

CANADIAN MENNONITE

July 28, 2014

Volume 18 Number 15

Making waves at assembly

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EDITORIAL

It's the images that linger

DICK BENNER
EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Words, words, words—millions of them filled the Loewen Auditorium during the four days of Assembly at Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, earlier this month. Conversations, greetings, drama, spirited singing and good humour made this another inspirational gathering for delegates to the biennial event of Mennonite Church Canada.

But what lingers are the images, those symbols that lodge themselves in our minds and spirits in enduring and endearing ways. Those flashes of inspiration that let us know, once again, we are part of a special body, knit together in a spiritual fabric, precious in the sight of our Creator, called to be salt and light to a “groaning” world.

What are the endearing images? I can't get out of my mind Brian Quan's quip, as a newcomer to our Mennonite culture, that one of his first introductions was to the “debating and shouting” going on. “Why are they shouting at each other?” he asked his Mennonite host. “Oh, they are not shouting,” he was told, “they are discerning.” “This was my first Mennonite word,” he declared. It brought the house down.

Mennonites laughing at themselves? Humorous, yes, but a poignant illustration of our diversity—a subtle, but gentle awakening to the culture and mindset of our new Canadian churches bringing a non-European cultural awareness to how we think through issues, how we behave towards each other in arriving at consensus. An endearing image indeed.

Then there was David Driedger's image of the waves in his imaging of the “Jesus calming the waves story” from the Mark 4 passage undergirding the assembly theme, “Wild hope: Faith for an unknown season.” Instead of “shouting from the shoreline and adding waves to already troubled waters,” he appealed, “we should wade into the water and bear with the chaos as the Spirit hovers over those waters.”



Powerful, profound and enduring images—reinforced by the waving of blue fabrics carried through the audience (*see front cover*), forming pockets into which we poured our crumpled-up fears. The words and images contributed to wonderful release.

Then there was a new word from Betty Pries: “attachments.” The new word for an old, worn-out one: “sin.” “Attachments,” she said in the context of forming a new spirituality, “are those things that tempt us to be someone or something other than who we are called to be.” Simple, really, but self-examining and spiritually formative in a surprising and enduring way. A word that lingers and gives new light.

But all this is not to be kept to the few 500-plus of our 30,000 members who attended Assembly 2014. For the first time, social media played an important role. At the back of the auditorium was a large screen showing tweets scrolling as the sessions took place. MC Canada was live-streaming the sessions to any and all who

wanted to tune in via the Internet. These videos are now available for viewing.

We are living in a different time. No longer are these events restricted to those attending. Electronic media made Loewen Auditorium an international stage available to all wanting to participate, allowing for widespread engagement. These words, these images, can now appear on the screens of millions of smart phones, tablets and computers.

Social media will also enable *Canadian Mennonite* to expand on these images, this inspiration, in the coming days, as was called for in a sponsored luncheon immediately following the Becoming a Faith Church (BFC) discussion on the floor. There was a call to hear more stories from the full spectrum of believers, stories of struggle, stories of congregations processing the BFC questions: how they have tried to talk about the issues, what resources they have used, about gay people trying to be faithful.

There was a call to “step back from the issue occasionally and provide a larger framework for faithfulness, such as Betty Pries's presentation.” Another called for a “blueprint for building communities.” Yet another called for more theological discussion, possibly presenting two views of Scripture texts and a broader examination of psychological and social science data from scientists and psychologists in our congregations who could address these issues.

All this will be possible through our soon-to-be-released redesigned website, the extending of the many words and images in a venue with no space restrictions (as there is in the printed version).

Canadian Mennonite, as the village square, will continue this conversation in building faithful, caring, peaceful communities.

Stay tuned.

ABOUT THE COVER:

'Fears' are written on paper water drops and cast on the 'waves' for God to carry during the Assembly 2014 morning worship service on July 4. Jesus' message of 'peace, be still,' took on a special meaning for many. 'Wild hope' assembly coverage begins on page 4, and again on page 43.

PHOTO: DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD, CANADIAN MENNONITE

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

Canada

CANADIAN MENNONITE

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40063104 REGISTRATION NO. 09613

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Milestones announcements: milestones@canadianmennonite.org

Obituaries: michael.hostetler@canadianmennonite.org

Calendar announcements: calendar@canadianmennonite.org

Material can also be sent "Attn: Submissions/Readers Write/Milestones/Obituaries/Calendar"

by postal mail or fax to our head office.

Reprint requests: reprints@canadianmennonite.org

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

Guiding values:

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

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

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One-Year Subscription Rates

Canada: \$44 + tax (depends on province where subscriber lives)

U.S.: \$66

International (outside U.S.): \$89.10



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Online NOW!

at canadianmennonite.org

Continuing our Assembly 2014 coverage, web-exclusive stories report on the children's activities, more seminars and a special reunion of two cancer buddies.

You can view the #mennopeg tweets on Twitter or see the Twitter feed at <http://home.mennonitechurch.ca/events/Winnipeg2014/tweets>.

Check out our Facebook page for posts on Assembly 2014 topics, between July 2 and 6.

[Facebook.com/Canadian.Mennonite](https://www.facebook.com/Canadian.Mennonite) [@CanMenno](https://twitter.com/CanMenno)

ASSEMBLY FEATURE

‘Finding faith for an unknown season’

MC Canada ponders new ways to be unified

BY DAVE ROGALSKY

EASTERN CANADA CORRESPONDENT

PHOTO BY D. MICHAEL HOSTETLER



Plenary speaker Brian Quan addresses the opening assembly session on July 3. Confessing that he is still new to the Mennonite-Anabaptist culture, he says, ‘I’ve been trying to raise my Mennoniteness by reading the Canadian Mennonite.’ Quan is minister of English ministries at Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church and also serves on the binational editorial board of Leader magazine.

A tornado warning was issued for southern Winnipeg just as Willard Metzger, Mennonite Church Canada’s executive director, was giving the final announcements at Assembly 2014 on July 5. Should delegates proceed to their seminars or should they stay in the Loewen Athletic Centre on the campus of Canadian Mennonite University (CMU), where the assembly was held? After a few minutes the warning was dropped.

The storm warnings paralleled the assembly theme of focussing on Jesus and his disciples in the boat during the storm in Mark 4, as well as the mood that has prevailed in MC Canada over the past few years—a mood of confusion and questions, and, for some, of fear.

‘Leave and go’

Brian Quan, English pastor at Toronto Chinese Mennonite Church, set the assembly on its journey across the stormy Sea of Galilee on July 3 with his question: “Leave and go: What are we being asked to leave behind? Where is God calling us?” His talk was a precursor to the two major assembly business reports from the Future Directions and Being a Faithful Church (BFC) task forces, which both asked difficult questions about the future of MC Canada.

Said Quan: “If we are called to be people of God, then we are in this boat. We are in this boat together. It is not a big boat, but a resilient one. Being in the open water with this boat is risky business. This is not an accident, this is where God has called us to be. Jesus has led us into uncertain and unpredictable places. He has something for us to learn together. He has something for us to discover together. These are wild and uncertain times, but filled with hope. . . . Let us begin to discover this together, in this assembly, in our city, in our communities and with our families. Let’s go!”

‘Do not be afraid’

The next morning, David Driedger, associate pastor at First Mennonite Church in Winnipeg, spoke on the nature of discernment, telling assembly participants, “Be not afraid.” He noted that,

PHOTOS THIS PAGE BY DAVE ROGALSKY



Plenary speaker David Driedger, left, visits with Dan Nighswander, who is wearing a straw hat to identify him as a member of MC Canada Witness; Ryan Siemens and Lorraine Mueller.

having grown up on the Prairies, he could talk about the nature of being in a small boat in a storm, just not from personal experience. Quoting the Avett Brothers, he said, “Ain’t it like most people? I’m no different; we love to talk on things we don’t know about.”

“One of the church’s most trusted and most destructive postures in response to what remains unknown . . . is to re-trench its position as knowing and possessing the truth and then applying that truth to those outside its parameters,” he said.

Even though the BFC process seeks truth, Driedger said he thinks that it misses the mark by purporting to find a final or unassailable truth upon which all can agree. He said that such an idea of truth is something far more like idolatry. If some claim to have the truth and are right, and also claim that others are wrong and are sinful, then they have set themselves up as holders of truth that only God can claim. Instead, he said the church needs to be faithful, attending to each other in the midst of the waves, not claiming to somehow be better or have the final revelation of God’s truth.

What’s in the denomination for the churches?

Later on July 4, Future Directions Task Force members April Yamasaki, pastor at Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, B.C., and Gerald Gerbrandt, president emeritus of CMU, retold the story of Scripture as a drama, in which Act I is the Old Testament, Act II is the story of Jesus, and Act III is the birth of the church. They then continued the drama with further acts in the life of the church, both at the congregational and larger levels. Through telling the first three acts they painted a picture of the people of God that is not static, but constantly changing, always trying to be faithful and follow God in their time. The fourth act is in this time, when congregations and denominations are trying to do the same in a rapidly changing world.

Comparing a 1950s Mennonite church, with its Germanic, white, male pastor, with the congregations that now make up MC Canada, this rapid change is obvious, and it is continuing. Their presentation was followed by a time for table groups to share about their congregations and how they are reflecting the changing and ongoing nature of God’s people.

It was pointed out in the second Future Directions plenary session, held on July 5, that, since the church is no longer seen as the source of authority or guidance in society, Christians feel like they have lost their place in society. Most of this session was spent encouraging table groups to envision what their congregations might look like in 20 years and what support they would like to see from the national and area churches to carry out those visions.

In a seminar later that afternoon, the idea that the congregation—and not the individual or the area/national churches—is the basic unit of the church was brought to the table. How can the national church have a more integrated, simpler and sounder structure is the ongoing focus of the task force, delegates were told.

The denomination has moved from being a clan to something much more akin to a business, with congregations asking what is the “value added” by belonging. The task force asked participants for “top-of-mind” ideas on how to go forward. Suggestions centred on more relationships, more mutual care and doing together what cannot be done alone. Several delegates suggested that the national/area church structures need simplifying, with perhaps only one level beyond the congregation.

(For more, read “The changing face of congregations” on page 8.)

Unity in the process, not the outcome

Much of the assembly was given over to the BFC task force’s presentation and discussion on sexuality.

(Continued on page 6)



Tim Wenger of River of Life Church, Kitchener, Ont., questions Aldred Neufeldt of the Future Directions Task Force.

(Continued from page 5)

Opening the first session, Rudy Baergen, interim pastor at Waterloo North Mennonite Church, Waterloo, Ont., and Jack Suderman, former MC Canada general secretary, presented the results of the BFC 5.0 process. Many congregations participated in the study of the broad sweeps of sexuality, resulting in the task force reporting that the majority of congregations find themselves in the middle, “reflecting historical affirmations” about sexuality, “and at the same time express[ing] a desire to be more compassionate and welcoming of those individuals who are same-sex attracted.”

“Significantly smaller number[s] of responses” either “oppose any revisiting of the historical understanding of biblical sexuality” or “call for more inclusion of persons in same-sex relationships, including welcoming them as members and as committed same-sex partners.”

This characterization was based on an interpretation of the responses of

congregations and was not in response to any question posed by the task force, nor expressly answered by congregations. During the final seminar sponsored by the BFC task force on July 5, delegates took the task force to task for suggesting the divisions in the national church.

Based on the divergent results of BFC 5.0, the task force proposed that, rather than trying to find some statement about same-sex sexuality on which all could agree, three other questions should be the focus of further discussion and study:

- **GOD’S GIFT** of unity in Christ is not invalidated by our disagreement. How shall we maintain our unity in Christ as congregations, area/national church while understanding matters of same-sex relationships differently?
- **MOST RESPONSES** indicated a desire to be “more compassionate and welcoming of those individuals who are same-sex attracted.” Describe how your congregation hopes to reflect this desire.

• **IN REVIEWING** the trends from the BFC report, what counsel do you have for the area/national church in light of the different understandings of compassionate responses toward persons that are in same-sex relationships?

In a passionate statement at the July 5 session, Metzger pleaded for new ways of understanding unity within MC Canada. He suggested that if individuals, groups and congregations, perhaps even area churches, would “prayerfully, worshipfully and honestly struggle with the Bible” and come up with different conclusions, then unity can be found in the process and not in the outcome.

Several people, including David Driedger in his plenary presentation, called for the church to listen to the voices of those affected most by these discussions and their outcomes.

Lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered/queer people have not been asked for their specific input in the BFC process, and in both seminars and plenary sessions this absence was criticized.

David Tiessen, pastor at Bethel Mennonite Church near Elora, Ont., suggested that the role of the prophet be revived. Prophets were significantly at odds with their culture, but respected the community and were respected, in turn, by the community. Congregations affirming same-sex relationships, while respecting the larger church’s decisions, could be seen as prophets standing outside the larger church and respected by the larger church for carrying a prophetic voice to the church at large. Key, he said, would be neither group attempting to change the other.

The three-point proposal was put to a vote as the next step in the BFC process on July 5, with 263 voting in favour and 30 voting against. Delegates also requested both biblical study material on same-sex sex and a list of materials that congregations could access to continue to study this question specifically.

Seminars, workshops bolster task force discussions

Supporting these two major discussions were many other workshops.

/// Briefly noted

Sexuality has ‘the potential of taking us into fragmentation’

With the future of the church and issues of sexuality being prominent issues up for discussion at Assembly 2014, Karl Koop, a Canadian Mennonite University professor, asked César García, Mennonite World Conference’s general secretary who spoke about the global Anabaptist mosaic, how these topics could affect the global church. While García said he recognizes that theological interpretations of sexuality are contentious subjects in many countries, “we want to open spaces in MWC to speak about [these issues] without going into fragmentation. Any kind of decision is going to affect the global church. About this specific topic, we know it has the potential of taking us into fragmentation. The challenge is how to keep our communion in spite of differences.” Globally, there are 1.7 million baptized Anabaptist Christians from 103 Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches from 56 countries on six continents, he explained. Sixty-five percent of these are African, Asian and Latin American, where conservative sexual ethics still predominate in many regions. Sexuality isn’t the only contentious issue facing MWC-member churches, he said, noting that in some places churches are grappling with women who want to be pastors or are trying to discern whether or not they will allow remarried pastors to speak.

—BY RACHEL BERGEN



César García

Gordon Zerbe, CMU's professor of New Testament, led participants in a new look at the Book of Romans, wondering if the first chapter's discussion of sexuality is as much about sexuality as it is about the feuding groups in the Roman church.

"Navigating the challenge of pluralism" was Lethbridge (Alta.) Mennonite Church pastor Ryan Dueck's topic, while Chris Lenshyn, associate pastor at Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford, B.C., looked at "Exploring Anabaptist presence in a post-Christian landscape."

Renewal as a spiritual process

In her plenary presentation on July 5, Betty Pries, executive director of Associates Resourcing the Church and a trained mediator and coach, spoke about the renewal of the church as a spiritual process.

She reminded delegates that in the 16th century the Roman Catholic Church responded to the threat of the Reformation in two ways: one was to exclude and destroy the believers who rejected the authority of Rome; the other was to develop a new spirituality that re-grounded the church in Christ. Excluding "others" from Mennonite congregations may not be quite as violent as burning them at the stake, she suggested, but is violent nonetheless.

What the church and individuals within the church need to do, she said, is humbly surrender themselves to God, setting aside their sense of being right, having the answers and knowing the way forward. She explained that this is an attitude of the whole person, expressed in spirituality that sees the main purpose of prayer as listening and not as talking. When this happens, people begin to abide in Christ, listening deeply inside themselves and to others for what the voice of God is saying.

Pries reminded her listeners that Jesus practised this kind of prayer, going into the wilderness for 40 days at the beginning of his ministry and at several other points along it. This, she said, "is not an easy form of prayer. In our attempts to be silent before God we are so often confronted with all that is within us that refuses to be silenced, whether that be to-do lists or old wounds that won't be healed."

"Like Jesus, we are called to take time away, to spend time with God," she said. "But the hard news is that when we do, like Jesus, we will not only encounter God, we will also encounter our demons—our attachments—those things that tempt us to be someone or something other than who we are called to be. Traditionally, the word for 'attachments' was actually 'sin.' I find myself drawn to the word 'attachments' for the simple reason that the word 'sin' no longer speaks to many of us. The word 'attachments' also forces us to take a hard look at those things that we call good which are not good or those things that we call bad but which are not bad."

Finally, these prayer disciplines lead people to incarnation, to following Christ who was God-made-flesh, she said, suggesting that, in the current hyper world of images, communications, influences, speed and pressure, the call now is to live out a life centred in Christ—lives of peace, stillness, quiet and listening.

Closing 'Wild hope' with 'wild hope'

July 6's closing worship service included a "wild hope" communion that avoided quiet

background music and finished with a rousing version of the Celtic "My Soul Cries Out" hymn from *Sing the Story* that was sung and danced to by participants.

Brian Quan returned to the pulpit to ponder again what Jesus was teaching the disciples in the boat on the sea in the storm. Wondering if Jesus was "sleeping with one eye open," he suggested that a key lesson for the disciples then, and for the church now, is that while it, like Peter stepping out of the boat, may think it knows what to do, a better attitude is that fine line between fear and awe. The church may not know now what to do to move into the future, he said, but when God shows it—and God will—the church will be even more afraid, or perhaps full of awe at God's power and insight.

