottawa Mennonite Church sermon: "[We] would do well to recognize that both pacifists and militarists, seen in absolute terms either in theory or practice, are very hard to find . . . and both pacifists and non-pacifists have in common major sins of omission."

As Epp noted, pacifists and militarists may not be as far apart as either side would like to believe. I think most Mennonites would agree that the rule of law is needed to maintain peace, both domestically and internationally. However, "working for peace," however we understand it, can be messy business.

**BRIAN HUNSBERGER, WATERLOO, ONT.**

### ✉ Article appears to discredit our 'traditional pacifist stance'

**RE:** "LET NOBODY judge them," Oct. 28, page 6.

What is disturbing about Ross W. Muir's article is its apparent intent to discredit our people's traditional pacifist stance, documented lapses notwithstanding. It goes so far as to imply that conscientious objectors during the Second World War were, in fact, little better than shirkers and cowards.

Never mind what Jesus said about turning the other cheek, what about the notion that war is really nothing more than politically sanctioned insanity? In what other facet of our normal lives are we urged, if not coerced, to throw in our lot with such a colossally mad scheme? I think this was at the root of the widespread conscientious objection in America to the Vietnam conflict; namely, it became evident that war is just plain crazy, useless and stupid.

**CURTIS DRIEDGER, PETERBOROUGH, ONT.**

### ✉ Unpleasant realities need to be named

**RE:** "LET NOBODY judge them," Oct. 28, 2013, page 6.

I'm glad to see the work of Nathan Dirks shared in Ross W. Muir's feature article. Dirks has done well to help us name the reality that not all who sit in Mennonite church pews hold to nonresistance as a response to violence.

As a Mennonite pastor, the wife of Peter Engbrecht asked me to visit him during the later stage of his life. Engbrecht was a decorated Canadian war hero, yet at the end of his life dealt with anguish over the killing he did and was part of. For me, this is also part of "Lest

we forget." It is not about judging others, but about being realistic about the sacrifices we choose to make.

In the historical sense, I value my relationships with Second World War conscientious objectors and veterans alike. Recognizing the neglect of the church in the past to minister to those who returned from war, I am fearful of the continuing silence concerning veterans of Afghanistan. As Dirks suggests, I suspect there are many "Mennonite names" among those who have served recently in the military.

To my understanding, this is all the more reason for today's church leaders to speak up about the cost of being a peacemaker in the name of Christ. The current generation of young men and women deserve to know theological and practical alternatives to violence, and to have opportunities for peacemaking service.

**RANDY KLAASSEN (ONLINE SUBMISSION)**

### ✉ A church apology to war vets 'would indicate growth'

**THANKS TO ROSS W.** Muir for his article on Mennonites and war, "Let nobody judge them," Oct. 28, page 6.

To demonstrate that nearly all "total pacifists" actually aren't, brings war down to a level of crime and prompts a few questions. If they don't dodge these—many do—they soon admit they dial 911 to summon cops with guns, and will defend themselves and others about as often as anyone. Cops are like local soldiers, and armies, if a military effort is justified, are like police forces. Crime violence and war violence are much the same.

In other words, it's easy to be a theoretical pacifist when conflicts are distant, but not so easy when violence is in your face. What would you probably do if you or your family were in danger or being attacked? What if your daughter was being raped? Such blunt questions offend some people, but isn't this what it boils down to? I love nonviolent ideals, but know most of us can't live them much in more hostile situations.

Muir relates how Mennonite churches and communities generally treated returning Second World War Mennonite vets with coldness. Well, things which threaten some people's black-and-white, one-size-fits-all answers to life may easily make them cold or angry. And a human fault is that we like to control others.

A decision to fight Nazism could ultimately only be a personal one, yet some "leaders" try to make such choices for others and sheep-like people fall in line. There's value in community, but sometimes it's more about pressure to conform.

As for an apology, I don't think one person can ever apologize for another for anything, so unless those

people are still alive and doing the apologizing, it can only be a gesture. But such a gesture from churches and their broader organizations might be nice, however belated. It would indicate growth, if nothing else.  
**HOWARD BOLDT, SASKATOON**

## ✉ Peace church should oppose Québec charter

RE: "A CAUSE for concern?" Oct. 14, page 13.

As Anabaptists living in Québec, we were concerned when we read Willard Metzger's Viewpoint article about the Parti Québécois government's proposed Charter of Québec Values (now tabled as Bill 60). The proposed charter would ban the wearing of "ostentatious" religious symbols by state employees,

including workers in hospitals, primary schools, universities and subsidized daycares.

Although the article makes several points with which we agree, its overall tone of acceptance of the charter project was perplexing. He seems to suggest that this project can be seen as an enlightened attempt to create a secular space in which no religion receives special privilege. However, it seems more likely to us that the proposition grows out of a fear and ignorance of the other, especially if the person is a relative newcomer who adheres to a religious tradition. Here is why we think so:

- **THERE HAS** been a dramatic increase in racist incidents in the last month, mostly targeting Muslim women wearing hijabs. A local anti-Islamophobia organization recently reported receiving 117 complaints of "verbal or physical abuse" between Sept. 15 and Oct. 15, compared to 25 in the previous seven months. The charter itself appears to be inciting this behaviour.
- **THE PQ** government is not basing its proposed charter on recommendations from the Bouchard/Taylor Report on reasonable accommodations in 2008. Co-author and McGill philosopher Charles Taylor has spoken out strongly against the proposed charter. In a Radio Canada interview in August, he called it an "absolutely terrible act of exclusion" and "something we would expect to see in Putin's Russia."
- **THE GOVERNMENT-APPOINTED** Québec Human Rights Commission claims the charter would never survive a court challenge because it directly infringes on the province's Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms.
- **THE MUSLIM** director of the private daycare that our daughters attend expressed feeling unwelcome and having difficulty finding clients because of a perception that she would indoctrinate the children, even though she runs it to government standards in every way.

We agree with Metzger that the charter should neither be ignored nor feared, but it certainly does not call for "sincere cooperation," nor is it a "recognition of religious diversity," as he suggests. As a peace church, we should actively resist Bill 60 by standing in solidarity with those targeted by the proposed law, and by promoting dialogue and understanding between those who increasingly mistrust and fear one another.  
**ANICKA FAST AND JOHN CLARKE,  
 MONTRÉAL, QUÉ.**



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## LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

## Attunement

Part 2 of a series

TROY WATSON

If, according to the gospels, baptizing people with the Holy Spirit was Jesus' primary mission, what exactly is Spirit baptism?

I believe it has little to do with spectacular gifts like tongues, signs and wonders. I'm not saying that being filled with the Spirit never results in these gifts, but what I do believe is it is easy for these spectacular gifts to become distractions from the real point, namely, love.

As Paul says, *"If I speak in tongues . . . but don't have love, I'm like a clanging*

*gong"* (1 Corinthians 13:1). I certainly don't believe being attuned with Divine Spirit is synonymous with tongues, ecstatic visions or miraculous manifestations. In fact, those of us who seek extraordinary gifts and experiences are especially prone to "ego consciousness." Our very desire for something extraordinary is our ego seeking to identify with being or doing something special.

(What I mean by "ego consciousness" is the state of finding my identity in external things like my reputation, accomplishments, failures or spiritual status, or the church or denomination I belong to.)

Spirit baptism is ultimately about being baptized with the essence of God, which is love. But what does baptism mean?

A 19th-century Presbyterian minister named James W. Dale embarked on what is probably the most comprehensive study of the word "baptism" to date. He dedicated 20 years of his life to one word, *baptizo*, the most common Greek word for "baptize." He fastidiously examined its use in a wide range of historical documents and published his findings in four volumes. He concluded that to "baptize"

essentially means to "merge."

This understanding is illuminating. It means Jesus came to merge human spirit with Divine Spirit. This is especially

meaningful considering the time of year in which we find ourselves. During the Advent and Christmas seasons, we celebrate the incarnation—the birth of a baby who was both God and human. The incarnation is the merging of humanity and divinity. From the very beginning, the early church believed followers of Christ are

the body of Christ, meaning we are the ongoing physical presence of incarnation. Through Spirit baptism, humanity is merged with Divine Spirit.

(This leads to the early Christian doctrine of *theosis*, which I will talk about in another article.)

*Another way of speaking about this is to say there is a divine spark or inner light in every human being. Think of it this way, God is omnipresent, so God must be present in every human being.*

So what does it mean to have humanity and divinity merged within our own beings? I believe there are three primary states involved in this process:

• **IMAGE OF GOD.** All humans are made in the image of God. Another way of speaking about this is to say there is a divine spark or inner light in every human being. Think of it this way: God is omnipresent, so God must be present in every human being. As Paul says, in God *"we live and move and have our being"*

(Acts 17:28).

• **INDWELLING OF GOD.** What creates this second state of being is an acknowledgement of the omnipresence of God within us, and taking a posture of hospitality towards God. We welcome God's presence to dwell within us and with us.

• **ATTUNEMENT WITH DIVINE SPIRIT.** This is the Spirit baptism Jesus talked about and promised to his followers. This is the merging of human spirit and divine Spirit. It is one thing to welcome God into our lives. It is an entirely different thing to be merged with Divine Spirit. What happens in this state is that one's consciousness—one's perspective, desires, values, goals, etc.—is merged or aligned with God's. In this state, we become co-creators with Divine Spirit, who is love.

Spirit attunement is not a one-time experience. It is important to continually attune ourselves. The New Testament doesn't just talk about being baptized or filled with the Spirit. It also talks about walking in the Spirit after one's awakening or rebirth.

Just because I was in a state of Spirit attunement five years ago, or even five minutes ago, doesn't mean I'm in that state right now. It's very easy and quite common for humans to slip into ego consciousness. It's our default state.

Some of the most destructive forces in the church and the world are people who have experienced Spirit attunement, but operate out of a state of "ego consciousness," thinking they are attuned to God's Spirit. In this state, we begin doing or enforcing our own agenda, claiming it is God's will. It happens all the time. It also helps explain the checkered past and present condition of the church. ❧

*Troy Watson (troy@questcc.ca) is pastor of Quest in St. Catharines, Ont.*



## /// Milestones

### Births/Adoptions

**Drudge**—Jonah Stephen (b. Oct. 7, 2013), to Darryl and Ashley Drudge, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

**Dyck Goulet**—Elfrieda Naomi (b. Oct. 21, 2013), to Sasha Dyck and Dora-Marie Goulet (Mennonite Fellowship of Montreal).

**Janzen**—Jonah Frederick Alexander (b. June 28, 2013), to Michael and Deidre Janzen, Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

**Kampen**—Elena Suzanne (b. Oct. 22, 2013), to David and Christine Kampen-Robinson, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

**Kleinschmidt**—George (b. Oct. 18, 2013), to Paul and Anna Kleinschmidt, Waterloo North Mennonite, Waterloo, Ont.

**Koop**—Nora Marie (b. July 2, 2013), to Brendan and Jen Koop, Ottawa Mennonite.

**Love**—Tom Shepherd (b. Feb. 9, 2013), to Emma and Matt Love, Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon.

**Martin**—Blake Alexander (b. Oct. 24, 2013), to Lance and Andrea Martin, St. Jacobs Mennonite, Ont.

**Pardys**—Russell Andrew (b. July 27, 2013), to John-eric and Lindsey Pardys, Bloomingdale Mennonite, Ont.

**Wagler**—Daxton Lloyd (b. Oct. 18, 2013), to Andrew and Katie Wagler, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

**Wiebe**—Janie Sue-Ellen (b. Oct. 20, 2013), to Kara and Tyler Wiebe, Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon.

**Wiens**—Jack Remington (b. Oct. 15, 2013), to Joe and Amanda Wiens, Bergthaler Mennonite, Altona, Man.

**Winter**—Aubrey Hannah (b. Nov. 3, 2013), to Ben and Sarah Winter, Steinmann Mennonite, Baden, Ont.

### Baptisms

**Nikolas MacGregor**—First Mennonite, Kelowna, B.C., Nov. 3, 2013.

**Marie (Thompson) Little, Matthew Wiens**—Nutana Park Mennonite, Saskatoon, Oct. 13.

### Deaths

**Funk**—Katharina (nee Klassen) Stoesz, 100 (b. Feb. 1, 1913; d. Oct. 20, 2013), Bergthaler Mennonite, Altona, Man.

**Gingerich**—Gladys (nee Baechler), 88 (b. Nov. 22, 1925; d. Nov. 2, 2013), Zurich Mennonite, Ont.

**Groff**—Reta, 95 (d. Oct. 11, 2013), Preston Mennonite, Cambridge, Ont.

**Martin**—Ellen, 81 (d. April 2, 2013), Bloomingdale Mennonite, Ont.

**Mullet**—James, 88 (b. Aug. 19, 1925; d. Oct. 31, 2013), North Star Mennonite, Drake, Sask.

**Regier**—Isaac, 82 (b. Aug. 11, 1931; d. Oct. 7, 2013), Zoar Mennonite, Langham, Sask.

**Roes**—Eleanor, 76 (b. July 28, 1937; d. Oct. 31, 2013), Crosshill Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.