Quan concluded with the thought that, while sometimes God's intervention in the lives of God's people is spectacular, more often it is in the small things, like being invited to talk about faith issues with Muslim neighbours when we secular Canadian Mennonites think it best to avoid religion in conversation. ❧

/// For discussion

1. As Mennonite Church Canada ponders the future, it recognizes that the church is changing. What changes have been happening in your congregation? What fears do you have about the future of your congregation and the denomination? Is maintaining the status quo an option?
2. David Driedger says that claiming to have the final revelation of God's truth is something "like idolatry." Do you agree? Does showing respect for an opposing point of view diminish our integrity? Is unity in Christ possible if we disagree on some very deeply held convictions?
3. The report from the Being a Faithful Church Task Force says that most congregations want to be "more compassionate and welcoming of those individuals who are same-sex attracted." Is this the attitude of your congregation? What does it mean to be more compassionate and welcoming? What are the advantages and disadvantages of having each congregation decide individually how welcoming to be?
4. Brian Quan suggests that when God reveals what the church should do, we will find ourselves between fear and awe, just as Peter did when he stepped out of the boat. Do you find this idea comforting or distressing? What next step is God suggesting for your church?

—BY BARB DRAPER

The changing face of congregations

STORY AND PHOTO BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent

In the face of an uncertain future, trepidation of shrinking budgets and programs, tired and fewer volunteers, and changing realities, encouraging stories were shared over two days of Assembly 2014 of vibrant Mennonite churches that are responding in creative and varied ways.

In the small Manitoba town of Pinawa, which was created by the government for the purpose of nuclear research in the 1960s, the need for a church was identified. In response, six denominations came together to form Pinawa Christian Fellowship. Mennonite Church Manitoba is just one of those six denominations that worship together as one congregation.

Niverville (Man.) Christian Fellowship formed when two Mennonite congregations reunited after a split. They came together to share their resources and to answer a need in the community for a different kind of congregation, and to fulfill a unified desire to engage in church planting.

Little Flowers, an inner-city church in Winnipeg, is in the process of renovating an apartment block to provide supportive community for people struggling with mental illness.

Seminar participants also said their congregations are responding to their changing realities by working together inter-denominationally on Canadian Foodgrains Bank projects or with immigrant and refugee families, and by moving a church office downtown where it intersects with the lives of people from all walks of life.

Numerous other examples indicate the future may well look different, but it can still be vibrant and vital.

In a plenary session, Chad Miller and Rebecca Steiner, members of the Future Directions Task Force—whose mandate is to discern what God’s Spirit is calling Mennonite Church Canada to in the 21st century and discover the best ways for the church to thrive and grow—shared some of their dreams.

“I imagine a church that acknowledges and embraces the pluralism of today, seeing it as a part of God’s greater plan,” said Steiner, a task force member. “I imagine a church open to learning from the ‘other’ and finding common ground with those who claim different beliefs than our own. I imagine a church that has a broader vision of who the body of Christ is.”

“I believe in a church that fosters transformational encounters with Jesus,” Miller said, describing how 20 junior-high youth in one church were invited to journey to the cross and there experienced the transforming power of the gospel.

Steiner and Miller both imagine ways the church can take itself out of its four walls and from behind closed doors. One Mennonite church shares worship space in a non-profit seniors village started by a Brethren in Christ church.

“I imagine a church that gathers under the acacia tree,” Miller said. “The edges of our faith community become more

porous, letting people come only as close as they want, or watch from the edges until they are ready to join the community.”

In a small-group discussion afterwards, delegates got to share their dreams and hopes for the wider church. They resoundingly affirmed the MC Canada Resource Centre. Several proposed:

- **DE-CENTRALIZING DECISION-MAKING** power so people can have a sense of ownership;
- **BECOMING LESS** top-down and more grass-roots; and
- **MOVING AWAY** from standing groups to more ad hoc, temporary groups for jobs that need to be done.

The task force has done a lot of listening and will now work through the thick pile of notes it received from delegates.

“It’s a complex task,” said Terry Keller, “but we have clearly heard a longing to belong to a larger body, to be part of something bigger than just the local congregation.”

That work still needs to be done was evident from one group response: “The vast majority of people have no idea what our conference is about, and that number is growing.” ❧



Terry Keller and Aldred Neufeldt address seminar participants about the future of the national and area churches.

Biblical visions of 'wild hope'

Dan Epp-Tiessen finds 'more and more strength and hope in God's good future'

STORY AND PHOTO BY AARON EPP

Young Voices Co-editor

Where in the Bible can Christians turn to for "wild hope" if they are to have faith in an unknown season?

That was the question Dan Epp-Tiessen, associate professor of Bible at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, addressed during the seminar he led at Assembly 2014 on July 4. In the seminar,

of creation will be restored.

Epp-Tiessen pointed out that, while the dominant rapture narrative in popular Christian culture is that Jesus will come again and whisk Christians away to a different place, the Book of Revelation offers "wild hope" in the form of a reversal.

"God comes down to share this world

'God has an agenda for God's creation, and God expects us to get on board with that agenda.'
(Dan Epp-Tiessen)

entitled "Wild hope: Living in light of God's good future," he highlighted biblical visions of God's good future.

"In my own personal life, in my own faith pilgrimage, I'm finding just more and more strength and hope in God's good future," he said. "More and more I find I'm challenged and inspired by these biblical visions."

"I'm struck by the contrast between what we see in Paul and the New Testament, and many of our congregations," he added. "We don't talk about that 'wild hope,' or at least the congregations that nurtured me [didn't]. . . . We shy away from that stuff."

Epp-Tiessen pointed to stories in Genesis 12 in which God begins to work through Abraham to redeem the Israelite people, as well as stories in Isaiah, the Psalms and the New Testament, stories in which God begins the work of renewing human community, healing creation and setting it free from bondage and decay.

The fundamental promise of Jesus is that the kingdom of God is near, Epp-Tiessen pointed out. The world is in a state of "already, not yet," he said, because it has been given an idea of what the kingdom will be like as a result of the life and work of Jesus. Eventually, there will come a time when all

and live in our midst, and God's holy city comes down and creation is healed and redeemed," he said, adding, "All the evil forces are eliminated."

God's good future will come in God's time, he said. This future should inspire the lives of Christians. Ultimately, what Christians do on Earth matters.

He pointed to I Corinthians 15:58, where Paul writes, "Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain."

"God has an agenda for God's creation, and God expects us to get on board with that agenda," he said. "All our small efforts to help our neighbours, to help feed the hungry in the world . . . somehow God is going to take our efforts and resurrect them and do something marvellous with them."

"Because of God's good future, what we do with these bodies here and now matters," he concluded. "Your labour is not in vain."

Rudy Franz, a pastor from Blumenort, Man., said he appreciated the seminar because the cultural context North



Leading a seminar on visions of hope in the Bible, Dan Epp-Tiessen, associate professor of Bible at Canadian Mennonite University, said that he is challenged and inspired by biblical visions.

Americans find themselves in does not always offer much hope. The news media typically shows North Americans that which is not working in the world, Franz said, and when people focus on what is not working, it tends to be all they see. Contrasting that with a biblical message is important.

"It helps to set our lives and cultural context in perspective," Franz said of the seminar. "Our lives are part of a bigger story of God [working] in the world, and we ought not forget that." ❧

Deconstructing Muslim myths

BY DICK BENNER

Editor/Publisher

The biggest obstacle to working with people of other faiths is to deconstruct all the stereotypes and myths that the media have created and perpetrated, especially about Islam, Donna Entz told her packed “Experiencing hope with people of other faiths” workshop.

After 20 years of living in a Muslim village in Burkina Faso, she established North Edmonton Ministry, in an attempt to build relationships with some of the thousands of immigrants who make Alberta their home. To counter the Western stereotypes of Muslims, for instance, she is making hers a relational ministry that addresses the problems of isolation and loneliness that so often plague these newcomers.

This past Christmas she served four dinners in her home for her Muslim friends, having “wonderful parties” that not only filled a social need but got Muslim neighbours connected with other Muslim families. It is a ministry that works both ways—giving new insights to Mennonites about these newly settled immigrants and providing the immigrants with a new appreciation for Mennonite hospitality and acceptance of Muslims living among them.

“They have much to teach us about taking our faith seriously,” she said, observing that, while Mennonites assume that their culture is becoming less religious, especially with the loss of their young people, Muslim communities, on the other hand, live out their faith with very strict adherence to the Qur’an.

She encouraged participants to acquaint themselves with another faith, “not only by reading books about it, but first of all to get to know a Muslim personally and then to ask their new friends what they should read to inform themselves.”

Deepening personal faith by explaining it to others is another benefit of this ministry, Entz said, adding that she finds Muslims generally very open to hearing



Donna Entz

about the Christian faith. She shared a book by Christian theologian N.T. Wright with a Muslim friend and found her very engaged in comparing views. “This kind of exchange is occasion for knowing one’s own faith in new ways,” she said.

In another setting, Entz reported moving outcomes from a multifaith book club in which Mennonites and Muslims studied Karen Armstrong’s *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*. The sharing got very personal, she said, with one Bosnian woman “moved to tears” when sharing her story about trying to find her lost husband. The group surrounded her with their love, triggering her to ask how this “healing power” could come to her own Muslim community.

“Of course we have our critics,” said Ed Kauffman, pastor of First Mennonite Church in Calgary, in trying to convince some fellow Mennonites that this “relational ministry” is an important first step as an opener to further witness to the Christian faith. “They think this this is not direct evangelism,” he said, and thus are sceptical of the effort.

“These persons think we are ‘watering down’ our faith so that eventually we all

have one worldwide communion that denies the core beliefs of Christianity,” said Entz, adding that this is one of the media myths built up around Islam—the fear that they are wanting to take over with a global caliphate. “Nothing could be further from truth,” she said, insisting, rather, that it’s not a matter of being in or out of God’s kingdom, but rather that Christians stay open to the Spirit to direct them to engage with persons of another faith. “We so often find more common ground than we ever thought possible.”

In another setting—a peace seminar—she was surprised to learn that Muslim participants were very intrigued to hear the story of Jesus meeting the Samaritan woman—a story they had never heard. Entz shared this story as a way of showing the basis for the Christian way of peace. “They were intrigued with how the Jews evaded both the Samaritans of that time and Jesus, the messiah, and were drawn to the powerful force of peacemaking of that parable.”

Entz’s new initiative is supported by the missions committee of Mennonite Church Alberta, but, as a small area church, it is struggling to keep funding her work, so it is looking to form partnerships with Mennonite Central Committee and perhaps the Witness program of MC Canada, to use her ministry as a model for congregations across Canada in working with others faiths. ❧

‘There is abundance’

Young adults challenged to be generous during assembly seminar

BY AARON EPP

Young Voices Co-editor

What might a flashlight symbolize about how you were brought up to believe about generosity?

That was one of the questions faced by participants during a weekend seminar at Assembly 2014 that aimed to get young

adults thinking about the way they use their money. Arnie Friesen and Dori Zerbe Cornelsen, stewardship consultants for Mennonite Foundation of Canada (MFC), led the seminar, entitled “Wild generosity and young adults.”

The 12 participants were divided into three discussion groups and each was given a small object: a flashlight, a world globe and a children's toy.

The first group said that generosity, like the flashlight, is powerful when it is used properly. It comes in different shapes and sizes, and it can help others.

For the second group, the world globe reminded them that generosity can be far-reaching, and that now, more than ever, the world is getting smaller. Christians are aware of what is going on around the world, and of the different needs faced by people in countries all over the globe.

The third group was given a *kendama*, a traditional Japanese toy consisting of three cups attached to the centre of a wooden spike, with a ball connected to it by a string. The group reported that, just as there are different ways to play with the toy, there are different ways to give, and, just like playing with the *kendama*, generosity can be alternately frustrating and fun.

The time of reflection led to a wider discussion about how people's values about money are shaped, and how Christians might be generous with their money.

Friesen, who works with MFC in Abbotsford, B.C., noted that many people today buy things they don't need with money they don't have to impress people they don't like.

He added that he doesn't view money as something that belongs to him, but, rather, something that belongs to God that has been entrusted to him. "What's helpful to me is to think of money as kingdom currency," he said.

The seminar was an assembly highlight for Pierre-Joël Koop, who got married at the end of June and attended the seminar with his wife, Rebecca Steiner. Koop said he and Steiner have been discussing their views on finances, particularly budgeting and generosity. "We've certainly been receivers of generosity in our lives, so we want to give back," Koop said. The seminar "made us want to set up a meeting with [Cornelsen] in the very near future."

Carrie Martens, a pastor at Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in Kitchener, Ont., also enjoyed the seminar. "Doing exercises where we reflect is often the best thing," she said. "Sharing stories is better



Participants reflect on money matters during the 'Wild generosity and young adults' seminar.

than just receiving information."

Martens graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in 2006 and a master of divinity degree in 2011. Today, at the age of 37, she may not be a young adult, but she finds herself in the same situation as many young adults: getting established in the working world and paying off student loans.

Martens said there is a misconception today that young people don't want to be generous. In her experience, young adults are generous, but that generosity looks different than it did a generation ago, when generosity was tied predominantly to financial giving. "I experience young adults as incredibly generous, just in different ways," she said. "They do things like resource sharing and giving of their time."

Zerbe Cornelsen and Friesen alluded to

different kinds of giving during the seminar, and challenged participants to give even if they are not as financially stable as they would like to be.

Friesen related the story of one 30-year-old woman he knows in the U.S. She and her husband have a combined student debt of \$120,000, but have still committed to making financial donations as they work to pay off that debt.

Zerbe Cornelsen ended the seminar by encouraging participants to think about creating a generosity plan and making financial giving a topic of discussion with friends.

(Read Friesen's "An intentional generosity plan" column on page 19.)

"There is abundance," Zerbe Cornelsen said. "We need to figure out how to work together to make that available to all." ❧

'Jesus is with us' in our creation-care efforts

Environmental concerns stretch back nearly 40 years

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU

Manitoba Correspondent

Last year, Mennonite Church U.S.A. passed a resolution on creation care at its Phoenix assembly. Is it time for [MC] Canada to have a resolution as well, and, if so, what should it look like?"

Joanne Moyer, a member of the Mennonite Creation Care Network Council (www.mennocreationcare.org), a ministry of the two national churches that provides resources and leadership in this area, posed this question at her seminar, "Creation care: Testing our resolve."

Mark Bigland-Pritchard of Osler (Sask.) Mennonite Church thought it should. He introduced a resolution entitled "Implications of the gospel for action on anthropogenic climate change."

Backed with scientific data and biblical injunctions to "protect and nurture the earth," and to "love our neighbour as ourselves," the resolution calls on MC Canada to "urge its member churches to study the findings of climate science, to consider the implications, to explore the meaning

of climate justice and climate responsibility in their own contexts, and to prayerfully consider how best to reach out to the victims of climate change and how best to rapidly reduce the greenhouse gas emissions for which they are responsible."

It also calls for the "General Board to establish a framework whereby the denomination, member churches and individual church members may receive advice from experts on the best options for responding to the climate crisis in their own context."

The General Board felt it needed more time to study the resolution before bringing it to the delegate body for a vote.

Earlier in the year, the General Board received a request from the Fossil Free Menno group (www.fossilfreemenno.org) calling on MC Canada to study the issue of divestment from the fossil-fuel industry. This request was folded into Bigland-Pritchard's resolution.

During her seminar, Moyer gave a brief history of the steps MC Canada has taken

in regard to creation care. The earliest resolution was "Christian stewardship of energy resources," adopted by the General Conference Mennonite Church in 1977.

In 1989, the "Stewardship of the earth resolution on environment and faith issues" led to the creation of the Mennonite Environmental Task Force, which was the forerunner of the current Creation Care Network.

The *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, with several articles that speak to creation-care issues, was adopted in 1995.

In 2007, MC Canada's Faith and Life Committee presented an affirmation statement "to commit ourselves to discern a path of faithfulness to be good stewards of the earth." At that same assembly, a "Green assembly resolution" to make national gatherings as green as possible was passed. In response, the Creation Care Network put together a set of green guidelines.

And two years ago in Calgary, a motion to reaffirm the 2007 resolution was passed because some of those guidelines were not being followed.

Participants in Moyer's workshop were not short on ideas for congregations and the wider church. Several expressed a wish for the church to take more ownership of the issue and "put environmental concerns ahead of money and profit."

"We need more education in our churches and more open conversation on

CAMP ASSINIBOIA PHOTO



Despite the flooding, Camp Assiniboia—where an assembly worship service was held on July 5—is still running a full program this summer and the camp staff are doing a great job working around [and in] the water, says site manager David Hogue.

the issue,” was a comment that came from one of the groups. “The churches should certainly be involved in and promote fair trade, reducing, reusing and recycling.”

Many suggestions for things churches can do came out of the small-group discussions, including making church buildings more energy efficient, providing education, and advocating for better practices and lifestyle choices. The consensus was that Scripture calls Christians to nothing less than caring for what God has created.

In consultation with assembly planners,

Moyer completes a creation-care audit after each assembly she attends. Without having completed her 2014 assembly audit yet, Moyer said planners had worked hard at reducing paper and she encouraged the use of electronic devices such as tablets. “It does, however, raise the question of electricity use,” she admitted.

People were encouraged to bring their own water bottles and coffee cups, and MC Canada provided recyclable coffee cups, but, she noted, “the compostable paper dishes and plastic cutlery were not separated from

other garbage, and so I can only assume they will be going into the landfill site.”

Moyer gave a meditation at the July 5 evening worship event at Camp Assiniboia. “Because we are connected, because we are people of faith,” she said, “we must keep caring and searching for solutions. . . . No matter what the dire forecasts and gloomy reports tell us, Jesus is with us, and therein we can find hope, the hope we need to carry on and to meet all the struggles and storms that assail us with courage, hard work and faithfulness.” ☞

DELEGATE PROFILE

Leon provides B.C. prof a paw to stand on

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD
Alberta Correspondent

It’s hard to organize a trip to Mennonite Church Canada’s assembly, knowing what to pack, how many books to bring and how to plan visiting times. The who to travel with, however, is a no-brainer for Bonnie Sawatzky. Leon, a black lab service dog, is her constant companion. Leon helps Sawatzky pick things up, walk when she needs to, get up if she falls, and he especially likes to push buttons to open doors.

Sawatzky, a professor of biomechanics at the University of British Columbia, was born with some physical difficulties that were exacerbated by a car accident in 1993. Before the accident, she said she loved to cycle, but after it, “I felt like my legs were cut off.”

Her first service dog, a golden retriever named Phoenix, was an energetic, gregarious individual. With Phoenix pulling her wheelchair, Sawatzky said she was “cycling” again. “The wind in my hair is what I gained with Phoenix. He pulled me everywhere. Having a service dog brought life back for me.”

When Phoenix died suddenly of cancer, Sawatzky’s grief was profound. “I never knew what it was like to be depressed until I lost Phoenix,” she said. In addition

to the grief of losing a beloved companion, Sawatzky had to cope, once again, with the loss of function and independence.

In 2008, a year after losing Phoenix, Leon came into Sawatzky’s life. He is very

different than Phoenix, calm and quiet in contrast to Phoenix’s exuberance. While Sawatzky has not been able to resume “cycling,” because Leon does not pull, there are other things she has gained. Leon is content to patiently wait through long university classes—or assembly sessions—and his steadiness has encouraged her to go for short walks in their neighbourhood.

How does she want assembly participants to interact with Leon? “Leon loves belly rubs,” she said, “but please ask if it’s an appropriate time to pet him.” ☞



Bonnie Sawatzky travelled to Assembly 14 with Leon, her black lab service dog. ‘Leon loves belly rubs,’ she says, ‘but please ask if it’s an appropriate time to pet him.’

Prayer to heal the heart

Pastor, psychologist teach pastors to 'focus on Jesus, ask him for help, see what happens'

STORY AND PHOTO BY DONITA WIEBE-NEUFELD
Alberta Correspondent

Who gets the help when a pastor marries a psychiatrist? At the 2014 Mennonite Church Canada minister's conference, the answer was no joke, yet everyone left feeling better.

Dr. Karl Lehman, a psychiatrist, and pastor Charlotte Lehman team up in both

life and work to teach people how to help each other heal through prayer. While the concept of healing prayer is nothing new, the Lehmans' Immanuel Approach offers an accessible method for both pastors and laity. Sharing anecdotes from their own lives and considerable teaching experience,



Monica Bock, left, and Ken Bechtel with their 'medication' as prescribed by Dr. KMZ de Stress (aka Karen Martens Zimmerly, MC Canada's denominational minister). The 'pills'—assorted M&Ms—are for the 'relief of common ailments associated with leadership.' Pastors appreciated the thought!

the Lehmans encouraged pastors to pay attention to their own healing needs so they can be available to others.

Charlotte referred to pastoral work as “a crucible to squeeze out any unresolved issue you have in there!”

The method recognizes where God is in good memories, and uses this felt presence in the healing of painful memories that block emotional health. While Karl emphasized that he usually teaches this approach over a few days, the basic concept was surprisingly simple and practical enough to be immediately helpful as pastors interacted with each other.

In groups of three to five, pastors practised the initial step in the Immanuel Approach by sharing a happy memory and reflecting on where Jesus was in it. Verbalizing the memory—the felt presence of God—in community is meant to engage the relational part of the brain that

Charlotte [Lehman] referred to pastoral work as 'a crucible to squeeze out any unresolved issue you have in there!'

needs to be working for a person to move into healing. After listening to whatever surfaced in sharing, participants explicitly invited God to be present in the moment, and then to bring forward memories where healing is needed. Those who felt uncomfortable with what surfaced were encouraged to recall the happy memory they had described earlier. This is the built-in “safety net,” making use of the technique possible for those at all levels of training in the technique.

Karl summarized the Immanuel Approach succinctly when he said, “Focus on Jesus, ask him for help, see what happens. That's basically what you do.”

Gay Kauffman of First Mennonite Church, Calgary, said that, although the material was familiar to her, “I found the workshop helpful for working on my own woundedness as well as for helping others in my practice of spiritual direction. I believe that bringing Jesus into our memories of painful events can be a powerful,

life-changing practice. I hope to use the practice of healing prayer first on resolving my own past traumas before using it on others.”

David Martin, MC Eastern Canada’s executive minister, has a background in neurological science and pastoral ministry, and is familiar with the Ignatian spiritual practice the Lehmans referenced. While the material was known to him as well, Martin appreciated the way it was blended into a whole. Their approach is “potentially something simple, easy and powerful for healing,” he said.

Martin said he was also intrigued by Karl’s stories of teaching the technique to traumatized populations in India, Asia and Uganda. “There is power for this to be a lay movement for healing in the name of Christ with the church fronting it,” he said. ❧

/// Briefly noted

What exclusive allegiance to Jesus looks like in a pluralistic culture

Embodying the love that Jesus Christ modelled and treating people the way we want to be treated are the best ways to face an increasingly pluralistic society. That’s the message Ryan Dueck, pastor of Lethbridge (Alta.) Mennonite Church, delivered during a July 4 seminar entitled “Hope in disorienting times: Navigating the challenge of pluralism.” Speaking to a full room, Dueck explored what exclusive allegiance to Jesus looks like in a culture that celebrates—and even demands—inclusivity. Dueck noted that, while Canadian Mennonites find themselves in a culture filled with a variety of differing religious views, pluralism should not make them afraid. He pointed to I John 4:18: “*There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.*” “I don’t think we ever need to approach our neighbours as objects of fear,” Dueck said. “We need to treat them as people made in the image of God. If pluralism makes us fearful, clinging to our truth, then we have not been perfected by love.”

—BY AARON EPP



Ryan Dueck

At least there is hope for a tree!

BY VIRGINIA A. HOSTETLER

Web Editor

At a corner of Ellice Avenue and Marilyn Street in Winnipeg, the neighbourhood association erected four sheets of plywood and painted them with chalkboard paint. The phrase, “Before I die I want to _____” invited passersby to fill in the blank with their own wishes. Many responses expressed deep desires for meaning and purpose.

Seminar leader Doug Klassen, pastor at Foothills Mennonite Church in Calgary and a member of the Faith and Life Committee of Mennonite Church Canada, reminded participants that people don’t often stop at the corner of Ellice and Marilyn to ponder the profound things, the things that deeply touch their and other’s lives.

Klassen suggested that, while people need to take time to create denominational statements and plan structures and programs, they can’t make the mistake of thinking that those things are enough.

Referring to a popular TED Talk, on the importance of “why” questions, Klassen said that people are not motivated to caring action by having data and asking “what” and “how” questions. “Few organizations, including the church, talk about the why,” he said. “When you get to the why questions, everything can spin out of there.”

Klassen invited participants to answer the question, “Where is God at work in your church?” asserting that “God gives a passion and a vision to every congregation!”

Participants told of connections with the local community and with causes that matter to people in the church.

Listeners had to wait until the end of the session to hear the reason for the seminar title. Klassen told one last story of a funeral he had conducted for a young person. People were questioning God about the accident that had caused the death and were asking for hope in a dark time. At a loss of



Doug Klassen

words, Klassen recalled Job, who, in the midst of his questioning, could affirm, “*For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its shoots will not cease*” (Job 14:7).

MC Canada churches will find comfort and strength as they ask hard questions of meaning and purpose. ❧

'Wild hope' Snapshots

Young adults at the Mennonite Church Canada assembly were treated to an intimate concert by Mennonite singer-songwriter Matt Epp at Sam's Place, a Winnipeg coffee-shop and bookstore. Before the concert, MC Canada executive director Willard Metzger encouraged the young adults to take back their faith and their church, and make them their own.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BEN BORNE

CMU ARCHITECT'S RENDERING



PHOTO BY D. MICHAEL HOSTETLER



Mennonite Church Canada assembly participants (photo right) get a chance to tour what will become the joint CommonWord centre that will form part of the new Canadian Mennonite University library now under construction but set to open in January. The combined CMU bookstore and MC Canada resource centre will quadruple in size, going from their present space of 47 square metres to 223 square metres. Fair-trade giftware, greeting cards, brand wear and stationery supplies will be offered onsite, says Dave Bergen, MC Canada's executive minister of Christian Formation, and the Resource Centre will continue to serve as a congregational resource for many Anabaptist-themed books, worship items, adult small-group studies, devotional pieces, pastoral care aids and first nation resources, among others. CommonWord will be situated under the mezzanine of the new building across from a café and stage for performing and live-streaming of public events.

PHOTO BY RYAN ROTH BARTEL



Children are engaged in the art of leather craft on opening night of Assembly 2014 by stamping images of water and nature onto bracelets as symbols of their 'wild hope'

PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY



Toddler Maeve Goertzen gets a better view of the auditorium with help from John Reimer, a delegate from Whitewater Mennonite Church in Boissevain, Man., during a break from discernment sessions.

PHOTO BY D. MICHAEL HOSTETLER



Artist Ray Dirks, curator of the Mennonite Heritage Centre Gallery, works on paintings for his 'Along the road to freedom' series, while chatting with assembly goers and surrounded by works of other artists from Manitoba and beyond. His new series depicts the stories of Mennonite women who brought their children out of Stalin's horrors to safety in Canada.

VIEWPOINTS

/// Readers write

We welcome your comments and publish most letters sent by subscribers intended for publication. This section is largely an open forum for the sharing of views. Letters are the opinion of the writer only—publication does not mean endorsement by the magazine or the church. Keep letters to 400 words or less and address issues rather than individuals. We do not countenance rancour or animosity. Personal attacks are inappropriate and will not see the light of print. Please send letters to be considered for publication to letters@canadianmennonite.org or by postal mail or fax, marked "Attn: Readers Write" (our address is on page 3). Letters should include the author's contact information and mailing address. Letters are edited for length, style and adherence to editorial guidelines. Preference will be given to letters from MC Canada congregants.

✉ Church should fund prison visitation

IN MATTHEW 25, Jesus says, "[A]nd I was in prison and you visited me." In Hebrews 13:3, the author writes, "Remember those in prison as if they were your fellow prisoners" (NIV). Now Jesus did not make a command of such, but it was a pretty good suggestion that we follow through. It might even be said that Jesus was the very first M2 volunteer.

In the light of brotherly love, let us consider those who populate our prisons by visiting them regularly as M2/W2 volunteers. At a recent volunteer appreciation dinner there were four prison wardens who each said how much the M2 volunteers were appreciated and how they make their jobs much easier.

Let us not forget that ministry is not forgotten just because there are bars holding some enclosed away from the public eye. Consider that there but for the grace of God go we. Who among us is so righteous that we can snub our noses to those who fall down?

FROM OUR LEADERS

Engaging the challenge

WILLARD METZGER

This winter on an evening journey to the airport, I encountered a substantial snow storm. Strong winds drove heavy snow across the roads. Even with my eyes wide open I was blinded, unable to see the front of my car. I inched forward without any idea where the road was. I didn't know if I was wandering into the oncoming lane or edging towards the ditch—an extremely unnerving experience.



It is not easy navigating a storm. Sight is limited. Knowledge is inadequate. Understanding is incomplete.

I felt vulnerable.

The storm image seemed like a fitting theme for the assembly in Winnipeg from July 2 to 6. More than 500 delegates and guests gathered to engage the work of the church and study the account of Jesus calming the storm in Mark 4:35-41. The story of the disciples' fear resonated with many. With waves threatening to swamp

the boat, fear seemed understandable. Much less understandable is the way Jesus swept aside fear as evidence of an underdeveloped faith. Surely one cannot be blamed for fearing potential disaster?

Assembly participants considered the parallel between the disciples' experience on a stormy sea and the changing context for the church in Canada. Familiar waters have been replaced with uncertain and rising waves. What we always considered to be truth is no longer common knowledge or accepted practice. People are discerning faithfulness differently.

For many, this new context of questioning is disconcerting. It feels like the church is drifting in a sea of compromise. Some resonate easily with the disciples, feeling as though the church is being buffeted by intense waves. Discerning eyes widen, peering for some sign of God's assuring presence. And all the while Jesus seems asleep in the stern, head tucked into a soft pillow. Like the disciples, we want to awaken Jesus and say, "Don't you

care if we drown?"

Mark 4:35-41 is an appropriate text. It is a fitting story for the church to wrestle with. But as assembly unfolded further, I began to wonder if we are misreading our context. Perhaps it is not a threat as much as it is a challenge. A threat conjures up impulses of defence, while challenges stir preparedness for thoughtful and rigorous engagement.

In my encounter with the church, few youth and young adults express fear regarding its future. From those who are not succumbing to apathy, I sense yearning for the church to pull away from the dock and sail into the sea. Many others would rather stay moored in the harbour and wait for the storm to pass. But our youth and young adults are calling for a more active engagement. Perhaps they are more comfortable with waves.

I left the assembly heartened and encouraged—not that the storm will pass, but that our ship is sufficiently seaworthy. I left assured. When faith is in the boat with Jesus, the church is never threatened. So we can confidently prepare to engage unsettled waters ahead.

Willard Metzger is executive director of Mennonite Church Canada.

Two years ago, the federal government began diminishing the M2 budget and this year it has diminished to zero, so we rely mainly on the thrift store to subsidize our budget plus whatever other funds filter in.

Because M2/W2 is a faith-based entity, it is my opinion that it is unchristian of us to ask the government for handouts.

According to George Epp, who is a staunch

supporter of M2/W2, there are 72 Mennonite Brethren churches in B.C. and I count 32 Mennonite Church B.C. congregations, bringing the total to 104 churches under the Mennonite banner.

Now I understand that all churches are not equally affluent, but why can we not fund our own projects?

Many churches give a bit to M2/W2, but it is not

(Continued on page 20)

GOD, MONEY AND ME

An intentional generosity plan

ARNIE FRIESEN

When our boys were younger, I wanted them to see how much we were giving to our church. I wanted to model cheerful generosity, and to demonstrate that this was normal and very intentional. If the truth be told, I was secretly hoping that our generosity would be contagious, as well.

Practising intentionality in giving may be less common than we think. But with careful and deliberate planning, our generosity can rise to the top of our to-do list.

Recently I heard a gifted speaker, Kathy LeMay, deliver an impassioned talk on the importance of developing an “intentional generosity plan.”

LeMay suggests that this plan should answer the following six key questions:

- **MY VISION** for the world or community is . . .
- **MY CHARITABLE** priorities are . . .
- **THE AMOUNT** or percentage I contribute to charity annually is . . .
- **THE AMOUNT** or percentage I would like to contribute next year is . . .
- **THE CHARITIES** that I am most interested in supporting are . . .
- **THE MOST** important reason for creating and implementing my generosity plan is . . .

These questions encourage us to look at our motivation as well as our goals for generosity.

Here is a simple generosity plan that my wife and I created several years ago. We decided to focus on three categories of giving:

- **FIRST, WE** are committed to giving the first fruits of our income to support the ministries of our home church. Some might refer to this as a tithe. The Apostle Paul simply instructs that everyone has the opportunity to decide in his/her heart what amount to give (II Corinthians 9:7).



[L]et me suggest that 10 percent of gross salary income would be a minimum target, not the ceiling.

However, let me suggest that 10 percent of gross salary income would be a minimum target, not the ceiling.

- **SECOND, WE** like to give gifts and offerings to other good causes, such as relief agencies, mission work and Christian education. This is where we want to follow our passions. We want to give to five or six causes that are most important to us. This allows us to comfortably say no to other causes that don't match our current plan. Importantly, our intentional generosity strategy also includes

charitable gifts through our estate plan.

- **THIRD, FROM** time to time we want to offer random or reckless acts of generosity. These gifts might end up with recipients we know little about, but it just seems right to provide help. There are no charitable tax receipts for these gifts. Even if the gift ends up not being used for the best of purposes, it simply is good for our souls to be randomly generous once in a while.

Our plan provides clarity that empowers and informs our generosity activities. Intentionality helps us to keep the course with unwavering confidence.

What has God entrusted to you that really was meant to flow to others? Do you have a plan for distributing these resources? Why not take a few moments and draft a plan?

Reviewing Lemay's questions may be an ideal place to begin. Think about causes that you are most passionate about. Take your time. Once you've gotten started, you can correct the course and improve your

gifting strategies at a later date. So plan to give with exhilaration and joy as a grateful response to God's greatest, indescribable gift of salvation to you!

Arnie Friesen is a stewardship consultant in the Abbotsford, B.C., office of Mennonite Foundation of Canada. For more information on impulsive generosity, stewardship education, and estate and charitable gift planning, contact your nearest MFC office or visit MennoFoundation.ca.

(Continued from page 19)

enough. Now it may come off sounding a bit harsh, but do we throw Christ scraps also? No one likes to be reprimanded, but brotherly rebuke is mentioned in more than one place in our holy book.

KEN HINTON, LANGLEY, B.C.

Ken Hinton is a member of Langley Mennonite Fellowship.