**Siemens**—Rudy, 79 (b. Sept. 1, 1934; d. Nov. 8, 2013), Morden Mennonite, Man.

### Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones

*announcements within four months of the event.*

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

## Pontius' Puddle





FALL 2013  
VOLUME 24 ISSUE 1

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Alumni News
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# AMBS window

## IMPROVISING LEADERSHIP

David Miller, Associate Professor of Missional Leadership Development

When I began serving as a pastor in the early 1980s, a wide array of seminars and workshops focused on strategic planning for congregations and pastors. All that was needed, these resources told us, were a clear mission statement and defined, measurable goals for the church. Pastors were to function as CEOs to chart the way toward a successful future.

However, these corporate planning models, geared around notions of success, growth and dominance, have largely come up short in the face of changing communities, declining attendance, diminished social power and prestige of Christian congregations, and greater skepticism about the trustworthiness of Christian proclamation.

Over time, I discovered I was drawing increasingly on lessons from



my earlier education as an actor and experience in improvisation. As actors, we were schooled in the canons of theater—plot, character development, stagecraft. These traditions were then released in the unanticipated challenges of improvisational situations. Tradition became living and dynamic—not mere repetition, but new embodiment. Actors who scarcely knew each other could create together in the face of new twists, conflicts, possibilities and limitations.

As the church finds itself in an increasingly changed and challenged social location, leadership requires the skills and soul of a jazz musician or improvisational actor. Well grounded in the canons of scripture and tradition, leaders seek to shape and release congregational imagination toward new improvisations of the tradition.

The past is not the object of defense and preservation, but the foundation of creative and creating hope that seeks to embody the 'what if' of God's vision. What if Isaiah was right that the Word of God is accomplishing God's purpose

in the world (Isaiah 55:10-11)? What if Christ's Spirit is continuing to yearn that the world may know "the things that make for peace"? What if our congregations seek not to have all the answers, but instead—as communities of memory, anticipation and improvisation—live into experiments in God's reconciliation and peace?

In such a move we are more recipients and learners than managers of God's gracious work. We learn anew that truth that transforms is found more in participation than in rational defense.

In these pages, you will read of leaders and congregations engaging in improvisational ventures resulting in racial reconciliation, justice for immigrants, compassion and care for children and youth, healing and welcome for a former convict—the ancient vision of God's shalom embodied anew on contemporary stages. ●

**Photo:** The Nueva Vida Norristown New Life congregation celebrated its 23rd anniversary in July when this photo was taken. See more on page 2. Photo by Peder Wiegner.

# BRIDGING CHURCH AND COMMUNITY



**D**uring September, Hyde Park Mennonite Fellowship of Boise, Idaho, took part in eleven days of prayer and fasting for immigration reform—eleven days to symbolize the estimated eleven million undocumented people currently living in our country.

After the Mennonite Church USA convention in Phoenix with its emphasis on immigration, our congregation had a worship series on immigration and the Bible, which led to a letter-writing campaign, which eventually led us into joining with some other Idaho congregations in this fasting and prayer effort (including two other Mennonite congregations).

As a congregation we are seeking to be a prophetic voice in our community. We know this means speaking from who we are as a peculiar people of faith—a

people who seek to point to the God that created all people in God's very own image with limitless potential. We also know this means we must pay attention for where God is already at work within our community. Participating in this time of prayer and fasting was, for us, a clear place of intersection of those two elements: who we are as a community of faith, and where God was already at work in our community.

*Marc Schlegel is pastor of Hyde Park Mennonite Fellowship. He completed an AMBS Master of Divinity degree in 2012.*

**Photo:** Marc Schlegel speaks at an immigration reform rally on the steps of the Idaho state capitol to kick off "11 days of prayer and fasting for immigration reform." Behind him are photos of "Aspiring Americans" who are the face of this movement.

**N**ueva Vida Norristown New Life (NVNNL) launched an extensive mission, Enlarging Our Place in God's World, in 2008. The vision is built on the intercultural congregation's call from God to share the reconciling and transforming love of Jesus with the people of Norristown and beyond.

The mission includes sharing space with a childcare ministry for low income families, bridging the digital divide at the New Life Internet café, photo ID clinics, youth outreach, prayer walks, street evangelism, a discipleship housing ministry for single women, outdoor worship services, preparation of social safety net applications, translation services, and backyard peace camps for community children. Some members also minister at a thrift store, soup kitchen and homeless shelter.

The long-range plan is to form ACTS 2 Ministries as a community development corporation. Anticipated ministries include counseling services, restorative justice peace circles and restarting a microenterprise training program for the city and county.

The congregation represents 17 cultures/ethnicities. Everyone, even children and youth, can find ways to participate in God's vision for the congregation. The mission grows through much prayer, discernment, sacrificial giving and support from Franconia Conference and other partners.


*Sharon Gehman Williams (Master of Divinity 1986) serves as minister of worship at NVNNL.*

## AMBS Window FALL 2013 Volume 24 Issue 1

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## ALUMNI NEWS

Several graduates have accepted positions at Oaklawn, a Mennonite psychiatric hospital and mental health center:

- **Andrea Opel (Master of Divinity 2012)**, social worker with Elkhart County Child and Adolescent Clinical Services.
- **Rolando Sosa Granados (Master of Divinity 2010)**, social worker with child and adolescent clinical services.
- **Joseph Vallejos (Master of Arts: Peace Studies 2010)**, social worker with addictions services.

**Jake Hess (Master of Arts: Peace Studies 2013)** is serving as co-

coordinator and caseworker in the Community Service Restitution Program with the Center for Community Justice in Elkhart.

**Sandy Miller (Master of Divinity 2012)** was ordained Aug. 18 at Silverwood Mennonite Church, Goshen, for her ministry as director for church relations at Mennonite Mission Network.

**Sherri Martin-Carman (Master of Divinity 1998)** was ordained Oct. 27 at the Floradale Mennonite Church in Ontario for her ministry as a retirement home chaplain. ●





soul. The transformative experiences of this internship convince me that, whatever the context of my future ministry, I must seek out cross-cultural and interchurch partnerships with ministers like Rev. Tinsley who can teach me how to be a midwife of hope and justice in the church and community.

*Julia Gingrich is a Master of Divinity student. She lives in Elkhart and attends Prairie Street Mennonite Church.*

**Photo at left:** Julia Gingrich (right) pictured with Rev. Jennifer Tinsley at St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church, Elkhart.

In January, I felt the Spirit nudging me to pursue a pastoral internship at St. James AME (African Methodist Episcopal) as I listened to Rev. Jennifer Tinsley preach at a Dr. King Day service. Rev. Tinsley raised a prophetic cry against the structures of death, such as mass incarceration and gun violence, which are devastating the black community in Elkhart.

Several weeks into my internship, the powers of death struck the black community in Elkhart when a 16-year-old was killed in a drive-by shooting. The acquittal of George Zimmerman in the killing of Trayvon Martin stirred up more “groans too deep for words.”

My summer internship allowed me to enter spaces where I was graciously invited to listen to the Spirit groaning through the urgent prayers voiced by members of Christ’s body who are awaiting liberation from racial oppression. As a result, my own longing for a racially just world deepened, and I was compelled to attend to the ways my privilege and collusion with oppressive systems harm others and wound my own

Mike was a lifer in Saskatchewan Penitentiary in Prince Albert when he signed up for Person-to-Person, a prison visitation program started in 1974 by the Conference of Mennonites of Saskatchewan where visitors come once a month to listen to, talk with and become friends with those in prison.



In the first visits, Mike entered the room with his hat over eyes, mumbled for a bit and that was it. Over time the hat slowly began to rise and the mumbles turned into discussion. He even shared his dream to one day own a house, grow

a large garden and have a pet cat.

After Mike was released on parole, he joined our CoSA program (Circles of Support and Accountability for offenders most likely to re-offend). After several years, he bought a small house, tilled the entire back yard and adopted Misty from the local pet shelter.

Three years later, Mike died suddenly from a heart attack as he was preparing for worship at Grace Mennonite Church, the congregation where he was baptized and a member. For the funeral, the congregation filled up with ex-inmates, prison guards, parole officers, coworkers, other CoSA members, volunteers, friends and the congregation.

That evening, and through Mike’s redeemed life, we were touched by the Kingdom of God.

*Ryan Siemens, Master of Divinity 2007, is pastor of Grace Mennonite Church, Prince Albert, Sask. He will continue this ministry part-time after January when he also becomes director of the Person-to-Person program. ●*

**Photo at left:** Mike was a member of the Grace Mennonite congregation, Prince Albert, Sask. This photo was taken a month before his death, the only time he ever wore a tuxedo.

## YOUR GIFTS AT WORK

AMBS’s Intercultural Competency and Undoing Racism committee leads the seminary toward our vision of making “theological education accessible to and welcoming of Christians of increasingly diverse traditions, ethnicities and races.”

Your gifts support this vital mission not only as the seminary works toward this vision, but also as we prepare leaders to minister in increasingly diverse contexts.

All employees recently participated in the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), assessing our capacity to accurately understand and adapt behavior to cultural difference and commonality. Iris deLeón-Hartshorn of Mennonite Church USA and local IDI administrator Darin Short are working with us to help us grow toward greater intercultural competence. Committee members are (back) Safwat Marzouk, Jewel Gingerich Longenecker, Zach Kovitch; (middle) Loren Johns, Nekeisha Alexis-Baker; (front) Bob Rosa and Katerina Friesen. ●



# PANORAMA

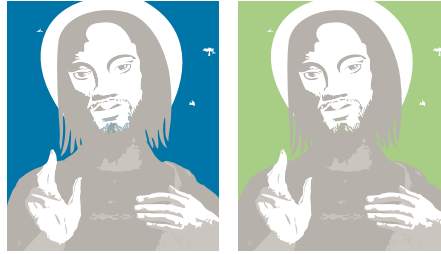
## President reappointed

Sara Wenger Shenk, AMBS president, has been reappointed for another four-year term, 2014–18. This action began with the AMBS board of directors and included actions from Mennonite Church Canada Christian Formation Council and Mennonite Education Agency of Mennonite Church USA.

Bruce Baergen, chair of the AMBS board, said, “After completing a very comprehensive review of Sara’s first term we want to celebrate the outstanding work and commitment she has given to and continues to give to the seminary.”

## Anabaptist Short Courses

Six-week online courses on congregational conflict and Mennonite polity are scheduled for spring. In addition, a Spanish-language course on Anabaptist history and theology—also six-weeks online—is offered in February and March. Visit [www.ambss.edu/anabaptistshortcourses](http://www.ambss.edu/anabaptistshortcourses)



## Pastors Week features 5 faculty

“Help me see Jesus! Help me see, Jesus!” is the theme of **Pastors Week, Jan. 27–30**. Five AMBS professors will focus on Jesus from different points of view:

- Rachel Miller Jacobs, D.Min.;
- Andy Brubacher Kaethler, Ph.D.;
- Safwat Marzouk, Ph.D.;
- Jamie Pitts, Ph.D.;
- Allan Rudy Froese, Ph.D.

Cyneatha Millsaps and Janeen Bertsche Johnson will lead worship times. Information about workshops, teaching sessions, affinity group gatherings and more is available: [www.ambss.edu/pastorsweek](http://www.ambss.edu/pastorsweek)

## Leadership Clinics

Daylong workshops are scheduled for January 27:

- How dare we call ourselves Anabaptist?
- Sex offenders in my church?
- Gathering for new pastors

## Spring online course

**Social Theory for Christian Peacemakers** will be taught online during spring semester. Instructor Gerald Shenk hopes students from many different settings will bring life experience into conversation with the theological convictions and social theory constructs. [www.ambss.edu/academics/social-theory-for-Christian-peacemakers-course.cfm](http://www.ambss.edu/academics/social-theory-for-Christian-peacemakers-course.cfm)

## Upcoming events

- Workshop: Lent Planner, Jan. 17
- Webinar: Lent Planning, Feb. 11
- Webinar: Jubilee for Today, March 6
- Webinar: What is your Sermon Doing?, March 20

[www.ambss.edu/churchleadershipcenter/index.cfm](http://www.ambss.edu/churchleadershipcenter/index.cfm)

# PRESIDENT’S WINDOW SARA WENGER SHENK



Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved (Acts 2:46-47).

What a remarkable story. Even a revolutionary story. The birth day of the church. A story and Spirit that keep inspiring us to try radical new church ventures.

And yet we live with this reality: the fastest growing religious preference for adults in the United States and Canada is “no religious preference” and the number of religiously unaffiliated persons has hit an all-time high.

I love the way a non-anxious *Washington Post* columnist describes our time:

“It’s a yeasty time. Christianity is being reinvented. My guess is that it will get smaller for a while. Many churches built in the religious boom years of the past century will close.

There will be tensions between experimenters and traditionalists. Denominational loyalty will continue to fade. But fresh ways of blending the old and the new will continue to emerge. And, yet again, an ancient protean faith will find new forms.”

It was a yeasty time when there was a sound like a rushing wind and all were filled with the Holy Spirit. Foreigners heard stories about God’s marvelous deeds in their own languages. People

disagreed about what was happening. Some were amazed. Some perplexed. Others simply sneered.

Peter steps up, as good leaders do, to show how all of God’s saving action in the world climaxed in Jesus Christ. It suddenly dawned on people that they’d gotten Jesus all wrong! They were “cut to the heart” saying, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

“Repent, and be baptized ... in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” The church was born!

AMBS is a “yeasty” community. We devote ourselves to the apostles’ teaching, to fellowship, to breaking bread and the prayers—finding fresh ways daily to blend the old and the new. Thanks be to God for our graduates who step up, as good leaders do, to show the way in Norristown, Boise, Prince Albert, Elkhart and beyond. ●

## GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

# Famous football player warms Mennonite crowd

STORY AND PHOTO BY BARB DRAPER  
KITCHENER, ONT.

Although Michael “Pinball” Clemons is famous for his exploits in the Canadian Football League, he talked about the importance of humility and living for others when he spoke at an anniversary gala held at Bingemans banquet hall in Kitchener, Ont., on Nov. 4. Hundreds of guests celebrated 70 years of Fairview Mennonite Home in Cambridge and 50 years of Parkwood Mennonite Home in Waterloo, also raising money for Fairview’s kitchen expansion and enjoying Clemons’s great smile and inspiring stories.

It didn’t take long for the former Toronto Argonauts running back and coach to make an impression. During the after-dinner auction, he bought the first item, a signed Kitchener Rangers hockey jersey. The second item for sale was a football jersey signed by Clemons. Just before the bidding started, he got up from his seat and said the item should also include two tickets to the CFL’s Eastern Conference final game.

The bidding rose quickly, then slowed at

around \$1,100. Clemons again approached the auctioneer and said, “We can arrange a pre-game visit at the sidelines.” Grinning broadly, he added, “That should be worth another \$100!” The bidding quickly took off again until it stalled at \$1,600. At that point, Clemons announced that he could get another jersey, and another set of tickets and passes for a pre-game visit, and both buyers were able to make a \$1,600 contribution.

These antics served to warm up the crowd. No one doubted his warmth when he responded to David Jutzi’s introduction by saying, “That was one of the best introductions I’ve ever had; I need to love you.” With that, he walked over to Jutzi and gave him a big hug.

Clemons is a most unusual speaker. Using a wireless mic, he never went behind the podium, but wandered among the tables, sometimes interacting with the guests and sometimes jumping up on a chair.

“Yes I ran for 25,000 yards,” he said, but quickly added, “All that means is that I was a glorified coward.” He declared that Canadian society chases after the illusions of fame and style when it should be concerned about substance.

“The Hall of Fame is for artefacts,” he remarked. “All I did was run with a piece of leather for a few miles—and it took me a few years!” Fame is not what is important, he insisted. Being a good father and a good husband is much more important.

Taking care of other people and putting their interests above a person’s own are important goals in life, declared Clemons. What matters in life is service, such as that found in homes that care for elderly parents, he said, referring to the reason for the gala.

Clemons talked about the fullbacks who ran in front of him. “Eleven guys sacrificed their bodies so I could get the yards,” he said humbly, suggesting that when the elderly can no longer run by themselves, the next generation needs to run with them.

The anniversary gala was a great success. The fundraising dinner, auction and donations raised \$90,000. ❧



Former Argonaut running back Michael ‘Pinball’ Clemons autographs Norma Rudy’s program at the Fairview and Parkwood Mennonite Homes anniversary gala. Rudy worked at Fairview Mennonite Home for many years and her husband David served as executive director from 1961-88.

## MennoJerusalem Tours

### A TASTE of TUSCANY

Women’s Club: May 5-17, 2014

### CHINA: LAND & PEOPLE

Descendants of the Dragon

October 5-24, 2014

### ISRAEL & JORDAN

Land, the People & the Book

March 2014 & May 2015

### JOURNEYS of ST. PAUL

in Turkey, Greece & Italy

September 2015

[office@mennojersalem.org](mailto:office@mennojersalem.org)

Tel: (519) 696-2884

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

# MC B.C. ponders future

*Reduced funds are ongoing concern*

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

B.C. Correspondent  
LANGLEY, B.C.

The future direction of Mennonite Church B.C. was the main topic for delegates to the special fall meeting of the area church at Langley Mennonite Fellowship on Nov. 2.

Future directions in budget dominated the agenda. Moderator Lee Dyck reminded the delegates that, at last February's annual meeting, they agreed the area church needs to raise more money, so the Finance Committee came up with the idea of last month's dessert fundraisers. (See "Desserts raise funds for MC B.C.," Nov. 11, page 23.) She said of those events, "Twenty-five thousand dollars [the amount raised] is great, but it's not enough."

Finance Committee chair Alan Peters said MC B.C. has three choices:

- **DECREASE SPENDING.**
- **INCREASE GIVING.**
- **CONTINUE TO** spend the Mountainview Fund. Previously, interest from the sale of Mountainview Mennonite Church was enough to support special programs, but recently MC B.C. has been forced to dip into the principal.

"Or the fourth option," quipped Peters: "not pay the bills!"

Finance Committee member Randy Redekop said the committee is willing to make an effort to provide more information about MC B.C.'s ministries and create healthy conversation, in an effort to increase individual and congregational giving.

Also discussed was the future direction involving programs with B.C.'s indigenous peoples. Indigenous relations coordinator Brander McDonald relayed thanks to Mennonites for their support during the recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) activities in Vancouver. He noted with gratitude that more than 300 Mennonites took part in the TRC walk

of support, and said he is thankful for the opportunity to visit churches and participate in dialogue circles.

Agreeing that the position is a valuable one, delegates passed by an overwhelming majority a motion to extend the indigenous relations coordinator position from Jan. 1, 2014, to Feb. 28, 2017.

A special resolution approving Chinese Grace Mennonite Church borrowing funds from Mennonite Foundation of Canada for renovations was passed, necessary because the property title is held by MC B.C.

The final topic on the agenda was a report by April Yamasaki and Aldred Neufeldt of the MC Canada Future

Directions Task Force. They noted that the church is living in a time of change, which all denominations in North America are facing. Mennonites continue to donate generously, and donations are increasing, although the peak year of giving was more than two decades ago, in 1991.

The task force, they said, is looking at the larger picture and asking, "What is God's Spirit calling us to in the 21st century?" and, "What are the best ways [programs/structures/strategies] for the church to thrive and grow?"

Commented Garry Janzen, the area church's executive minister, a place to begin is to "love one another from the heart."

Concluding the meeting, Henry Krause showed a brief video and encouraged attendance at February's Leaders, Elders and Deacons (LEAD) sessions focusing on creation care. ☼



Alan Peters of the MC B.C. Finance Committee, left, discusses area church budget concerns with Matt Horst of Bethel Mennonite Church, Langley.



*Gabrielle Wiebe, Gerald Ens and Maria Dueck have worked at Camps with Meaning summer programs since 2006 or 2007. 'We have to let go and dream differently,' says Dueck of the proposal to allow MC Manitoba to divest itself of two of its camps.*

## 'We have to let go and dream differently'

*MC Manitoba opens up to possibility of selling two of its camps*

STORY AND PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent

WINNIPEG

"The 21st-century church will look very different from the patterns developed by the late 20th century," Gerald Gerbrandt reported to Mennonite Church Manitoba delegates at their fall assembly on Nov. 7 at First Mennonite Church.

Speaking on behalf of the Future Directions Task Force appointed by MC Canada, he said, "We expect this change will be reflected in at least two ways: The form local congregations take will become more diverse, with mission as a more central focus; and there will be a shift away from the expansive programs and denominational offices founded in the last half of the 20th century."

With this vision for the future church and its programs, 129 delegates representing 31 MC Manitoba congregations considered what to do with one of the programs they hold near and dear to their hearts. Last year, a proposal to consolidate the area church's camping ministry into two sites, in the face of shrinking budgets and staffing challenges, was met with

passionate pleas from delegates to keep all three camps open and to work harder at finding the resources needed to do so.

During the course of the past year, the MC Manitoba board continued to study its Camping Ministry and develop further options. (A full report on the MC Manitoba website—[mennochurch.mb.ca](http://mennochurch.mb.ca)—provides background information on the ongoing stresses to camping ministry and outlines several options for a valuable, faithful, sustainable Anabaptist camping ministry.) At seven regional meetings throughout the province this fall, board members presented these options and listened to more than 200 constituents.

"We simply believe that the path in front of us is no longer status quo," states the report. "The status quo decisions of the past few years have simply thrown the burden back on the Camping Ministry staff, requiring harder work with fewer resources and more demands, and it's simply not right. We believe we are heading into changing times as a denomination."

The board came to the delegate assembly suggesting that MC Manitoba retain ownership of one of its camps and request proposals from interested parties to own and operate the other two camps. MC Manitoba would work on creating a partnership agreement with these parties that would allow for some summer programming at the two independent sites into the future. While it would be ideal for the ownership of the two sites to remain related to MC Manitoba, it is possible parties unrelated to MC Manitoba could take over.

Delegates offered strong support and affirmation to the board for its work. There were questions about the possibility of competing financial and human resources if regional MC Manitoba congregations were to assume ownership, but widespread appreciation was expressed for the work that the board has done.

One young person, Maria Dueck, a summer staff person with Camps with Meaning since 2007, spoke passionately against the proposal last year, but since then has changed her mind. "I've come to realize that camp is not a place, but a ministry," she said. "When the change was first proposed, my reaction was to oppose it and protect what was, but then I began to realize that what I want to protect is the ministry."

There was no vote on the proposal, but the board carefully noted the feedback from delegates.

"There was a different tone in the conversation this time," said Ken Warkentin, MC Manitoba's executive director. "There is a dawning recognition that the issues behind the proposals are very real. I heard support for the board and for the direction the board is going. That affirmation was very important for us to hear."

The board will bring a final proposal for the delegates to vote on at the annual church gathering on March 1, 2014, at Steinbach Mennonite Church.

At the fall meeting, delegates gave their approval to the proposed 2014 congregational giving and ministry allocation budget of \$645,000, an increase of 1.6 percent, and to the proposed 2014 ministry revenue, expense and capital budget of \$1.79 million. To date, MC Manitoba has received \$413,601, or 65.1 percent, of the church budget donations for 2013. ▮

# Generosity leads to generosity

*Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and Shantz Mennonite Church share largess*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
KITCHENER, ONT.

The new meeting room at 50 Kent Avenue was full of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada staff and representatives from many other Mennonite organizations from the Waterloo area on Oct. 30, as the area church and the Shantz Mennonite congregation of Baden began “tithing” to the wider church money they had received as the result of a large bequest.

The \$400,000, shared between Mennonite World Conference (MWC), whose general secretary, César García, participated in the event from South Korea via Skype, and MC Canada, is a tithe of the amount the area church and Shantz have each received to date from the estate of Harold and Enid Schmidt.

According to Don Penner, pastor at Shantz, there is more to come as

properties, farms and businesses belonging to the Schmidt estate still need to be sold.

At the gifting event, Arli Klassen, MWC development manager, received the gift, reiterating what García had noted: These monies will help the four new commissions of MWC—Deacons, Faith and Life, Missions and Peace—get going with their work.

Willard Metzger, executive director of MC Canada, said this gift is an opportunity for missional opportunities. Hilda Hildebrand, moderator of MC Canada connecting via Skype from Winnipeg, gave thanks for the special opportunities the money will make possible for the national church.

This gift has been developing over the

*Hilda Hildebrand . . . gave thanks for the special opportunities the money will make possible for the national church.*



*David Martin, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada executive minister, centre, stresses to Arli Klassen, Mennonite World Conference (MWC) development manager, and Willard Metzger, executive director of MC Canada, the importance of the collaborative nature of ministry to MC Eastern Canada at a gifting event on Oct. 30. MWC general secretary César García watches the proceedings from South Korea via Skype.*

past couple of years, following the death of Enid Schmidt in 2011; her husband Harold died in 2001. Without children, they have given the lion's share of their large estate to MC Eastern Canada and their home congregation of Shantz Mennonite.

David Martin, executive minister of the area church, said that MC Eastern Canada's understanding was that the bequest came free of guidance except “to advance the church.” Upon receiving knowledge of the estate, MC Eastern Canada developed a new policy for dealing with the Schmidt bequest and others, which was approved by the delegate body in April.

The policy states that these “above-budget” gifts should not be used as a substitute for the ongoing generosity and commitment of congregations, individuals and ministry partners to the vision and mission of MC Eastern Canada. Instead, bequests are an opportunity for the church to celebrate, nurture and expand generosity.

The plan is for any bequest to be spent over a period of 10 to 15 years, and not be put into an endowment to provide interest income for the area church. To that end, MC Eastern Canada has begun by tithing from what it has already received to other organizations.

Shantz has followed a similar path, gifting more than \$250,000 worth of interest it has already received to a number of organizations suggested by congregational members. The church is considering whether to tithe on the principal amount as well. Shantz had been considering a building project for some time, but does not want the bequest to sideline clear thinking about the church's needs and God's call to the congregation.

A future use of bequest money by MC Eastern Canada will be to invest in technology so congregations that can't easily attend area church events because of distance constraints can receive live streaming of them.

Both the area church and Shantz Mennonite have invested the principal they have received to date and are taking their time in gifting.

Shantz invites applications to [bequestdisburse@shantzmcc.ca](mailto:bequestdisburse@shantzmcc.ca). For guidelines, visit the church website at [www.shantzmcc.ca](http://www.shantzmcc.ca). ❧

# Rockway Collegiate gets \$150,000 'challenge' gift

STORY AND PHOTO BY DICK BENNER

Editor/Publisher  
KITCHENER, ONT.