✉ We need to engage even if life is messy

RE: "CHASTISED BY the chief," June 9, page 16.

Will Braun displays a winsome maturity and openness, acknowledging criticism he receives while engaging in issues of social justice. He brings out what seems obvious: that both non-native and native peoples have a mixture of opinions. Knowing this, he

FAMILY TIES

A milestone birthday

MELISSA MILLER

"I'm turning 60 and I need help," I wrote in the invitation to my recent party. I was disquieted by the approach of this milestone birthday, beset with, and surprised by, regrets, laments and some form of existential anxiety. Still, the passage of time continues whatever our reluctance towards what it brings.

And a birthday is a birthday, and, as such, is an occasion to celebrate. Since I can always count on my friends to help me navigate life's challenges, I asked them to bring to the party a story of joy or of "befriending life" (taken from Rachel Naomi Remen's *My Grandfather's Blessings*). I imagined such reflections would lighten my mood and provide me with valuable resources for the journey.

I designated the event a "crone" party, which led my sister to inquire if we were going to wear purple gowns, burn incense and howl at the moon. Actually, the term "crone" has been reclaimed by feminists to mark a mature woman's passage to a new stage of life, one characterized by wisdom, freedom and personal power. Purple, incense and howling are all optional. Hopefully, wisdom, maturity and freedom will abound.

Some birthdays carry more meaning than others. My grandmother declared she never felt old until she turned 70.

My sister sighed as she approached 40, saying, "It's not getting older that I mind . . . it's the passage of time," a poignant reference to sending her youngest to Kindergarten. My father approached the zero years by extending previous birthdays. "This is my third year of being 39," he joked.

Turning 60 has lots of meanings, some of which we see as good, some of which we deem to be not so good. Given the decades I've enjoyed, I have a rich stash of memories, a number of which are coloured by joy and wonder. I especially appreciate having had the opportunity to watch babies grow into interesting, unique adults. And I've gained valuable knowledge, not just about the things I studied formally, but in life lessons: self-knowledge, including awareness of my limitations and strengths; firmer grounding in my deepest convictions;



I ponder what I've done with my life and what I might do with the remaining years.

realism that can be tinged with cynicism; a greater capacity to take the long view; and ample evidence of God's steadfast presence. It is a blessing to see 60 years, especially given the many whose lives end at an earlier age.

One thing 60 is not, though, is young. Turning 60 means I'll be ticking a different age bracket in surveys, and qualifying

for certain senior benefits. It means aging in a culture that overwhelmingly dismisses, demeans and devalues the elderly. It means I'm well into the second half—more likely the final third, or even final quarter—of life. That gives me pause. I ponder what I've done with my life and what I might do with the remaining years. I try to release the regrets, and use them as a springboard to make better, more satisfying choices in the present.

"I want to be married to amazement," sings the poet Mary Oliver, as she contemplates living well in the face of death. That seems like a worthy goal. So is Paul's counsel in Philippians 1:20-26 and II Corinthians 5:1-10, as he dances between the value of meaningful life on earth and joining Jesus in heaven. He concludes, "*Whether we are at home with Jesus, or in our earthly bodies, we make it our aim to please Jesus*" (II Corinthians 5:9, paraphrased).

All said, the party was great! And it buoys me to aim for the following as I become a crone. I want to be grounded in gratitude. I want to be open to amaze-

ment. I want to be full of kindness and compassion. I want to be fierce for the right reasons. I want to live in a way that pleases Jesus.

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

calls on the church to recognize that “[l]ife is messy; jump in.” Non-native critics sometimes use the presence of mixed opinions among Canada’s Indigenous Peoples to dismiss their leadership or to minimize the church’s need for engagement. Both of these are unhelpful responses.

TERRY M. SMITH, MITCHELL, MAN.

✉ Families should set boundaries for sporting involvement

RE: “SPORT IS not our saviour,” May 26, page 35.

As I read Paul Loewen’s critique of sport and its effect on family, community and spiritual life, my reaction was, “Wow, somebody actually has the guts to say something about this. A sports fanatic, no less.”

As my kids have aged through the elementary and secondary years, I have observed a worrying trend among my peers and their children: an obsessive commitment to sports. People are booked to the point where the opportunity to connect with friends and family is clearly a secondary priority. A false sense of importance is placed on their child’s—or parent’s—dedication or commitment, and often for the exact reason Loewen stated in his letter: “You miss a practice, they bench you for the game.”

So imagine the church saying the same thing: “You miss a service, we strike you from the directory for a month.” Using that same logic, we should then expect attendance to exponentially improve, right?

Personally, I think it’s up to families to set the boundaries for their involvement, not the coaches or leagues. They will keep doing things as is until there is pressure put on them to back off of family life, until families say Sunday morning is sacred or that a once-a-year family reunion is more important than yet another weekly practice.

I think Loewen is also correct in that the long-term benefits are minimal, as there are few adult leagues with a fraction of the commitment of the childhood leagues. Why? Because by then you’ve either made it your career or you’ve moved on. If that’s all you did as a youth, moving on is harder, because you were cut off from all those other formative experiences that may have provided a path forward. In the process, the family, community and church are left weaker for it.

Involvement in sports is great and offers huge benefits, but should be kept in a reasonable balance. Let the families control that balance, not the sports league or the coaches. They are just kids after all!

Thanks for having the courage to say it like it is.

KAREN BUSCHERT, WATERLOO, ONT.

✉ Homosexuality is ‘clearly’ named a sin in the Bible

RE: “BIBLE CAN’T be ‘crystal clear’ when it’s self-contradictory” letter, June 9, page 11.

I strongly disagree with Mark Morton’s letter. I agree with Artur Esau that at least some things in the Bible are crystal clear. It is clear to me that homosexuality is named a sin in both the Old and the New testaments. It is also clear to me that I am a sinner saved by the grace of God. I have believed that the Bible is true all my life and have tried, with God’s help, to follow St. Paul’s instructions to Timothy in II Timothy 3:1-16.

Morton thinks Acts 13:39 and Mark 3:29 are contradictory. By saying this he is breaking one of the first guidelines in Bible study, that states we are not to take one verse out of context and come to a certain conclusion.

I believe the Bible clearly teaches that all sins can be forgiven, but to be forgiven there must be faith and repentance (I John 1:9). According to the late Theodore Epp of *Back to the Bible*, the unforgivable sin is committed by people who know the truth, but who time and again reject the wooing and work of the Holy Spirit until they reach a point of no return and are unable to repent.

I also do not agree that Bible translations are interpretations. Article 9 of the *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective* still states: “We believe the Bible is the inspired book of the church.” The faithful church places itself under the authority of Scripture (II Timothy 3:16). Since the Bible is the book that God wants us to have, and wants the gospel of his love and forgiveness to reach all people, I sincerely believe that he will protect the truth as the Bible is being translated into other languages.

If, as Morton suggests, we can pick and choose what we want to believe and what we want to reject, then our churches and our faith are in serious jeopardy.

CORNIE MARTENS, RABBIT LAKE, SASK.

✉ Homosexuality not a priority of Jesus

AS SOMEONE WHO is heterosexual, I know that I cannot begin to understand the challenges faced by lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered/queer (LGBTQ) people.

But as someone who can read, I know what Jesus—according to the Bible—had to say about it. Nothing. Not one word. If he had an opinion on the matter, it doesn’t seem to have been one of his priorities.

Jesus had plenty to say about the poor. He spoke of the ill and injured, and widows and orphans. He appears to have been in favour of peacemakers. Maybe

if we want to claim to “follow” Jesus, we should make these our concerns also.

Then, once all the hungry have been fed, once poverty and homelessness have been eliminated, when there is no more disability or disease, when those who grieve are comforted, when all people are clothed appropriately for their weather, and war is a thing of the past, maybe we can take the time to worry about what consenting adults do behind closed doors.

Until then, can we please have even just one issue of *Canadian Mennonite* that’s free from this creepy obsession with what goes on in other people’s bedrooms?

JUDIE BOND, EDMONTON

✉ Climate change is nothing new

IN RESPONSE TO all of the articles and letters on climate change, I submit the following report from *The Washington Post*:

“The Arctic Ocean is warming up, icebergs are growing scarcer and in some places the seals are finding the water too hot, according to the [U.S.] Commerce Department yesterday from Consulate at Bergen, Norway. Reports from fishermen, seal hunters and explorers all point to a radical change in climate conditions and hitherto unheard-of temperatures in the Arctic zone. Exploration expeditions report that scarcely any ice has been met as far north as 81 degrees 29 minutes.


“Soundings to a depth of 3,100 metres showed the Gulf Stream still very warm. Great masses of ice have been replaced by moraines or earth and stones, the report continued, while at many points well known glaciers are entirely disappeared.

“Very few seals and no white fish are found in the eastern Arctic, while vast shoals of herring and smelts, which have never before ventured so far north, are being encountered in the old seal fishing grounds.

“Within a few years it is predicted that due to the

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ice melt the sea will rise and make most coastal cities uninhabitable.”

Oops. Never mind. This report from the Associated Press was from Nov. 22, 1922.

G.H. JANZEN, PRINCE ALBERT, SASK.

/// Milestones

Births/Adoptions

Bergen—Alexander Alonzo Allan (b. Jan. 21, 2011), adopted by Barry Bergen and Ruth Boehm (June 16, 2014), Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Corriveau Friesen—Felix Alexandre (b. June 3, 2014), to Tom Friesen and Caroline Corriveau, Ottawa Mennonite.

Meakin—Grady Hayes (b. June 29, 2014), to Bobby and Kaylee Meakin, Morden Mennonite, Man.

Srigley—Lucy Karlin (b. June 18, 2014), to Debbie and Ken Srigley, North Leamington United Mennonite, Ont.

Wiebe—Rowan Cecil (b. June 20, 2014), to Janna and Terrell Wiebe, Springfield Heights Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Baptisms

Craig Kuepfer, Brady Gerber, Isaac Zehr—Crosshill Mennonite, Millbank, Ont. July 6, 2014.

Dixon Doblah, Juldeh Kamara, Denise Nyuma, Odell Nyuma, Ronky Snogba—Holyrood Mennonite, Edmonton, June 29, 2014.

Austin Dalke, Carol Fehr—Morden Mennonite, Man., June 15, 2014.

Jill Olfert—Mount Royal Mennonite, Saskatoon, May 25, 2014.

Vanessa Metzger, Ron Edney, Scott Chapman, Michele Schlueter—Poole Mennonite, Milverton, Ont., June 8, 2014.

Christine Strong—Wellesley Mennonite, Ont., June 22, 2014.

Katelyn Derksen, Isaac Friesen, Alicia Sawatzky, Erika Sawatzky, Emma Wiebe—Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite, Man., June 8, 2014.

Deaths

Andres—John W., 87 (b. Sept. 1, 1926; d. June 28, 2014), Bethany Mennonite, Virgil, Ont.

Carney—Glen, 63 (b. June 25, 1951; d. June 27, 2014), Hunta Mennonite, Ont.

Cowan—Margaret, 88 (b. Aug. 10, 1925; d. March 24, 2014), Faith Mennonite, Leamington, Ont.

Dyck—Esther, 74 (b. May 18, 1940; d. June 7, 2014), Bergthaler Mennonite, Altona, Man.

Heinrichs—Abe, 78 (d. June 18, 2014), Rosenfeld Bergthaler Mennonite, Man.

Hildebrand—Margaret K., 63 (b. Nov. 27, 1950; d. June 16, 2014), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Jantzi—Edna, 91 (b. Oct. 17, 1922; d. June 26, 2014), Crosshill Mennonite, Millbank, Ont.

Kroeker—Erdman (Ed), 84 (b. Feb. 2, 1930; d. June 8, 2014), Bethel Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Kroeker—Katharina, 85 (b. March 27, 1928; d. June 9, 2014), Douglas Mennonite, Winnipeg.

Sawatzky—Wilhelm, 84 (b. Feb. 23, 1930; d. June 13, 2014), River of Life Church, Chilliwack, B.C.

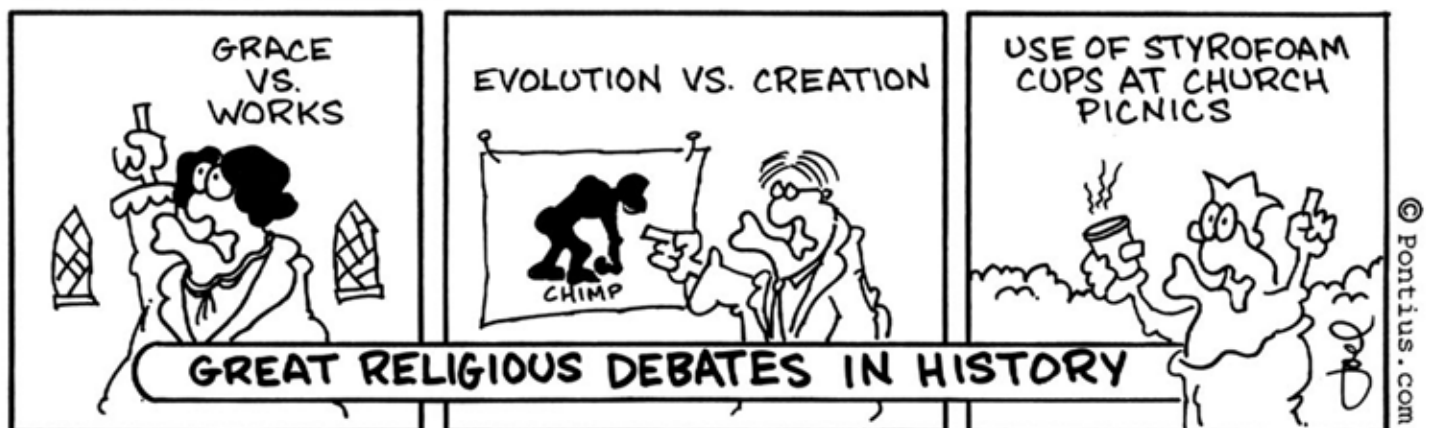
Woodyard—Patty, 66 (b. Jan. 13, 1948; d. June 14, 2014), Ottawa Mennonite, Ont.

Canadian Mennonite welcomes Milestones

announcements within four months of the event.

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

Pontius' Puddle



LIFE IN THE POSTMODERN SHIFT

Fad or future?

TROY WATSON

“Look outside,” Dan blurted through the phone before my mother could even say hello.

She walked over to the front window and was astonished to see Dan sitting in his car parked in our driveway. He was beaming with pride as he spoke to her via his new state-of-the-art mobile phone. Our entire family raced outside to behold this miraculous communications device from the future. That it looked like he was holding a cinder block up to his face didn't diminish our sense of wonder at this exciting advance in technology. Of course, this was in 1987.

It's 2014 now and there are almost as many cell-phone subscriptions (6.8 billion) as there are people on Planet Earth (7 billion). A 2013 UN study reported more people have cell phones than toilets today. Cell-phone technology has completely revolutionized how we function as individuals and societies in the 21st century and it only took a little over 20 years to do it.

Incredibly, the late science-fiction author Arthur C. Clarke predicted this in the 1950s. He envisioned a “personal transceiver, so small and compact that every man carries one . . . able to call a person anywhere on earth merely by dialling a number.” He also accurately predicted this device would include a means for global positioning so that “no one need ever again be lost,” and that the arrival of such a device would take place in the mid-1980s. How could Clarke have seen the future with such clarity?

In 1997, Blockbuster ruled the DVD rental world, with more than 8,000 stores and 25,000 employees, but a man named Reed Hastings envisioned a different



future for the entertainment distribution business. He cofounded a company called Netflix that used the postal service to mail DVDs to people's homes, and in the early 2000s began focussing on streaming movies online.

In the early to mid-2000s, Hastings began courting a deal with Blockbuster CEO John Antioco to purchase Netflix for \$50 million. The Blockbuster executives laughed Hastings out of the office. In 2010, just a few years later, Blockbuster went bankrupt and Netflix was worth \$13 billion. Netflix is currently worth more than \$27 billion, with shares of Netflix rising nearly 300 percent last year.

The solution is figuring out how to discern what God is doing now in our world and contemporary context, and then get on board.

Blockbuster saw Netflix as a fad. It turned out to be the future.

Every envisioned future has at some point been considered a fad, a fantasy or a threat. There are a lot of new spirituality trends popping up in our contemporary Canadian culture. Without question, many of them are incompatible with the Christian faith, but some of them may very well be the future. I can't help but wonder how many churches will soar like Netflix and how many will end up as yesterday's Blockbusters.

Most modern churches recognize we have a problem, but unfortunately we're too often looking for the wrong kind of solution. We're looking to save the church, or to preserve our denomination, tradition, theological position or

favourite ministry. Yet the solution to our problem has nothing to do with preserving anything.

The solution is figuring out how to discern what God is doing now in our world and contemporary context, and then get on board. The real challenge for the majority of us is that only those gifted with prophetic imaginations possess the capacity to visualize the unknown.

I Chronicles 12:32 says, “From the tribe of Issachar, there were 200 leaders. . . . All these men understood the signs of the times and knew the best course for Israel to take.”

God is faithful to bless every denomination and congregation with these discerning visionary leaders who understand the signs of the times, but it is up to the rest of us to identify and listen to them.

But what if we are misled by a false or misguided prophet? What about the community hermeneutic?

No doubt there are risks involved and

challenges to be worked through, but it's far riskier to neglect—or drive away—these visionary pioneers, as John Antioco did with Reed Hastings. The warnings of the Old Testament prophets hold true for us today: It's easy for God's people to reject God's future.

Thankfully, we have a Creator who grants us repeated second chances, but we can't ignore the Arthur C. Clarkes, Reed Hastings and Issacharite leaders that God sends us without consequence. They are part of God's design for how we collectively attune ourselves to God's Spirit. ✎

Troy Watson (troydw@gmail.com) is pastor at Avon Mennonite Church, Stratford, Ont.

VIEWPOINT

A letter of unsupport for Canada

DAVID DRIEDGER

Shortly after my birth I was registered as a Canadian citizen. Birth cast me into a life that was not of my choosing or making.

The Mennonite community into which I was born has a history of both appealing to government and rejecting government. These expressions are not mutually exclusive. The pairing of these elements comes when our community's values are threatened to the point that remaining in a given place is deemed too great a compromise for our beliefs. Military participation has been one compromise this community has, at times, been unwilling to make. So we have left many places, sometimes voluntarily and other times by force. But we did not leave a place only to end up nowhere.

Mennonites were ideal immigrants for countries wanting to stabilize territories from internal or external threats. Most of my ancestors arrived in Manitoba shortly after the province was born in the 1870s. We arrived as pioneers and placeholders, ensuring the base of an emerging government. My family was given the right and privilege of settling here, at least in part, to thwart claims contesting the emerging government's sovereignty. Since that time, most of my ancestors have lived as Canadian citizens.

Canada is ethnically diverse, at least in most of its urban centres. The vision for this diversity is the notion of multiculturalism. This vision has been a blessing to many people who have not received such tolerance in their previous homelands.

What I feel compelled to speak about are some of the harmful conditions that have created and sustain this vision of



Canada. What follows is obviously not an exhaustive political account of Canada, but is my understanding of the relationship between the political imagination of Canada and the material realities that are tied into expressing that imagination.

And so in the broadest of strokes I understand that:

- **CANADA IS** a nation founded on the pervasive and continued abuse of the indigenous population that inhabited this land prior to European settlement. There remains no political will or action to treat Indigenous Peoples by the sovereign rights they claim, and Canada continues to build a significant portion of its economic wealth through the neglect of indigenous claims over natural resources.
- **CANADA HAS** a remnant of social security that offers healthcare to all citizens, but is not able to provide basic living standards to many of its most impoverished inhabitants. Those who need social security—the chronically ill and disabled, as well as those facing multiple forms of abuse or neglect—are subjected to rigorous and perplexing bureaucratic processes that frustrate or exhaust many individuals before they receive the care they need. And in many instances the support they receive hardly allows for a basic standard of living.
- **CANADA PURSUES** increasing participation in the global economy. This has meant the increased use of overseas labour that does not need to adhere to Canadian labour guidelines or safety practices; an increased expression of disposable consumerism that is meant to inflate the economy without providing

quality employment or considering the cost to the environment; increasing pressure and devastation on countries and communities that do not have the economic power to demand equitable treatment; and a decline in diverse middle-class incomes and an increased gap between the rich and poor.

- **CANADA UPHOLDS** “free choice” as a means to keep from developing stricter environmental and health regulations. We are given the “choice” of healthier foods or a variety of products, which has meant that unhealthy or unethical foods and low-quality products remain the most affordable and accessible.

Canada has a government in place that passes laws and develops policy. You, the Government of Canada, are responsible for these practices. I cannot in good conscience support the political imagination of Canada and its benefits when it comes at the cost of others, as stated above.

I am under no illusions that this letter will effect any change, or that it will even be read. I am also not willing to continue my own Mennonite tradition of tending towards a belief in political neutrality or abstention. And so, as part of the historical record, I want it to be known that I do not support Canada in this form.

Through my personal and professional efforts I will continue to work at better understanding the conditions that lead to the environment I live in, and my personal and professional efforts will be directed towards naming those things and those people responsible for creating and maintaining those conditions which are destructive to some for the benefit of others.

To the extent that the above account is true, I hold the government responsible for creating a more equitable standard of living. To the extent that the government is unwilling or unable to make changes in these areas, then I would pose the question: “Is it or is not appropriate to speak of Canada as sovereign?” ❧

David Driedger is associate pastor at First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

VIEWPOINT

The power of change in the local circle

WILL BRAUN

SENIOR WRITER

The auditorium tingled as the keynote speaker took the stage. A tall black guy—a CNN personality, *New York Times* best-selling author, and former White House staffer who advised President Obama on green economics—he had a coast-to-coast smile and wit surpassed only by his charm.

I can't honestly remember what he said, but I remember the buzz of inspiration. The audience was aglow with admiration and an amorphous sense of motivation.

Van Jones was the speaker. The setting was a social justice conference at a small, upscale college near Minneapolis, Minn., this past March. I was there with a northern Cree representative to present a workshop about the impact of hydro-power development in Manitoba.

I don't much like conferences. It's their shape and geography that bother me. Good things happen at conferences, but I think a couple of relatively simple but profound changes could make them much better. I think these changes would be particularly apt in the Anabaptist context.

My most recent conference experience highlighted my concerns. Jones stood up at the front, with the rest of us seated quietly in rows facing him. Wisdom, inspiration—whatever that is—and expertise were located on a pedestal at the front.

I would have liked to see the students gathered in small circles discussing among themselves, with good facilitators and perhaps people with specific experience as available resources. I would have liked to see them affirming one another,



rather than standing star-struck in line to get Jones's autograph.

I wanted to see them empower each other, accessing and enlivening their own gifts, rather than importing the supposed key ingredient of change in the form of a larger-than-life quasi-superhero parachuted in

from afar.

That brings me to the geography argument. I believe in localization. What we need is near us. We need to trust God on that one. We need to find the wealth right around us, not spend money on fossil fuel in search of distant star power. We need to work with geography, not fight it. In every way we need to learn to live in smaller circles.

I don't get asked to speak at conferences often, but I have turned down a few long-distance, all-expense-paid gigs, and I biked 2,100 kilometres to one in 2006.

We need to find the wealth right around us, not spend money on fossil fuel in search of distant star power.

More recently, I was asked to speak at a Kairos conference in Vancouver last fall. Part of me would have loved to attend, but I declined. As much as I might like to think I have some unique wisdom to offer, I believe that the local people going to that conference could offer more value than I could. They didn't need me.

As I wrote to the organizer, "Outside people can provide info and broad perspectives, but the flip side is that they implicitly indicate that essential ingredients of change lie way out there somewhere with 'special' people."

The power of change must be located

in the local circle, because if it is located in a frequent-flying pedestalled speaker, most often it will dissipate just as quick as that feeling of "inspiration" fades, which, in my experience, usually happens before I get back home.

So I missed a trip to Vancouver. I missed a reportedly fantastic conference. I missed a chance to hob-nob with other presenters. Instead, I stayed home on the farm with my family that weekend. No regrets.

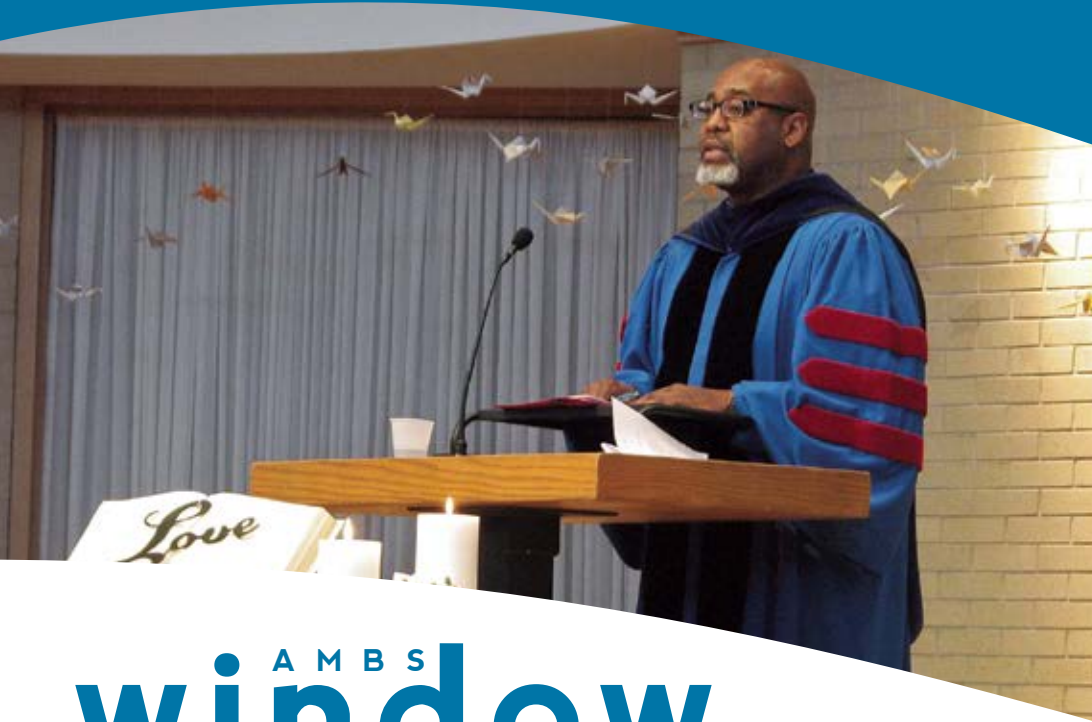
Again, good things happen at conferences. I wouldn't have driven to the Twin Cities in March if I didn't believe that. The matter is not black and white. I just think we, as church folk, could take some relatively simple steps to make church conferences better, cheaper and with greater lasting value. In short, make them round; make them local; use facilitators, not hot shots; trust yourselves and trust God.

National gatherings—which take a lot of money, fossil fuel and conference staff effort—could be less frequent, alternated perhaps with localized gatherings. While it is important to hear from leaders and leading thinkers, the speaker-audience format should be limited. Generally, I think we Anabaptists have a more participatory, egalitarian impulse and history. We should stick to it.

I think it is also important to remem-

ber that many people rarely, if ever, attend church conferences. For me, this adds perspective. I am one of those people who don't go to conferences and, despite that, I still feel very much connected to the broader church.

To people who go to conferences regularly, no doubt the events seem essential. And in many ways I'm glad for the keeners. But personally, I'd rather sit around a living room with some folks from my local church. They may not be as inspiring as Van Jones, but a rooted community of transformation is worth more than a fleeting buzz. ❧


SUMMER 2014
 VOLUME 24 ISSUE 3

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Your gifts at work
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AMBS window

BEING COURAGEOUS

Sara Wenger Shenk, President

Maya Angelou died last month. Tributes to her filled the news. Folks remembered her as “an unstoppable force for art, justice and love” and that often she “drew on her faith as a source of strength to find beauty and perseverance in hard times.”

Maya’s voice lit up my spirit as I participated in closing events of this year, including the graduation of 35 remarkable students.

Maya said: “I believed that there was a God because I was told it by my grandmother and later by other adults. But when I found that I knew not only that there was God but that I was a child of God, when I understood that, when I comprehended that, more than that, when I internalized that, ingested that, I became courageous.”

AMBS’s teachers daily find ways for students to more fully comprehend, internalize, even ingest the “ah ha” that yes, we are children of God.

Diminished participation in church life, polarizing conflict on many fronts and widespread poverty and injustice

require unusual courage by those who offer themselves as leaders for God’s reconciling mission in the world.

Graduating seniors spoke of their gratitude. One said: *The AMBS community impacts moral formation and character formation. They are*



inseparable. The longer I’ve stayed at AMBS, the more I’ve become completely convinced of that, because I see the community here and I see how my classmates have evolved. I see how I

have evolved.... I know right now there’s a ton of uncertainty within Mennonite Church USA ... which saddens me deeply. I pray fervently that regardless of what happens there will still be a way for people from all over to be a part of this beautiful community of believers.

Another said: *My time here was a great experience. I think of the first day*

when the dean said, “I want you freshmen to know you are going to hear things that are different than what you’re used to hearing.” I was like “Really?” I wondered, “Do I actually belong here?” Then some of my reading started turning in me. I felt like I was ready to preach as soon as I got out of class. So I want to say to every single professor here that made me feel welcome, “I love you from the bottom of my heart. God bless you.”

With Maya may we together understand, comprehend, internalize and even ingest that we are children of God. That’s what it will take to become courageous for persevering in hard times. ●

Photo above: Commencement speaker James Logan, PhD, urged graduates to go forward wrapped in Christian love “with a wise mixture of toughness, gentleness, joy, courage, prudence, temperance, humility, mercy, and a very, very difficult peaceableness.” Read more about commencement on page 7. Credit: Nekeisha Alexis-Baker

2014 GRADUATES

Thirty-five graduates honored

Thirty-five graduates were honored at the AMBS commencement service on May 24, 2014. They received the following degrees:

MDiv Master of Divinity
MAPS Master of Arts: Peace Studies
MATS Master of Arts: Theological Studies

Certificates are noted with the information for individual graduates.

Graduates not able to be present for commencement are listed on page 6.

John Bender. *Certificate in Theological Studies.* Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference historian and retired writer-editor. He and Marty, his wife, are members of Prairie Street Mennonite Church.

Wilma Cender. *MACF; concentration in Christian spirituality.* Will expand her spiritual direction practice and provide pastoral care and counseling. Wilma

and Karl, her husband, are members of Valparaiso (Ind.) Mennonite Church.

Sara Erb. *MDiv; concentration in theological studies.* Will begin an interim pastoral position in Ontario. Sara is a member of Steinmann Mennonite Church, Baden, and attends Belmont Neighborhood Fellowship, Elkhart.

Lawrence Giden. *Certificate in Theological Studies.* Will continue in the ministries he is doing at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Niles, Mich.

Julia Gingrich. *MDiv; concentration in pastoral ministry.* Will continue work with the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program at the Center for Community Justice in Elkhart and explore a pastoral ministry assignment. Julia and Josh Weaver, her husband, are members of Prairie Street Mennonite Church.

Adam Graber Roth. *MAPS.* Will serve for three years with Karen, his wife, in a Mennonite Central Committee assignment in Egypt. They will live in Beni Suef, teaching English as a Foreign Language and Peacebuilding.

Dianna Graham. *MDiv; concentration in theological studies.* Hopes to start a non-profit center called "Shalom Center." She is married to Willie J. Graham Sr. and is a member of New Light of Hope Christian Center Church of God in Christ in Elkhart.

Todd Gusler. *MDiv; concentration in Christian faith formation.* Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. Todd and Leah, his wife, have one child and attend Sunnyside Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Chaiya Hadasunsern. *MDiv in dual degree program with Andrews University's Master of Social Work.* Will be pastor of Hmong Mennonite Church,



John Bender, Wilma Cender, Sara Erb, Lawrence Giden, Julia Gingrich.

Denver, Colo. He and Aranya, his wife, have four children and attend Hively Avenue Mennonite Church.

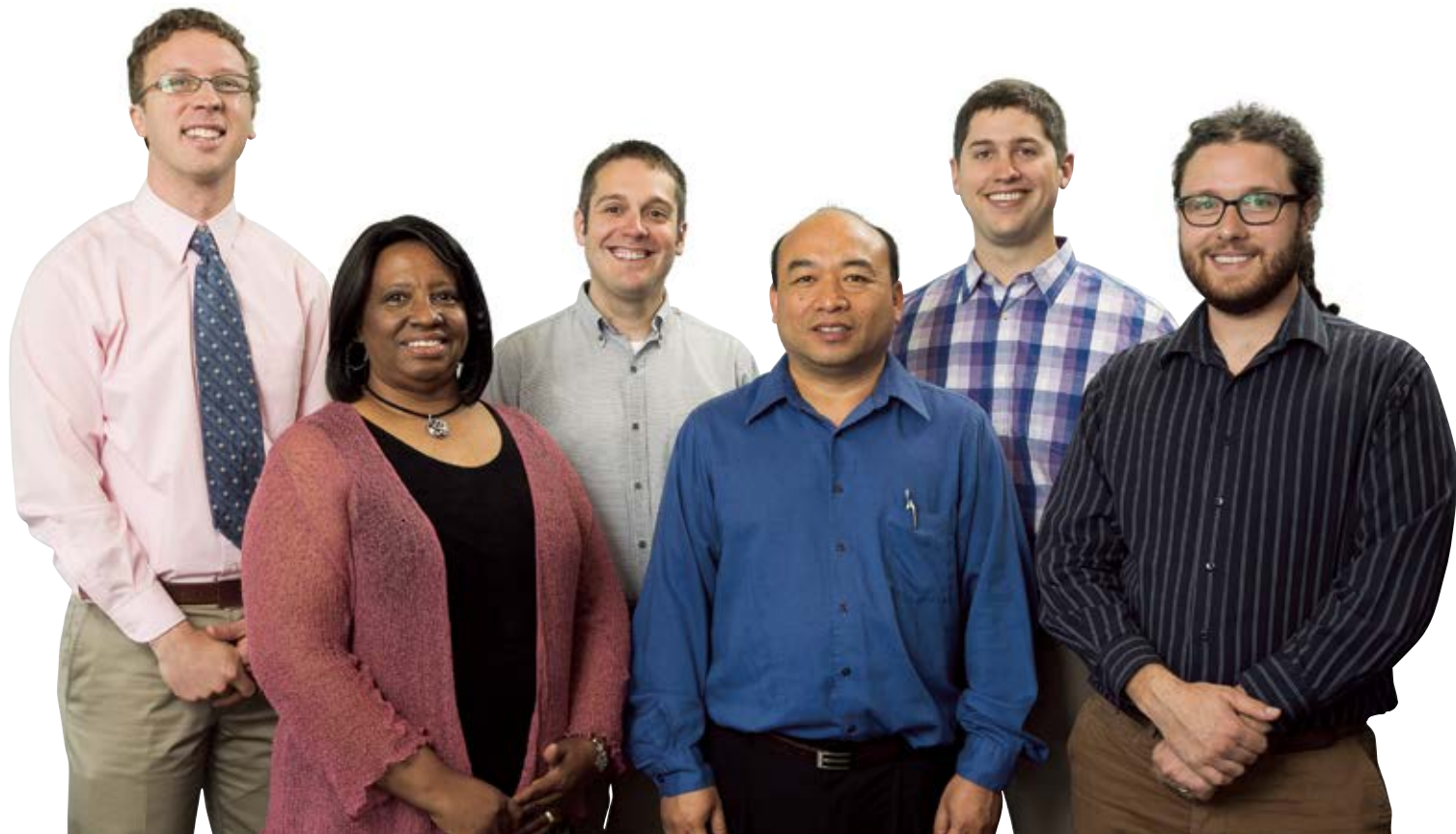
Jeffrey Hochstetler. *MDiv; concentration in pastoral ministry.* Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. He is married to Kelsey Hochstetler. He is a member of Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville, Ohio, and is an associate member of East Goshen Mennonite Church.