There was an air of expectancy at this year's annual meeting of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, but no one in the larger-than-usual audience knew exactly why. Well, almost no one.

There was a hint from the board chair's comments, when Russel Snyder-Penner noted that board members "have not been active in fundraising for the school in the past," implying that now they would be expected to roll up their sleeves and get behind what he introduced as the Share the Flame campaign.

The \$145,000 goal, in addition to Rockway's regular fundraising efforts, would be dedicated to assisting students

and families who need tuition support. Tuition assistance had previously been part of the operating budget, he noted, but since Rockway has been in a deficit position for some years running, Snyder-Penner appealed to alumni, students and their parents, volunteers, board members, staff and faculty, donors and others to pick up this tab.

And then came the surprise. As guest David Martin, executive minister of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, was invited to the podium, the mystery was solved. After noting that Rockway was one of the area church's "most precious resources" in forming faith in its young people, he announced a \$150,000 gift, the



*Mark Weber, left, the parent of a future Rockway Mennonite Collegiate student, was the first to hand in his commitment to the Share the Flame campaign to Burnie Burnett, director of development at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate.*

first distribution from the estate of Harold and Enid Schmidt that had recently been partially bequeathed to the area church. MC Eastern Canada will match personal and corporate donations to Rockway dollar for dollar, up to a total of \$150,000.

The same has also been provided to UMEI Christian High School in Leamington, Ont., Martin said, calling the matching funds a "winning formula that benefits all the churches of Eastern Canada," naming such things as religious studies and teaching the values of peacemaking and justice, as well as offering a quality education, as components of this benefit. He referenced the thrill of hearing young people speaking of their experiences at Rockway at their baptisms.

In her report as Rockway's new principal, Ann Schultz, a former music director at the school, reported that 282 students were enrolled for the fall term.

John Torrance-Perks and Peter Wyngaarden were reappointed to three-year terms on the 10-member Rockway board. Mark Diller Harder, pastor of St. Jacobs Mennonite Church; Jesse Huxman, communication strategist with Mennonite Foundation of Canada; and Rebecca Seiling, freelance writer and an editor for the Shine Sunday school curriculum, were appointed as new board members.

The board approved budget income of \$3.81 million for 2013-14, and expenses of \$3.79 million, resulting in a small projected surplus for the year. ☞

## ☞ Briefly noted

### Alberta pastors talk about neighbouring

PHOTO BY TIM WIEBE-NEUFELD

WATER VALLY, ALTA.—"Mennonites seem to do well at neighbouring people across the seas and those who suffer disasters, but not as well locally," according to Dan Graber, Mennonite Church Alberta's area church minister. So from Oct. 27 to 29, pastors gathered at Camp Valaqua to hear how church communities can—and do—reach out to their neighbours in word and deed. Input for the discussions was provided by Greg Brandenburg, a sociologist who consults with churches on being missional and engaging neighbours, and Karen Wilk, a national team member of Forge Canada, a network committed to training leaders and churches in neighbourhood transformation. "The basic question they started from was how do we take the commandment to love our neighbour seriously?" said organizer Tim Wiebe-Neufeld. Brandenburg and Wilk encouraged churches to think about the needs in their areas and to find ways to engage people physically and spiritually, which sometimes means reimagining how church happens. Pastors discussed how their churches are—or are not—involved in the places around their church buildings and homes. Mennonite Church Canada's Resource Centre was on hand with a variety of material on the theme of neighbouring.

—BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD



*Greg Brandenburg, left, talks with Pastor Chad Miller of Foothills Mennonite Church, Calgary, at the MC Canada resource table.*



*Kirsten Hamm, centre, the new Mennonite Church Saskatchewan youth minister, chats with people buying fair trade coffee during the area church's annual Equipping Day. Coffee sales go to support provincial youth activities.*

## Indigenous relations, spiritual care part of Equipping Day

STORY AND PHOTO BY KARIN FEHDERAU

Special to *Canadian Mennonite*  
ROSTHERN, SASK.

Although the number of participants at the annual Mennonite Church Saskatchewan Equipping Day was a little lower this year than others, that did not diminish the effort made by organizers to offer a high-quality event to enrich church workers and those in leadership.

The 10 workshops offered at Rosthern Mennonite Church carried information on all aspects of congregational life, including finances, church policies, hope to those who are grieving, and behaviour covenants. MC Canada executive director Willard Metzger was on hand to share about the Future Directions Task Force, and two workshops took a closer look at relationships with Saskatchewan's indigenous communities.

### **Church challenged to support indigenous community**

A focus on relationships with Canada's indigenous peoples means learning about their suffering, according to Mark Bigland

Pritchard of Osler Mennonite Church, who organized a session with two people from Pinehouse, Sask. They shared information about the Cameco/Areva mining company's attempt to sign a deal with the town council so it can bury nuclear waste in the area while prohibiting residents from speaking out about the proposed project.

Dale Smith spoke with agonized concern about his friends and family who disagree with his stand against a nuclear waste site in the area. He is part of a group that is bringing a lawsuit against the council and town, despite having close ties to the community. Deep in his heart is his concern for others. "The women have suffered in our communities more than our men," he said.

Although he has asked for clarity and answers from town council and the mining company, Smith said he has been stumped by a lack of information. "We're getting very vague answers," he said.

A challenge for churches to join together

in a support network was put forth.

"Building relationships is foundational to anything we do in Pinehouse," explained Pritchard, who has travelled to the northern Saskatchewan community, in an informational document. "Our job is to support, not to take over," he said.

### **Providing spiritual care**

A workshop aimed at pastors and deacons was especially helpful in teaching participants the ins and outs of spiritual care. Garth and Claire Ewert Fisher, with many years of ministry experience between them, offered valuable insights on the importance of just being there.

"What we are about [when visiting] is a ministry of presence and of caring," said Claire. "What happens beyond that is God's work."

"We're entering someone's valley of fear," noted Bruce Jantzen, pastor of Laird Mennonite Church, who attended the workshop.

Claire agreed, saying, "We have to stay there in the darkness with them."

Keeping it simple during a spiritual care visit means there is no formula for success, stressed the workshop leaders. But using simple ideas to give direction to the visit helps beginners and experienced deacons alike. For example, praying beforehand and just showing up to be a support is already saying a lot, the Ewert Fishers said.

### **Youth ministry in a tech-savvy age**

Kirsten Hamm, the new area church youth minister, was on hand to highlight a focus on teenagers and young adults connected to MC Saskatchewan congregations. Having been at the job only three months, Hamm was full of enthusiasm and energy, but also acknowledged the challenge of working with teenagers in a tech-savvy generation.

"They don't answer their phones any more," she joked, "so I text them all the time."

But the point of her workshop was about looking forward together and gaining wisdom from others. As one of only two area church youth ministers left in Canada, Hamm was seeking input from those in attendance. ❧



# Effective church teams are built on trust

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
WATERLOO, ONT.

According to Betty Pries of Associates Resourcing the Church, 1 Corinthians is about multi-staff teambuilding in the church. While both pastors and laity have gifts to use, she told a Mennonite Church Eastern Canada-sponsored training session for pastors and lay leaders that “without love,” a favourite wedding text from the 13th chapter, nothing good can come of anyone’s gifts in the church.

And she stressed that no single leader has the whole truth or the whole vision for a congregation. Each leader only “sees in a mirror dimly,” she said, adding, “Hold your truth with humility.”

“Different gifts lead to different knowing,” she continued, saying that the big task of multi-staff teams is “finding the way forward when you’re on different pages.”

The morning session on Oct. 16 focused on the intermeshing continuums of accountability and collaboration on one axis, and hierarchy and flat structure (where power is spread out across the congregation) on the other. According to Pries, high hierarchy and accountability lead to dominance of one leader. High flat structure and accountability lead to full mutual supervision and frequently to power struggles. High hierarchy and collaboration often lead to a power vacuum, while high flat structure and collaboration lead to analysis paralysis, with every decision up for discussion.

Pries believes that a flexible and fluid team structure somewhere in the middle between hierarchy and flat structure, and between accountability and collaboration, makes for the most effective teams. In other words, there is time for both authority/responsibility and collegiality, and for accountability for personal tasks and collaborative projects.

The day ended with a discussion of Patrick Lencioni’s five dysfunctions of a team. According to Lencioni, if there is an

absence of trust, teams will have a fear of conflict. This leads to a lack of commitment to even form goals for which no one

is willing to take accountability. This, in turn, leads to a lack of results.

In other words, without love and with too high an image of one’s own ideas, nothing good happens, for leaders see in a mirror dimly. Building trust in a team should be the primary task of leaders, those in attendance were told. This applies to single-pastor congregations too, as this type of team also encompasses lay leaders and the whole of the congregation. ❧



*Tanya Dyck Steinmann, left, Scotty Zehr and Ray Martin, all members of the East Zorra Mennonite Church pastoral team from Tavistock, Ont., took part in the ‘multi-staff team’ seminar sponsored by Mennonite Church Eastern Canada on Oct. 16 in Waterloo, Ont.*

## ❧ Briefly noted

### Old Order community begins to get children back

The required process of home visits and sleepovers has been completed for two families in an Old Order Mennonite community in rural Manitoba torn apart earlier this year when a number of adults were charged with assaulting children, who were later removed by the province for their own protection. On Nov. 1, four children from one family were returned home to stay and four days later another couple had their children returned. None of these parents are facing any charges. Another couple, also facing no charges, continues to wait for their children to be returned, but Manitoba’s Child and Family Services (CFS) has not initiated any steps to have those children returned. CFS changed the wording of a condition that stated children could not attend church in the community if someone charged will be in attendance. This change was made after the families and their lawyers objected, claiming that the court process could go on for years, and that prohibiting the children from attending church would be detrimental to their community. The change places the onus on the person charged to stay away from church, rather than on the parents to keep their children away. CFS will not return any children to families if adults living in the house have been charged.

—BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU



Ken Hull, left, associate professor of music at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont., discusses 'James in a postmodern context' with Alicia Batten, Grebel's new associate professor of religious studies and theological studies, at Grebel's annual pastors breakfast on Oct. 29.

## To doubt or endure?

*Grebel's new New Testament professor presents James in a postmodern context at annual pastors breakfast*

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent  
WATERLOO, ONT.

Alicia Batten wonders whether the word translated as "doubt" in James 1:6 should rather be translated as 'dispute': "Let him ask in faith with no disputing, for he who disputes is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind."

Batten, the recently hired associate professor of religious studies and theological studies at Conrad Grebel University College, gave the annual lecture to the Grebel pastors breakfast on Oct. 29. During her talk, she said, "In our age, when we are encouraged to question our own presuppositions, institutions and patterns of behaviour, and when doubt is perceived as important for a disciplined thoughtfulness, it is hard to accept James' unreserved statement that the 'doubter' will not receive anything from the Lord."

The same word that is translated as "doubt" in James 1:6 is translated as "make distinctions" in James 2:4, where leaders give preferential treatment to rich folk over poor folk and the congregation is divided.

Some scholars lean toward the "dispute" translation, but Batten said she isn't sure that there might not be yet a better translation.

She also drew attention to the first verses of James 1, where the author lays out his plan to encourage his readers to endure. To that end, James later refers to the endurance of Job. If the word in James 1:6 should be translated as "dispute," then Job, who disputes wholeheartedly with both his friends and with God, would be no example to James's readers, she said. But then Job also never doubts God, but stays very much in relationship, even in the midst of his accusations.

How to translate the word then? Batten, it seems, is left with more questions than answers.

She concluded, saying, "Therefore, the next task is for me to sort through the Greek literature that uses this word, as well as other early Jewish and Christian use, and reflect upon it. . . . In addition, it will be important to sort through other issues and images in James that may be pertinent to this question of translation. At any rate, this gives you an idea of some of the questions regarding the Letter of James."

A spirited question-and-answer session followed, with many references to the postmodern call to doubt everything. The

### /// Briefly noted

#### Grebel grad students win national research scholarships

WATERLOO, ONT.—Two Conrad Grebel University College grad students are among the recipients of the prestigious 2013 Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship. Melanie



Melanie  
Kampen

Kampen of Winnipeg is conducting research for her master of theological studies thesis comparing the western Christian doctrine of original sin with the views of indigenous theologians on the same topic. "By deconstructing the primary western theology of sin, and suggesting alternative readings of some key passages in Scripture, I hope to begin to decolonize western theology and stand in solidarity with native Christians whose voices have been ignored and discredited for far too long," she says. Maxwell Kennel, an associate youth pastor at Crosshill Mennonite Church, Millbank, Ont., is focusing on the philosophical views of existence that lie behind Anabaptist Mennonite theology. "I



Maxwell  
Kennel

hope to show how some areas of philosophy can help us to make our ways of doing theology less violent," says Kennel. "If violence is a major problem for theology, then my goal is to help theology ensure that it not only promotes non-violence, but also thinks and converses in a way that is nonviolent." Kennel and Kampen each receive a 12-month, \$17,500 scholarship to put towards their individual projects.

—Conrad Grebel University College

gathered pastors seemed to find Batten's open conclusions and commitment to continued searching refreshing—a willingness to endure continued questions/doubts. ///

LEAMINGTON MENNONITE HOME PHOTO



*This year's annual Leamington Mennonite Home gala fundraising event was dubbed 'The Gatsby Glitz' and featured the ambiance, entertainment and music of the 1920s. Attended by 425 guests, the Nov. 2 event raised more than \$54,000 for a tub room transformation project in the retirement residence.*

AVON MENNONITE CHURCH PHOTO



*Avon Mennonite Church in Stratford, Ont., recently celebrated the official opening of a new wheelchair-accessible entrance. Pictured from left to right: Bernice Barratt, church committee member; Gary Schellenberger, Perth-Wellington Member of Parliament; Diane Sims, church committee member; George Schroeder, church committee chair; and Fred Zehr, Leadership Team chair. The work, with funding from the Federal New Horizons for Seniors Program, includes automatic door openers and improvements to a wheelchair-accessible washroom and supportive-hearing devices in the church.*

# God at work in the Church Snapshots

## GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

## VIEWPOINT

# Figuring out 'better ways of sharing'

*England trip highlights indigenous issues*

BY WILL BRAUN  
SENIOR WRITER

Oct. 7 marked the 250th anniversary of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, a rather grandiose document whereby King George III of England went about the imperial business of colonizing a big chunk of North America.

Steve Heinrichs, director of indigenous relations for Mennonite Church Canada, travelled to England to mark the occasion. He was with a delegation organized by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. The group included Shawn Atleo, national chief of Canada's Assembly of First Nations, and one of his

predecessors, Ovide Mercredi. Among other activities, the delegation had arranged for a meeting with Prince Charles.

Commemoration of the Royal Proclamation, like the document itself, is complicated. The first two thirds of the proclamation—which is about as long as a feature article in *Canadian Mennonite*—established a system of British rule for the eastern part of North America, over which the Brits had recently consolidated control. The last third of the document set out parameters for relations with “the several Nations or

Tribes of Indians” in the relevant areas.

It recognized indigenous peoples as independent political entities, rather than simply subsuming them as subjects. And it clearly recognized certain indigenous rights to land and due process.

The proclamation declared indigenous people in the parts of North America not formally colonized at the time—not yet “ceded to” or “purchased” by the Crown, which includes what is now western Canada—were not to be “molested or disturbed.” Their lands were “reserved” for them. Acquisition of these lands for settlement purposes could not take place unless a Crown-sanctioned process was undertaken.

It sought to avoid the “great frauds and abuses” that it said had been previously committed in the purchases of indigenous lands. That said, the document still clearly envisioned eventual settlement of indigenous lands. It assumed ultimate dominion over indigenous lands, even if it laid out an orderly system for settlement and respected indigenous sovereignty.

The basic rights recognized in the proclamation are enshrined in the Canadian Constitution and are thus vitally relevant today.

MC CANADA PHOTO BY BRAD LANGENDOEN



*Ovide Mercredi, former grand chief of the Assembly of First Nations of Canada, was part of an indigenous delegation that travelled to England for the 250th anniversary of Royal Proclamation of 1763, a rather grandiose document whereby King George III of England went about the imperial business of colonizing a big chunk of North America.*

There are different interpretations of the proclamation and the various treaties that followed, but hopefully we, as people of faith, can see a simple principle at the core of indigenous relations in Canada: that we live together respectfully and fairly. That we share this land. That we co-exist in a way that works well for everyone.

Obviously, this has not happened; otherwise, indigenous leaders would not have felt the need to travel to London to bring attention to the proclamation. Things have worked out much better for us settlers than for indigenous people. I'll spare you the stats.

While some people are eager to blame indigenous people for their state, as people of faith we are called to understand and be gracious. Our role is to respond, not to shift blame.

Heinrichs says the proclamation is "about a way of being together." The task now, he says, is to "figure out better ways of sharing."

Back in London, the group looked forward to meeting Prince Charles—which was to be the centrepiece of the trip. However, Heinrichs says the delegation learned that the Prime Minister's Office back home intervened to have the meeting cancelled. Clearly we need a better way of

being together in this country.


We are fortunate, as a Mennonite church in Canada, that Heinrichs is in the thick of vital conversations with indigenous leaders. He accompanied the delegation to London at Mercredi's invitation. But the ultimate value of his work will depend on the extent to which others in the church support and join him on the path towards "respect and mutuality" ❧



A video of the trip can be found at [mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/2173](http://mennonitechurch.ca/tiny/2173). See the "Photos" link on our home page for more coverage of the visit to England.

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## FOCUS ON MISSION &amp; SERVICE

## FOCUS ON MISSION AND SERVICE FEATURE

## Divided for service

A reflection on Luke 12:49-53

BY MARKUS POETZSCH

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

There are some verses in the Bible that we studiously avoid thinking about, let alone discuss publicly.

They are like repressed memories or family secrets that threaten to cast us back into shame and confusion, to undo the semblance of peace, fellowship and orderliness that we have so diligently cultivated for ourselves.

What a surprise then that our summer lectionary, that sometimes errs on the side of cautious diplomacy in its selection of readings, included Luke 12:49-53, one of the least consoling and most bluntly divisive messages ever attributed to Christ:

*"I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! From now on five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; they will be divided father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law"* (NRSV).

Whether sword or division, the message is the same: Faith in Christ will divide us, even at the level of our most intimate associations. How these words must have shocked Christ's listeners back then.

While a contextually attuned reading of these verses is obviously important, we should be wary of allowing the historical context of Christ's words to limit their contemporary force or relevance in our lives. Was he only preaching division to

THE TIRE ZOO PHOTO (CREATIVE COMMONS)



the early church in a moment of evident frustration or is he preaching division to us still today? Can we just pick and choose what we want to hear from Christ or sift the gospels only for those words most congenial to our current cultural values? How ready are we to listen to a gospel of division in an age that not only ascribes the highest moral value to tolerance and inclusiveness, but that associates these specific values with Christ himself?

The faith that Christ recommends in Luke 12 is founded on an Old Testament understanding of God's Word as having the properties of fire. It will destroy, separate elements and purify. The separation of elements is what Christ means by division. If we have Christ's nature and Spirit in us, and allow ourselves to be governed by these, then we will walk a different path than many of our coworkers, acquaintances, friends and even relatives.

Division occurs first in the soul, as the believer is divided against natural inclinations, and then by degrees is transformed in thought and belief. To accept Christ is to be changed. *"If anyone is in Christ, he [or she] is a new creature; the old things [have] passed away; behold, new things have come,"* Paul says in II Corinthians 5:17. From this inner soul-searching division against the old that must pass away, there follows an outer division, a change of perspective and conduct by which we stand apart from—and against—all the ways of the world that deny, diminish or deride the ways of Christ.

In all of these areas, we must first exercise prayerful discernment, and then, as Christ says, expect division. Indeed, we cannot read the Bible closely, reflect on it and pray for spiritual guidance without finding ourselves drawn away from something even as we are drawn to something else. This is an inevitable part of discipleship. But if, on the other hand, we are comfortable in the world, largely carefree and untroubled by the habits of our culture, easily able to reconcile the life of the Spirit with the trends of the age, then we are not taking Christ's admonitions seriously enough. Having separated us out even before we were born and consecrated us to his purposes, he wants us likewise to separate ourselves from a world of sin.

I'm certain that we all have opportunities to exercise our contrary and divisive spiritual callings. And I don't think this necessarily means entering the public sphere and making grand countercultural gestures or declarations. On the contrary, it is often in our everyday lives where our convictions, humbly followed, bear the greater fruit. Let me suggest three opportunities:

- **THE FIRST** concerns habits of transportation, how we get around and treat others in our daily travels. In seven years of living in Waterloo, Ont., and waiting to cross at a nearby intersection, only about a dozen times has a car stopped and let us cross. Maybe twice a year such a miracle happens!

I think how we drive our cars says something about our priorities. It also

says something about our increasing detachment from one another. For if we don't stop for a child waiting to cross the road, what will cause us to touch our brakes? How did we become so preoccupied with our own lives and schedules, so unmindful of the presence of others, so wedded to speed and our own "right of way"?

I encourage you to practise stopping for pedestrians young and old. Let go of your schedule. Risk the wrath of the drivers behind you. Change the culture of move-

*Having separated us out even before we were born and consecrated us to his purposes, he wants us likewise to separate ourselves from a world of sin.*

ment on your neighbourhood streets. Who knows where that could lead?

• **I'M CONVINCED** that our reliance on mobile technology, our addiction to it—where we bring it, how we use it, what relationships we allow it to mediate for us—is no longer just an issue of common courtesy or common sense. It has profound spiritual implications.

For if I am increasingly unable to be among people—whether at a ball game, music recital or school play, or even in church—without my attention wandering to, and being entirely engrossed by, my devices, then I will miss opportunities, some that may never return, for serving God, because what we do for the least of those around us, we do for Christ himself.

Yet how can we do anything, enter into anyone's world of cares, extend any sympathetic gesture to the people immediately around us, when our thumbs are busy hammering out ephemera for distant readers? We are becoming self-absorbed, myopic wanderers of virtual realities, evermore blind to the real needs of others in whom Christ is manifest.

So what do we do? In this case, I think it really helps to take radical steps that one would do with any other compulsive or addictive behaviour: Weed it out where you can. Give it up where you ought. Exercise self-restraint for the good of your most casual and your most intimate relationships, and for the good of

your relationship with Christ above all else. For such things we were created, and not for a life of prostration before the cold flicker of technology.

• **MY FINAL** suggestion is the most overtly divisive. It will almost certainly turn someone away: a neighbour, a friend, perhaps even a fellow church member. It is a practice inspired by Christ's Great Commission, a practice that many denominations have largely delegated to missionaries or given up on entirely.

It involves essentially only this: Telling someone else about Christ, inviting someone to hear the Word. Perhaps a neighbour, a coworker, an estranged family member, a passing acquaintance. Tell someone. Invite someone. Speak your faith. If it makes a difference to one person or one family, a life-altering difference that you yourself can attest to, would not all our effort and awkwardness be worth it?

I have wrestled with this issue often, and no matter what arguments I erect as stumbling blocks to my initiative, I always feel that this is the inescapable will of God that needs to be done with love and sensitivity, as one beggar showing another beggar where to find bread.

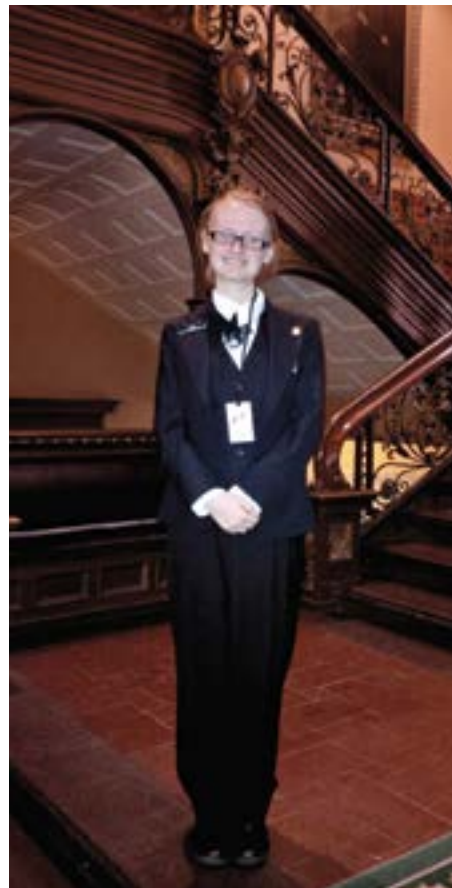
It will assuredly mark us out as different. It is perhaps the most divisive, but, at the same time, the most generously unifying act that I can think of. May Christ give us the courage to be divisive, to lay our fears, our scepticism, our complacency aside for his sake and for the sake of those who are truly hungering and thirsting for the words of eternal life. ☞



*Adapted from a sermon preached by Markus Poetzsch at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont., on June 18. For complete sermon, visit [canadianmennonite.org/luke12](http://canadianmennonite.org/luke12).*



PHOTO BY MIKE STRATHDEE



**Kathleen Strathdee of Breslau Mennonite Church, Ont.,** was chosen to serve as a page at the Ontario legislature during this fall's legislative session, but to her disappointment it was only for three weeks. Although it meant living in Toronto during the week, which, her dad Mike says, made it hectic, he and her mom Carolyn thought this was a good learning experience for their daughter. Pages run errands for the 107 Members of Provincial Parliament, whose names, faces, ridings and seats in the legislature they have to memorize. Kathleen has an uncle and several cousins who have been pages, and is, according to her father, 'already talking about re-thinking her university plans so she can come back to Toronto and serve as a student usher at the legislative assembly' in the future.

## Canadian government grant helps shelter Syrian refugees

BY EMILY LOEWEN

Mennonite Central Committee Canada

The Government of Canada has provided Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada a new grant of \$600,000 to provide shelter assistance and other essential items to Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

Lebanon's winter rains have begun earlier than in past years, and shelter is the primary need for those fleeing the conflict in Syria.

"The homes are very basic and not originally built for winter," says Rita Hamdan, director of Popular Aid for Relief and Development (PARAD), an MCC Canada partner. "People are ready to use any room they can find even if it has no window or door, and water comes in."

There are an estimated one million

Syrian refugees and Palestinian refugees from Syria now living in Lebanon, making up nearly a fifth of the country's population.