Kyle Metzger. *MAPS.* Will be ministry coordinator at Love in the Name of Christ in Huntington, Ind. He and Sharon Metzger, his wife, are members of 509 Community in Huntington.

Elizabeth Miller. *MATS; concentration in theology and ethics.* Exploring further study in religious history. She is married to Neil Richer and is a member of Berkey Avenue Mennonite Church.



At the Dean's Breakfast, graduate Eric Vandrick received the Marlin E. Miller award for excellence in theological studies from Lois Barrett, professor of theology and Anabaptist studies. Additional awards are announced on page 6.



Adam Graber Roth, Dianna Graham, Todd Gusler, Chaiya Hadtasunern, Jeff Hochstetler, Kyle Metzger.

2014 GRADUATES

Lyle Miller. *MDiv.* Will continue as Pastor of Family Life and Financial Stewardship at Waterford Mennonite Church, Goshen. Lyle is married to Bonnie Miller.

Martin Navarro. *MDiv; concentration in theological studies.* Will begin an assignment with Mennonite Education Agency in Elkhart, providing program and administrative support and arranging and coordinating events. Martin is married to Viridiana Lopez-Soto and is a member of Comunidad Cristiana Vida Abudante, Cicero, Ill.

Lydia Nofziger. *MDiv; concentration in theological studies.* Will complete a pastoral assignment for a pastor on sabbatical this summer and then pursue a position in social service or teaching ministry in Columbus, Ohio.

Theophilus Odhiambo. *MDiv; concentration in Christian spiritual formation.* Pursuing a pastoral ministry or other service assignment. He and Agnes, his wife, have four children and are members of Hively Avenue Mennonite Church, Elkhart.

Linda Short. *MDiv; concentration in pastoral care and counseling.* Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. She is married to LaVon Short and attends Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold, Ohio.

Katrina Mullet Siegrist. *MDiv; concentration in pastoral care and counseling.* Will do a Clinical Pastoral Education Residency at St. Joseph Regional Medical Center in Mishawaka. She is married to Brent Siegrist and attends Walnut Hill Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Kevin Swartzendruber. *MDiv; concentration in pastoral ministry.*

Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. He is married to Angela Swartzendruber and is a member of North Goshen Mennonite Church.

Naomi Tice. *MACF; concentration in worship.* Pursuing a pastoral ministry assignment. She is a member of Springs Mennonite Church, Springs, Pa.

Eric Vandrick. *MATS; concentration in theology and ethics.* Will become manager of Mennonite Cooperative Bookstore at AMBS. Eric and Linsey, his wife, are members of Hively Avenue Mennonite Church.

Anita Yoder. *Certificate in Worship Leadership.* Will continue as Pastor of Worship and Music at Clinton Frame Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind. She is married to Randi Yoder. ●



Elizabeth Miller, Lyle Miller, Martin Navarro, Lydia Nofziger, Theo Odhiambo, Linda Short.

Chaiya Hadasunsern completed two degrees this year, to add to the AMBS degree he already had. He completed the AMBS Master of Divinity degree and a Master of Social Work degree from Andrews University in a dual-degree program. In 2002, Chaiya received a Master of Arts in Mission and Evangelism and he was pastor of Hickory Hmong Mennonite Church in Hickory, N.C., before returning to AMBS.

After a trip to Thailand this summer to visit family and friends, Chaiya and Aranya, his wife, and their four sons will move to Denver, Colo., where Chaiya will become a part-time pastor of the Hmong Mennonite Church there.



Trina Siegrist, Kevin Swartzendruber, Naomi Tice, Eric Vandrick, Anita Yoder.

2014 GRADUATES

These graduates were not able to participate in the commencement festivities.

Hildegard Amstutz. *Certificate in Theological Studies.* Business chaplain and program director for spiritual retreats in Asociación Querit, Asunción, Paraguay. Hildi and C. Paul Amstutz are members of Mennonitengemeinde Concordia in Asunción.

Leonard Beechy. *Certificate in Theological Studies.* English teacher at Northridge High School, Middlebury, Ind., and writer for Mennonite Publishing Network. He and Sharon, his wife, are members of Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Mary Brubaker-Zehr. *Certificate in Theological Studies.* Director of student services for Conrad Grebel University College, University of Waterloo (Ont.). Mary and Scott, her husband, are members of Rockway Mennonite Church, Kitchener.

Caitlin Desjardins. *MDiv with a concentration in theological studies.* Youth director at Forest Hill Presbyterian Church, Cleveland, Ohio.

Gail Graber. *AMBS–Great Plains Foundation Program of Study.* Chaplain at Bethesda Home in Goessel, Kan. She is a member of Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan.

Jason Greig. *MDiv; concentration in theological studies.* Pursuing doctoral studies. Jason and Elisabeth Brendebach Greig, his wife, and their two sons are living in Wissen, Germany.

John Hershberger. *Certificate in Theological Studies.* Behavioral clinician at Elkhart General Hospital in the Innovative Health Options program. He and Diana, his wife, are members of College Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Mary Yoder Holsopple. *Certificate in Theological Studies.* Bullying Prevention Coordinator for Elkhart Community Schools. Mary and Elroy, her husband, are members of Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen.

Benjamin Charles (Chuck) Hostetter. *Certificate in Theological Studies.* Pastor of Mountain View Mennonite Church, Hickory, N.C., and district overseer for congregations in Tennessee, Carolina and Kentucky for Virginia Mennonite Conference. He is married to Joyce Moyer Hostetter.

Bernice Kaufman. *Certificate in Theological Studies.* Executive assistant for Mennonite Women USA. Berni is a member of Eden Mennonite Church, Moundridge, Kan.

Henry Klassen. *Certificate in Christian Ministry, Winnipeg Centre for Ministry Studies,* a cooperative program of AMBS and Canadian Mennonite University. Will continue lay ministry in his congregation, First Mennonite Church, Winnipeg. He is married to Anne-Marie Klassen.

Joon Hyoung Park. *MDiv; concentration in theological studies.* Pursuing a mission assignment with Mennonite Church Canada Witness. Joon and Shim Beack, his wife, are members of Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Abbotsford, B.C.

Ki Seok (Peter) Sung. *MAPS.* Pursuing pastoral ministry. Peter and Hae Chin Woo, his wife, live in Kwanwondo, South Korea. ●

AMBS Window SUMMER 2014 Volume 24 Issue 3

Distributed three times a year as a supplement to *Canadian Mennonite* and *The Mennonite*. Editor: Mary E. Klassen
Designer: Nekeisha Alexis-Baker
Photos: Steve Echols, Mary E. Klassen

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GRADUATE AWARDS

AMBS faculty selects graduates to receive awards each year. These are presented at the Dean's Breakfast the day before commencement. The graduates receive a gift certificate to the Mennonite Cooperative Bookstore, a subscription to *Mennonite Quarterly Review* or another journal, or a gift registration for an upcoming AMBS workshop or webinar.

This year's recipients are:

Joon Hyoung Park, Award of excellence in missional leadership
Julia Gingrich, Award of excellence in preaching
Trina Siegrist, Award of excellence in pastoral care and counseling

Todd Gusler, Award of excellence in Christian formation
Elizabeth Miller, C.J. Dyck award for excellence in history
Jason Greig, Marlin E. Miller award for theological studies
Eric Vandrick, Marlin E. Miller award for theological studies
Caitlin Desjardins, Gertrude Roten award for excellence in Greek exegesis
Lydia Nofziger, Millard Lind award for excellence in biblical interpretation
Naomi Tice, Heart of the Community award ●

Message, scripture and charge call grads to love

Graduates were reminded of “the simple yet not so simple four-letter word: Love” by speaker James Logan, PhD, at the commencement service on May 24, at College Mennonite Church.

In his address, “A Christian politics of (sometimes funky) love.” Logan, an AMBS graduate who teaches at Earlham College, Richmond, Ind., named ways in which the world needs the contributions of the graduates. He pointed to violence and conflict; children dying because of malnutrition, lack of water and substandard medical care; Black and Latino men incarcerated because of racial injustice; and how consumerism and “me-ism” seem to be the highest measure of being human.

Logan affirmed the ways graduates are already deeply engaged through ministries related to poverty, hunger, racism and unjust incarceration, peace and justice, care for the environment, and care for those considered to be people with disabilities. While he acknowledged that graduates are aware that “the struggle is real,” he challenged them to continue and expand their involvement in the tough issues present in the world.

“It is especially important to remember that the pursuit of love will sometimes be ‘funky,’” he emphasized. “When you involve yourself deeply in the politics of Christian love in this world you will find that there is sometimes going to be a physical and moral stench that accompanies your human associations.”

The supreme example of bringing love into a world yearning for it, Logan said,



In responding to the charge they received from Professor Ted Koontz, graduates turned to the congregation to sing “They will know we are Christians by our love.” They invited the congregation to join them on the third verse.

is Jesus: “aching and suffering love for the very humanity that nailed him to and then hung him from a cross.”

Real Christian love must not be an escape, he added; “real Christian love is an entry into the needs of the present, sharing in its suffering, its needs and activities and its hope.”

I Corinthians 13 provided the Scripture text for the service, and it was read in four languages represented among the graduates. Martin Navarro read in Spanish, Chaiya Hadtasunsern in Thai, Theo Odhiambo in Swahili and

Lydia Nofziger in English.

In his charge to the graduates, Professor of Ethics and Peace Studies Ted Koontz encouraged the class “to know yourself loved by God, to know others as loved by God, and to practice loving as God loves.” Then he added, “That should keep you busy for a while.” ●

YOUR GIFTS AT WORK

Every staff and faculty role at AMBS is essential, but one that attends to the heart of our worship and life is the campus pastor. Janeen Bertsche Johnson oversees chapel services, prayer gatherings, weekly forums with speakers and discussion, and community activities such as potluck meals. She also serves as instructor for several colloquia and coordinates LEAP (Leadership Education in Anabaptist Perspective), the first course students take in the Master of Divinity and Master of Arts in Christian Formation degrees.

Your gifts make it possible for her to provide this leadership along with mentoring and pastoral counseling that are part of being a pastor to the seminary community. Thank you for gifts that support these dimensions of care for students and employees, that enrich our worship and that add dimensions of fun to our life together. ●



PANORAMA



Family members and the AMBS community surrounded Ted Koontz and Gayle Gerber Koontz to bless them at a June 5 event honoring them for 31 years of teaching at AMBS. On Ted's right is Peter Koontz, son; On Gayle's left are Tim and Sarah Koontz, son and daughter-in-law.

Retirements

Ted Koontz, professor of ethics and peace studies, and Gayle Gerber Koontz, professor of theology and ethics, are retiring this summer after teaching at AMBS for 31 years.

At a June 5 event, Sara Wenger Shenk, president, called Gayle "pioneer, priest, poet, passionate lover of God, beloved sister in Christ." Ted she described as "intrepid pilgrim, tenacious peacemaker, patient listener, humble servant, persistent prophet."

ALUMNI RECOGNITION 2014

Wilma Ann Bailey (Master of Divinity 1979) is a scholar who gives her gifts to the church, and for this AMBS honors her this year with the annual AMBS Alumni Ministry and Service Recognition.

Wilma followed her degree at AMBS with MA and PhD degrees from Vanderbilt University, and for 14 years she has taught Hebrew Bible at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis.

She also taught at Messiah College, Grantham, Pa., and directed the James Lark Leadership Program and taught at Goshen College. She was licensed for ministry in 1980 by Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, becoming the first woman to be licensed by the conference. She has served on boards of the Mennonite Church, Mennonite Central Committee, Phillhaven (a mental and behavioral health care provider) and Eastern Mennonite University.

Wilma is a writer of both scholarly materials and Bible studies for the church. She wrote the Lamentations

volume in the Believers Church Bible Commentary series to be released this fall, and earlier wrote *You shall not kill or You shall not murder: The assault on a biblical text* (Liturgical Press, 2005), in addition to many other books. She has published seven volumes of Adult Bible Study Guides published by Faith and Life Press and has another forthcoming, in addition to articles, essays and book reviews on topics related to peace and justice, women in ancient Israel, laments and the environment.

She has taught in other world contexts, including Chunnakam, Sri Lanka; Bulawayo, Zimbabwe; and at the Imam Khomeini Educational and Research Institute in Qom, Iran.

At AMBS, we look forward to Wilma joining the September 18–20 conference Rooted and Grounded: A conference on land and Christian discipleship. She also will be on campus to be honored for the Ministry and Service Recognition sometime in October. ●

Short Courses for everyone

Anabaptist Short Courses—six-week, non-credit, online courses—begin a new series in fall:

- Exploring Anabaptist History and Theology, led by Jamie Pitts, PhD, Oct. 22–Dec. 3

www.amsb.edu/anabaptistshortcourses

Pastors Week 2015

"Where culture blurs theology: What is an Anabaptist Christian" is the theme that four presenters will address:

- Greg Boyd, PhD
 - Drew Hart, MDiv, PhD student
 - Janet Plenert, MDiv
 - Elizabeth Soto Albrecht, DMin
- Visit www.amsb.edu/pastorsweek for details of the January 26–29 event.

Rooted and Grounded

Learn who's speaking at the September 18–20 conference on land and Christian discipleship and register at

www.amsb.edu/rootedandgrounded



GOD AT WORK IN THE CHURCH

New school greets returning children

‘[W]e are very committed to start off a new beginning here—new hope and new life for our children’

BY EVELYN REMPEL PETKAU
Manitoba Correspondent

The old school has been burned to the ground and in its place stands a newly constructed, brilliant red building, a symbol of a new beginning for this Old Order Mennonite community that reflects its hope for, and commitment to, its children.

It has been over a year since Manitoba’s Child and Family Services (CFS) apprehended all 42 children from the rural community—which cannot be named to protect the identity of the children—and 16 adults were charged with offences including assault and assault with a weapon.

More than half the children have now been returned to the community and by the end of July all but two are expected to be home. The dropping of charges against some of the community members has meant the lifting of bail orders that prohibited them from having contact with each other and with the children.

Although six adults still face charges and one woman awaits sentencing, life has moved a little closer to normal. Community members can now come together for meetings and work together on tasks such as planting crops. They have also been able to build their new school together.

Several church-related groups volunteered to help with the building. Representatives from these groups were invited on May 16 to hear the community’s plans and to discuss how they could assist, said Peter Rempel, former executive director of Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba and current moderator of Mennonite Church Manitoba who heads a group of Mennonite professionals, including counsellors and psychologists,

in assisting community members and leaders work through the legal and social issues involved.

“Reps came from the Acadia Hutterite Colony; from the Nationwide Mennonite Church, which has four congregations in Manitoba; from Winnipeg Mennonite Elementary and Middle Schools; and from German/Russian immigrant churches in Manitoba, Alberta and B.C., plus my wife, Elsie, who is a former teacher,” Rempel said.

“At that time, the community had received approval for its building plan from the municipality, endorsement from CFS for the teacher to resume teaching and for the ‘discipline in school’ policy prepared by the community,” he noted.

Each of the groups offered materials, labour, funds or furnishings. At least seven crews from these various groups have been out to help. On May 17, the old single-room schoolhouse was burned down. The community’s decision to build a new

school building was made while most of the children were still in foster care, as an expression of their faith in the children’s return.

On June 18, as construction rapidly proceeded, the community allowed media in. One community member said to the media, “We wanted to make this statement to the public. . . that we are very committed to start off a new beginning here—new hope and new life for our children.”

A month later, a bright, new building stands in its place. When the new school opens in early September, about 21 children will attend.

“The community is very encouraged by the strong and practical support of these groups, and is looking forward to the children resuming their schooling in a new building,” said Rempel. ☞

PHOTOS BY TERRY WARBURTON



After burning the original school building on May 17, the Old Order Mennonite community in rural Manitoba, along with a number of outside helpers, began building a new school. The nearly completed building will open in September for new and returning students.



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Ontario



Employment
Opportunity

Thrift Development Officer, Full Time

We are seeking a person who is responsible for business development and operational oversight for all MCC Ontario Thrift Shops.

Interested individuals are asked to contact Joline Patfield at jolinepatfield@mennonitecc.on.ca with a cover letter and resume before August 6, 2014.