In winter, rain can infiltrate homes and turn floors into lakes. Last rainy season, a hundred people had their mattresses ruined when the warehouse they lived in flooded. On many shelters "tires and stones are being used to steady the sheets of plastic used for a roof," says Hamdan, adding, "People shouldn't have to live like this."

It's also common for several families to share a small apartment, and others are constantly on the move, forced out by landlords when they can't pay the rent.

## Syrian villages welcome return of humanitarian aid

BY LINDA ESPENSHADE

Mennonite Central Committee U.S.

After opposition forces overtook the Syrian villages of Haffar and Sadad on Oct. 21, Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S. appealed to the United Nations to make it possible for humanitarian assistance to reach the estimated 3,000 Syrian families endangered there.

A week later, access was restored, report Doug and Naomi Enns, MCC representatives based in Beirut, Lebanon, who work in Lebanon and Syria.

Since the Syrian civil war began in 2011, Sadad and Haffar had been relatively safe places where many Syrians sought refuge after being displaced by violence in other parts of the country. After the takeover, though, civilians were killed and injured as opposition forces used the villages as a base to fight government forces. Houses and cars were confiscated, and movement of supplies and people in and out of the area was severely restricted.

"I could hear children cry in fear of the situation," said Riad Jarjour, president of the Forum for Development, Culture and Dialogue, an MCC U.S. partner organization, describing an Oct. 22 phone call with his brother in Haffar. "I could hear the faint sounds of the barrage of mortars and intense fighting raging outside. As I sat on the phone, I could not but cry with them," he said.

Jarjour and Bishop Selwanos of the Syrian Orthodox Church in nearby Homs, another MCC U.S. partner, appealed to MCC U.S. to advocate with the UN to

negotiate safe passage for the Red Crescent to reach the wounded and safe evacuation of affected families in Haffar and Sadad.

Doug Hostetter, director of the MCC United Nations Office, took their message to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on Oct 23, which he said was welcomed.

Jarjour and the Ennses thank all those who had prayed, and invite continued prayers for Haffar and Sadad, and for partners in the area working to evacuate, relocate and provide assistance to the many people who are displaced.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MCC U.S.



*Earlier this year, these men unloaded boxes of oil that were used in food packages distributed in Syria. The men and the town where they worked are unnamed for their security. Throughout the past two-and-a-half years of civil unrest in Syria, Mennonite Central Committee U.S. has been distributing food, blankets, hygiene supplies and other support to Syrians affected by the violence.*



## FOCUS ON MISSION & SERVICE

“People in the southern refugee gatherings have no guarantee they can stay in their homes,” says Hamdan. “They are always in fear of being evicted.”

With the new grant from the Government of Canada, MCC Canada will provide

rent support to 350 families in southern Lebanon and Mount Lebanon. Another 130 families will receive assistance with urgent home repairs. PARD and the Development for People and Nature Association, another MCC Canada partner, will determine which

families are most in need, and coordinate the distribution.

In addition to the shelter support, another thousand families will receive essential items such as mattresses, blankets and hygiene supplies. ☸

MCC CANADA PHOTO BY SARAH ADAMS



*This refugee settlement in southern Lebanon is composed almost entirely of people from the same village in Syria. The shelters pictured are not equipped for winter and will flood with heavy rains.*



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## VIEWPOINT

# Honouring God while serving people

BY LOUIS SAWATSKY

SPECIAL TO CANADIAN MENNONITE

Once read a quote describing the purest form of ministry as “everything believers do to honour and glorify God.” That’s a broad definition. It gives us opportunity to do ministry with every breath we take. But while honouring and glorifying God, ministry also benefits both the giver as well as the receiver.

My home congregation in Winnipeg, Bethel Mennonite Church, has provided administration and support to a Mennonite Voluntary Service Unit since 1984. Up to six young adults move into the Unit house each fall, making a commitment to volunteer their time and talents to Christian service at a selected charitable organization for a minimum of one year.

This opportunity stretches and challenges their faith. It is the first time that many of them have experienced the satisfaction of helping others without pay. It’s also life-shaping. I have seen at least four people choose vocations in the church as a result.

God is honoured and glorified through their ministry, and our congregation is enriched by their presence and blessed by the opportunity we have to help them grow through our ministry.

Across the ocean, the Mennonite Benevolent Society (MBS) responds to the culture, perspectives and needs of people in Ukraine. Through MBS, where I have volunteered for 11 years, we have developed care programs for seniors, and, more recently, for children with special needs. Our ministry helps the most vulnerable people address common needs associated with poverty, illness, loneliness,



helplessness and despair.

Clients in the seniors care ministry come from various faith backgrounds and understandings. Although the programs focus on their needs, they are also faith-nurturing. Discussions often turn to questions about belief. Bible study and faith discussions are regular features.

With our assistance, local professionals have organized programs to encourage interaction between children with special needs and other children and adults. Children with learning difficulties learn to speak in sentences. Some learn to read. With help, others can eventually integrate

into regular schools. The attitude that children with special needs don’t belong in wider society is gradually changing in Ukraine as they are equipped to live productive lives. It is satisfying to know that we helped empower local people to help themselves, and that we are encouraging changing attitudes toward those with different abilities.

Clients of MBS in Ukraine struggle to understand our motivation. Why are we helping them? It isn’t enough to tell them that we are responding to Jesus or honouring the memory of our ancestors. Instead, they draw upon their understanding of God. They prayed and God responded. It is not about the ministry workers or MBS at all. It is about God and God’s response to their prayers.

That’s a humbling perspective, and it’s one that honours and glorifies God. Let’s make sure the ministries we engage in are not about us, but about honouring God. At the same time, we shouldn’t feel guilty about personal satisfaction. After all, Jesus said, “[S]trive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33, NRSV). ❧

PHOTO COURTESY OF LOUIS SAWATSKY



*Sharing a meal is an important part of the day program offered by the Mennonite Benevolent Society in Ukraine. Several of the clients are blind, and this is a safe outing for them and one of the only times they get to socialize and talk.*

## FOCUS ON MISSION &amp; SERVICE

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



*Marge and Ivan Unger, left, of Wannan Mennonite Church, Cambridge, Ont., visit with three members of the Lighthouse Gospel Church, Port Burwell, Ont.—Stephanie Wiebe, Amanda Wiebe and Margaret Neufeld—at the Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) Staten Island Celebration in Kitchener, Ont., on Nov. 2. The Ungers and the others had met while serving with MDS on Staten Island in the spring. Marge cooked while Ivan served as office manager. Neufeld took over from Ivan in that position and eventually served for 10 weeks. Reports noted that more than 500 volunteers served in the New York City community battered by 2012's Superstorm Sandy from March of this year until the end of October. The evening was full of stories of people who had been helped, photos of before and after projects, food, music from an Old Colony choir, and people catching up with each other. An offering was taken to help pay for one of two new dormitory trailers built by Triple E trailers of Winkler, Man.*

CALGARY CENTRE FOR NEWCOMERS PHOTO



*The Calgary Centre for Newcomers (formerly the Calgary Mennonite Centre for Newcomers) celebrated its 25th anniversary of serving immigrants and refugees on Oct. 8. With a staff of around 120, it serves close to 9,000 clients a year through a full suite of settlement, English language and employment programs. At the celebration, the centre received a \$50,000 donation from the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC). Pictured from left to right: Dilan Perera, and Dale Taylor, Newcomers Centre board chair and executive director, respectively; Denise Ludwig of RBC; Francis Boakye, the centre's program manager; and Alikhan Esmail of RBC.*

God at work in  
Mission & Service  
**Snapshots**

# From sustainable agriculture to sustainable church

BY DEBORAH FROESE

Mennonite Church Canada

Mennonite church leaders in Burkina Faso and the Democratic Republic of Congo see entrepreneurship and small-scale agriculture as key to building self-sustainable church programs, especially for young people.

Mennonite Church Canada is drawing upon that vision by helping two young adults receive the necessary training at the Songhaï Center in Porto Novo, the capital city of Benin. The centre is a zero-emissions model research farm that also educates students in ecologically sustainable farming practices in the context of an African environment.

Jean Mbuabua, from the Evangelical Mennonite Church of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Arouna Sourabie, from Evangelical Mennonite Church of Burkina Faso, were selected for participation by their respective national

Mennonite churches. Their sponsorship follows the introduction of entrepreneurship seminars by MC Canada in Congo and Burkina Faso in 2010 and 2011. The seminars were designed to encourage new business development that would sustain individuals, families and church ministries in areas where jobs are hard to find, by providing fresh, nutritious food, employment and a growing platform for resource development.

Hippolyto Tshimanga, MC Canada's African ministry director, discovered the Songhaï Center while searching the Internet for new training opportunities for those who attended the seminars. He and colleague Rod Hollinger-Janzen, executive coordinator of Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, visited the centre in Porto Novo prior to sending Mbuabua and Sourabie there.

Tshimanga is excited about the project. "It is a thoughtful and systematic way to fight economic and food-provision challenges in Africa by using readily available resources," he says. "While engaging our Mennonite brothers and sisters in Africa in these agricultural activities, we also help their national churches to build capacity for self-support and missional growth."

Songhaï is gaining worldwide recognition for its advances in ecologically sustainable agriculture in the African context. Crops, animals and fish are raised with methods that allow the waste from each to be used as input in another. Plant waste feeds animals and fish, and provides mulch for other plants to help keep moisture in the ground. Animal and fish pond waste becomes fertilizer in plant production. Waste water is collected and combined with animal and human waste, and chopped water hyacinth, typically considered a nuisance water weed; the mixture is then processed in a "biogas digester" to create methane and electricity to fuel operations at the centre.

Even flies are put to work for the greater good. All animal slaughter waste is collected to attract flies, which then lay eggs that hatch as maggots. The maggots are gathered as an inexpensive food for fish and poultry.

At the end of their training, Mbuabua

## /// Briefly noted

### MCC responds to Typhoon Haiyan

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is responding to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, providing funding for relief, supporting the initial assessment team of an MCC partner organization and working with partners to determine needs for longer-term recovery. MCC is providing an initial \$50,000 to Church World Service (CWS), which is working with the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction Network, to respond with urgent food and non-food items. Initially, this assistance is focusing on Surigao del Norte and Dinagat Island, both in Mindanao, and on Bohol and Samar, both in Visayas, areas where MCC's partners have access. MCC also is providing funding to Peacebuilders Community, a Mennonite-related agency, to send a 10-member team trained in disaster preparedness from Cebu and Mindanao to Leyte Island, an area where thousands of people are believed to have perished. MCC partnered with Peacebuilders Community from 2009-12, to train peace and reconciliation teams in disaster preparedness, a project planned in the Philippines because previous conflicts have arisen amid the severe needs after major disasters. The Philippines Council of Evangelical Churches has connected Peacebuilders Community with local pastors in the area, and the team plans to help mobilize, train and deploy some 50 volunteers from five churches to help in several affected areas. The goal is that working with local pastors and congregations will help prevent conflict. See more coverage at [canadianmennonite.org](http://canadianmennonite.org).

—Mennonite Central Committee

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE SONGHAÏ CENTER



*The entry gate to the Songhaï Center, Porto Novo, Benin.*

**FOCUS ON MISSION & SERVICE**

and Sourabie will return to their home countries to launch small-scale farming activities. Their new skills will help them earn an income for themselves and for their church programs. They will also train others who, like them, attended the entrepreneurship seminars.

The centre was founded in 1985 by Father Godfrey Nzamujo, a Dominican priest and a research scientist with a Ph.D. in electronics. The original farm took root on a single hectare of swamp land granted to Nzamujo by the Benin government. Since that time, he has transformed it into the most productive land in West Africa. Songhai has since expanded to six sites in Benin, Togo, Nigeria and, recently, Liberia.

“This program has enormous potential for everyone involved,” says Tshimanga. “One of [MC] Canada’s primary goals is to help build the global church. The best way to do that is to equip people to meet their basic needs and the needs of their local congregations.”



*Father Godfrey Nzamujo, a Dominican priest and a research scientist with a Ph.D. in electronics, founded the Songhai Center in Benin in 1985.*



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# Building Anabaptist Style

In October 2013 eight Mennonite agencies moved into a new two-storey building on 50 Kent Avenue, in Kitchener, Ont. What does “blessed are the meek, the persecuted, and the poor” have to do with building Anabaptist style? Everything. The participating organizations share in the mandate to live, serve and work consistently with what Jesus taught.

The main floor juxtaposition of a thrift store with a credit union says a lot about the mission of the new Mennonite office complex at 50 Kent. The ministries housed within are for everyone, poor and rich, the church and the public, handicapped and healthy, locals and those from farther away.

About synergies in the new building,

Ruth Konrad, branch manager for Mennonite Savings and Credit Union, says, “When we have our grand opening, all the staff at the Credit Union are planning to wear something from Thrift with a button that says: ‘Ask me what I’m wearing from Thrift today.’ And anyone at Thrift who is a member with us is going to have a button that says: ‘Ask me why I’m a Credit Union member.’”

Environmental stewardship was top of mind in the entire design and building process, asserts Rick Cober Bauman, executive director of Mennonite Central Committee Ontario, the agency that owns the 50 Kent Avenue property. MCCO chose Van-Del, a local, environmentally conscious contracting firm whose workers eliminated long commute

times and thus reduced costs and fuel consumption during the building process.

Van-Del brought extensive experience in the construction management approach which involves collaboration among the stakeholders, builders and the architect, starting with the conceptual stage all the way to completion. This collaborative approach to design and construction contributed to significant efficiencies and cost savings.