View the complete job description on our website at <http://mcccanada.ca/get-involved/serve/position/mcc-ontario-thrift-development-officer>



From left to right, campers Gary, Tom, Betty and Kirk from Outlook, Sask., enjoy singing during chapel at Youth Farm Bible Camp's Adult Special Needs session.

Discovering the kingdom at summer camp

Youth Farm Bible Camp offers a unique ministry to adults with intellectual disabilities

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DONNA SCHULZ

Saskatchewan Correspondent
ROSTHERN, SASK.

Swimming, archery, horseback riding and campfires are typical summer camp experiences. While children and teens enjoy these activities each year at Youth Farm Bible Camp near Rosthern, so do about 250 adults with intellectual disabilities.

Youth Farm has offered camps for adults with special needs since the 1970s. Back then, the Mennonite Youth Farm, where the camp is situated, was the site of two homes for adults with intellectual disabilities, one each for men and women, explains Mark Wurtz, the current camp director. Henry Friesen, then camp director, decided to offer a week of camp for the residents of those homes. Henry and Jack Bartel were among the first campers, and the brothers still enjoy camp at Youth Farm each summer.

The program grew to include two more weeks in the 1990s. Since 2006, Youth Farm has offered five weeks of Adult Special Needs (ASN) camp in addition to camps for children and teens.

Most participants live within a

two-hour drive of the camp. They come from Saskatoon, Prince Albert, North Battleford and smaller communities in between. Many live in group-home settings, while some come from independent living situations.

Campers are adults of all ages and

include those with Down's syndrome, autism and fetal alcohol syndrome. "They have a wide range of aptitude," says Wurtz, noting some function independently, while others require a higher level of care.

Wurtz describes one participant who suffers daily seizures because of the stress resulting from being at camp. The seizures make him extremely tired, "but he just loves coming to camp," says Wurtz. Unable to partake in group activities, he enjoys what Wurtz calls "his truck skill," riding in the pick-up truck with the camp maintenance man.

Counsellors receive no special training, since Wurtz hasn't yet found curriculum that meets Youth Farm's needs. "The best training for staff is experience," he says, noting that most counsellors are not strangers to the camp, having attended as campers and then as counsellors-in-training before being hired as counsellors. About 80 percent of Youth Farm's counsellors are return employees.

Working with ASN campers is draining. Youth Farm's rotational schedule includes alternating direct care with work that's not care-related, along with time off, to ensure counsellors don't burn out. Wurtz says that bringing new staff on board mid-stream also rejuvenates tired staff.

Working with ASN campers also changes the counsellors. As they get to know adults with special needs, they learn that behavioural problems may indicate a need



Gary, a camper from Outlook, Sask., enjoys horseback riding at Youth Farm Bible Camp's Adult Special Needs session.



Candy, a camper from Saskatoon attending Youth Farm Bible Camp's Adult Special Needs session, enjoys playing the tambourine during chapel.

for attention, and they learn to respond accordingly. This skill transfers to children's and teen camps, during which counselors will more likely respond to behavioural problems by giving care rather than discipline.

While activities like wall climbing and other adventurous games are not possible, in most other respects ASN camp is not unlike a week of children's camp. Participants sleep in cabins with other campers, make new friends and try new activities.

Music is an important part of these camps. "Singing is the easiest way to connect with them," says Wurtz. Chapels, a hoedown and a talent night are featured activities.

The biggest difference between ASN and children's camp is the slower pace. Activities are scheduled every half hour at children's camp, while at ASN camp, says Wurtz, "it may take half an hour just to get from one activity to the next."

Wurtz prefers to think of ASN campers as "differently abled," rather than disabled. "They are truly differently abled," he says. "In their relationships they are very open to others, and they are often closer to the kingdom than we are."

To read the blog of Jon Epp, Youth Farm's associate camp director, about spiritual lessons learned from an ASN camper, visit www.yfbc.com/blog/26/. ❧

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Faith Her, a Grade 9 student at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate in Kitchener, Ont., shares how God has been her help in coming to and growing at the school, during the Pastors Breakfast on June 10.

Bursary allows Hmong student to attend Rockway

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
KITCHENER, ONT.

Faith Her, a Grade 9 student at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate, shared at the Pastors Breakfast on June 10 how much she appreciated the bursary that provided a way for her to attend the school. As part of First Hmong Mennonite Church, just across the street from the school, she also thanked God for the opportunity to come to Rockway, although God also had to give her a large dose of courage in order to take hold of it. But after a year she is feeling at home and welcome.

Her's presentation highlighted the faith and service components of Rockway's program. She said that one important thing she learned is that creation is like a party, with God as the host. God has prepared everything and invited humanity to be God's guests. This is both gift and responsibility. She also learned much as a participant in Toronto Ontario Opportunities for Learning (TOOLS), a program of Mennonite Central Committee Ontario. By experiencing poverty on the street, she found her perspective and her heart were also changed.

The annual Pastors Breakfast keeps the school in regular contact with local pastors and provides an opportunity to test

plans and ideas. On June 10, about 20 pastors met with administrative staff to look at Rockway's missional focus. Tom Bileski, the school's director of community relations, outlined some of the school's missional practices, including chapel, religious studies courses, service trips and projects, and partnerships with Mennonite Church Eastern Canada and Silver Lake Mennonite Camp in youth and junior youth retreats.

Several pastors noted that, while these were all good, they would like to see more faith-formation activities. Bileski and principal Ann Schultz responded that some activities—for example, learning to listen to God in contemplation—were being used by teachers in class. Schultz also noted that there are plans for a “sacred space” in the school, where students could go to be quiet, think and pray.

David Martin, MC Eastern Canada's executive minister, explained how the area church's Legacy Initiative Fund is making it possible for more families to send their children to church schools. MC Eastern Canada has promised a \$150,000 matching grant for bursaries to Rockway and to UMEI Christian High School in

Staff change

Director named for new MSCU peace centre

WATERLOO, ONT.— Paul Heidebrecht has been named director of the new Mennonite Savings and Credit Union Centre for Peace Advancement (CPA) at Conrad Grebel University College.



Paul Heidebrecht

Heidebrecht spent five years as the Ottawa Office director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Canada, where he guided MCC's efforts to shape government policies on behalf of program partners in relief, development and peacebuilding. Prior to that, he completed a master of arts degree in theological studies at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) and a doctorate in theological ethics at Marquette University. His CPA position will be complemented with other teaching and research work at Grebel. Heidebrecht says he plans to spend “significant time and energy introducing the CPA to the University of Waterloo, the local community, and to the broader academic, church and civil society networks in Canada and globally. . . . In addition to collaborating with familiar partners like Project Ploughshares and MCC, I'm looking forward to establishing a whole host of new relationships.” In 2011, a \$1 million gift from the Credit Union was announced to add the CPA to the academic building expansion that recently opened. The CPA will celebrate its opening on Sept. 21, the International Day of Peace.

—Conrad Grebel University College

Leamington, Ont.

Pastors were invited to stay for the weekly chapel at which graduates shared their testimonies of what Rockway has meant to them through years. ❧

GOD AT WORK IN THE WORLD

PeopleCare Inc. lives by its name

Corporate long-term-care company partners with MEDA on Ghana project

STORY AND PHOTO BY DAVE ROGALSKY

Eastern Canada Correspondent
KITCHENER, ONT.

Brent Gingerich, the third generation of the Schlegel-Gingerich clan to helm the PeopleCare Inc. family of long-term care facilities, remembers travelling after high school with a friend in south and southeast Asia.

In Bangladesh, the two volunteered for a month in an orphanage, the same one his friend had lived in before he was adopted by Canadian parents. The experience was life-changing for Gingerich.

“Every Canadian should travel to a different country and see how half of the world lives, both to appreciate what we have, and work to help the world,” he says.

Now, as CEO of the family business, he is paying the salaries of a number of his employees who are going to Ghana in September for two weeks to see how a Mennonite Economic Development Association (MEDA) project is helping women there. In the meantime, the employees in the various homes in Cambridge, Delhi, Stratford, Kitchener,

Tavistock and London, Ont., are raising funds for the Ghana GROWS (Greater Rural Opportunities for Women) project.

Since the employees are paying for their own trips, all funds raised are going to the project. At a fundraiser in Kitchener, they had met their goal of \$25,000 and had high hopes for significantly more to be raised at subsequent events. Suppliers and services volunteered items for the silent auction, food and drink. Bands and singers supplied music, and staff volunteered throughout the afternoon and evening.

Gingerich and his parents, O’Derald and Mary, marvelled at the level of support, even from homes which were not sending anyone on the trip.

Ghana GROWS aims to help 20,000 women grow soy beans, learning over the next six years to farm, process the beans into a paste/milk to improve family nutrition, and to market surplus beans. With matching government funds, monies raised by PeopleCare staff will be

/// Briefly noted

Indigenous-settler relations explored

SOUTHERN MANITOBA—Thirty people from four Mennonite churches and one United Church congregation in the Winkler-Morden-Altona area of southern Manitoba travelled to the nearest aboriginal community on June 16 to hear about treaties and indigenous-settler relations from two local elders and Aimee Craft, an indigenous lawyer and author. The get-together took place at the Roseau River First Nation, located just east of the “West Reserve” that was granted to Mennonites shortly after Treaty 1 was signed with the Roseau people and others in 1871. Following a meal and input from the hosts, everyone around the circle shared thoughts on living together in an area marked by a troubled history and complicated present. Some participants expressed hope that further dialogue and collaboration could follow.

—BY WILL BRAUN

multiplied nine times.

Ghana GROWS is a great project for the long-term facilities’ staff to support, says Elaine Shantz, chief operating officer of PeopleCare and a former board member of MEDA Waterloo, since so many of the staff are female. ///



PeopleCare chief operating officer Elaine Shantz, far right, introduces the team going to Ghana in September, including Brenda Leis, far left; project coordinator and PeopleCare employee Dale Shantz; second from left; and PeopleCare president and chief executive officer Brent Gingerich, in the black shirt. Pictured second from right is Marion Good, MEDA Waterloo’s regional director of resource development.

GOD AT WORK IN US

OBITUARY

A shaper of the church at a crucial time

Ron Sawatsky
(b. March 19, 1950; d. June 28, 2014)

BY DAN NIGHSWANDER

Mennonite Church Canada



Ron Sawatsky

Ron Sawatsky's untimely death at age 64—shortly before the 2014 assembly of Mennonite Church Canada—prompts memories of his years of leadership in the Canadian church.

For several years, he represented Mennonite Church Eastern Canada on the General Board of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada (CMC). In 1997, he was called to be moderator of CMC, continuing during the transition to MC Canada, which he served as moderator until 2002.

His leadership spanned the merger of

the General Conference and Mennonite Church, and their re-structuring into MC Canada and MC U.S.A. He chaired the General Board, the assembly and many binational meetings, and he was also very actively involved in shaping them. His grasp of organizational issues and his ability to lead a group through complicated political processes served the church well through that period.

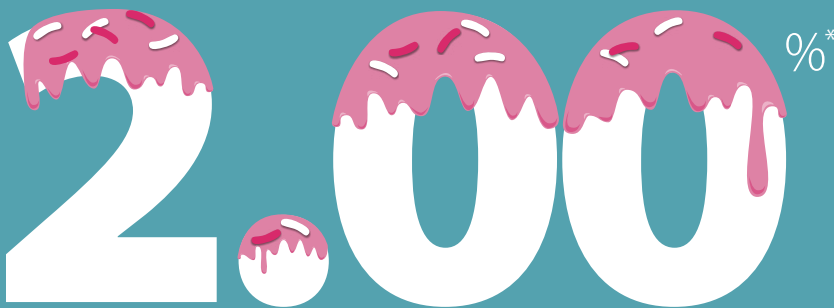
Sawatsky had a passion for the church, and patience for endless meetings and conversations. Always willing to put himself

in the midst of controversy, he freely gave great amounts of time to be present where he was needed. His commitment as moderator exceeded what most people could give to a voluntary position, and it was invaluable through those creative and sometimes conflicted years.

Sawatsky grew up in Winnipeg, then pursued his post-secondary education at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Va.; the University of Waterloo, Ont.; and the University of Toronto, where he earned his doctorate in religious studies degree in 1986. He served with Mennonite Central Committee in Akron, Pa., and continued alternately studying and working at various business endeavours in Toronto and Waterloo. In 1999, he became chief executive officer of Rockhill Mennonite Community in Sellersville, Pa., a position that he held until December 2012.

His love for the church and his willingness to serve tirelessly were an inspiration to those who served with him and those who follow. May he now rest from his labours in peace. ☩

We turned **50** this year. Not bad for a local credit union that started out with \$22 in a cashbox. That got us thinking, "We need to thank our members for 50 awesome years!" So what did we do? We *sweetened* our 1 year GIC with 0.50% extra interest and we want to share this with you! Come in and celebrate our anniversary with some *icing* on our rates.



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Visit to Cateura, home of the
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ARTBEAT



Mennonite authors Danny Unrau, left, Shirley Showalter and April Yamasaki pose with their books at a recent writers forum in Abbotsford, B.C. The works include novel, memoir and devotional books.

Writing as a spiritual journey

Forum showcases Mennonite authors

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY DUECKMAN

B. C. Correspondent
ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

Writing as a spiritual journey and what it means for writers and readers was the topic of a July 11 authors forum at House of James Christian bookstore. Drawing on a variety of experiences, three Mennonite book authors addressed “writing as a spiritual journey” as they discussed their books and the process of writing them.

First to speak was April Yamasaki, whose recently published book, *Sacred Pauses: Spiritual Practices for Personal Renewal*, explores how spiritual disciplines can enrich the Christian’s devotional life. “Writing is an act of faith,” said Yamasaki, who wanted to be a writer since childhood; she currently pastors Emmanuel Mennonite Church in Abbotsford. “Writing helps me to reflect and articulate.”

Sacred Pauses, she explained, was something she felt she’d been writing all her life, and she decided it was a personal journey even if never published. She described the

distractions, detours and roadblocks she experienced along the way to completing the book, as well as the “way stations” that gave her encouragement.

Shirley Showalter of Harrisonburg, Va., author of *Blush: A Mennonite Girl Meets a Glittering World*, talked about how she came to write her memoir. Showalter grew up in a conservative Mennonite church in Pennsylvania, where career options for girls were limited, but she entered the academic field and eventually became president of Goshen (Ind.) College.

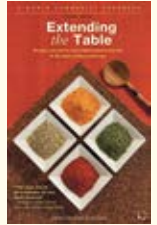
Showalter said, “When I was little, I wanted to be big—big as in important.” Now in writing the book she said, “I wanted to do writing as an exploration of self, meaning and purpose, not tied to academic practice.”

Danny Unrau, a Mennonite Brethren pastor in Richmond, B.C., is the author of *You are the Boy*, a novel of Jewish connections in a Mennonite family, which turned

/// Briefly noted

New version of ‘globally minded’ cookbook released

Extending the Table, the second in the World Community Cookbook series commissioned by Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and published by Herald Press, is being re-released with new recipes and many more colour photos than in the original edition. The new edition also includes regional menus, gluten-free and vegetarian tags on recipes, new dishes (including some from countries not represented before), and numerous photos of prepared dishes to help those who are unfamiliar with the food. More than 120 cookbook users helped choose which recipes made the cut for the revised cookbook. Managing editor Valerie Weaver-Zercher says the new edition “still strives to help Canadian and U.S. cooks prepare food in ways that are mindful of the rich culinary traditions and strong Christian faith of our brothers and sisters around the globe.” Former U.S. First Lady Rosalyn Carter comments, “This book should be in kitchens all over North America. . . . It is for those of us who love our neighbours on every continent and enjoy the rich variety of ways they prepare food.” —MennoMedia



out ironically to be true in his own ancestry. Unrau shared insights he had gained about writing, including listening, hearing, finding one’s identity, and “just start writing and it will come.” According to Unrau, “writing is medicine,” and he compared it to a strawberry-rhubarb dessert, “a mix of sweetness and bitterness.”

A question-and-answer session followed. Topics included the process of writing a book, writing for a secular audience, and if spiritual traditions other than Christian had influenced them. //



Faculty Position in PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES

Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo invites applications for a full-time regular faculty position in the undergraduate and graduate Peace and Conflict Studies (PACS) program with teaching and research expertise in interdisciplinary and multi-sector approaches to peace studies. The appointment will begin **July 1, 2015**. The College will begin reviewing applications on **October 1, 2014**. The College is committed to employment equity. Canadian citizens and permanent residents will be given priority.

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British Columbia

MCC is a church-based agency that serves in the name of Christ by providing relief, development and peace initiatives in over 60 countries. MCC British Columbia supports the international work of MCC and operates several local programs that serve needs here at home. MCC BC has an operating budget of \$10 million with 75 staff and 3,000 volunteers who work in 10 thrift shops and a range of other activities. We also own several subsidiary enterprises that operate local programs and hold legacy investments.

Employment Opportunities

Finance and Administration Director

The Finance & Administration Director is a new position that reports to the Executive Director and is responsible for all financial services related to the operations of MCC BC, and also provides expertise and oversight related to subsidiary enterprises. Administrative responsibilities include property, office equipment, information systems, and insurance.

Qualifications include: certification in a professional accounting association, proven track record in a related leadership role, knowledge and experience related to the charitable sector, proficiency with computer systems and accounting software, experience with policy development, and the ability to work effectively in a collaborative team environment.