MCCO’s Creation Care Committee was on the task throughout the process. “Our carbon footprint was a significant consideration in the construction and design,” says Cober Bauman. “Our partners in the building were invited to meetings with the architects many times so that their space and needs were met.”

Mennonite Central Committee



Mennonite Brethren Mission



Mennonite Church Eastern Canada





A 45,000-litre water tank catches all the rainwater and redirects it for use in the building so that no municipal water is used for anything where non-potable water will suffice. Lo-flow toilets, maximum insulation, and high-efficiency heating and cooling systems were installed. There are bike storage and showers for staff who wish to cycle to work. The building also has rigging for solar panels which will be installed in the future.

Cober Bauman recognizes the link between North American pollution and natural disasters around the world. “If we are going to be serious about root causes, so that we are not contributing to the very problems we are trying to solve, then we ought to at least do what we can to mitigate those causes with the kind

of building we are going to be in,” he explains.

But 50 Kent is more than a building. It is a community, and this also factored into the design, says Cober Bauman. While the building is designed for use by Mennonite organizations, the building is also intended for use by the immediate community. “It is meant to be an open welcoming place,” he says.

Dan Driedger, MennoHomes executive director, elaborates. “The thrift shop brings in a whole new bunch of folks to shop who have no connection to any agencies here, and it’s one-stop shopping for our constituency,” he says, pointing out that each organization has access to a higher level of communication technology, along with meeting space that would

not have been possible if they were in separate buildings.

“Mission comes from healthy community,” says Philip Serez, mission mobilizer of Mennonite Brethren Mission (Ontario branch). He senses a vision shared by the other tenants at 50 Kent and hopes that this will open doors to what God wants to do with strengthened relationships. The common “Great Room” in the centre of the second floor holds all kinds of possibilities for him as he works at multiplying missional leaders.

Expanding on that concept, David Martin, executive minister of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada, says: “In a way it becomes a witness more comprehensively than ever has been possible before in engaging an Anabaptist Mennonite

MennoMedia



Van-Del Contracting Ltd.



## Promotional Supplement



MCCO project coordinator Robert Vietch examines architectural plans.

presence and culture in this building. I think [visitors] will bump into that as they come into Thrift or come into the Credit Union,” noting that this growing awareness is evident within the offices as well. MCEC has also built office space for guests (like pastors and Mennonite Church Canada staff and volunteers) to use while they are visiting in Kitchener.

This new synergy is particularly helpful

for Mennonite Foundation of Canada, notes Jesse Huxman, MFC’s communication strategist. Huxman already feels the increased sense of community as staff connect with other like-minded Mennonites in a common kitchen/lunch room and common public seating areas. The building says to the Kitchener-Waterloo community that the Mennonite agencies are pleased to be part of life in the region. Just as the region welcomes Mennonites, so too Mennonites show their openness and welcome through this new building.

“We’ve been talking about this for years, so it feels good to see it come to fruition,” says Heather Gallian, Thrift on Kent manager. She is pleased about simple and basic things, like less water usage and sharing office equipment—instead of each organization having its own photocopier, for example, they can all share one. “When you pool the resources you have, you realize you don’t need as much as you thought you did, and everything goes farther. And it hopefully will break down some of the community stereotypes about Mennonites.” Gallian goes on: “This isn’t a ‘quiet in the land’ building anymore; it’s very relevant to 2013.”

Another stereotype Gallian wants to break is that thrift shops are “for poor people.” Thrift on Kent is a modern, comfortable, welcoming place for everyone,

regardless of their economic or social status. “I want everyone to come into the thrift shop and feel this is their home and their community. I want anybody from any walk of life to be able to come here and say, ‘Yeah, this is my 50 Kent.’”

Craig Cressman Anderson, MennoMedia’s Canadian customer service and marketing manager, expects his agency’s move will increase its visibility in the Kitchener-Waterloo Mennonite community and beyond. He cites growing interest in Anabaptism outside Mennonite circles as a reason for this desire to be more visible. Non-Mennonites are recognizing that Anabaptists have ideas worth exploring, and increased traffic through the MennoMedia office will, he believes, make Mennonite publications available to a broader reading public.

Cressman Anderson expects this new location for his office will have a bearing on his personal habits, as he will be able to walk or cycle to work.

For one of the occupants, coming to 50 Kent was not an easy decision. Arli Klassen, Mennonite World Conference development manager, says that moving into a lovely new space “feels very different than most of our member churches around the world, where there is wide economic disparity.”

Conversely, “this is where most of our constituent churches are. To have chosen

MennoHomes



Mennonite Foundation of Canada



Mennonite World Conference





# ‘Mission comes from healthy community.’

Philip Serez



not to move in would have been isolating ourselves,” she says. When consulting with Cesar Garcia, MWC’s president, she got strong encouragement to make the move. “How we do that is reflective of our members around the world,” Klassen says. To that end, the MWC staff have been mindful of utilizing resources carefully and have furnished the office with very little output of money. She points out that “our furniture all comes to us from other places [i.e. is second-hand].”

“Our hope is that as people flow through they will discover more than the one thing that has brought them in the first place, that it will grow the ministries,” says Cober Bauman. Common spaces and shared technological resources serve to build community among

the eight agencies and also help to make a smaller carbon and structural footprint.

In reflecting on his work as the project’s architect, Edward Thomas found the multiple shared gathering spaces inspiring, done intentionally to encourage community. “The building is pragmatic and not showy,” he says, “and designed to be respectful of the neighbourhood.”

When positioning the office spaces on the second floor, Thomas chose a circle motif, emphasizing equality as opposed to hierarchy. He designed a structure that provides high-quality ambient light, and he devoted extensive attention to reducing the building’s carbon footprint. The exterior design has visual motifs related to the Mennonite quilting and barn-raising traditions.

“It is easy to become idolatrous about this place, rather than focusing on our growing capacity to respond to the needy in the world,” says Cober Bauman. “It’s about focus—relief, development and peace in the name of Christ—and applying these resources to that.” Throughout the building process, MCCO made Psalm 19:14 its focus and prayer: *“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.”*

The impact of one building and how its occupants relate with each other may be largely symbolic. However, this impact can grow dramatically as the organizations’ constituencies and their spheres of influence choose to benefit from, and put into practice, what is learned at 50 Kent.

Thrift on Kent



SRM Architects Inc.



## One woman . . . one month . . . one dress

*Mennonite challenges global consumption patterns*

BY RACHEL BERGEN

Young Voices Co-editor  
WINNIPEG

Anna-Marie Epp-Janzen has 13 dresses, eight pairs of pants, 26 pairs of shoes, eight scarves and eight sweaters, but for the past 31 days she's been wearing the same dress.

Janzen, 26, of Hope Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, has been garnering media attention lately for her consumption sabbatical and the challenges she's undertaking along the way. She just finished one such challenge, the October Dress Project, for which she wore the same dress every day for the month of October, blogging all along the way. Her self-imposed consumption sabbatical also means she won't be buying any clothes, books or anything she doesn't actually need for a year.

your mandate and your whole purpose in your life, you can no longer contribute to a consumer culture with integrity," she adds.

The entire garment industry is exploitive at all levels, according to Epp-Janzen, from the people who pick the cotton and who make the clothes, to those who buy the clothes and even the environment.

"The whole thing is ripe with injustice and it doesn't need to be," she says. "We have all the power in this. We can vote with our dollars and 'boycott,' rather than boycott," she says.

And the sacrifices she's been making haven't been all that painful.

"I've been getting happier with the clothes I do have," she says during the

PHOTOS COURTESY OF  
ANNA-MARIE EPP-JANZEN



*Anna-Marie Epp-Janzen poses in the dress she's worn every day for a month.*

*'It's about sparking conversation, and thinking about things in a real, physical way. We can make personal sacrifices that don't hurt that much.'*

She's doing it as part of a global campaign to raise awareness about North America's consumption craze, but also because she's inspired by people who work for peace and justice: Jesus, Thich Nhat Hahn and Gandhi, especially.

"I was brought up with the understanding that being a Christian and following Jesus means following Jesus in action," she says. "His entire life and teaching [were] around justice, peace, loving our neighbours, shalom and being at peace with each other, ourselves and the world."

"There comes a point where, if that's

October Dress Project, "although, it's been getting colder here, and I really want to wear pants."

Epp-Janzen's been getting a lot of praise from the media for these challenges, but she doesn't really understand why.

"It's silly that I'm getting so much attention for something [wearing the same clothes] that most people do every day, not just for a year or a month."

Living simply and working for a just, peaceful world are her mandates in life. She works at Canadian Foodgrains Bank as a youth coordinator, she buys fair trade



*Anna-Marie Epp-Janzen sees her consumption sabbatical as spiritual. She's been blogging about it for the four months she's been fasting.*

and local products where possible, cycles most places, drives instead of flying when possible, and educates others on unjust systems.

On Oct. 30, Epp-Janzen spoke at Canadian Mennonite University's Face2Face event, which looked at the links between North American consumption of cheap clothing and how it's related to the spread of sweatshop labour in developing countries.

"It's not about blame, guilt or 'look what I'm doing,'" she says. "It's about sparking conversation, and thinking about things in a real, physical way. We can make personal sacrifices that don't hurt that much."

Now that the October Dress Project and the dialogue that ensued are over, Epp-Janzen and her husband Daniel are planning for Lent, for which they will give up plastic. They'll be able to use plastic that they already have, including old plastic bags and Tupperware®, which they have

already been doing, but they will also have to curb their diets to accommodate the challenge.

"We won't be able to buy milk because of the plastic packaging . . . so it will really change our diets more than anything," she says.

And they are also considering a water-use experiment. Canadians use more water per capita than any other country, so the Epp-Janzen's want to see how little water they can live on. This challenge will involve limiting their daily water use to a blue jug each per day for a week. ☘

**CANADIAN MENNONITE**



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## PERSONAL REFLECTION

## Inspired by peace

BY EMILY MININGER

SPECIAL TO YOUNG VOICES

PHOTOS BY AMANDA CHEUNG



*Hip-hop artist Emmanuel Jal speaks at Conrad Grebel University College about his experiences growing up as a child soldier in Sudan.*



*The second day of the conference started with a first nation drum circle.*



*George Roter, co-founder and CEO of Engineers Without Borders, guides students through an active demonstration of the inter-connectivity of global issues.*

It's not very often that I get a chance to come into contact with experts in the field of peace and justice, so when I heard about the Peace and Justice Studies Association Conference in Waterloo, Ont., as a peace and conflict studies student at Conrad Grebel University College, I knew this was an opportunity I couldn't miss.

I was right. The conference made for an incredible and inspirational weekend. Nothing gets you fired up to make some change like hearing Nobel Peace Prize-winner and anti-landmine activist Jody Williams talking about taking action against violence in the world, or Idle No More cofounder Sylvia McAdam speaking about the injustices still faced by indigenous peoples in Canada.

We were even given the incredible opportunity at the student conference to dance and sing with former war child Emmanuel Jal, now a hip-hop artist, who shared his story and flooded our emotions with his moving music written out of his personal experience. Many students I talked to said that it was an experience they weren't likely to forget.

Throughout the conference, a message that stuck with me personally was how environmental issues are inherently issues of peace, and advocating for environmental justice is a way of working for peace. In Canada, for example, fighting against the pipelines is closely tied with fighting for indigenous rights because the pipelines need to go through first nation lands. This was just one way that the speakers at the conference fostered new connections and new ways of thinking, as well as addressed innovative ways of solving age-old problems. It was an invigorating and stimulating conversation to be a part of.

Another unique aspect of the conference was the integration of music. So often we engage with the intellectual side

of issues and don't take time to feel or engage emotionally. With the performance of a music group before each keynote address, a performance of *War Requiem* for the main conference, and Jal at the student conference, music was made an integral part of this conference and added another level of depth and connection.

Overall, this conference was an encouraging experience for me. Sometimes in peace studies, it can feel like not a lot of people are motivated to make change. You hold an event related to an issue near and dear to your heart, and not many people show up, and you wonder why people don't seem to care. Or you try to engage people in conversation about the injustice you see around you, and people switch the topic and don't engage. It can be discouraging to feel like no one else shares your passion or cares to actually make positive change in the world.

But that was not the case at this conference. Seeing so many people—students, activists, scholars, musicians, artists, practitioners and teachers—coming together to discuss the latest work in the field of peace and justice was inspiring. Never before had I been in such close contact with people who have had such a large impact on the world, leading movements and actively facilitating global change.

As a student of peace and conflict studies (PACS), I often get asked what one does with a PACS degree. I'm not going to lie. Sometimes I can get pessimistic about the opportunities available to me after I graduate. However, through talking with other passionate students, and being more connected with what is actually happening to advance peace and justice around the world, I'm hopeful that I will find a way to use my education to make a difference, to be a peacemaker, activist or entrepreneur working towards justice for all. ☯

# Inspiring youth to pursue peace and seek justice

Canadian Mennonite University  
Special to Young Voices

**H**ow do we practise peace and justice in our daily lives? That was the question acclaimed activist Shane Claiborne explored at Peace It Together (PIT) 2013, a Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) conference for youth focusing on biblical and Anabaptist themes of peace.