Advancement Director

The Advancement Director reports to the Executive Director and is responsible for all fundraising, marketing and communications activities including direct mail, monthly giving, major donors, fundraising events, media, church relations, planned giving, marketing a wide range of MCC activities, and creating new initiatives to engage our constituency and expand the donor base.

Qualifications include: proven track record as a leader in fundraising and communications, experience with related best practices, passion for networking and constituency relations, effective communicator in various mediums, proficiency with fundraising software, aptitude for creating innovative strategies for growth, and the ability to work effectively in a collaborative team environment.

MCC workers are required to have a personal Christian faith, active church participation, a commitment to non-violent peacemaking, and support for the mission of MCC.

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Check www.mccbc.ca
for more information on MCC
and this job posting.

‘There is a community of young people here’

Young adults reflect on their experiences at Assembly 2014

STORY AND PHOTOS BY AARON EPP AND RACHEL BERGEN

Young Voices Co-editors

The work being done by the Future Directions and Being a Faithful Church (BFC) task forces were the focus of the plenary sessions at the 2014 Mennonite Church Canada assembly, and so those topics were on the minds of many of the young adults at the event.

More than 50 people between the ages of 18 and 30 attended the four-day event, nine of whom were interviewed about what they saw and heard:

Alyssa Bender, 24

Living Water Community Christian Fellowship, New Hamburg, Ont. Delegate for Mennonite Church Eastern Canada.

This was Alyssa Bender’s third assembly, having attended the 2012 assembly in Vancouver and the 2005 MC Canada/MC U.S.A. event in Charlotte, N.C.

While BFC and Future Directions interest her, Bender said she is paying close attention to what she sees as deeper theological shifts within MC Canada. “Sometimes I feel like we might be minimizing the importance of Christ in light of the decisions we’re making,” she said. “It seems more analytical and emotional, as opposed to Spirit-driven.”

When it comes to what is going on at the MC Canada level, Bender said most of her church-going friends are unaware. For her, paying attention to MC Canada happenings is the result of always having been involved with the wider church. Her excitement about the kingdom of God is also a reason she goes to assemblies.

“I have a passion for salvation and evangelism,” she said. “The message of Christ needs to get out. I guess I see the Mennonite church as a mega-microphone, and I want a voice in that microphone.”

Ben Borne, 24

Delegate for Wildwood Mennonite Church, Saskatoon.

Ben Borne loves the Mennonite church. He has attended many national church assemblies, but this year he came to honour a commitment he made in Waterloo in 2011. Three years ago, he introduced the Harmony motion, a resolution that proposes welcoming and including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and other members of the queer (LGBTQ) community into churches at the local, provincial and national levels. It garnered a lot of support and ushered in the BFC process.

Borne said he comes to assembly to express his love for the church, but also to serve as a reminder that LGBTQ people aren’t the “other,” that they’re at assembly and in the pews at church. He said it’s especially important for him to attend assembly because there are no LGBTQ voices on the BFC Task Force.

“The church says they’re listening to LGBT[Q] voices because they’re listening on the congregational level, but I think the task force needs to intentionally seek out those voices for input, debate and engagement,” he said.

(Continued on page 36)



Alyssa Bender



Ben Borne

(Continued from page 35)

Clare Schellenberg, 22

Assembly worship service volunteer. Home Street Mennonite Church, Winnipeg.

This was Clare Schellenberg's first time attending assembly, and she was drawn in because of the theme of "Wild hope." "It's an important theme for the church, to step into stormy waters and embrace the uncomfortableness of issues," she said. "We don't do that enough."

Schellenberg participated in the worship services and attended a BFC plenary session. It was particularly important for her because she identifies as a lesbian and is in a committed same-sex relationship.

Although she appreciated the church discussing it, she felt that the conversation could have started with storytelling. "It would be a good opportunity to have storytelling, listening and a chance to ask questions," she said. "There needs to be a connection [to LGBTQ people] or story told to answer them."



Clare Schellenberg



Katiana Wiens



Pierre-Joël Koop and Rebecca Steiner



Stacy Peters



Tim Wenger

Katiana Wiens, 30

Delegate for Niagara United Mennonite Church, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

For Katiana Wiens, attending her first assembly was not only an opportunity to engage with issues MC Canada is facing, but also an opportunity to spend time with friends. Four of her friends from Niagara-on-the-Lake attended and two of her friends from Saskatchewan were there as well. The group of seven rented a house in Winnipeg for the weekend.

"We've had good conversations at the end of the day when we debrief," she said.

The conversations she had with fellow delegates at her table during plenary sessions were also meaningful for Wiens. "It's a wonderful opportunity to get together and have these discussions," she said. "It's a space to share your perspectives in a safe, non-judgmental way."

Pierre-Joël Koop, 29

Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship, Winnipeg.

Rebecca Steiner, 24

Delegate for Community Mennonite Church, Stouffville, Ont.

Pierre-Joël Koop and Rebecca Steiner

were the most popular couple at assembly. During one of the plenary sessions, the emcee noted that the pair had just gotten married on June 28, and thus were spending their first week of marriage at the church gathering.

Steiner said the couple wanted to attend because of her involvement as a member of the Future Directions Task Force, but also because of the positive experience she had at her first assembly in Vancouver two years ago.

The worship music and BFC discussions stood out as highlights, and Steiner is interested to find out what delegates wrote down as they imagined the future of the church during plenary sessions related to Future Directions.

"We were hoping to get people to think outside of the box," she said. "I think [those conversations] went well."

Stacy Peters, 20

Delegate for Bergthol Mennonite Church, Didsbury, Alta.

Stacy Peters is a Canadian Mennonite University student, but the call to participate in the assembly drew her back to Winnipeg during her summer break from school. One of the big reasons she wanted to attend was because there are just a handful of Mennonite churches in her area church. "I wanted to experience the larger church," she said.

Like many of her peers, the worship was a highlight, as well as the chance to talk about sexuality. "In my congregation, [sexuality] doesn't get discussed," she said. "It's important and we need to talk about it."

Tim Wenger, 22

Delegate for River of Life Fellowship, Kitchener, Ont.

Tim Wenger has been to each assembly since 2006 in Edmonton, where, to the best of his knowledge, he was the only delegate under the age of 18. "I love being a part of our wider church body," he said. "[Assembly] helps you realize that the church isn't just a small group of people, but God's kingdom is growing throughout all of Canada and the world."

One of the biggest highlights for Wenger was the discussion regarding Future Directions. "Even though things are

changing, it's exciting to see people have hope for the future as well," he said, adding that he encourages young adults to come to the next assembly. "There is a community of young people here, even if it isn't as apparent as the older generations." ❧



Vic Thiessen sees a connection between the films Pleasantville and Chocolat, and how God is working in MC Canada today.

Live in colour . . . eat chocolate

Two films show how change can be liberating in life and in the church

STORY AND PHOTO BY RACHEL BERGEN

Young Voices Co-editor

Many churches have an inherent aversion to change, according to Vic Thiessen.

The same is true for the characters of the film *Pleasantville* (1998). Thiessen, Mennonite Church Canada's executive minister of church engagement and chief administrative officer, as well as *Canadian Mennonite's* resident film critic, used *Pleasantville* to talk about how liberating change can be in film and in the church in one of Assembly 2014's many seminar sessions.

Pleasantville concerns two 1990s teenagers, David and Jennifer, who are transported into a 1950s TV sitcom by a TV repairman. There, everything is black and white—literally. The film is set in an idyllic, but profoundly complacent small town where no change takes place. Everything

is perfect and everyone knows their roles. But then change is introduced, as is the gradual adoption of colour and liberation.

Thiessen thinks there are some strong parallels between the Holy Land during the life of Christ and *Pleasantville*, not in terms of its pleasantness, of course. The culture was resistant to change, there were sharp social boundaries and there was little room for compassion.

Enter Jesus. "Jesus introduced change and colour," Thiessen said. "He spent much of his time with the poor and oppressed."

Just like in *Pleasantville*, the film *Chocolat* (2000) addresses issues of change in a stagnant community, but more specifically in a Christian community.

The main character, Vianne, is the agent of change in the film. She opens a chocolate

(Continued on page 46)

(Continued from page 45)

shop during Lent in a small French town, associates with the outsiders in the community and challenges dominant ideas in many ways. The mayor sees her as a threat to the stability of the town. Although many of the people in the community reject her, Vianne exemplifies love and acceptance, so many townspeople are drawn to her, even when urged not to associate with her.

Thiessen sees these two films as indicative of how Christ interacted with leaders in his lifetime and how God is working in MC Canada today. “Many people believe the church has lost its relevance, but Jesus is still relevant,” he said. “We can catch a glimpse of what it would be like if Jesus, friend to the poor and marginalized, came

into our villages today.”

Thiessen cited a recent survey of young Mennonites in North America that found that most young people want their church to be a safe place where all questions can be asked, where deep emotional needs can be met and where all people are welcome. The survey also found they often find these things in their churches.

“Our young adults want to live in colour and eat chocolate—fair trade, of course,” he said.

Pleasantville and *Chocolat* both conclude with change overtaking their respective communities, and people finding liberation in it. “We need to be open to change, as well,” Thiessen concluded. ☿

Daily guide for A Year of Reading Biblically: Part III



Sep 1: Ezek 9-12	Oct 2: Matt 1-4	Nov 2: Luke 21-22	Dec 3: 1Cor 15-16
Sep 2: Ezek 13-15	Oct 3: Matt 5-6	Nov 3: Luke 23-24	Dec 4: 2Cor 1-4
Sep 3: Ezek 16-17	Oct 4: Matt 7-8	Nov 4: John 1-2	Dec 5: 2Cor 5-9
Sep 4: Ezek 18-20	Oct 5: Matt 9-10	Nov 5: John 3-4	Dec 6: 2Cor 10-13
Sep 5: Ezek 21-22	Oct 6: Matt 11-12	Nov 6: John 5-6	Dec 7: Gal 1-3
Sep 6: Ezek 23-24	Oct 7: Matt 13-14	Nov 7: John 7-8	Dec 8: Gal 4-6
Sep 7: Ezek 25-27	Oct 8: Matt 15-17	Nov 8: John 9-10	Dec 9: Eph 1-3
Sep 8: Ezek 28-30	Oct 9: Matt 18-19	Nov 9: John 11-12	Dec 10: Eph 4-6
Sep 9: Ezek 31-33	Oct 10: Matt 20-21	Nov 10: John 13-15	Dec 11: Philippians 1-4
Sep 10: Ezek 34-36	Oct 11: Matt 22-23	Nov 11: John 16-18	Dec 12: Colossians 1-4
Sep 11: Ezek 37-39	Oct 12: Matt 24-25	Nov 12: John 19-21	Dec 13: 1 Thess 1-5
Sep 12: Ezek 40-42	Oct 13: Matt 26	Nov 13: Acts 1-3	Dec 14: 2 Thess 1-3
Sep 13: Ezek 43-45	Oct 14: Matt 27-28	Nov 14: Acts 4-6	Dec 15: 1 Timothy 1-6
Sep 14: Ezek 46-48	Oct 15: Mark 1-3	Nov 15: Acts 7-8	Dec 16: 2 Timothy 1-4
Sep 15: Dan 1-3	Oct 16: Mark 4-5	Nov 16: Acts 9-10	Dec 17: Titus-Philemon
Sep 16: Dan 4-6	Oct 17: Mark 6-7	Nov 17: Acts 11-13	Dec 18: Heb 1-6
Sep 17: Dan 7-9	Oct 18: Mark 8-9	Nov 18: Acts 14-15	Dec 19: Heb 7-10
Sep 18: Dan 10-12	Oct 19: Mark 10-11	Nov 19: Acts 16-17	Dec 20: Heb 11-13
Sep 19: Hos 1-7	Oct 20: Mark 12-13	Nov 20: Acts 18-20	Dec 21: James 1-5
Sep 20: Hos 8-14	Oct 21: Mark 14	Nov 21: Acts 21-23	Dec 22: 1 Peter 1-5
Sep 21: Joel	Oct 22: Mark 15-16	Nov 22: Acts 24-26	Dec 23: 2 Peter 1-3
Sep 22: Amos 1-5	Oct 23: Luke 1	Nov 23: Acts 27-28	Dec 24: 1 John 1-5
Sep 23: Amos 6-9	Oct 24: Luke 2-3	Nov 24: Rom 1-3	Dec 25: 2 John-Jude
Sep 24: Oba-Jonah	Oct 25: Luke 4-5	Nov 25: Rom 4-7	Dec 26: Rev 1-3
Sep 25: Micah 1-7	Oct 26: Luke 6-7	Nov 26: Rom 8-10	Dec 27: Rev 4-8
Sep 26: Nahum 1-3	Oct 27: Luke 8-9	Nov 27: Rom 11-13	Dec 28: Rev 9-12
Sep 27: Hab-Zeph	Oct 28: Luke 10-11	Nov 28: Rom 14-16	Dec 29: Rev 13-16
Sep 28: Haggai 1-2	Oct 29: Luke 12-13	Nov 29: 1Cor 1-4	Dec 30: Rev 17-19
Sep 29: Zech 1-7	Oct 30: Luke 14-16	Nov 30: 1Cor 5-8	Dec 31: Rev 20-22
Sep 30: Zech 8-14	Oct 31: Luke 17-18	Dec 1: 1Cor 9-11	
Oct 1: Malachi 1-4	Nov 1: Luke 19-20	Dec 2: 1Cor 12-14	



Summer reads & recipes



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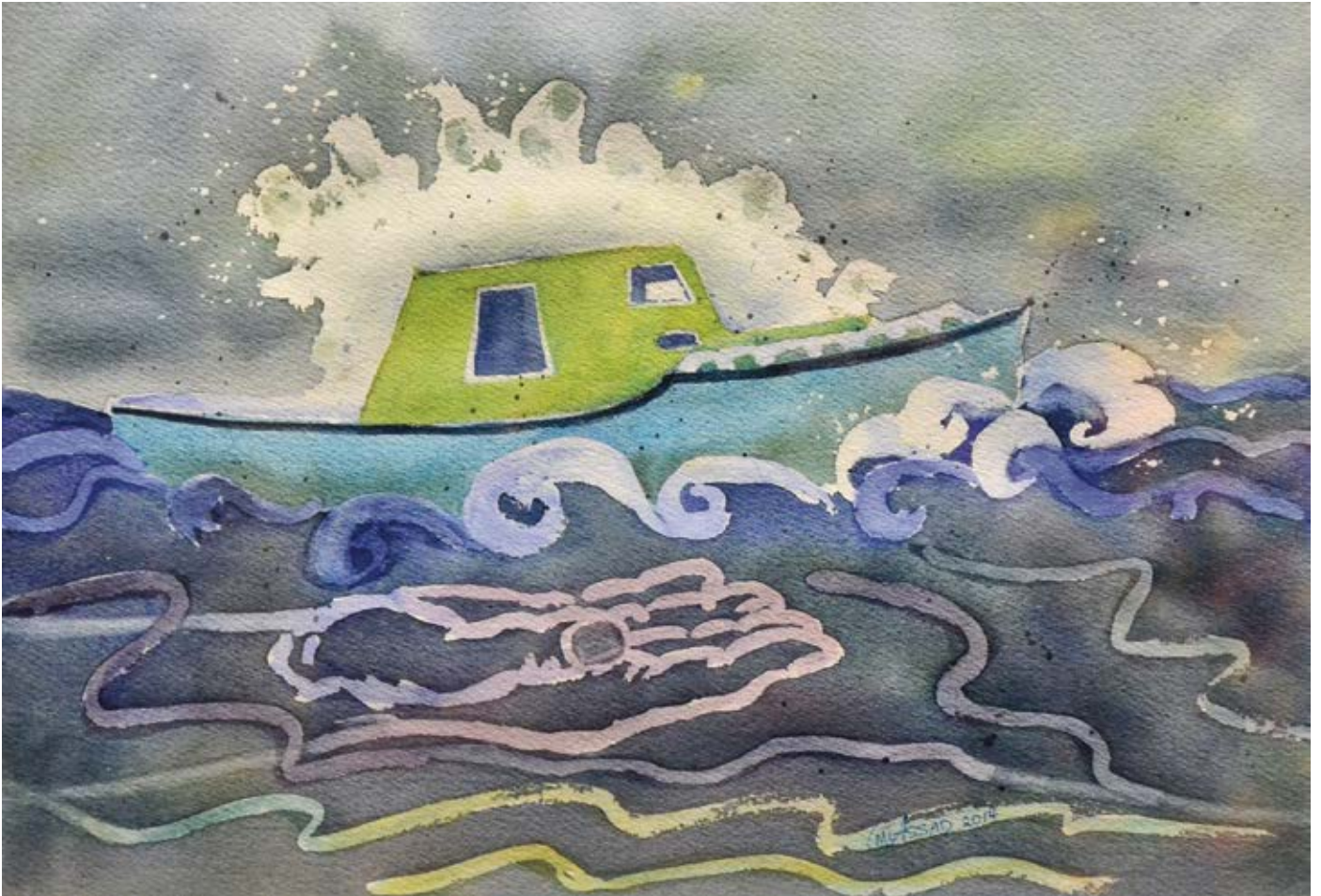
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'Where is your faith? (Luke 8:25); a watercolour painting by Marie (Gerber) Assad of Waterloo, Ont., was just one of many 'wild hope' themed works on display at the Assembly 2014 art exhibit. 'The boat is modelled after a Newfoundland fishing boat—where we spend our summers,' wrote Assad in her submission letter.

Riding the waves at Assembly



Children make and play with folded paper boats as part of the July 6 assembly morning worship.