Over the course of three worship sessions, Claiborne challenged the more than 100 youth, youth sponsors and pastors from across Canada who gathered at CMU to see that being a Christian isn't about what happens to people in the afterlife, but, rather, it's about the way they spend their time on earth.

"Jesus didn't come just to prepare us to die, but to show us how to live," Claiborne said.

The author of a number of books, including *The Irresistible Revolution: Living as an Ordinary Radical*, told stories from his various ministry experiences, including working with Mother Teresa in Kolkata, India; a trip with Christian Peacemaker Teams to Iraq in 2003; and living with the Simple Way, a community he helped start in Philadelphia's Kensington neighbourhood.

He told listeners that there are a variety of ways to pursue peace and seek justice in their daily lives, and that they are invited to do something with their gifts that contributes to the redemptive work God is doing in the world.

He added that, ultimately, more important than what people do or accomplish in this life is who they are becoming as children of God. "In the end, the great adventure we get to be on is following Jesus," Claiborne said.

On Oct. 19, youth participated in a variety of different workshops to put into action the things they had learned from Claiborne. They had the option to visit a L'Arche community; explore Cedar Lane Farm, an organic farm located in a house-barn in rural Manitoba; spend

the afternoon at Neechi Commons, a supermarket, bakery and fish market in Winnipeg's North End that fosters neighbourhood revitalization; visit House Blend Ministries, an intentional community in downtown Winnipeg; build instruments; or create and distribute a broadsheet newspaper with recent news stories rewritten from the perspective of peace.

PIT also included times for small group reflection; opportunities to play sports or create art; and social events like square dancing, karaoke and a talent show.

Robbie Friesen, a Grade 12 student from Vineland, Ont., said the conference gave him a new understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Christ. "When Jesus said, 'Give up everything and follow me,' there are different ways you can look at that," said the 17-year-old who travelled to Winnipeg with his youth group from Vineland United Mennonite Church. "I'll definitely remember Shane's stories of active peace and following Jesus."

Hannah Thiessen, a Grade 11 student from Cambridge, Ont., agreed. "Shane makes it easy to wrap your brain around actually doing these things," said the 15-year-old from Wanner Mennonite Church. "I hope that I can act on what I've learned, and contribute to my community in some way."

Lois Nickel, director of enrolment services at CMU and one of PIT's organizers, said that was the goal of the conference. "We wanted to show youth that you can live out peace wherever you are," she said. "We hope youth pastors and leaders will be taking ideas and inspiration from this weekend to go and try new things with their youth groups."

CMU will host the next Peace It Together youth conference in October 2015. ☞

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CMU



*'Jesus didn't come just to prepare us to die, but to show us how to live,' acclaimed activist Shane Claiborne told youth at CMU's Peace It Together conference in October.*



*At CMU's PIT conference in October, activist Shane Claiborne told stories from his various ministry experiences, including working with Mother Teresa in Kolkata, India, and a trip with Christian Peacemaker Teams to Iraq in 2003.*

## Calendar

### Saskatchewan

- Dec. 7, 13:** A Buncha Guys Christmas concerts, at 7:30 p.m.; (7) Knox United Church, Saskatoon; (13) Shekinah Retreat Centre, Waldheim.
- Dec. 15:** RJC choir concert, at Knox United Church, Saskatoon.
- Dec. 20:** RJC Christmas concert, at RJC, 7 p.m.
- Jan. 10-11, 2014:** RJC alumni basketball, hockey and choir weekend, at RJC.
- Jan. 17, 2014:** RJC winter theatre production.

### Manitoba

- Dec. 5-7:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate presents its senior-high drama.
- Dec. 6:** *Handmaid of the Lord*, an original contemporary musical, tells the story of the nativity from Mary's perspective; at Eastview Community Church, Winnipeg, at 8 p.m.
- Dec. 9:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate

- Christmas concert at Westminster United Church, Winnipeg, at 7 p.m.
- Dec. 15:** Mass choir Christmas concert at Winkler Sommerfeld Mennonite Church, at 7 p.m.
- Dec. 19-20:** Christmas concerts featuring MCI choirs in Buhler Hall. For more information, visit [mciblues.net](http://mciblues.net).
- Jan. 23, 2014:** IDS Esau Public Lecture Series, with Nettie Wiebe, at Menno Simons College. For more information, visit [mscollege.ca/esau](http://mscollege.ca/esau).
- Jan. 24-25, 2014:** CMU opera workshop, in the Laudamus Auditorium, at 7:30 pm. For more information, visit [cmu.ca/programs/music.html](http://cmu.ca/programs/music.html).
- Jan. 24, 2014:** New Songs for Worship workshop, in Winkler, led by CMU prof Christine Longhurst. For more information, or to register, call 204-487-3300 or e-mail [clonghurst@cmu.ca](mailto:clonghurst@cmu.ca).
- Jan. 30, 2014:** CMU Face 2 Face | On Campus. Topic: "The universe is expanding, just like our minds: Beyond quantum physics and what it all means." For more information, visit [cmu.ca/face2face](http://cmu.ca/face2face).
- Jan. 30-31, 2014:** Westgate

- Mennonite Collegiate presents three one-act plays by its junior-high students, at the Franco-Manitoban Centre.
- Feb. 5, 2014:** Westgate Mennonite Collegiate open house, at 7 p.m.
- Feb. 13, 2014:** CMU celebration fundraising dinner, in Winnipeg, at 7 p.m. For more information, visit [cmu.ca/events.html](http://cmu.ca/events.html).

### Ontario

- Dec. 1:** Acoustic Advent carols at the Detweiler Meetinghouse, Roseville, 2:30 p.m. Featuring the PMS Singers and No Discernible Key. Leader: Fred Martin. For more information, call Will Stoltz at 519-696-2805.
- Dec. 8:** Menno Singers presents "Explorations: Concert No. 2—North," with the Inter-Mennonite Children's Choir and the Menno Youth Singers, at St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Kitchener, at 3 p.m.
- Dec. 20-22:** "An Advent journey/ marketplace" at Listowel Mennonite Church. For more information, call 519-291-2350 or visit [lmchurch.ca](http://lmchurch.ca).
- Dec. 22:** St. Catharines United Mennonite Church Choir presents its

- annual Christmas candlelight service, "The Miracle of Christmas, God's Gift of Love," at 7 p.m. at the church.
- Jan. 18, 2014:** MC Eastern Canada pastors, chaplains and congregation leaders event, "The Lord's Supper and the 21st-century Mennonite church," at Rouge Valley Mennonite Church, Markham.
- Feb. 7-9, 2014:** MC Eastern Canada youth winter retreat at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp.

### U.S.

- Jan. 27-30, 2014:** Pastors Week at AMBS, Elkhart, Ind. Theme: "Help me see Jesus! Help me see, Jesus." Presenters: Rachel Miller Jacobs, Andy Brubacher Kaethler, Safwat Marzouk and Allan Rudy-Froese. For more information, or to register, visit [www.ams.edu/pastorsweek](http://www.ams.edu/pastorsweek).

**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](mailto:calendar@canadianmennonite.org).**

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## Classifieds

### Travel

Visit Europe the Mennonite Way with Mennonite Heritage Tours! Small group Hotel Tours focusing on Mennonite/ Anabaptist heritage in Holland, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Poland and Ukraine. [www.mennonite-heritagetours.eu](http://www.mennonite-heritagetours.eu)

### For Sale

**Living Gift: John's Jesus in Meditation and Poetry, Art and Song** (lovely lithocover) BCBC John Companion. Willard Swartley, \$24  
Correlates with the Winter-Spring *Gather Round* curriculum on John's Gospel. Great for Sunday School classes of parents with children in *Gather Round*! Request Swartley's correlation sheet. **Pre-Christmas sale, \$20** plus \$10 shipping costs to Canada. Order [wswartley@ams.edu](mailto:wswartley@ams.edu).  
Quantity discounts: inquire. Wonderful Christmas gift!

### For Sale

"Canadian Word Guild"  
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"For special Christmas sale see:"  
"www.mysteriesofgrace.com"

### For Sale

## Book for Sale

Flowing with the River:  
Soundings from my Life  
and Ministry

by Sue C. Steiner

To order go to:  
[flowingwiththeriver.com](http://flowingwiththeriver.com)  
\$15 + shipping

**For Sale****Willow Terrace condo for sale in Kelowna, B.C.**

Beautiful condo for sale by motivated sellers moving to retirement housing. A bright, friendly, cheerful home with 1312 sq. ft., two bedrooms and baths. Ideal spot for those who enjoy the beauty of nature: clear, crisp winter days or fun in the summer sunshine. Included: use of fitness and social room with piano, indoor workshop, and craft room.

Willow Terrace is owned by the Mennonite Church which is next door. Asking price, \$205,000 with furniture; and \$179,000 without furniture. Monthly condo fees: \$240. For more information contact Gail Brighton at [ahhaenterprises@shaw.ca](mailto:ahhaenterprises@shaw.ca).

**Employment Opportunities**

**Vineland**  
United Mennonite Church

**Employment Opportunity**

VINELAND UNITED MENNONITE CHURCH invites applications for the FULL TIME position of LEAD MINISTER. We are located in a semi rural community in the heart of Ontario's Niagara Peninsula.

We are seeking a person who is committed to an Anabaptist understanding of faith and theology, deeply rooted in biblical teaching, a confident preacher, excels in developing relationships with the congregation and willing to work as part of the leadership team. Candidates should have previous pastoral experience, a Masters of Divinity or equivalent is preferred. Start time is negotiable.

Please submit inquiries, resumes and references by February 15, 2014 to:

Henry Paetkau, Area Church Minister,  
Mennonite Church Eastern Canada  
#201 - 50 Kent Ave.,  
Kitchener, Ontario N2G 3R1  
Tel: 226-476-2500 \*704 or 855-476-2500  
Email: [hpaetkau@mce.ca](mailto:hpaetkau@mce.ca)



**Ottawa  
Mennonite  
Church**

**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY: LEAD MINISTER**

Ottawa Mennonite Church is seeking a lead minister for our congregation of approximately 225 people. We are diverse in culture, education, age, marital status, and faith traditions. Mennonites by choice, we love to worship, to sing, and to serve Jesus in our community.

We are searching for a person of deep faith, schooled in the Anabaptist tradition, who is able to communicate and connect with people of all ages. Through well-planned and thoughtful worship services and a strong preaching and teaching ministry, the applicant will equip us to live as loving, faithful and joyful Christians in our various settings.

Start date: Summer/Fall 2014

For more information, please contact Henry Paetkau, MCEC Area Church Minister at [hpaetkau@mce.ca](mailto:hpaetkau@mce.ca)

**CAMPUS HOSTS**

**Conrad Grebel University College  
at the University of Waterloo**

Conrad Grebel University College, a residence and teaching facility affiliated with the University of Waterloo, seeks a married couple for the position of Campus Hosts (formerly known as Senior Residents), beginning summer 2014. The role involves living in an apartment in the College's residence building and supervising the College during non business hours. Rent and utilities are free in exchange for performance of duties. Applicants should be mature, responsible and able to relate to a broad range of people, especially students in residence.

*Application deadline is January 10, 2014*

Read more at [grebel.ca/positions](http://grebel.ca/positions)



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Mennonite Mutual is an Alberta only based company that supports the mutual aid ministry of its member churches. The company is guided by a vision statement which is based on Galatians 6:2: "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ". The company provides property, liability and auto insurance for homes, farms and businesses. Its Head Office is located in Calgary, AB.

Resumes should be directed to Sue-Ellen Moore by:

email at [smoore@mmiab.ca](mailto:smoore@mmiab.ca) or by

fax to (403) 291-6733 or toll free fax: 1-866-671-6733

**Lead Pastor:** Highland MB Church (Calgary, AB), following transitional renewal, needs a Lead Pastor-Teacher who will be a discipler-equipper to build up the Church. More details: [www.hmbc.ca/employment](http://www.hmbc.ca/employment).

**Advertising  
Information**

Contact

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1-800-378-2524 x.224

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[canadianmennonite.org](http://canadianmennonite.org)

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*The Archbishop of the Episcopal/Anglican Diocese of Egypt, Rev. Dr. Mouneer Hanna Anis, centre, presents an Arabic copy of David W. Shenk's book, A Muslim and a Christian in Dialogue, to the King of Jordan, Abdullah II ibn Al-Hussein, during a conference held in Amman in September. The conference, hosted by King Abdullah, dealt with the challenges faced by Arab Christians living in the Middle East. Shenk co-wrote the Dialogue with Badru D. Kateregga, a Muslim scholar and author. Al-Azhar University, the premier Muslim university in Egypt, began conversations with Shenk about publishing an Arabic translation of the Dialogue about six years ago, following his participation in a conference at Yale University involving 180 Muslim and Christian leaders from around the world.*



# God at work in the World Snapshots

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



*Matthew Isert-Bender, one of the pastors at Nith Valley Mennonite Church, New Hamburg, Ont., poses in front of the former Mohawk Institute Residential School while on a Six Nations tour sponsored by a Six Nations/Lutheran/Mennonite talking circle on Oct. 30. The event included stops at the Woodland Cultural Centre in Brantford, the home of Pauline Johnson, a 19th-century Mohawk poet and niece of Chief Joseph Brant; and the Mohawk Chapel; as well as a guided tour of the Six Nations of the Grand River territory.*